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Dr Su-Hie Ting
Chief Editor
Issues in Language Studies
Faculty of Language Studies and Communication Studies
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
94300 Kota Samarahan
Sarawak
Malaysia
shting@unimas.my

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Types of communication strategies used across age groups

Figure 1. Frequency of communication strategy use across age groups

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Contents

ANALYSING THE MACRO-ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE REVIEW ARTICLE GENRE IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS

Ali Sorayyaei AZAR[1]
Azirah HASHIM[2]
Department of English Language, Faculty of Languages and Linguistics,
University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

[1] asorayaie@siswa.um.edu.my*
[2] azirahh@um.edu.my

*Corresponding author
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is (1) to analyse the macro-organisational structure and (2) to investigate and describe the analytical sections of the data. The data, drawn from a randomly selected corpus of 32 review articles, was analysed following Swales' (1990) genre analysis to describe and investigate the schematic structure of the review article genre. The findings revealed that the CARS model was often observed in this genre. Moreover, although both review articles and research articles have been considered sub-genres of the research genre, there is a significant variation among them in terms of the schematic structure, rhetorical strategies, and functions. The schematic structure and functions of the review article genre were further investigated by consulting the specialist informants. The macro-organisational structure of this genre proposed hence provide the instructive guidance for EFL graduates and junior researchers how to review the developments critically during their research writing.

Keywords: academic review genres, review article genre, macro-organisational structure, analytical sections of review article genre

Introduction

During four decades, genre analysis is still a valuable and productive method for analysing the schematic structure of academic discourses. Many researchers have adopted Swales' (1990) CARS model to analyse Moves and Steps of academic texts. They have followed English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach to identify the

functions of the academic texts. The functions and communicative purposes of the academic discourses have been represented with a set of moves and steps. It was noticed that these structures cannot be in a fixed order or sequence. In addition, they are changing over time. By doing genre analysis, the researchers are able to suggest organisational structures and schematic patterns for the academic texts in their disciplines.

For this reason, one perspective of genre analysis is to focus on academic discourses and their analytical sections (i.e. the Introduction, Review of literature, Methodology, Results and Discussion, and Conclusion sections). In addition, academic review genres have been studied extensively over the last decade, in particular the book reviews (Groom, 2009; Hyland & Diani, 2009; Moreno & Suarez, 2008; Motta-Roth, 1995), literature review sections in PhD theses (Kwan, 2006; Ridley, 2008; Thompson, 2009), and review articles (Myer, 1991; Noguchi, 2006; Sorayyaei Azar & Hashim, 2014, 2017a, 2017b; Swales, 2004). However, academic review genres still require much more analysis especially review articles. Until recently, there have been many studies focusing on the macro-organisational structure of research article sections and other academic discourses, but very few studies have focused on the schematic structure of review article genre. Among the various types of academic review genre, the review article genre has attracted the most attention due to its significant purposes and classification. It also plays an important rhetorical role in creating a research gap, raising a research problem, and evaluating the works and establishing "praise and criticism interactions" of authors (Hyland, 2000).

The valuable knowledge about the generic structure of academic review genres is needed for EFL postgraduate students and junior researchers so that they can strategically develop their comprehensive research and review the developments of a research in the related field critically. These types of studies are useful for teachers and postgraduate students. The contribution of these studies to the teaching field is valuable and the knowledge genre analysis is applicable.

In fact, the genre-based studies focus basically on introducing Moves and Sub-moves (i.e. Steps or Strategies) of academic discourses. They not only generate sets of Moves and Sub-moves, but they also analyse linguistic features of the texts. We can emphasise that one can acquire genre knowledge by focusing on learning the typical macro-structure and schematic knowledge of academic discourses. Hence, dealing with the schematic structure needs to be situated with our learners' and novice writers' ethnographic awareness. Due to this need, we analysed the macro-organisational structure of review articles in Applied Linguistics[1]. Besides, we described and analysed the analytical sections of review articles (i.e. the Abstract, Introduction, Body and Conclusion sections). The ethnographic accounts were also collected and used to confirm and back up the findings of this genre-based study. Swales' (1990) CARS structure was observed to some extent in the review article genre. Moreover, the IMRD model is an adequate model for experimental research papers, this model has been rarely observed in the review article genre, except in a few cases. Thus, we have suggested the rhetorical model of the review article genre in Applied Linguistics which is different from the IMRD structure.

The Research Questions

This study aims at giving answers to the following questions:

1. What is the macro-organisational structure of the review article genre in applied linguistics?
2. What are the schematic structures of the analytical sections of the review article genre in applied linguistics?
3. Do the schematic structures of the analytical sections in review articles follow the CARS model?

A Brief Review of Related Literature

The review article genre has been generally understood as a brief survey of relevant literature and this type of review genre has been in circulation since the 18th century (Kronick, 1976, as cited in Garfield, 1987a, p. 113). On the contrary, review article texts can be characterised by two major types as stated by Adams (1961), namely, (1) discipline review and (2) categorical review. These were two types which belonged to the 19th century German review types. The former is a comprehensive description record, while the latter is a highly selective and critical one and it focuses on a problem and presents its solution. In another view, Woodward (1974) believed that there can be eight types of reviews, namely, critical, evaluation, interpretive, speculative, state of the art, tutorial, historical and popular. Thus, it can be contended that it is not normally a brief survey of relevant literature. For instance, if a review is a critical one it can focus on critical evaluation of published information and ideas. To be short, the review article is a valuable source, as it has been suggested, not only for being an integrative and a synthesised-form scientific article but also for being a source for data access (Garfield, 1987). As Price (1965) suggested, after publishing thirty or forty research articles in any field we will need a review. In fact, we can conclude that it is often difficult to give a single definition of a review article because as mentioned above the review article in any discipline and its related fields may take various forms and functions.

With the given definitions and characterisations in mind, there can be more than one function for the review article, namely, (1) historical function and (2) contemporary function (Woodward, 1977). It seems that the categorical review article mostly often likes to perform the historical function, while the bibliographic review article which provides merely a survey of the current literature tends to perform the contemporary function (Woodward, 1977, p. 176). Although there was common agreement that reviews fulfill two primary functions, we can certainly find out from findings of other studies this double role of the reviews obviously needs to be called into question. In publishing reviews, there might be significant factors affecting their characteristic features, categorisation and functions. Review writers are sought out by editors and solicited to write on a given subject field. The editorial policy, the exact scope and overall format of the journal, the discipline itself, and author's communicative purpose lead to the variation of the reviews. For example, Noguchi (2001, 2006) classified the science review article genre into four main categories: (1) history, (2) status quo, (3) theory, and (4) issue. As Swales (2004)

pointed out there are no discoursal studies of review articles discussed at length in writing manuals except two: Myers (1991) and Noguchi (2001). Myers examined review articles of two prominent molecular biologists. It is stated that a review article draws readers into the writer's views of what has happened and by ordering the recent past, it suggests what can be done next (Myers, 1991, p. 46). Neglected review genre, as Noguchi (2001) stated in her doctoral dissertation, offers a publishing opportunity, because review articles are more flexible and less frozen than the standard research articles. She applied textual analysis and the informants' views to 25 science review articles. Moreover, she suggested review article is a different genre and it is going to become increasingly important. The review article genre, thus, plays a significant role for those people in creating knowledge and informing them on how to manage their own learning and how to make use of scholarly reviews. Given the scant attention to the review article genre in the field of applied linguistics, the present study is important.

The Study

The corpus used for this study comprised 32 review articles in the field of applied linguistics, each 18-20 pages on average, published in an established journal between 2000 to 2007 entitled: Annual Review of Applied Linguistics (ARAL published by Cambridge University Press). The prestige and reputation of this journal in publishing review articles were taken into account. Yet, another criterion involved in sampling procedure of this study was to consult the specialist informants in that field, this is known as "informant nomination" the established tradition in sampling and targeting the corpus-based studies (Hyland, 2000, 2007; Kuhi & Behnam, 2010; Kuhi, Yavari, & Sorayyaei Azar, 2012). They were asked to name the most prestigious journals in which their review articles were published and the corpus were selected from these (see Appendix A).

The first step was to identify the prevalent analytical sections of the corpus. By concentrating on the organisational structure and textual devices of these sections of the corpus, we attempted to investigate the purposes and characteristic features of the prevalent sections of review articles in applied linguistics. Such an analysis of the textual/ or organisational structure of the review article genre is a necessary prerequisite to the investigation of this type of genre. In this study, two sets of clues were used to investigate the purposes and the schematic structure of this review genre: Moves (see Appendix B for the examples of moves provided from the corpus to illustrate the move structures) and the specialist informants' feedback. The specialist informants used for this research were in fact the authors of the review articles (in ARAL).

In the second step, we referred to the specialist informants through e-mailing interview and personal communication. It is essential to look inside the academic discourse community in order to learn about the discourse structure, categorisation and classification system, and functions of the review article genre. For this reason, several semi-structured questions related to the informants' review articles were posed. These questions were in terms of their main aim of writing and publishing this type of academic review genre in ARAL journal and also clarifying the

classification system, functions, and the generic structure of review articles. Tables 1 and 2 provide the two frameworks taken from Hatim and Mason (1990) and Yang and Allison (2003).

Table 1
Hatim and Mason's framework (1990)

Through-argumentation	Counter-argumentation
i. Thesis to be supported	i. Thesis cited to be opposed
ii. Substantiation	ii. Opposition/ Counter-claim/
iii. Conclusion	iii. Substantiation of counter-claim
	iv. Conclusion

Table 2
Yang and Allison's framework (2003)

Moves	Steps
1	Summarising the study
2	Evaluating the study
	i. Indicating significance/advantage
	ii. Indicating limitations
	iii. Evaluating methodology
3	Deductions from the research
	i. Recommending further study
	ii. Drawing pedagogic implication

Macro-organisational Structure of the Review Article Genre in Applied Linguistics

The main focus of the present research is on the macro-organisational structure of review articles in applied linguistics. There is a variation with respect to the organisational structure that exists within the review article genre and it differs from experimental research article, systematic reviews, book reviews, and book review articles. According to Swales (1990) and Weissburg and Buker's (1990) presentation, the different sections of the experimental research articles follow the IMRD model. In contrast with the sections of the experimental research article, the present study shows that there are four main predominant sections in the corpus of the present research (Table 3). The prevalent sections for review articles include the Abstract section (87.5 %), the Introduction section (90%), theme-bound units (consists of content-based headings and sub-headings) in the Body section (100%), and the Conclusion section or Concluding Remarks (87.5 %). Apart from that, there are three main types of review articles in the corpus of this research which are: (1) the bibliographic review article which gives readers a comprehensive and descriptive record of annual works and it encompasses the literature-oriented approach, (2) the critical evaluative review article which encompasses subject-oriented approach, that is to say it identifies an idea or raises a research problem, then it gives its solution by analysing and evaluating the selective works done before in the related field, and finally it suggests a new direction, and (3) the mixed-mode review article which has the twin roles and encompasses both literature-oriented and subject-oriented

approaches (see Sorayyaei Azar & Hashim 2014). The 47% of review articles in this research involve mixed-mode reviews (15 out of 32) and the rest of the reviews belongs to both classes, that is to say, the rate of distribution for the two classes is: 28% of the reviews involve critical evaluative reviews (9 out of 32) and 25% of the reviews involve bibliographic reviews (8 out of 32).

Table 3
Frequency of prevalent sections in review articles

Sections	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Abstract	28/32	87.5%
Introduction	29/32	90%
The Body	32/32	100%
Conclusion	28/32	87.5%

Based on the analysis of overall organisational structure of review articles, the following specific details were provided for each one of the review article genre. Table 4 displays the specific features of each review article in the corpus. They include the number of authors per text, average self-citation and average number of pages for each text, the type of section headings provided and if the four sections of the review article texts exist.

Table 4
Specific features of review articles in this research

Data No.	Singled Author	Date of Pub.	Abs.	Intro	The Main Body	Conc	Average no. References	Average Self-Citation	Tables, Charts, Figures	Average no. of Pages
RevA.1	Yes	2000	NO	*	***	NO	15	3	-	12
RevA.2	Yes	2000	NO	*	***	***	A.14+92	5	-	21
RevA.3	Yes	2000	NO	NO	***	***	A.17+63	3	-	17
RevA.4	Yes	2000	NO	*	***	*	A.3+79	12	-	19
RevA.5	Yes	2001	**	**	***	*	A.4+81	3	-	19
RevA.6	Yes	2001	**	*E	***	*	A.6+45	2	Fig.1	19
RevA.7	Yes	2001	**	**	***	*	A.6+79	13	-	16
RevA.8	Yes	2001	**	**	***	*	A.3+59	11	T.1	13
RevA.9	NO	2002	**	**	***	*	204	38	-	28

Table 4 (continued).

Data No.	Singled Author	Date of Pub.	Abs.	Intro	The Main Body	Conc	Avera-ge no. Refe-rences	Aver-age Self-Cita-tion	Ta-bles, Cha-rts, Fi-gures	Ave-rage no. of Pa-ges
RevA.10	Yes	2002	**	**	***	*	A.3+O.48	48	Fig.1	19
RevA.11	Yes	2002	**	**	***	*	A.1+195	22	f.1+t.1	22
RevA.12	Yes	2002	**	**	***	*	A.5+W.7+90	5	f.1	20
RevA.13	NO	2003	**	**	***	***	A.6+41	3	-	18
RevA.14	Yes	2003	**	**	***	*	102	-	-	21
RevA.15	Yes	2003	**	**	***	NO	40	7	-	13
RevA.16	NO	2003	**	**	***	*	A.5+109	2	-	20
RevA.17	Yes	2004	**	**	***	***	A.7+71	3	f.1	22
RevA.18	NO	2004	**	NO	***	***	A.4+101	5	-	17
RevA.19	Yes	2004	**	**	***	*	A.8+116	4	-	25
RevA.20	NO	2004	**	**	***	*	A.15+338	5	-	36
RevA.21	Yes	2005	**	**	***	*	A.5+127	10	-	22
RevA.22	NO	2005	**	**	***	*	60	1	-	19
RevA.23	Yes	2005	**	**	***	NO	A.6+161	23	f.1	27
RevA.24	NO	2005	**	*E	***	*	A.5+33	-	-	20
RevA.25	NO	2006	**	*E	***	NO	A.5+122	5	f.1	31
RevA.26	Yes	2006	**	**	***	***	A.4+95	10	-	21
RevA.27	Yes	2006	**	**	***	*	A.4+57	1	f.1	14
RevA.28	NO	2006	**	NO	***	*	A.5+89	9	-	26

Table 4 (continued).

Data No.	Singled Author	Date of Pub.	Abs.	Intro	The Main Body	Conc	Average no. References	Average Self-Citation	Tables, Charts, Figures	Average no. of Pages
RevA.29	NO	2007	**	**	***	*	A.7+70	2	f.1+t.3	22
RevA.30	NO	2007	**	**	***	*	A.6+W.5+22	4	f.1+p.14*	20
RevA.31	Yes	2007	**	**	***	***	A.3+150	7	-	30
RevA.32	Yes	2007	**	**	***	*	A.7+95	6	-	21

Note. *= the conventional heading shows the section; *E= Embedded with next section; **= No conventional section heading, but the content represents the section; ***= Content section heading; A.: Annotated References; W.: Websites; f.: Figure; t.: Table; p.: Picture; o.: Other References; Abs.: Abstract; Intro.: Introduction; Conc.: Conclusion

Based on the specific details presented in Table 4, the second column indicates whether the review article has one single author or more than one. The third column shows us the date of publication of review articles which varied from 2000 to 2007. The fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh columns tell us if the sections are present or not (this sign "*" shows the presence of conventional heading, "**" this sign shows there is no conventional section heading, and this "***" shows that there is a content section heading). For example, the fourth column shows whether the abstract section is present for the first review article of the corpus (RevA.1). The textual structure of this review article is in Table 5. This table indicates that the abstract section does not exist, the body section contains content headings and the conclusion section is not also present and there is no conventional section heading for this section.

Table 5
Overall textual structure for review article 1

Functional Sections	Section headings in Review Article	Sub-headings in Review Article
Abstract	No Abstract	------
Introduction	Introduction	
The Body section	Linguistics and Language Teaching	
	Corpus Linguistics, Authentic Language, and Task-based Instruction	
	Linguistics, Language Teaching, and Applied Linguistics	

Conclusion	No Conclusion

In addition, Tables 4 and 5 reveal that there is no section heading at all for the Abstract section. The authors may use varied section headings for signalling the analytical sections of review articles, and sometimes they represent content section headings like theme-bound units in the Body section. The content section heading is signaled with unconventional section heading or theme-based section heading but it represents the functions of the analytical section. For instance, there are no conventional section headings for the Body sections in the corpus of this study, but we have identified these sections with "content section headings" or "theme-based section headings". The characteristic features and organisational structure of review articles in applied linguistics were further investigated by consulting our specialist informants. Some of the feedback and views received from the informants have been included in the following section. The questions ('i' and 'ii') and the informants' feedback taken from the questionnaire:

Based on the findings, review articles do not have the standard headings like many research articles and they do not follow the IMRD (Introduction, Method, Result, and Discussion) model.

i. Is there a particular order in which you write a review article?
    1. "The headings are based on content, but the very first section is an introduction, on main themes, and then headings should go from more general to specific. The final section tends to sum up main trends and what needs to be researched…". (Informant '5')
    2. "a) Summary of previous reviews, if any,
       b) Delineating the Parameters of the review, components of the research area,
       c) Reviewing and critiquing research in each component,
       d) Concluding, summarising, looking forward,
       e) Bibliography" (Informant '6')
    3. "Vignette, definition, literature review, critique, and conclusions" (Informant '7')
    4. "No, it entirely depends on the themes that emerge when I do the preparatory work" (Informant '8')
    5. "Other than an introduction, a section on future directions, and final conclusions, the articles do not follow a uniform pattern for me. The topic itself tends to suggest section headings…". (Informant '9')
ii. There are no Section Headings like 'Abstract' or 'Introduction' in the review text. Why? Is it because of the editorial policy of ARAL? Or it is the result of choices made by the respected writer?
    1. "I assume that it is a decision or policy of ARAL". (Informant '9')

The feedback and views received from the informants supported the findings of the present research. The characteristic features and organisational structure of review articles in applied linguistics which were analysed and described in this study were confirmed by consulting our specialist informants. In most of review articles in the corpus of this study, for example, we could not find section heading for the Introduction section, except three review articles those published in

2000 and before 2000 (i.e. 'Volume No. 20' and before this volume). Thus, according to our specialist informants' views, this is a decision or policy taken by ARAL. One of the informants even believes that the overall organisational structure of review articles can be as the following: Vignette, definition, literature review, critique, and conclusions (Informant '7'). Another informant, yet, believes that review articles do not follow a uniform pattern for him. He has further added that the topic itself tends to suggest section headings. As it has been discussed above, the content section heading is signalled with unconventional heading but it represents the functions of this section. These sections might be mixed and embedded with other sections in review articles. Therefore, it is important to find out that a section is embedded with other section in some review articles of this research (like the Introduction section can be embedded with the first sub-heading thematic unit of the Body section). Take for example in the corpus (RevA.6 and RevA.25), there is no conventional signal or heading for the Introduction sections and they are embedded within the first sub-headings of the Body sections, because the main purpose of these chapters is included in the first theme-bound unit of the Body sections.

Table 6
Overall textual structure for review article 6

Functional sections	**Section headings in the review text**	**Sub-headings in the review text**
Abstract	No section heading, but the content represents the section	
Introduction	No section heading, but it was embedded within the first sub-heading of the Body	
The Body section	The Neurobiological Circuitry	- The Amygdala -The Orbitofrontal Cortex - The Body Proper
	From Stimulus Appraisal to Motivation	
	From Appraisal to Behavior: Translating Motivation into Action	
	Decision-Making in Language Pragmatics	
Conclusion	Conclusion	

As discussed in the methodology section, this was considered as one of the challenges of this research. In Table 6, we can find different sections are embedded and the findings highlighted specifically for each review article in the corpus of this research.

The Abstract Section of Review Articles

According to Table 3, almost more than 85% of review articles (28 out of 32) contained the Abstract section except four review articles in the corpus of this research. In the Abstract section the writers tried to give a preview of the review, and it was typed in a smaller font size. This section in review articles attracts our attention through its being outstanding and different from the other sections. In the Abstract sections of the corpus there is no conventional section heading "Abstract", however one can realise that this section not only has summarised the whole ideas and points included in review article but it can also tell the audience the kind of text types the review article contains. Besides, the first four reviews in the data do not contain this section at all because it seems that those review articles which were published in 2000 and before 2000 followed a different style and format based on the editorial policy of the ARAL journal on the writing of review articles. Therefore, they do not contain the Abstract section. Instead, the review articles published from 2001 onwards contain the Abstract section without its conventional section heading. There is a possibility of change in the format and style of review articles over these years. There are mostly often four moves for the Abstract section in review articles in applied linguistics namely "situating the review", "presenting an issue", "presenting the review", and "discussing the review". This move pattern for the Abstract section of review articles in applied linguistics fits Santos' (1996) model, with two moves missing, namely, "describing methodologies" and "summarising the results". These two moves do not usually appear in review articles and it seems that Santos' model does not conform completely to the actual practice of abstracting in the review article genre in applied linguistics (see Appendix B for coding scheme of move analysis).

The Introduction Section of Review Articles

According to the analysis of the organisational structure of review articles, the Introduction section with its exact conventional section heading was found in three review articles in the corpus, and likewise this section was not present in the three review article texts of the corpus. Moreover, the Introduction section without the conventional section heading appears between the Abstract section and the Body section of review articles, was realised in 26 review articles.

As the findings of this research revealed, the conventional section heading "Introduction" was absent in the 26 review articles. However, the content and pattern of this section were there and it represented an introduction. They often to some extent followed Swales' CARS model as in the Introduction section of experimental research articles (see Appendix B for move examples provided from the corpus). The researchers read this section of the corpus carefully before identifying the rhetorical move structure for this section (i.e. as the nature of genre analysis is pattern seeking). The move types were identified based on the type of review articles in applied linguistics, namely, Move 1 (establishing the background), Move 2 (narrowing down the scope of the review), and Move 3 (presenting the review). Move 2 was identified in review articles that were evaluative, presenting/or

raising issues of the field and showing a lack of study in the field. It should be added that Move 2 was less frequent than the other moves in the bibliographic review articles. It was noticed that there is a significant variation among the text types of the review article genre in terms of Moves and Sub-moves. In other words, the schematic structure for the Introduction sections in the three types of review articles (i.e. "critical evaluative", "bibliographic", and "mixed-mode" review articles) cannot be the same. Those review articles in applied linguistics, for example, which were descriptive and indicated comprehensive record of the developments did not contain Move 2. This move was observed more frequently in the evaluative and critical review texts than descriptive review texts. Therefore, there is a variation between the schematic structure of bibliographic review articles and the critical evaluative review articles in terms of Moves, Sub-moves and rhetorical strategies (for more details regarding the review article genre in applied linguistics and the classification system see Sorayyaei Azar & Hashim 2014; 2017a; 2017b).

In the second phase of this research, the characteristic features and organisational structure of review articles in applied linguistics were further investigated by consulting the specialist informants in the field of applied linguistics who were the solicited authors of the review articles in ARAL journal. Some of the questions that have been posed via face-to-face interview or e-mail interview and their feedback were brought here to illustrate their ideas and viewpoints. The first question is related to the particular order of writing a review article and the second question dealt with certain aspects that have been included in writing the beginning section of review articles in applied linguistics by respected authors. The informants of the present research gave their views and feedback, and they were taken for granted in our findings. The following item and the questions (i.e. 'i') taken from the questionnaire:

i. What are the main aspects which you normally include in writing the beginning section of review article?

1) "The main themes discussed and their sequence in which they are presented…" (Informant 5)
2) "Summarising most recent reviews, if any, and asking what progress has been made since it was published. If no previous review exists, summarising research up to the timeline of the current review article" (Informant 6)
3) "I try to include a vignette which illustrates an important aspect of the topic I am reviewing". (informant 7)
4) "I would pose a question or puzzle, and indicate why it's important to find an answer and how I'll try to do that in the paper" (Informant 8)
5) "Introduce the topic and explain its contemporary relevance to the field, define key terms, identify existing "gaps", and provide an overview of the treatment to follow" (Informant 9)

Their feedback and views to our analysis and description of review articles in applied linguistics are really informative and presented a crystal-clear image of the different sections of review texts particularly for the conventional sections like the Introduction section.

The Body Section of Review Articles

Based on the identified sections in the Body section of review articles in this research, there were content-based sections almost in all review articles (30 out of 32) except in two (RevA.20 and RevA.22). In the first one (RevA.20), the heading "Review of Research" was found following its beginning (i.e. Introduction) section. The authors tried to review and reflect on developments in the teaching of second language writing between 2000 and 2004 and they identified many potential areas for future research. While, in the second one (RevA.22) the authors tried to survey longitudinal second language acquisition research published between 2003 and 2005. They also offered a critical reflection of best longitudinal practices. More importantly, they partially followed IMRD model in this review article of the corpus and used the conventional section headings like "Methodology for the Present Review", several sub-arguments and discussions that represented "methodological discussion" section, "Future Directions" and "Concluding Remarks". In the entire of the corpus, each section heading in the Body section could be identified and divided by a different font or bold-typed words/ or phrases. In other words, it can be shown that each section heading in the Body section talks about a specific theme. In the beginning of each theme there is usually a thematic phrase or word which is typed in bold font, and following these main thematic topics there are often sub-themes which are typed as the underlined to separate the sub-units from the usual paragraphs of review article. The number of these theme-bound units in the Body section of review articles is not fixed and predictable. Due to highly recursive, complex and length of thematic units in the Body section it was decided to focus on argumentation across the thematic units. The researchers attempted to analyse and identify how argumentative patterns were formulated and shaped in these thematic units of the Body section.

As a matter of fact, the main attempt for analysing thematic units was to investigate and identify which argumentative pattern was used in the review article genre. In other words, analysis of theme-bound units in the Body section of the review article genre need not always be prescriptive and it should not necessarily be based on CARS model. Therefore, we examined the function of each theme-bound unit according to its local purpose (i.e. the authors try to focus on the turning points or issues related to the main title of review article), then according to its communicative purpose (i.e. the global purpose of the title mentioned in that review article) and the writer's communicative intention (i.e. the authors may intrude their attitude and stance in evaluation of the developments in a research). As it has been discussed before, the scope for genre analysis of theme-bound units in the Body section was narrowed down to the analytical framework used by Hatim and Mason (1990) for argumentative discourses. We then identified which argumentative text type pattern (i.e. "through-argumentation" in which thesis cited to be evaluated and the authors' evaluation and argument go in line with other scholars' views or "counter-argumentation" in which thesis cited to be opposed and the authors make counter claim) was commonly used for the thematic units in review articles. Then, the prototypical argumentative pattern (i.e. what types of argumentative text types were used in the review texts) for the thematic units which were involved in

argumentation was proposed for the different types of review articles in applied linguistics (see Sorayyaei Azar & Hashim, 2017a).

The Conclusion Section of Review Articles

In this study, the Conclusion section was found in 28 review articles of the data (see Tables 3 and 4), while the Conclusion section did not occur in the four review articles of the corpus. At the same time, in one of the review articles (RevA.25) the section heading "Future directions and challenges" (i.e. it indicated challenges and issues in English as a lingua franca) was used. This section appeared in very lengthy, recursive, cyclical paragraphs. The analysis of this section (i.e. "future directions and challenges" in RevA.25) indicates that there is variation with respect to the moves and rhetorical strategies that exist within this section (i.e. some of the strategies in this section are defining the challenge, analysing the reasons, presenting the idea, indicating a need, asserting the confirmative claims about the research, raising a question, reviewing previous works, suggesting possible solutions, and highlighting the authors' view). In addition, in another review article (RevA.31) the section heading "Final Mark" is shown and used instead of using the "conclusion" heading. This section is too similar to the Conclusion section. Besides, two other review articles (RevA.17 and RevA.13) used the section heading "Directions" to show new directions/or trends in the related research and also give suggestions for further research to the readers, and also in the data (RevA.3) the heading "Final Consideration" is identified. In two of the other review articles (RevA.16 and RevA.28) the "Implication" section is identified. Besides, the "pedagogical implication" section appears separately before the Conclusion section in some review articles (e.g. RevA.31 and RevA.32).

Based on the findings of this research, there are three prevalent moves for the Conclusion section in review articles in applied linguistics namely "summarising the review", "evaluating the review", and "giving suggestions" (see Appendix B). This move pattern for the Conclusion section of review articles in applied linguistics fits Yang and Allison's (2003) model. These three moves usually appear in review articles and it seems that Yang and Allison's model conforms completely to the actual practice of concluding in the review article genre in applied linguistics. The analysis of the rhetorical move structure for the Conclusion section will be presented and discussed in our forthcoming research paper.

References of Review Articles

There are usually two kinds of references given in review articles of the corpus of this research, namely "Annotated References" and "Unannotated References". The former is giving and introducing those kinds of references which their purposes and content are described in detail, but the latter is introducing the cited references in the review in a usual way. The section heading "Unannotated References" was replaced by the section heading "Other References" from 2002 onward. The heading "Unannotated References" was displayed in the years 2000 to 2001 of the data (see Table 4 for more details of the average number of references in each data). It is

essential to note that the style of citation and giving references is changed during the time in review articles (Noguchi, 2009, as cited in Hyland & Diani, 2009).

Self-citation in Review Articles

According to this study, there are signs of self-citation by the writers in almost all of review articles (30 out of 32 review articles). The most highly self-cited review articles are RevA.10 (48 times), RevA.9 (38 times) and RevA.23 (23 times) from the corpus respectively. The average mean of self-citation was 8.4 for each review article in the corpus.

Page Numbers of Review Articles

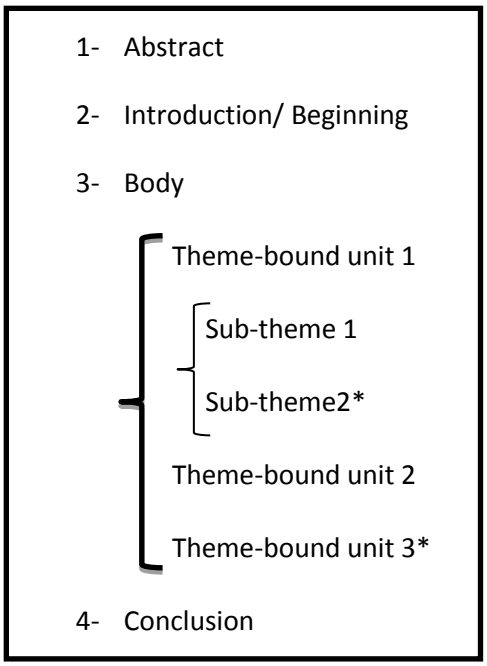
The average number of pages is 19 for review articles in this research (see Table 2).

Figures/ Tables/ Notes in Review Articles

Among review articles in the corpus of this research, there were nine review articles which contained figures or tables (see Table 3). In RevA.30, 14 pictures, 14 transcripts and two texts and fragments were found. At the same time, the "Notes" sections were found in 22 review articles in the corpus, and also there were the "Appendix" sections in the two review articles of the data (RevA.10 and RevA.30). There was only the "Appendix" section in RevA.10. It is found that the "Acknowledgment" section occurs in the "Notes" section in few review articles of the corpus.

As the analysis of macro-organisational structure in the corpus of this research developed, there emerged a predominant structure of review articles in applied linguistics. This macro-textual structure consists of four major sections, namely, the Abstract, Introduction/ or Beginning, Body, and Conclusion sections (see Figure 1). The move patterns and rhetorical structures for the Abstract, Introduction and Conclusion sections in review articles in applied linguistics have been presented and discussed in the forthcoming research paper (Sorayyaei Azar & Hashim, forthcoming).

Based on Figure 1, and the structural organisation of Literature Review chapters in PhD theses highlighted by Kwan (2006), we note of the following points. The first point is that these genres, namely, the review article genre and literature review genre are to some extent closely related to each other. In other words, they are from the same "genre family" (Swales, 2004) or "genre colony" (Bhatia, 1997, 2004). According to Swales' (2004, p. 66) belief, we can further add that one family member such as the review article genre may take on several features of another member (e.g., the literature review genre). Although their main functions are different from each other, we can find some similarities not only in rhetorical structures of these two sub-genres but in their writers' textual strategies or rhetorical devices as well (Sorayyaei Azar & Hashim, 2017b). If we compare, for instance, their structural organisations, we can find similarities.



* The number of theme-bound units & sub-theme units are not fixed.

Figure 1. Organisational structure of review articles

The second one is that these forms of reviews as sub-genres of academic review genres have become increasingly evaluative and persuasive. The persuasive and evaluative functions of academic review genres are significant features which implicitly and explicitly can be predominantly indicated and emphasised by writers. Book reviews, for example, try to make a balanced description of books not only positively but also negatively. It attempts to praise and criticise the positive and negative aspects of the product in the marketing and academic settings. And as Bhatia (2004) believes, food and restaurant reviews emphasis the positive description and evaluation of the foods. In other words, their feature can be considered promotional and the functions of these genres, such as reviews, are introducing, giving information, evaluating, convincing, and recommending products (Sorayyaei Azar & Hashim, 2017a). Take for instance, a blurb according to Bhatia (2004) can carry at least three moves. "These moves, namely 'Establishing Credentials', 'Introducing the Product', and 'Indicating Value of the Product', are too similar to an advertisement" (Bhatia, 2004, p. 93). It appears that the blurbs, which can be considered as one of the academic review genres, reviews the book from one angle and advertise from another angle. In fact, it can be contended that this multifunctionality of academic review genres is very remarkable and it can be taken into consideration. The review article genre also can represent multi-functions. The multifunctionality of the review article genre depends on its type and level of criticality. As it has been discussed somewhere else (Sorayyaei Azar & Hashim, 2014), we can classify the review article genre based on its text types and criticality and represent the review text types on the continuum. According to Sorayyaei Azar and Hashim (2014, p. 81):

> This continuum can demonstrate the functionality variation among review articles whether they function as evaluative review or descriptive and indicative review. In addition, it shows variety of the text types as well as the intended audiences of the reviews.

Thus, the review article genre in applied linguistics can represent various functionality and that is how interestingly there is variation among one single genre in the same discipline, that is to say the review article genre. Sorayyaei Azar and Hashim (2014, p. 81) further add:

> This vertical continual spectrum demonstrates the degree of criticality among the text types of the review articles in applied linguistics…this continuum is ranging from the bibliographic review through the mixed mode to the critical evaluative review. These reviews, in fact, differ from each other in the kind. Actually, the less evaluative and more narrative form is the bibliographic review. From this one if we go up the continuum, we could proceed through a review following a mixed-mode design (i.e. narrative and evaluative texts mixed) and encompassing both approaches. Finally, we could reach a critical evaluative review. This type of review seeks to question and discusses the question, analyses and evaluates the recent developments, reviews and compares the debates, and offers possible solutions and suggests new directions. This type of review article has offered comprehensive, timely collections of critical evaluative reviews written by solicited expert members of the discourse community.

In short, there are similarities and divergences across such sub-genres, based on our analysis of a set of linguistic devices and features targeting review articles in applied linguistics. The findings indicate that review articles in applied linguistics may differ from each other in the kind and their functions. They often occupy their own ideal areas in the classification continuum expressing on the one hand their intended audiences and variation in authorship and, on the other hand, variation in criticality of the text types based on their communicative purposes. In other words, critical evaluative intensity seems to depend on the rhetorical functions, characteristics, and purposes of the review article genre.

Conclusion

This study analysed the macro-organisational structure of review articles in applied linguistics. From the results, it is concluded that the CARS model was sometimes observed in the review article genre. In addition, the findings revealed that there is a variation between the research article genre and review article genre in terms of macro-organisational and micro-organisational structures (i.e. Moves, Sub-moves, and rhetorical strategies). It should be added that almost more than 85% of review articles contained the Abstract section, the Introduction section without the conventional section heading was realised in 26 review articles, there were theme-bound units in the Body section almost in all review articles (30 out of 32) except in two, and the Conclusion section was found in 28 review articles of the data. Based on the findings of this research, there are four prevalent moves for the Abstract

section, three major moves for the Introduction section, and three main moves for the Conclusion section in review articles in applied linguistics. The Body section was highly recursive and complex so we decided to focus on argumentation across the thematic units. The researchers attempted to analyse and identify how argumentative patterns were formulated and shaped in these thematic units of the Body section. Moreover, the characteristic features and organisational structure of review articles in applied linguistics were further investigated by consulting the specialist informants in the field of applied linguistics who were the solicited authors of the review articles in ARAL journal.

It is hoped that a closer understanding of the macro and micro-organisational structures and rhetorical strategies of review articles helps uncover elements of the value system for EFL graduate students and junior researchers. These elements of the value system not only emphasise disciplinary discourse but also provide EFL graduate students and junior researchers with the ability to make use of scholarly review articles and primary literature during their research writing. The lecturers are also advised to teach the macro-textual structures and rhetorical strategies in the review article genre in their English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes. This will raise the awareness of our students of the characteristic features of review articles so that they know how to monitor the review article genre and how to write academic reviews critically in their research journey. The generic features for review articles in applied linguistics can help both EFL postgraduates and junior researchers to review the developments with their critical and evaluative eyes and write their academic reviews in a more permissible style.

Notes

[1] This study was a part of PhD Thesis (at the Faculty of Languages & Linguistics, University of Malaya, Malaysia) investigating the review article genre in applied linguistics (2017).

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Appendix A

The list of review articles used in the corpus

RevA.1: Widdowson, H.G. (2000). Object language and the language subject: on the mediating role of applied linguistics. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 20: 21-33.

RevA.2: Crandall, J. (2000). Language teacher education. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 20: 34-55.

RevA.3: Swales, J., M. (2000). Language for Specific Purposes. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 20: 59-76.

RevA.4: Daoud, M. (2000). LSP in North Africa: Status, Problems and Challenges. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 20: 77-96.

RevA.5: Segalowitz, N. (2001). On the Evolving Connections Between Psychology and Linguistics. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21: 3-22.

RevA.6: Schumann, J. H. (2001). Appraisal Psychology, Neurobiology, and Language. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21: 23-42.

RevA.7: Dornyei, Z. (2001). New Themes and Approaches in Second Language Motivation Research. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21: 43-59.

RevA.8: Hansen, L. (2001). Language Attrition: The Fate of the Start. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 21: 60-73.

RevA.9: Schegloff, E. A., et al. (2002). Conversation Analysis and Applied Linguistics. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 22: 3-31.

RevA.10: Lazaratan, A. (2002). Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches to Discourse Analysis. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 22: 32-51.

RevA.11: Martin, J. R. (2002). Meaning Beyond the Clause: SFL Perspectives. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 22: 52-74.

RevA.12: Conrad, S. (2002). Corpus Linguistic Approaches for Discourse Analysis. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 22: 75-95.

RevA.13: Kymlicka, W., and Patten, A. (2003). Language Rights and Political Theory. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 23: 3-21.

RevA.14: Garcia, M. (2003). Recent Research on Language Maintenance. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 23: 22-43.

RevA.15: Hinton, L. (2003). Language Revitalisation. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 23: 44 57.

RevA.16: Valdes, G., and Angelelli, C. (2003). Interpreters, Interpreting, and the Study of Bilingualism. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 23: 58-78.

RevA.17: Vandergrift, L. (2004). Listening to Learn or Learning to Listen. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 24: 3-25.

RevA.18: McCarthy, M., and O'keeffe, A. (2004). Research in the Teaching of Speaking. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 24: 26-43.

RevA.19: Grabe, W. (2004). Research on Teaching Reading. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 24: 44-69.

RevA.20: Silva, T., and Brice, C. (2004). Research in Teaching Writing. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 24: 70-106.

RevA.21: Odlin, T. (2005). Cross-linguistic Influence and Conceptual Transfer: what are the Concepts? *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 25: 3-25.

Appendix A (continued).

RevA.22: Ortega, L., and Iberri-Shea, G. (2005). Longitudinal Research in Second Language Acquisition: Recent Trends and Future Directions. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 25: 26-45.

RevA.23: Robinson, P. (2005). Aptitude and Second Language Acquisition. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 25: 46-73.

RevA.24: Tarone, E., and Bigelow, M. (2005). Impact of Literacy on Oral Language Processing: Implications for Second Language Acquisition Research. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 25: 77-97.

RevA.25: Seidlhofer, B., et al. (2006). English as a Lingua Franca in Europe: Challenges for Applied Linguistics. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 26: 3-34.

RevA.26: Canagarajah, A. S. (2006). Negotiating the Local in English as a Lingua Franca. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 26: 197-218.

RevA.27: Pickering, L. (2006). Current Research on Intelligibility in English as a Lingua Franca. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 26: 219-233.

RevA.28: Nikolov, M., and Mihaljevic Djigunovic, J. (2006). Recent Research on Age, Second Language Acquisition, and Early Foreign Language Learning. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 26: 234-260.

RevA.29: Warchauer, M., and Grimes, D. (2007). Audience, Authorship, and Artifact: The emergent Semiotics of Web.2. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 27: 1-23.

RevA.30: Markee, N., and Stansell, J. (2007). Using Electronic Publishing as a Resource for Increasing Empirical and Interpretive Accountability in Conversation Analysis. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 27: 24-44.

RevA.31: Belz, J. A. (2007). The Role of Computer Mediation in the Instruction and Development of L2 Pragmatic Competence. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 27: 45-75.

RevA.32: Blake, R. J. (2007). New Trends in Using Technology in the Language Curriculum. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 27: 76-97.

Appendix B

Examples of moves (from the four analytical sections of review articles) provided from the corpus to illustrate the move structure

Abstract

Move1: Situating the Review

By Strategy1: Providing the Background on the Previous Research

1) *…language revitalisation, a movement that dates approximately from the 1990s and builds on prior work on language maintenance (see Fishman, 1991; 2001) and language death (Dorian, 1981; 1989).* (RevA.15, Abstract, Mixed-mode Review Article)

Strategy2: Defining and Elaborating an Idea/ Theme

2) *Over four decades ago the so-called Chomskyan revolution appeared to lay the foundation for a promising new partnership between linguistics and psychology.* (RevA.5, Abstract, Critical Evaluative Review Article)

Move2: Presenting an Issue

By Strategy1A: Raising a Question

1) *Yet, many of these discussions conceive of Europe as a group of nation states where English is either a first or a foreign language. This chapter seeks to question this well-established distinction…* (RevA.25, Abstract, Critical Evaluative Review Article)

Strategy1B: Indicating a Gap/ Lack of Study

2) *Unfortunately, all studies focus only on English discourse, which suggests that analyses of discourse in other languages are clearly needed; moreover, it was extremely difficult to find published discourse analytic studies…* (RevA.10, Abstract, Mixed-mode Review Article)

Strategy 1C: Presenting an Issue

3) *Many have now concluded, however, that the hopes originally expressed for this partnership were not realised.* (RevA.5, Abstract, Critical Evaluative Review Article)

Move3: Presenting the Review

By Strategy1: Stating the Writer's Main Purpose/ or View

1) *This chapter is about what went wrong and where we might go from here.* (RevA.5, Abstract, Critical Evaluative Review Article)

Strategy2: Outlining the Structure of the Review

2) First, we summarise…, then we review recent findings…Finally, we explore areas for further research. (RevA.28, Abstract, Critical Evaluative Review Article)

Appendix B (continued).

Move4: Discussing the Review

By Strategy1: Giving suggestions or interpreting the discussions

1) *Readers of CA research may now expect to have access to primary as well as secondary data…We also suggest that readers will be able to engage in …* (RevA.30, Abstract, Critical Evaluative Review Article)

Strategy2: Giving recommendations, implications or applications of the study

2) *Possible directions for further research are also considered.* (RevA.27, Abstract, Bibliographic Review Article)

Introduction

Move1: Establishing the Background

By Strategy1: Claiming Centrality

1) *As Linguistics has extended its scope over the past thirty years from an exclusive concern with knowledge of the abstract code…* (RevA.1, Introduction, Critical Evaluative Review Article)

Strategy2: Reviewing Previous Research

2) *Since the start, the expansion of interest in language attrition can be seen in a bevy of books (Hansen, 1999; Kenny, 1996; …) and dissertations (Ammerlaan, 1996; Bolonyai, 1999; …), and a succession of symposia on the subject at applied linguistics conferences; see Hansen (2000) for details.* (RevA.8, Introduction, Bibliographic Review Article)

Move2: Narrowing Down the Scope of the Review

By Strategy1A: Identifying an Idea, a Challenge, or an Issue

1) *Nevertheless, relatively speaking, psychological research on language today is far less driven by recent advances in theoretical linguistics makes little reference to current developments in psychology…the sad truth is that many psychologists interested in language have not kept up with recent developments in linguistics…* (RevA.5, Introduction, Critical Evaluative Review Article)

Strategy1B: Showing a Need or a Lack of Study

2) *…this overview will focus on students who need to develop academic reading abilities in school settings. Separate reviews would be required for adult literacy…* (RevA.19, Introduction, Mixed-mode Review Article)

Strategy1C: Raising a Question

3) *SLA researchers who would like to pursue longitudinal research programs can find little guidance about questions such as: What problems about the development of L2 competencies have SLA researchers investigated longitudinally?...* (RevA.22, Mixed-mode Review Article)

Appendix B (continued).

Move3: Presenting the Review
By Strategy1: Stating the Writer's Purpose or Presenting the Review

1) *In this chapter, I provide an overview of…* (RevA.12, Introduction, Bibliographic Review Article)

Strategy2: Presenting the Essence and Value of the Review

2) *These are, then, the issues we intend to address in this contribution.* (RevA.25, Introduction, Critical Evaluative Review Article)

Strategy3: Outlining the Structure of the Present Review

3) *This chapter begins with a definition of the terms…The following section reviews current research in ELF…the final part of the chapter describes…* (RevA.27, Introduction, Bibliographic Review Article)

Theme-bound Unit

Move1: Establishing the Background
By Strategy A: Claiming Centrality

1) *The Chomskyan revolution in linguistics of the late 1950s…stimulated a profound change…making possible a new kind of collaboration with linguists…* (RevA.5, Theme-bound unit, M1SA, p.4)

Strategy B: Elaborating and Introducing the Context/ or Showing Significance

2) *The attitudes towards ELF and the theoretical positions related to it depend a lot on different descriptions of the model. With the realisation of the new role of ELF, we have also moved beyond earlier models of global English.* (RevA.26, Theme-bound unit 26, M1SB, p.198)

Strategy C: Announcing the Other Writer's Claim

3) *In this view, the content of the language subject is necessarily dependent on linguistic description…The something that the teacher is teaching, the language subject, is here equated with the linguist's object of study, the object language.* (RevA.1, Theme-bound unit1, M1SC, p.22)

Strategy D: Reviewing Previous Works

4) *Subsequent work has examined talk in a variety of institutional or functionally specialised settings, such as legal settings (e.g., Atkinson & Drew, 1979; Drew, 199;…), broadcast media (e.g., Clayman, 1992; Clayman & Heritage, in press;…),…, among others.* (RevA.9, Theme-bound unit 2, M1SD, p.10)

Move2: Announcing the Writer's Point of View
By Strategy A: Announcing the review writer's counter claim

1) *Unfortunately, this solution is incoherent. Although the state can avoid interfering with the language choices people make away from public institutions…there is no way to avoid taking a stand on a series of other language policy issues.* (RevA.13, Theme-bound unit 3, M2SA, p.9)

Appendix B (continued).

Strategy B: Announcing Other Writers' View

2) *However, the emergence of powerful new techniques for modeling associative learning, such as connectionist networks (Bechtel & Abrahamsen, 1991…) and latent semantic analysis (Landauer and Dumais, 1997) are challenging these beliefs.* (RevA.5, Theme-bound unit 2, M2SB, p.8)

Strategy C: Suggesting Potential Issues/or Indicating a Gap/ a Need

3) *It seems to me that this assumption of dependency is mistaken…* (RevA.1, Theme-bound unit 1, M2SC, p.22)

Move3: Presenting Evaluation

By Strategy A: Discussing Problems/ or Issues Encountered by Analysing Reasons

1) *Yet, until this past half decade, the regaining of forgotten language had received little attention…So far, the recent studies, along with the previous scant literature on language relearning…* (RevA.8, Theme-bound unit 4, M3SA, p.66)

Strategy B: Referring to Others' Works/ Views to Synthesise Literature

2) *Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991), and Robinson (1991), the defining references on ESP, do not discuss these important obstacles…Among the twelve ESP certificate programs listed in Holden (1998), only one offers a language policy course…Daoud (1999) discusses some of the obstacles to ESP growth in Tunisia in terms of the management of innovation and concludes by questioning the commitment of Tunisian educational policy makers to ESP development…These issues are occasionally addressed by international ESP guest speakers in local contexts (e.g., Grabe 1996, Swales 1993, 1994); however they are given more attention in the language policy…* (RevA.4, Theme-bound unit 3, M3SB, p.82-83)

Strategy C: Contrasting and Comparing Others' Views

3) *In contrast to Cohen, Ishihara, and Sykes's use of simulated conversations and elicited discourses, Braun (2005) capitalised on CM in The ELISA Project to provide learners of English with a Web-based resource for genuine English-language oral interviews…The ELISA Project is significant because…* (RevA.31, Theme-bound unit 1, M3SC, p.50)

Move4: Presenting the Implication of the Review

By Strategy A: Drawing a Logical Conclusion

1) *I have discussed this elsewhere (Widdowson 1989), and this is not the place to deal with it again in detail, but we need to note that this matter of relationships is a crucial one, for in a normal experience of language, all of the features Hymes mentions come into play and interact in complex ways.* (RevA.1, Theme-bound unit 1, M4 Strategy A, p.23)

Appendix B (continued).

Strategy B: Restating the Issue/ Gap/ Challenge

2) *The research hitherto on multiliteracies has largely been qualitative…still in the formative and descriptive stage of observing how such text construction practices work in small settings or few subjects…* (RevA.26, Theme-bound unit 2, Move 4 Strategy B, pp. 209-210)

Strategy C: Offering Possible Solutions/ a new theory/ an approach/ a model

3) *Focusing on teachers--their beliefs about teaching, learning, or classroom interaction--can help balance more top-down, product-oriented conceptions of language teaching, with more nuanced, bottom-up, process-oriented descriptions of specific language teaching events.* (RevA.2, Theme-bound unit 2, Move 4 Strategy D, p. 38)

Strategy D: Suggesting Further Research

4) *However, there is a need to move beyond these qualitative case studies and analyse larger pools of writers and compare case studies to develop a typology of strategies used to negotiate the local in English writing.* (RevA.26, Theme-bound unit 2, Move 4 Strategy D, pp. 209-210)

<u>Conclusion</u>

Move1: Summarising the Review

By Strategy A: Reviewing the Author's Purpose/ or Idea / or claim

1) *We have argued in this article that, for CA, the advent of the digital publishing era is not an intellectual luxury_ it is a necessity.* (RevA.30, Conclusion, Critical Evaluative Review Article, p.37)

Strategy B: Summing up the Review

2) *The reasons discussed here include divergent approaches regarding how a theory about language should develop…* (RevA.5, Conclusion, Critical Evaluative Review Article, p.16)

Move2: Evaluating the Review

By Strategy A: Showing the Significance of the Review

1) *…the tremendous interest in corpus linguistics and its great, if uncertain, potential for LSP work of all kinds.* (RevA.3, Final Considerations, Critical Evaluative Review Article, p.67)

Strategy B: Showing Limitations of the Review/or Restating the Issue/ Gap/ Challenges

2) *These notions are still in need of empirical definition and socio-cultural validation…with respect to teacher education, much remains to be done to …* (RevA.4, Concluding Remarks, Critical Evaluative Review Article, p.87)

Move3: Giving Suggestions

By Strategy A: Offering possible solutions

1) *More software, more adaptable to discourse concerns, needs to become available to more researchers. More computer programming classes specifically for corpus linguistics need to be offered…* (RevA.12, The

Appendix B (continued).

Future for Corpus Linguistics and Discourse Analysis, Bibliographic Review Article, p.86)

Strategy B: Suggesting a new theory/ a model/ a new program

2) *The success of this enterprise depends on the development of relevant software to both enhance and supplant manual analysis…I expect this technology to affect our conception of language…* (RevA.11, Connections, Bibliographic Review Article, p.62)

Strategy C: Recommending Further Research

3) *It is an obvious cliché to say that more research on reading instruction is needed at this point.* (RevA.19, Conclusions, Mixed-mode Review Article, p.60)

Strategy D: Drawing Pedagogical Implications

4) *It would be helpful to establish minimal criteria for schools, teacher education, and classroom practice to avoid the pitfalls of the past. Applied linguistic researchers willing to direct their work to any of these important pedagogical areas…* (RevA.28, Conclusions and Implications for Future Research, Critical Evaluative Review Article, p.251)

GENDER AND PERFORMANCE IN ARABIC LANGUAGE LEARNING IN LAGOS

K. O. OLANIYAN-SHOBOWALE[1]
Department of Language, Arts and Social Sciences Education, Faculty of Education, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos

Tijani Akinola MOGAJI[2]
Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Arts, Lagos State University, Ojo, Lagos

[1]solalaniyan_2004@yahoo.com*
[2]mogajitijani@gmail.com

*Corresponding author
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ABSTRACT

This study focused on gender analysis of performance and enrolment for Arabic Language in a selected Arabic school in Lagos State. The study adopted the survey method for choosing the admitted students during the three years between 2014 and 2016. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select Daaru Da'wah wal Irshaad as a case study. The results revealed that the male Arabic students performed significantly better than the female students. Secondly, it indicated that the enrolment of males is far higher than that of females. The study concludes on the need to encourage the womenfolk to cultivate Arabic learning and sensitize them on the wealth of opportunity accruable from learning the language.

Keywords: Arabic language, gender, enrolment, performance, Arabic schools

Introduction

Arabic is a Central Semitic language, and classified alongside other Semitic languages such as Hebrew and Aramaic. It has the largest number of speakers amongst the Semitic languages. It is spoken by more than 280 million people as a first language and by 250 million more as a second language. Most native speakers of Arabic reside in the Middle East and North Africa (Mogaji, 2009, p. 161). The New Encyclopaedia Britannica regards the Arabic language as a Southern-Central Semitic language spoken in a large area including North Africa, most of the Arabian Peninsula and other parts of the Middle East. Arabic is the language of the Qur'an (or Koran the sacred book of Islam) (sic) and is the religious language of all Muslims (Mogaji, 2009).

Arabic, Himyaritic (South Arabic), and Ethiopic belong to the southern group of the Semitic languages, of which Phoenician and Hebrew form the western, Aramaic the northern, and Accadian (Assyro-Babylonian) the eastern group (Hitti, 1972, p. 152; Mogaji, 2009, pp. 161-162). Arabic is a member of the Semitic language family, which is part of a wider Hamito-Semitic family, including also ancient Egyptian within that family; it belongs to the Southern-Semitic or South-West Semitic branch, which includes two further sub-groups: South Arabian (comprising ancient Sabaean, Minaean, Katabanian, Hadramitic, etc in Yaman and Southern Hadramawt and modern Mehri, Sh Khauri etc in Northern Hadramawt and the language of the Island of Sokotra (Gibb, Kramers, Levi-Provencal, Schacht, Stern, Lewis, Pellat, Dumont and Savory, 1986, pp. 561-562; Mogaji, 2009).

Hitti contends that Arabic is the best surviving representative of the original Semitic speech, despite the fact that its recorded literature is one of the youngest of the Semitic literatures (1972, p. 152; Mogaji, 2009, pp. 161-162). In addition, it is generally believed to be nearer than any of the rest to the original archetype, the ”rsemitisch” (Nicholson, 1985, p. xiv).

Internationally, the significance of Arabic language and its role in communication, education, media, commerce, tourism, diplomacy, technology and sports etc. are widely reported (Oderinde, 2007). Globally, Arabic language functions as the lingua franca of the Arabico-Islamic world. It is the medium of transmission of Islam to all the nooks and crannies of the world.

Hence, it permeated the socio-cultural, economic, political, religious, diplomatic existence of Muslims irrespective of race, culture, educational qualification and socio-economic orientation. Consequently, the language functions as a major international language and medium of communication in all spectra of human relations and inter-relations.

In the south-western part of Nigeria and specifically in Lagos State, Arabic education remains a significant pillar of public and private learning. Thus, Arabic instruction takes place at three different levels, namely, formal and government owned schools, formal and privately owned Muslim schools, and traditional and privately owned Arabic schools.

This paper focuses on the later type of schools (traditional and privately owned). According to Adetona (2017, pp. 8-14), this type of schools “are not guided by any syllabus and the volume of knowledge possessed by the proprietor is what is imparted to the students”. They are purposely established for the propagation of the Islamic faith and all sciences. And despite its non-recognition by the government, they continue to flourish in Lagos state and they produce hundreds of male and female graduates yearly.

Review of Literature

The educational research on gender and language learning is germane and researchers continue to offer insights into its development and fluorescence. Arguably, the research on gender differences originated in the west (Qian, 2015). In the 1920s, the relationship between gender differences and language learning

captured the interest of anthropologists, psychologists and sociologists, who did considerable research on the subject.

In this regard, Burstall, (1975) reported that girls were more scattered in all language testing than boys, in his tracking study of 6,000 French children. In same vein, Boyle's (1987) survey of 490 Hong Kong students about their English learning revealed that girls' English proficiency test scores were significantly higher than boys by nearly ten folds. In the light of these studies, Li, (2005) concludes that woman is superior to man in learning a foreign language. Qian (2015) posits that the advantage which the female gender has on the male gender in language learning is hinged on the following factors:

i. **Physical factors**: Psychology studies indicated that the partial side of the brain hemisphere of men and women is quite different in the speed of development and level of specialisation. Women's left hemisphere on sexual partial side of sexual function develops earlier and stronger than men's; therefore, they are better than men in terms of language expression. In addition, the biological anatomy of women is far more advanced than that of men. Consequently, women's sound and pronunciation organs develop much earlier than men's. Hence, the female students are good at verbal, hearing and expressional skills. Thus, their verbal expressional ability and auditory perception are stronger than those of boys. He contends further that girls have the advantage of intelligence, which indicates that girls have reason to get higher scores than boys; and
ii. **Gender differences in IQ**: Intelligence is not a kind of simple ability but the combination of attention, observation, memory, and thinking ability Qian (2015).

A Brief Note on Daaru Da'wah Arabic Institute

Sheikh Mustapha Zuglul Sanusi is the founder of Daaru Da'wah wal Irshaad Arabic School. He was born on 18th August 1937 in Ikirun, Osun State, Nigeria. He obtained his preparatory and primary Arabic education from the Qur'anic School of his father Muhammad Sanusi. Thereafter, at the age of 18, he proceeded to Markaz Ta'lim al-'Arabiyy al-Islamiy, Agege, Lagos where he received his Intermediate stage in Arabic studies (Al-'Idaadiyah) between 1955 and 1959. Upon his graduation, he worked as a teacher in his Alma Mata after which he embarked on an educational voyage to Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Saudi Arabia. In 1965, he was appointed the Principal of the Markaz, and obtained his Diploma in 1967 from the institution.

In 1970, Sheikh Mustapha established Daaru Da'wah wal-Irshaad in Olohunsogo, Mushin, Lagos. The school began with the Primary (Al-Ibtidaaiyyah) and the Intermediate (Al-I'daadiyyah) stages. In 1981, it moved to its permanent site at Isolo, Lagos where the Secondary stage of learning (Al-Thanawiyyah) commenced.

The total population of the school as at the time of this study is 600 students, male (535), and female (65); and there are eight classes from Al-Tahdiiriy (Preparatory) to Al-Thanawiyah altogether. In the 4th class (Rabiah Al-I'daadiy), there

are a total of 70 students, 58 males and 12 females. The average performance of the female students is 40%, while it is 60% for the male.

Methodology

This study is a survey research which employed the purposive sampling technique to select Daaru Da'wah wal- Irshaad Arabic Institute, among notable Arabic Institutes in Lagos State. The study provided answers to the following research questions:

i. What is the enrolment ratio of the female and male students of Daaru Da'wah Arabic institute between 2014 and 2016?
ii. What is the mean achievement of the male and female students of Daaru Da'wah Arabic Institute in Arabic language between 2014 and 2016?

Against these research questions, 2 null hypotheses were also tested thus:

i. There are no gender-based significant differences in the enrolment for Arabic studies at the DDI between 2014 and 2016.
ii. There are no gender-based significant difference in the academic achievement at the DDI between 2014 and 2016.

Having obtained with necessary permission, primary data were collected from the institution management which comprised the number of students admitted between 2014 and 2016. Similarly, the academic performance of the same students was also collected for analysis. Frequency counts and t-test statistical tools were used to analyse data collected.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Students' enrolment and students' sex cross tabulation (2014) count

Students' Enrolment	Grouping Variables		Total
	Male	Female	
Tahdiriy	45	10	55
Awwal I'daadiy	80	10	90
Thanni I'daadiy	89	11	100
Thaalith I'daadiy	90	10	100
Rabi'ah I'daadiy	80	10	90
Awwal Thanawiy	81	9	90
Thanni Thanawiy	81	9	90
Thaalith Thanawiy	81	9	90
Total	627	78	705

(Source: Field Survey, 2014)

Table 1 shows the sex distribution of each class in 2014. This indicates that Thanniy and Thaalith I'daadiy are the most populated classes with 100 students. In addition, it indicates that the male students are the majority (627). There were only78 female students out of 705 students.

Table 2
Students' enrolment and students' sex cross tabulation (2015) count

Students' Enrolment	Grouping Variables		Total
	Male	Female	
Tahdiriy	46	9	55
Awwal I'daadiy	85	15	100
Thanni I'daadiy	91	9	100
Thaalith I'daadiy	85	15	100
Rabi'ah I'daadiy	79	11	90
Awwal Thanawiy	77	8	85
Thanni Thanawiy	77	8	85
Thaalith Thanawiy	77	8	85
Total	617	83	700

(Source: Field survey, 2015)

Table 2 shows the sex distribution of each class in 2015. This indicates that Awwal I'daadiy, Thanni I'daadiy and Thanni I'daadiy are the most populated class with 100 students. Furthermore, it implies that, the male students are the majority (617) and there were only 83 females out of 700 students.

Table 3
Students' enrolment and students' sex cross tabulation (2016) count

Students' Enrolment	Grouping Variables		Total
	Male	Female	
Tahdiriy	53	12	65
Awwal I'daadiy	81	19	100
Thanni I'daadiy	80	20	100
Thaalith I'daadiy	87	8	95
Rabi'ah I'daadiy	85	10	95
Awwal Thanawiy	78	7	85
Thanni Thanawiy	72	8	80
Thaalith Thanawiy	72	8	80
Total	608	92	700

(Source: Field Survey, 2016)

Table 3 shows the sex distribution of students in 2016. This indicates that Awwal I'daadiy and Thanni I'daadiy are the most populated class with 100 students. It indicates further that, the males are the majority (608), while there were only 92 females.

Hypothesis One

H_o: There is no significant difference between the enrolment for Arabic Studies among male and female students of Daaru Da'wah Wal-Irshaad Arabic Institute, Isolo, Lagos.

H_i: There is a significant difference between the enrolment for Arabic Studies among male and female students of Daaru Da'wah Wal-Irshaad Arabic Institute, Isolo, Lagos.

2014 enrolment.

Table 4
t-test on enrolment of male and female students

Grouping Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Male	627	271.50	153.410	5.614
Female	78	39.40	21.083	2.433

Table 4 shows that the male students are more with higher mean of 271.50 than the females with a lower mean of 39.40. The significance of the experimental group performance is tested and presented in Table 5.

Table 5
t-test for hypothesis One

	t-test for Equality of Means						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Students' Enrolment							
Equal variance assumed	11.569	703	.000	232.100	15.307	189.814	258.186

Assumption = Equal variances assumed
T- Test Calculated (Statistic) = 12.869
Degree of freedom = 703
Level of significance = 0.05
Returned p-value= 0.000

The *t*-test statistics was calculated as 11.569, at 0.05 significance level, with 703 degrees of freedom, the returned p-value of 0.000 was found less than the level of significance ($p < 0.05$). There is a significant difference between the enrolment for Arabic Studies among male and female students of Daaru Da'wah Wal-Irshaad Arabic Institute, Isolo, Lagos. This indicates that the male students who enroll for Arabic Studies in 2014 are more than the females.

2015 enrolment.

Table 6
t-test on enrolment of male and female students in 2015

Grouping Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Students' Enrolment				
Male	617	281.50	151.410	6.614
Female	83	41.30	21.083	2.533

Table 6 shows that the males are more with higher mean of 281.50 than the females with a lower mean of 41.30.

Table 7
t-test for hypothesis One

	t-test for Equality of Means						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Students' Enrolment							
Equal variance assumed	14.669	698	.000	240.200	19.407	179.814	268.171

Assumptions = Equal variances assumed
T-Test Calculated (Statistic) = 12.869
Degree of freedom = 698
Level of significance = 0.05
Returned p-value= 0.000

The *t*-test statistics was calculated as 14.669, at 0.05 significance level, with 698 degrees of freedom, the returned p-value of 0.000 was found less than the level of significance ($p < 0.05$). There is a significant difference between the enrolment for Arabic Studies among the male and female students of Daaru Da'wah wal-Irshaad Arabic Institute, Isolo, Lagos. This indicates that the male students who enroll for Arabic Studies are more than the females.

2016 enrolment.

Table 8
t-test on enrolment of male and female students

Grouping Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Students' Enrolment				
Male	608	241.10	131.110	5.114
Female	92	43.70	20.183	2.103

Table 8 shows that the male students are more with higher mean of 241.10 than the females with a lower mean of 43.70. The significance of the experimental group performance is tested and presented next.

Hypothesis Two

H_{o2}: There is no significant difference between the academic performance of the male and female students of Daaru Da'wah Arabic Institute, Isolo, Lagos in Arabic studies.

2014 academic performance.

Table 9
t-test on performance of male and female students

Grouping Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Students' Performance				
Male	627	9.31	14.211	.697
Female	78	4.52	.503	.058

Table 9 shows that the male students performed better with higher mean score of 9.31 in the Arabic Institute than the females with a lower mean score of 4.52.

Table 10
t-test for hypothesis Two

	t-test for Equality of Means						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diffe-rence	Std. Error Diffe-rence	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Students' Performance Equal variance assumed	2.312	703	.021	4.79	1.532	.331	7.128

Assumptions = Equal variances assumed
T-Test Calculated (Statistic) = 2.312
Degree of freedom = 703
Level of significance = 0.05
Returned p-value= 0.021

The *t*-test statistics was calculated as 2.312, at 0.05 significance level, with 703 degrees of freedom, the returned p-value of 0.021 was found less than the level of significance ($p < 0.05$). Hence, there is a significant difference between the academic performance of the male and female students of Daaru Da'wah Arabic Institute, Isolo, Lagos in Arabic studies. This indicates that the male students perform significantly better than the females who enroll for Arabic Studies.

2015 academic performance.

Table 11
t-test on performance of male and female students group statistics

Grouping Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Students' Performance				
Male	617	8.71	12.961	.739
Female	83	4.79	.613	.032

Table 11 shows that the male students performed better with higher mean score of 8.71 in the Arabic Institute than the female students with a lower mean score of 4.79.

Table 12
t-test for hypothesis Two

	t-test for Equality of Means						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Students' Performance Equal variance assumed	3.211	698	.012	3.129	1.222	.523	6.312

Assumptions = Equal variances assumed
T-Test Calculated (Statistic) = 3.211
Degree of freedom = 698
Level of significance = 0.05
Returned p-value= 0.012

The *t*-test statistics (Table 12) was calculated as 3.211 at 0.05 significance level, with 698 degrees of freedom, the returned *p*-value of 0.012 was found less than the level of significance ($p < 0.05$). There is a significant difference between the

academic performance of the male and female students of Daaru Da'wah Arabic Institute, Isolo, Lagos in Arabic studies. This indicates that the male students perform significantly better than the females who enroll for Arabic Studies.

2016 academic performance.

Table 13
t-test on performance of male and female students group statistics

Grouping Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Students' Performance				
Male	608	7.56	14.121	.978
Female	92	4.12	.754	.074

Table 13 shows that the male students performed better with higher mean score of 7.56 in the Arabic Institute than the females with a lower mean score of 4.12.

Table 14
t-test for hypothesis Two

	t-test for Equality of Means						
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Students' Performance Equal variance assumed	2.75	698	.011	3.440	1.323	.323	6.334

Assumptions = Equal variances assumed
T-Test Calculated (Statistic) = 2.750
Degree of freedom = 698
Level of significance = 0.05
Returned p-value= 0.011

The *t*-test statistics (Table 14) was calculated as 2.75, at 0.05 significance level, with 698 degrees of freedom, the returned p-value of 0.011 was found less than the level of significance ($p < 0.05$). There is a significant difference between the academic performance of the male and female students of Daaru Da'wah Arabic Institute, Isolo, Lagos in Arabic studies. This indicates that the male students perform significantly better than the females who enroll for Arabic Studies.

Conclusion

The male-female enrolment and performance in private formal Arabic schools in Lagos state has been an unexplored area of research and there is a dire need for aggressive research in this area of study. The low level of enrolment for female students in modern formal private schools in Lagos State is unhealthy for balanced education of the teeming womenfolk in Lagos state. There is urgent need to encourage and sensitise the womenfolk on the accruable benefits of embracing Arabic education in the contemporary world and the occupational opportunities which are available to female students of Arabic studies nationally and globally. These include the mass media (both electronic and print), international relations and diplomacy, international trade, commerce and economy, Translation and conference interpreting, international sporting events, and education.

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'I'M GETTING THERE': AN INVESTIGATION OF ACADEMIC WRITING DEVELOPMENTS OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN A FOREIGN BRANCH CAMPUS IN MALAYSIA

Ida Fatimawati bt ADI BADIOZAMAN
Faculty of Language and Communication
Swinburne University of Technology
Sarawak Campus, Jalan Simpang Tiga,
93350 Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia

ifaBadiozaman@swinburne.edu.my

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ABSTRACT

Many foreign university branch campuses in Malaysia make it compulsory for students to undertake academic literacy units (i.e. Reading for Academic Purposes, Technical Report Writing) in order to equip them with language skills as well as reading and writing for academic purposes. Despite the ubiquitousness of such units in universities, little is known about their effectiveness. This longitudinal study aims to address this gap. This paper reports on data collected from the first phase of a mixed methods study that seeks to explore (i) students' self-concept in academic writing, (ii) perceived impact of the Academic Writing (AW) unit on the writing development and (iii) the transferability of skills to other academic units. Findings from the questionnaire revealed that the AW unit had a significant positive impact on their writing skills and that the skills acquired were reported to be highly transferable to other study units. Nevertheless, to ensure academic success, the study concludes that the foundations for first year studies need to be laid early.

Keywords: academic writing, L2 writing, academic language-learning needs, language learning, English for academic purposes (EAP)

Introduction

Academic writing is an integral part of tertiary education in Malaysia (Rahman & Rahim, 2016). At this level, undergraduates are expected to have the necessary linguistic skills to be able to produce writing that adheres to different genres and disciplines. However, among English as a second language (ESL) students, academic writing is often described as challenging, complex and often linked to writing anxiety. In particular, the comments made about Malaysian L2 writers are often bleak, imbued with issues that range from plagiarism (Habali & Fong, 2016), low self-efficacy (Shammodin & Nimehchisalem, 2015) to writing anxiety (Maringe & Jenkins, 2015). As a result, such factors have been reported to act as barriers for students' engagement and overall academic performance in the academic writing class (Badiozaman, 2015).

Evidently, academic writing is not an easy skill to master especially in a second language (L2). Particularly with ESL or English as a F foreign language(EFL) students, research has attributed this to linguistics difficulties (Zhang, 2013) and the tacit nature of academic writing (Elton, 2010). Furthermore, since academic writing "serves different purposes in different units and requires students to assume different social roles " (Zhu, 2004, p. 30), this has implications for the academic writing class in Malaysian universities, where students may be studying in different disciplines and have little to no academic writing experience. For this reason, many higher learning institutions in Malaysia make it compulsory for students to undertake units such as Academic Reading and Writing, and Technical Report Writing. These units aim to equip students with the necessary language skills and the ability to read and write for academic purposes so that they can function effectively within an academic environment.

Nonetheless, despite the fact that such units are ubiquitous in higher learning institutions in Malaysia, little is known about its effectiveness. The limited research on the improvements made by L2 learners in their academic writing in a L2 setting provided the impetus for this study. The focus on academic writing in this study is also due to the role of writing in tertiary education (Othman & Mohamad, 2009). Students' achievements at tertiary level are evaluated mainly on written assessments, be it in the form of large extended writing (e.g. projects, proposal and reports) or short-response essays (e.g. examinations and quizzes).

As the demand and participation in English-medium higher education increase, so is the expectation for students to have academic literacy skills. Hence, it is necessary to understand academic writing improvements that are made in academic literacy classes. Furthermore, factors involved in the development of academic writing such as organisation of ideas, identifying audience for various genres and synthesising from multiple sources are scarce. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap. In particular, it first seeks to explore how much impact the Academic Writing[1] unit (AW hereafter) has upon the writing development of our ESL undergraduate students. Secondly, it will examine the transferability of skills to other academic units.

Literature Review

The development of academic writing skills is widely recognised as a major educational concern, particularly at the university level. As students progress through their academic years, they are asked to move from more general academic writing tasks to more specialised, discipline-specific writing (Nesi & Gardner, 2012). This is particularly true for Malaysian students transitioning from secondary schools to higher learning institutions, studying in an international branch university.

The acquisition of academic writing skills is reported to be challenging for many reasons. For example, advanced academic writing is widely recognised as an elaborated form of discourse that is grammatically complex. Staples, Egbert, Biber, and Gray (2016) maintain that "academic writing is produced in circumstances where language is carefully planned and edited, detailed and specific, and produced in a concise format" (p. 151). Writing in academic contexts also requires students to advance their own ideas within a framework of discipline knowledge and engage the reader in an academic discourse (Hyland, 2002). Furthermore, there is a lack of consensus with regard to which writing approach meets all students' needs (Biber & Gray, 2010). This is further complicated by the fact that writing involves many processes, namely pre-writing, translating, reviewing, planning and revising (Hyland, 2002). Compositional literature has also ascertained that writers move back and forth among these sub-processes (Barkaoui, 2007) in a recursive process. Writing, thus, poses great cognitive and metacognitive demands.

While English language proficiency is critical to academic performance, it is not the sole factor in determining academic writing performance. As evidenced from the literature review, students not only encounter difficulties in English language proficiency, but also in internalising the requirements of the academic writing genre. Note that researchers acknowledged there were important differences within academic writing, showing that the use of complexity features varies across parameters like academic discipline and specific register/genres of academic writing (Leki, 2011). Thus, students' difficulties in adjusting to academic writing in higher learning could also stem from inadequate understanding of academic writing standards and expectations from the lecturers and the institution (D. Green, 2010).

Writing in Higher Learning

Writing in higher education requires students to put forth their ideas within a framework of domains or discipline knowledge and engage the reader in an academic discourse (Rahman & Rahim, 2016). Therefore, tasks at this level often require students to integrate sources in their writing. This is a major learning outcome from university studies (Cumming, Lai, & Cho, 2016) demonstrating the acquisition of new knowledge, a means of establishing membership and identity within academic discourse communities. In fact, Bereiter and Scardamalia (2013) argue that undergraduates are expected to be (advanced) "knowledge transformers" where upon receiving the foundations for becoming an expert writer is laid - they are to "reach the stage of knowledge crafting" (p. 358). In short, communicative expectations shift as writers advance in their degrees.

For students in higher learning, the evaluative nature of academic writing is also apparent. In fact, Reid and Kroll (2006) highlighted another dimension to the concept of academic writing where:

> Academic writing is a form of testing. Instead of testing communication skills by multiple choice or true-false formats, writing assignments ask students to perform, to demonstrate their knowledge and skills by composing and presenting written material. And like all tests, the completed writing assignments are to be assessed (p. 261).

Evidently, the quality of students' written work determines his/her scholarship acceptance in academia as it demonstrates eligibility of higher education. Such challenges are further exacerbated for ESL students. Although they appear to have a general understanding of grammar rules, not many are able to write academically at the expected level. Among the reasons cited for this are the lack of experience with formal writing in previous educational institutions (Shammodin & Nimehchisalem, 2015); and inadequacies of the academic English language proficiency (Zhang & Mi 2010). Furthermore, balancing cognitive and metacognitive processes has also been reported to be challenging for novice writers (Wischgoll, 2016). Therefore, the acquisition of academic writing skills requires tremendous practice and training due to cognitive and metacognitive demands.

Evidences of Development

Studies investigating the development of academic writing often have varying results. There are studies which noted no significant writing improvement, despite students taking English for Academic Purposes (EAP) or Academic Writing courses (i.e. A. Green, 2005; Terraschke & Wahid, 2011). This could be attributed to various contextual and individual factors, and what actual development is being investigated.

Nevertheless, a study by Kolb, Longest, and Jensen (2013) which investigated the effectiveness of a writing-intensive first-year seminar revealed changes in students' writing process. The data collected via pre-test and post-test interview of 34 students noted that the first year students became better planners and reviewers after receiving explicit instructions. The seminar reported in this study was designed based on the underlying premise; "a better (writing) process yields a better product" (Kolb et al., 2013, p.20). For this reason, the students were "taught to change their writing strategies and practices" (Kolb et al., 2013, p. 23), and writing activities were designed into discrete tasks that culminate into broader final product-paced evenly throughout the term (Kolb et al., 2013, p. 21). Similarly, Wischgoll's (2016) experimental study also revealed that cognitive and metacognitive strategy training improved the university's academic writing skills significantly. Thus, it is likely that writing classes which reflect the most realistic writing processes will likely improve students' writing skills.

A study by Biber and Gray (2010) revealed that there is developmental sequence when novice academic writers learn to write. Novice writers begin with

clausal complexity features most common in speech, and then gradually develop proficiency in the dense use of the phrasal complexity features associated with specialist academic writing. In fact, studies done by Parkinson and Musgrave (2014) and Staples et al. (2016) provided further empirical support in which phrasal features increase, as L2 writers develop their academic writing skills in preparation for college and graduate level work.

The capacity to write well academically at tertiary level is a plausible expectation of university students. Interestingly, studies on the development of learners' language skills have been few and far between. The limited research on the improvements made by L2 learners in their academic writing in an L2 setting provided the impetus for this study. The study sought to investigate what features of academic writing, if any, develop as a result of studying in academic literacy unit, such as the 'Academic Writing (AW)' unit in an L2 medium university after one semester (12 weeks). In doing so, not only will the study help disclose the potential challenges that are bound to be faced by the students; it will also facilitate a more objective and tactile approach towards the pedagogy of teaching academic writing in an L2 setting. Thus, the current study has the following two main aims:

(i) to explore the extent of impact the AW unit has upon the writing development of our ESL undergraduate students; and
(ii) to examine the transferability of skills to other academic units that AW units often claim to do.

Methodology

The study adopted a sequential mixed methods design (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Phase One of the study involved distributing questionnaires to students who have completed a semester (12 weeks) of the AW unit. Phase Two of the study involved interviewing students who volunteered to be interviewed and fit certain character profiles based on the questionnaire data. Table 1 provides a visual model of the sequential investigative procedures for this study. An application to the University Human Research Ethics Committee was approved on the 9th December 2016. This paper reports only on data collected from the first phase of the study.

Table 1
Visual model for the sequential mixed methods procedures

Phase	Procedure	Product
Phase One		
Quantitative data collection	• Cross-sectional Questionnaire	• Numeric data
↓		
Quantitative data analysis	• Descriptive analysis • Grouped frequencies	• Descriptive statistics • Mean • Standard Deviation
↓		
Connecting Quantitative and Qualitative and quantitative	• Purposeful Selection of participants • Development of interview questions	• Cases • Interview Protocol
↓		
Phase Two		
Qualitative data collection	• Individual in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted	• Text data (interview transcripts, field notes) • Students written work
↓		
Qualitative data analysis	• Coding and thematic analysis • Cross-thematic analysis • NVivo 9 software	• Visual model of multiple case analysis • Codes and themes • Similar and different themes categories
↓		
Integration of the quantitative and Qualitative Results	• Interpretation and explanation of the quantitative and qualitative results	• Findings • Discussion • Implications

Instrument

The first phase of this study utilised a survey questionnaire that was adapted from the Inventory of College Level Writing and Thinking Tasks survey (Rosenfeld, Courtney, & Fowles, 2004). The questionnaire was for a study involving university academics and it was used for a student survey. To further align with the purpose of the study and its context, the questionnaire was amended in the following ways:

1. The background items were added to obtain the students' level of English proficiency based on band scored in the Malaysian University English Test (MUET);
2. The items on self-concept as an academic writer were added;
3. The item gauging the extent of transfer that has taken place were added; and

4. Open ended questions eliciting responses on the impact of AW on writing were added.

The questionnaire consisted of both multiple choice questions and qualitative questions. There were three main sections in the questionnaire; Section A investigated students' self-concept in academic writing, Section B investigated the impact of the AW unit and Section C gauged the transferability of skills gained from the AW unit. Responses for the items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1=False; 2=Mostly False, 3=Mostly True and 4=True). The qualitative questions elicited students' feedback on the usefulness of the unit in improving their academic writing and any other benefits that the course might bring them.

Respondents

The chosen institution is an international branch campus of an Australian university. As the medium of instruction in this institution is English, great emphasis is placed in ensuring that students have adequate language support, especially those who do not meet Band 6 IELTS English language entry requirement. For that reason, the AW unit is compulsory and is a pre-requisite for students to pass in order to graduate. Potential respondents were identified through purposive sampling (Patton, 2002). All the respondents who were enrolled in the AW unit in Semester 1, 2016 were invited to participate and fill in a questionnaire upon completion of the unit.

A total of 45 students (out of 60) agreed to participate, resulting in a 75% positive response rate. The undergraduate students come from various academic disciplines; and 26 (57.8%) of them were male and 19 (42.2%) were female students respectively (see Table 2).

Table 2
Breakdown of respondents based on academic major

Academic Major	Frequency	Percent (%)
Bachelor of Business	19	42.2
Bachelor of Design	2	4.4
Bachelor of Information & Communication Technology	4	8.9
Bachelor of Computer Science	8	17.8
Bachelor of Science	3	6.7
Bachelor of Engineering	9	20.0
Total	45	100

The analysis of the questionnaire revealed that the majority of the respondents spoke Mandarin and other native dialects as their first language (77.7%). The students fall in the average range of Band 3-4 of MUET, indicating that they are moderate to competent users of English. As there is no specific time that students can take the AW unit, students ranged in terms of their academic year. The majority of the students were in their first year, making up 75.6 % (n=34). This is followed by the second year students at 15.6% (n=7). The third year and final year each had (n=2) students, contributing to 8.8%. The details of respondents based on academic major are as follows (see Table 3).

Table 3
Distribution of respondents based on academic year and academic major

Academic major	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	Total
Bachelor of Business	14	5	0	0	19
Bachelor of Design	1	1	0	0	2
Bachelor of Information & Communication Technology	2	1	1	0	4
Bachelor of Computer Science	7	0	1	0	8
Bachelor of Science	1	0	0	2	3
Bachelor of Engineering	9	0	0	0	9
Total	34	7	2	2	45

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The AW unit is offered by the Faculty of Language and Communication. Students undertake the AW unit which is one semester (12 weeks) in duration, alongside their discipline subjects. The semester-long unit is delivered twice a week and each class lasts for 2 hours. The unit is designed with the aim to develop students' reading and writing skills for academic purposes (see Appendix A for unit outline) and develop their capacity to write an academic report appropriate to a university-level standard. The AW unit concentrates on developing skills in writing reports where it covers strategies for paraphrasing and summarising information, interpreting non-linear texts, reading for academic purpose, and synthesising information from different sources of information.

Students are required to write a report on a topic of their choice using the appropriate language, format and skills for report writing. This scaffolded assessment modularises components within an overall assessment and overtly breaks a large task into smaller chunks (Gipps, 1994 as cited in McNaught & Benson, 2015, p. 77). For example, throughout the course of one semester the writing of the report is broken down into sections and for each section, specific language and/or writing skills are taught (i.e. Literature Review Section - database search, summarising, paraphrasing and synthesising skills).

Initial contact with the respondents was arranged through the Unit Coordinator to introduce the study at a time that was convenient for them. In the first meeting with the respondents, the researcher verbally introduced herself; the students were then invited to complete the questionnaire in their own time. The respondents were given a week to complete the questionnaire. Those who were willing to participate in the interview need to leave contact details such as their email addresses for the researcher to contact them.

The data gathered through the questionnaire was analysed using SPSS 22. Statistical data obtained from the quantitative method employed allowed the identification of basic tendencies and significant relations (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Descriptive statistics and cross tabulation were performed. The responses for negative statements were reverse-coded prior to the data analysis.

Results

Prior to investigating the impact and transferability of skills acquired in the AW unit, it was important to gauge students' self-concept in academic writing. The descriptive analysis of their responses to the self-concept items is presented under two subheadings: *self-concept in academic writing* and *self-concept in writing in English*.

Students' Self-concept in Academic Writing

The 15 statements in this section included how students felt about their academic writing abilities, and how they valued academic writing and the tasks required of them in the AW unit. Table 4 presents the distribution of responses for the students' perception of academic writing.

Table 4
Distribution of responses for self-concept in academic writing

	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Distribution of Responses (%)			
				F	MF	MT	T
PAW 12	It is important for me to do well in academic writing	3.3778	.80591	4.4	6.7	35.6	53.3
PAW 11	I enjoy studying academic writing	3.0222	.81153	4.4	17.8	48.9	28.9
PAW 2	I always look forward to my AW unit	2.9556	.87790	6.7	20.0	44.4	28.9
PAW 10	I learn things quickly in my AW unit	2.7778	.82266	8.9	20.0	55.6	15.6
PAW 21	I find it challenging to write critically in academic writing	2.7333	.88933	6.7	35.6	35.6	22.2
PAW 5	Writing in academic English is a challenge for me	2.7333	1.03133	17.8	15.6	42.2	24.4
PAW 6	I often need help in the AW unit	2.6667	1.00000	15.6	24.4	37.8	22.2
PAW 9	I have poor academic writing skills	2.6000	.96295	13.3	33.3	33.3	20.0
PAW 3	Tasks in AW units are easy for me	2.4889	.89499	17.8	24.4	48.9	8.9
PAW 1	AW is one of my best subjects	2.4444	.91839	20.0	24.4	46.7	8.9
PAW 17	I have always done well in academic writing	2.2222	.76541	17.8	44.4	35.6	2.2
PAW 14	Academic writing is easy for me	2.2000	.86865	22.2	42.2	28.9	6.7
PAW 7	I often do badly in AW assessments	2.1778	.86047	17.8	55.6	20.0	4.4

Table 4 (continued).

	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Distribution of Responses (%)			
				F	MF	MT	T
PAW 15	I am hopeless when it comes to academic writing*	1.9333	.78044	28.9	53.3	13.3	4.4
PAW 23	The AW unit feels like a waste of time*	1.4667	.75679	66.7	22.2	8.9	2.2

Note. 1 = False; 2 = Mostly False; 3 = Mostly True; 4 = True. [a]Items are arranged from the highest to lowest mean. [b]*refers to negatively worded items

Two items had high means in this sub-category, affirming that the respondents generally have a positive disposition with regard to academic writing. The findings show considerable consensus amongst the respondents that it is important for them to do well in academic writing (PAW12), as indicated by the 35.6% who responded True (T) and the 53.3% who responded Mostly True (MT) to the statement. This corresponded well with items gauging respondents' interest in the subject of academic writing, namely Items PAW11, PAW2 and PAW10. The majority of the respondents seemed to enjoy studying academic writing (MT=48.9%; T=28.9%) and look forward (MT=44.4%; T=28.9%) to attending the classes. Nonetheless, most of the respondents reported that they were hopeless when it came to academic writing (T= 26.5%; MT=44.7%). This view was affirmed by Items PAW14 and PAW7 where the respondents reported that academic writing was not easy (64.4%) and they often did not fare well in the assessments (73.4%). This finding is corroborated by the mean ratings which are below 3.00 indicating areas where respondents needed help.

Items with the two lowest means in the questionnaire were represented by Items PAW15 and PAW23, with a mean value of 1.93 and 1.46 respectively. It is interesting to note that despite the perceived difficulty of academic writing, 88.9% of the students did not feel like the AW unit was a waste of time (False = 66.7%; MF = 22.2%). This finding warranted further investigation. In particular, it was seen as important to identify the factors that contribute to the difficulty of academic writing, and examine the reasons why students felt it was important to attend the AW unit.

As the students had English as a second language, it was important to gauge students' self-concept as writers of English. Table 5 shows the distribution of their responses. The majority of the students reported they often look for ways to improve their English writing (MT=35.6%; T=51.1%) in Item PAW22 and that they like writing in English (73.4%) in Item PAW4.

Table 5
Distribution of responses for self-concept of writing in English

	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Distribution of Responses (%)			
				F	MF	MT	T
PAW 22	I often look for ways to improve my English writing	3.3778	.71633	0	13.3	35.6	51.1
PAW 4	I like writing in English	2.9111	.90006	8.9	17.8	46.7	26.7
PAW 20	It is easy to organise my thoughts into sentences in English	2.5778	.94120	11	40	28.9	20
PAW 16	I feel confident in my ability to write in English	2.5556	.89330	11.1	37.8	35.6	15.6
PAW 19	It is easy to express my ideas effectively in English	2.4889	.96818	15.6	37.8	28.9	17.8

Note. 1 = False; 2 = Mostly False; 3 = Mostly True; 4 = True. [a]Items are arranged from the highest to lowest mean.

Despite these positive responses, the respondents struggled with writing in English. Mean ratings below 3.00 indicate areas where the respondents reported challenges in writing in English. This is evidenced by items PAW20 and PAW19. Almost half of the respondents responded False (11%) and Mostly False (40%) to the statement, *'It is easy to organise my thoughts into sentences in English' and 'It is easy to express my ideas effectively in English'.* This resonated with the findings on students' writing efficacy where 35.6% responded Mostly True and 15.6% responded True to the statement, *'I feel confident in my ability to write in English'.* These responses may have strong links to proficiency issues.

Impact on Academic Writing Skills

This section of the questionnaire attempted to investigate the impact of AW unit on their academic writing skills after one semester. A mean rating of 3.00 (important) or higher 4.00 (very important) was selected to distinguish the most important impact from those of lesser importance. The distribution of responses is presented in Table 6.

Table 6
Distribution of responses for Impact of AW unit on academic writing skills

	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Distribution of Responses (%)			
				F	MF	MT	T
IMP33	Improving my reference skills	3.7111	.45837	0	0	28.9	71.1
IMP27	Making use of sources in writing	3.6889	.46818	0	0	31.1	68.9
IMP35	Improving my paraphrasing skills	3.5111	.58861	0	4.4	40.0	55.6
IMP32	Improving my language structure	3.4889	.54864	0	2.2	46.7	51.1
IMP34	Improving my summarising skills	3.4667	.69413	2.2	4.4	37.8	55.6
IMP24	Understanding the general characteristics of academic writing	3.4222	.54309	0	2.2	53.3	44.4
IMP30	Interpreting graphic information appropriately	3.3556	.60886	0	6.7	51.1	42.2
IMP29	Presenting a graphic information in a clear manner	3.3556	.64511	2.2	2.2	53.3	42.2
IMP26	Synthesising key information in reading texts	3.3556	.60886	0	6.7	51.1	42.2
IMP38	Making varied sentence structure to communicate ideas effectively	3.3333	.56408	0	4.4	57.8	37.8
IMP31	Improving my grammar accuracy	3.3333	.70711	2.2	6.7	46.7	44.4
IMP25	Writing for the intended audience	3.2889	.62603	0	8.9	53.3	37.8
IMP37	Writing precisely and concisely, avoiding vague or empty phrases	3.2667	.57997	0	6.7	60.0	33.3
IMP36	Writing persuasively by constructing well-reasoned arguments	3.2222	.63564	2.2	4.4	62.2	31.1
IMP28	Presenting my arguments in a coherent manner	3.1333	.69413	4.4	4.4	64.4	26.7

Note. 1 = False; 2 = Mostly False; 3 = Mostly True; 4 = True. [a]Items are arranged from the highest to lowest mean.

Overall, the results in this section displayed high means. This indicates that that the respondents perceived the AW unit to have had a significant positive impact on their academic writing skills. It is important to note that the top five means were from items IMP33, IMP27, IMP35, IMP32 and IMP34. All the respondents perceived

that taking the AW unit has improved their referencing skills (MT=28.8%; T=71.1%). Understandably, this has also impacted positively onto their use of sources in writing (MT=31.1%; T=68.9%), paraphrasing (MT=40%; T=55.6%) and summarising skills (MT=37.8%; T=55.6%). It is likely that having explicit instruction, exposure and feedback contributed to a greater understanding of the general characteristics of academic writing (MT=53.3%; T=44.4%) and subsequently improving their language structure (MT=46.7%; T=55.1%).

Items with the lowest means were linked closely to language proficiency and advanced academic writing skills (i.e. writing persuasively to a specific audience) as depicted by items IMP31, IMP25, IMP37, IMP36 and IMP28 respectively. A majority of the students responded Mostly True (46.7%) and True (44.4%) to the statement that the AW unit has helped improve their grammar accuracy, writing to the intended audience (MT=53.3%; T=37.8%) and writing concisely (MT=60%; T=33.3%). It is plausible that writing tasks which require students to use increasingly complex and sophisticated language in order to convey precise and specialised meaning or write in a persuasive manner is a complex endeavour for students who are novice academic writers. This would explain the relatively lower means for items IMP36 (Mean=3.222) and IMP28 (Mean=3.133) respectively.

Transferability of Skills

In addition to the perceived impact of the AW unit, it was also important to gauge the transferability of skills. A mean rating of 3.00 (important) or higher 4.00 (very important) was selected to distinguish the most important skills from those of lesser importance. The distribution of responses is presented in Table 7.

Table 7
Distribution of responses for transferability of skills

	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Distribution of Responses (%)			
				F	MF	MT	T
Trans58	Finding relevant references	3.5111	.54864	0	2.2	44.4	53.3
Trans53	Summarising essential information	3.4667	.54772	0	2.2	48.9	48.9
Trans43	Making use of sources in writing	3.4222	.69048	2.2	4.4	42.2	51.1
Trans47	Reading and extracting thoughts in extended writing tasks	3.4000	.57997	0	4.4	51.1	44.4
Trans56	Revising and editing text to improve its clarity and coherence	3.3778	.57560	0	4.4	53.3	42.2
Trans55	Crediting sources appropriately	3.3333	.60302	2.2	0	60	37.8

Table 7 (continued).

	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Distribution of Responses (%)			
				F	MF	MT	T
Trans42	Synthesizing key information in reading texts	3.3333	.60302	0	6.7	53.3	40
Trans52	Developing a well-focused, well-supported discussion using relevant reasons and examples	3.3111	.59628	0	6.7	55.6	37.8
Trans44	Organising and presenting my arguments in a coherent manner	3.2889	.72683	2.2	8.9	46.7	42.2
Trans48	Improving my language structure	3.2667	.65366	0	11.1	51.1	37.8
Trans51	Integrating quotes and referenced material appropriately into own text	3.2444	.67942	2.2	6.7	55.6	35.6
Trans40	I'm more confident in writing academic research papers in my discipline	3.2000	.66058	2.2	6.7	60	31.1
Trans39	I'm more confident in writing assignments in my core academic modules	3.2000	.58775	0	8.9	62.2	28.9
Trans46	Interpreting graphic information appropriately	3.2000	.72614	4.4	4.4	57.8	33.3
Trans41	Writing for the intended audience	3.1556	.63802	0	13.3	57.8	28.9
Trans45	Presenting a graphic information in a clear manner	3.1556	.79646	4.4	11.1	48.9	35.6

Note. 1 = False; 2 = Mostly False; 3 = Mostly True; 4 = True. [a]Items are arranged from the highest to lowest mean.

Similar to the findings on the impact of the AW unit on their academic writing skills, the results in the transferability section revealed an overall high mean and are positive in nature. The item with the highest mean (3.5111) was students could *'Find relevant references'* with students responding mostly to True (53.3%) and Mostly True (44.4%). This was followed by '*Summarising essential information'* (Mostly True=48.9%; True=48.9%) and *'Making use of sources in writing*' (Mostly True=42.2%; True=51.1%) respectively. The respondents also reported that they *'Revise and edit text to improve clarity and coherence'* as part of their writing processes (Mostly True=53.3%; True=42.2%). In addition to positive transferability, the results also shed light onto their writing practices.

Due to the explicit instruction and transferability of skills from the AW unit, the respondents also reported an increase in confidence, in writing academic research papers in their discipline (Mostly True=60%; True=31.1%) and core academic modules (Mostly True=62.2%; True=28.9%) in items Trans40 and Trans39 respectively. These findings warranted further exploration in the next interview phase in order to understand better the high transferability and the circumstances in which the skills were perceived to be useful and relevant.

In general, the results indicated that the AW unit was effective, even though it was taught over a short period of time. The results appear to indicate that the undergraduates do need the academic writing support. As Horwitz (2010) stated, what learners believe about what they need to learn strongly influences their receptiveness to learning. In this study, it is likely that the students believed that it was important for them to learn academic writing. This thus, would explain the high mean ratings for impact and transferability.

Discussion

This study aimed to explore the impact of AW unit on the writing development of ESL undergraduate students after one semester (12 weeks). Secondly, it examined the transferability of skills to other academic units. It was interesting to note that students did not perceive their abilities in English and writing in English as very high. This is proven by the means represented in this section (mean average is the lowest out of three sections). The reasons for these perceived ideas could possibly be that they were placed in the unit based on the university's English entry requirement and also their very little experience in academic writing prior to the class. Nonetheless, these did not appear to deter their interest in learning the unit and also in attending the classes.

Despite the perceived abilities in English language and writing in the English language, students valued the AW unit very highly. This is evidenced by the quantitative data and the answers in the open-ended section of the questionnaire. Students reported that: *"This class has improved my vocabulary, doing citations, references and finding materials"* (Student 2), and *"Through this unit, I learnt to write better in terms of sentence structure for my reports"* (Student 33). This finding concurs with Lillis (2001) who argued that the focus should be transferred from students' 'problematic' language to the institutional practices of teaching academic writing. As the AW unit provided opportunities for students to improve their academic literacy and L2 proficiency, this context afforded an enriching educational experience for students in which the links between the academic writing and its relevance to academic studies are made explicit.

Completing the AW unit early in their academic studies appeared to have a positive impact on the students' self-concept as academic writers and their writing development. It is likely that this change was a result of explicit instruction in the AW unit, and growing awareness of the wide range of sources available (databases, peers and language tutors) as part of the writing process. Note the responses from the open-ended section of the questionnaire: *"I've learnt how to write a report and analyse information in a complex and academic way"* (Student 33) and *"I know now*

each section of a report has a different purpose and style of writing" (Student 16). Thus, what the findings of this study suggest is that following a semester of study, there are changes in terms of how students approach a writing task as reflected by the strategies they have reported to adopt.

The feedback from students indicates the task and activities throughout the unit was practical in helping them navigate their academic studies. Having had consistent high failure rates in the past, a review of the unit was done in which scaffolded assessments were introduced. This appeared to have been central to results on the development and transferability of skills. It is likely that continuous feedback throughout the unit (in line with the tasks) helped students to identify the process made and the likelihood of them developing the necessary skills and abilities: *"The lecturer is always guiding us when we do the tutorial questions and this makes it clear to me what my mistakes are and how to improve"* (Student 34) and *"I get to discover my weaknesses in academic writing and therefore allows me to improve and fix those problems" (*Student 9). Because the tasks were specific within the scaffolded assessment, it allowed the feedback to be correspondingly specific and directive which helped significantly on the writing output. The current and frequent interactions that learners have with the subject may also explain the overall positive response, transfer and development in the findings: *"The report is step by step. Writing is step by step. It is helpful for someone like me"* (Student 45) and "*The lecturer is always guiding us and this makes it clear- what my mistakes are and how to improve"* (Student 34). The scaffolded assessments allowed the feedback to be correspondingly specific and continuous (in line with the tasks), which helped improve the writing output (Hyland, 2013).

In addition to the higher order writing process (Kolb et al., 2013), the findings appear to indicate increased confidence during the program. The AW unit was reported to alleviate the stress and anxiety that come with academic writing. In addition to the quantitative data, note the responses from the open ended sections: *"I'm getting there.* W*riting is less intimidating now* (Student 1) and "*Now I have confidence. Once you have confidence, any other tasks in English seem easy and manageable"* (Student 44). This heightened level of self-efficacy resonates that of Piniel and Csizer (2015) where writing efficacy is reciprocally linked with learners' interest and perceived value of the writing skills.

The highly academic environment in which the students are embedded may provide further cues to the centrality of academic writing at tertiary level. This context and the AW class in which students were in, appear to be beneficial as students were guided from the pre-writing stages to post-writing stages of a report. The activity exposes students to not only strategies for writing, but also research skills (i.e. database search, organising information, synthesising information). Note the responses, *"This class has improved my vocabulary, doing citations, references and finding materials"* (Student 2) and *"It has enhanced my academic research skills"* (Student 14). These support mechanisms will assist students for successful completion of the unit as well as effective strategies for undergraduate study. This was supported by the open-ended answers from the questionnaire; *"I am more confident in extracting the information, gathering and data. I [am] more systematic than I used to be"* (Student 10). This finding resonates that of Wishcgol (2016) which

identified training interventions which included prewriting activities, inquiry activities for content developing, collaborating with peers as having the ability to ease the writing demands.

It was interesting to note that stress and anxiety were frequently cited by these undergraduate students as one of the challenges faced in writing. As mentioned in the literature review, academic writing is indeed a complicated endeavour for L2 writers. Tinto (2010) who focused on domestic graduate students, suggested that students who are transition into a new academic setting faced challenges of both academic and social integration. Although the study only focused on academic writing development and its transferability to other academic domains, it became apparent that participation in the AW unit was able to provide support and opportunities for students to learn academic writing, and subsequently transition/articulate accordingly into their new academic and social environments. It is likely that having such 'interventions' explicitly taught in the AW unit helped reduced their writing anxiety. Note the responses from the open ended sections: "*Now I have confidence. Once you have confidence, any other tasks in English seem easy and manageable"* (Student 44), *"I speak up more. AW has improved my communication skills"* (Student 23); and "I'm getting there. W*riting is less intimidating now* (Student 1), *I'm more confident in extracting information*" (Student 10). While self-confidence was low prior to undertaking the AW, the findings appear to indicate increased confidence during the program.

This heightened levels of self-efficacy resonates that of Piniel and Csizer (2015) where writing efficacy is linked with learners' interest and perceived value of the writing skills. It is also important to note that the transferability of skills in this study transcended that of writing skills. The students reported: *"I can meet my friends from different faculties, practice my English and write together"* (Student 34), and *"It [skills] can be applied when I do my research (*Student 45)". As a result, writing is perceived as a manageable task and not anxiety-inducing as reported in the findings: *"Writing is fun and stress free, when you manage your time well"* (Student 18). All these provide empirical evidence to support compositional and pedagogical literature where "in order to get students to improve the quality of what they write, they need to change how they write" (Kolb et al., 2013).

Despite the positive responses (Mostly True: 46.7%; True 44.4%) on how the AW unit has helped improve their grammar accuracy, the preliminary analysis of students' writing did not indicate significant changes. It is likely that the lack of improvement in grammatical accuracy could be attributed to the relatively short time period of the study (12 weeks). This finding concurs with Storch (2009) which noted some improvement in the formality of learners' language, but no evidence of improvement in linguistic accuracy or complexity. Nonetheless, the study has highlighted the value of the AW unit. More importantly it highlighted the need for further academic and language support for the student population.

Limitations

This study was exploratory in nature and its results need to be interpreted cautiously. The limitations in this study are due to its reliance on self-report data. There is a possibility of ambiguity in meaning in terms of students' understanding of the questionnaire items. Nonetheless, given that the project is designed to capture students' perceived development and transferability of AW skills, using self-reports seems justified at this early stage as it allows the gathering of information that is not available from language proficiency data alone. Secondly, the number of students involved in the study was small. While the findings of the study have been enriching, and to a certain extent are supported by the current literature, the description may be unique to this particular group of individuals, within this particular setting. It is thus anticipated that the longitudinal qualitative data from Phase Two would further expand on the findings of Phase One.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the impact of an AW unit on undergraduate students' writing development. Secondly, it examined the transferability of skills to other academic units. Results revealed the AW unit was able to assist students who may be under-prepared to meet the academic challenges of tertiary study. The majority of the respondents perceived that the unit has a significant impact on their writing development, and the skills gained from one semester were transferable to other academic units. For L2 students who are novice writers, writing can be a demanding and overwhelming task. Thus, a classroom setting which provides immediate feedback and emphasis on both language and skills acquisition is integral to first year success.

Writing remains to be the main method of communicating knowledge in the academic community. For students who are novice writers, it is unrealistic to believe that academic writing skills can be mastered within a short period of time. Nonetheless, the results of this study show that there are clear developmental trends in academic writing of L2 undergraduate writers. It may not necessarily translate into increased grammar accuracy, but it has become apparent that students are gradually becoming familiar with and are grasping a deeper understanding of what academic writing entails. Thus, the study highlights the need to have continuous 'pre-skilling' courses to ensure that students are adequately equipped with the appropriate level of academic skills to transition effectively into undergraduate study.

Notes

[1]In this institution, the academic literacy unit is called Academic Writing (AW)

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WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN WRITING INSTRUCTION: A QUALITATIVE SYNTHESIS OF RECENT RESEARCH

Pei Fen Dawn SIA[1]
Nanyang Technological University
50 Nanyang Ave, 639798, Singapore

Yin Ling CHEUNG[2]
Nanyang Technological University
50 Nanyang Ave, 639798, Singapore

[1]dawnsia@gmail.com
[2]yinling.cheung@nie.edu.sg*

*Corresponding author
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ABSTRACT

Giving written feedback to students is an important part of writing instruction. However, few studies have been conducted to investigate current trends of written corrective feedback in the secondary and university contexts. To identify and evaluate the current state of empirical evidence, we conducted a qualitative synthesis of published research that examined written corrective feedback in both English-as-the-first-language and English-as-the second/foreign-language settings. Four claims emerged in our analyses of 68 empirical studies published in journals from 2006-2016. Each claim is supported by empirical evidence. The claims are: (1) Individual differences play a part in the effectiveness of written corrective feedback; (2) Students' and teachers' perceptions affect the effectiveness of written corrective feedback; (3) Giving corrective feedback through technology is beneficial to students; and (4) Written corrective feedback is more effective when it is used concurrently with collaborative tasks. This meta-synthesis study sheds light on the written corrective practice of English Language teachers across different pedagogical settings and the factors that may affect student engagement in teacher written feedback.

Keywords: written corrective feedback, secondary school, university

Introduction

With academic writing now viewed as an important part of English language instruction, more studies have been conducted on the impact of teacher written corrective feedback on student writing. Although there has been research on written corrective feedback for high school and university levels, there has been no qualitative meta-synthesis study that addresses factors that influence the effectiveness of written corrective feedback. Our meta-synthesis study will fill this gap.

Using the method of qualitative metasynthesis, this study provides a comprehensive analysis of 68 empirical studies published during the period of 2006-2016 that examine this question. Four general claims pertaining to the place of written corrective feedback in writing instruction at high school and university levels have been identified. This review paper explicates the lessons learned from and future directions of written corrective feedback in instruction.

Corrective feedback is defined as responses to students' wrong sentences (Ellis, 2009). This response includes informing learners that their sentences are wrong and offers the corrected form of sentences. On top of that, written corrective feedback provides the grammatical explanation of the mistakes, and informs learners that their target language output is wrong (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). In this section, the different types of written corrective feedback will be discussed based on the current literature. While presenting the various types of corrective feedback, it will show the different approaches that researchers have taken to prove the effectiveness of one type of corrective feedback in comparison to another. The various types of corrective feedback that were commonly researched on in written corrective feedback students are mainly direct and indirect corrective feedback, metalinguistic corrective feedback, unfocused and focused corrective feedback, and electronic corrective feedback (Ellis, 2009).

Technology and Written Corrective Feedback

With the advances in technology, the feedback practices have also experienced changes as some teachers are considering to move on to electronic feedback. According to Hyland (2010), computer-mediated feedback and computer tools can facilitate more communication between teachers and students, and between students themselves. There have been a few studies that ventured into the use of electronic feedback in recent years (AbuSeileek, 2013; AbuSeileek & Abualsha'r, 2014; Bitchener, East, & Cartner, 2010; Elola & Oskoz, 2016).

AbuSeileek and Abualsha'r (2014) compared the effectiveness of the three different types of electronic written corrective feedback: track changes, recast and metalinguistic feedback with the use of a comment function on Microsoft word. The results indicated that track changes were more effective in students' writing than the other two feedback types. In a different study conducted by Guardado and Shi (2007), students were asked to provide electronic feedback (e-feedback) to their peers. In their study, students have expressed little interest and confidence to comment and turned the online peer feedback into a one-way communication

process. The study suggested that students have to be explicitly taught on how to provide peer feedback electronically. Teachers are to engage enthusiastically to give encouragement for student's interaction in the process of feedback. Bakri (2015) stated that most scholars tend to believe that teacher feedback is more useful than peer e-feedback, adding support to Guardado and Shi's (2007) argument that students prefer teacher feedback to peer feedback. More studies have to be conducted to find out if electronic feedback is effective and sustainable. Another type of feedback that has gained much interest is the metalinguistic corrective feedback.

Metalinguistic Corrective Feedback

Metalinguistic corrective feedback requires teachers giving students some metalinguistic comment or clue about the nature of the error (Ellis, 2009). In general, there are two ways which teachers commonly use to give feedback on students' written work. The first method is the use of error codes where the codes are written above the errors in the text. The second method is that teachers just circle or underline the errors. Students are required to identify the errors and correct them to the right form. Ellis (2009) has stated that the use of error codes, which is the first method, is commonly adopted by teachers. Metalinguistic corrective feedback can come in both oral and written forms. Written metalinguistic feedback involves providing explicit explanations on students' work; oral metalinguistic feedback may involve a form of small group discussion with the teacher where students are allowed to clear their doubts about their errors.

Some studies have demonstrated the significance and effectiveness of metalinguistic feedback (Bitchener, 2008; Mansourizadeh & Abdullah, 2014; Sheen, 2007). In Bitchener's (2008) study, there were experimental groups and one control group. The first group received direct corrective feedback, written and oral metalinguistic explanation. The second group received direct corrective feedback and written feedback. The third group received only direct corrective feedback. Since all the groups received the feedback options performed equally well, this may imply that oral metalinguistic feedback can be as effective as written metalinguistic feedback. Results from the study found that there was no difference in student performance given the three types of feedback options.

In another study, Mansourizadeh and Abdullah (2014) compared the effects of oral and written metalinguistic feedback on English as a Second Language student writing. The finding suggests that oral metalinguistic feedback is more effective than written metalinguistic feedback in improving second language. It was said that oral metalinguistic feedback is less time consuming as compared to written metalinguistic feedback as teachers are able to provide feedback in the form of a mini lesson. This finding can be considered inconsistent with Bitchener's (2008) insights that (1) corrective feedback, written and oral metalinguistic explanation; (2) direct corrective feedback and written feedback, and (3) direct corrective feedback alone, are equally effective to students. In addition to the electronic and metalinguistic corrective feedback, the direct and indirect corrective feedback is another type of feedback commonly employed by teachers.

Direct and Indirect Corrective Feedback

Direct corrective feedback refers to the feedback whereby the teacher provides the corrected form next to the errors (Bitchener & Knoch, 2010a, 2010b). On the other hand, indirect corrective feedback is when the teacher provides a code to indicate the errors. Students are the one responsible to correct the errors (Ellis, 2009).

The debate on the effectiveness of direct and indirect corrective feedback on student writing has been ongoing. "Those supporting indirect feedback suggest that this approach is best because it requires students to engage in guided learning and problem solving and, as a result, promotes the type of reflection that is more likely to foster long-term acquisition" (Bitchener & Knoch, 2008, p. 415). Indirect corrective feedback might be more effective for students with higher proficiency level as they would be able to produce the correct form of their errors due to their higher linguistic knowledge. On the contrary, according to Liu (2008), results have shown that direct feedback works better than indirect feedback for lower proficiency students. Solely underlining the errors might be confusing to weak students as it is beyond their ability to self-correct their errors.

Van Beuningen, De Jong, and Kuiken (2012) have shown that the direct and indirect written feedback is suitable for different types of errors. Direct corrective feedback is said to be more effective with grammatical errors; indirect corrective feedback works better with non-grammatical errors. It is interesting to note that, in their study, there is no significant correlation between student educational level and effectiveness of corrective feedback treatments. With mixed results reported over the years, it seems that we may need to consider students' individual differences when it comes to the effectiveness of written corrective feedback. Next, we will review the key studies on the focused and unfocused corrective feedback.

Focused and Unfocused Corrective Feedback

Focused corrective feedback involves the teacher correcting only on one or two specific types of errors (Bitchener & Knoch, 2009a, 2009b). Unfocused feedback involves the teacher correcting most of the errors in students' writing (Ellis, 2009). Over the past decade, the research results have been mixed. For example, Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, and Takashima (2008) compared the use of focused corrective feedback which targeted students' use of articles and unfocused corrective feedback. The finding has shown that there are no significant differences between the two types of feedback when it comes to the writing quality. The focused group received more error corrections than that the unfocused group.

On the contrary, the results of the study conducted by Sheen, Wright, and Moldawa (2009) showed that focused corrective feedback was more useful and effective than unfocused corrective feedback. The focused group received only correction on articles and participants were able to improve on the grammatical structures. They were able to benefit from the writing and became more conscious about form and hence paid attention to other structures.

According to a study conducted by Aghajanloo, Mobini, and Khosravi (2016), four types of written corrective feedback – focused direct corrective feedback,

unfocused direct feedback, focused indirect feedback and unfocused indirect feedback – were compared. Results have shown that unfocused direct corrective feedback is the most effective even though there are no significant differences among the four types of corrective feedback.

Methodology

We conducted searches in the computer databases at our university library to look for research studies published in the past ten years between 2006 and 2016. We accessed databases such as Wiley Interscience Education Backfiles, ProQuest Databases, EBSCOhost Research Databases and ScienceDirect. At the start of the search, we used keywords such as "written corrective feedback", "direct", "focused", "indirect", "unfocused", and "metalinguistic". Focusing on keywords "written corrective feedback", more than 18,000 academic journal articles showed up in the system. The different keywords of "direct", "focused", "indirect", "unfocused", "metalinguistic" were used to collate all the different types of written corrective feedback in research studies. Subsequently, we added other keywords such as "EFL", "ESL", "writing", "effectiveness", "university graduates", "high school", "individual differences", "technology" and "computer-mediated". This has helped to narrow down the search. The search results have shown different studies on written corrective feedback. We have decided to select studies which compared two or more types of corrective feedback. Keywords were modified throughout the searching process. We added keywords such as "technology," "computer-mediated," "students' perception," and "teachers' perception." We went through 119 relevant publications which were generated from the library searches and narrowed down to 68 studies which were relevant to our research question (see Appendix 1). We have adopted an inductive qualitative approach (Thomas, 2006) to examine the selected research studies and develop links and gaps between them in the area of written corrective feedback. Through the inductive approach, we identified themes in the form of claims which were supported by research evidence. We have formulated a key research question: What are the factors that influence the effectiveness of written corrective feedback?

Findings

After reviewing the articles, we categorised the rising issues and concerns with regard to written corrective feedback into four claims.

Claim 1: Individual Differences Play a Part in the Effectiveness of Written Corrective Feedback

There is a concern towards individual differences (e.g., students' own beliefs and motivational level) in the topic of written corrective feedback, which include students' personal preferences and attitudes towards the use of corrective feedback (Han & Hyland, 2015; Junqueira & Payant, 2015; Kormos, 2012; Li & Li, 2012; Rahimi, 2015; Rummel & Bitchener, 2015; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2010; Zacharias, 2007).

This is consistent with Bitchener and Storch's (2016) view that individual learner-internal motivational factors such as students' goals, attitudes, interest, beliefs and motivation can influence students' reception of written corrective feedback.

In a study conducted by Li and Li (2012), it was evident that individual differences played a part in written corrective feedback. The study suggests that every participant has different background and lifestyle which affected their views towards school and their writing. Two out of four participants felt that they were satisfied with their English level and they did not show any improvement in their post-test, as compared to the other two participants who had strong determination to work hard due to their discontentment with their own English level. This study has demonstrated that different students have different motivation level towards their writing and reception of written corrective feedback.

Storch and Wiggleworth's (2010) study has shown that the effectiveness of corrective feedback was related to the students' engagement with errors. According to Bakri (2015), it is crucial for future research to consider the important factor of individual differences and how it affects students in processing feedback in second language writing. Rahimi's (2015) study has suggested that not every student worked well with the adopted corrective feedback style in the treatment process. Another important result that arises from Rahimi's study is that teacher corrective feedback does not necessarily lead to student learning. This is dependent on students' individual characteristics such as the cognitive and affective variables, as well as the learning context (Rahimi, 2015).

Dowden, Pittaway, Yost, and McCarthy's (2013) study showed that students' perception of written feedback was affected by their emotions and the amount of support in the teaching and learning context. A study conducted by Best, Jones-Katz, Smolarek, Stolzenburg, and Williamson (2015) emphasised teacher-student reflection and indicated that bidirectional learning is important. Teachers should listen to what students have to say and help them to correct their mistakes and become better writers. Teachers have to take into account students' views towards the feedback given. In Shintani, Ellis, and Suzuki's (2013) study, individual differences could have been factored in as the students' revision method was constrained to what they were told to do. If the revision method was not helpful to the students, the results of their writing would be affected.

Claim 2: Students' and Teachers' Perceptions Affect the Effectiveness of Written Corrective Feedback

There were several empirical studies which focused on students' and teachers' perception of written corrective feedback. These studies also examined the ways to make use of students' and teachers' perceptions to enhance the effectiveness of written corrective feedback (Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Dowden et al., 2013; Jodaie, Farrokhi, & Zoghi, 2011; McCarthy, 2013; Evans, Hartshorn, & Tuioti, 2010; Lee, 2008; Robinson, Pope, & Holyoak, 2013; Weaver, 2006). Dowden et al. (2013) suggest that teacher and students have to work closely to solve the misunderstanding or miscommunication in the process of giving feedback. The study also suggests that students should be taught how to respond to written feedback.

The response to written feedback is missing in most of the research studies as the research interventions were carried out without stating if students have understood the purpose of written corrective feedback. Students indeed need to understand the meaning and purpose of written corrective feedback.

In a study conducted by Amerhein and Nassaji (2010), students think that teachers should provide written corrective feedback on as many errors as possible. However, teachers felt that they should correct the more important errors. Both teachers and students felt that written corrective feedback was a learning tool. The study displayed similarities and differences in terms of students' and teachers' perceptions. Teachers seemed to be more divided in their preferences and explanations for why and how errors should be corrected. This is similar to the study conducted by Lee (2008) where the study investigated teachers' perception of written corrective feedback. It seemed that teachers have their own concerns when giving feedback to meet school requirements.

Claim 3: Giving Corrective Feedback through Technology is Beneficial to Students

Instead of providing feedback in written form, teachers may opt for computer-mediated corrective feedback to students due to advancement in technology. Recent studies have suggested the effectiveness of computer-mediated corrective feedback with regard to student writing (AbuSeileek, 2013; AbuSeileek & Abualsha'r, 2014; Shintani & Aubrey, 2016).

The results of AbuSeileek's (2013) study have indicated that there was a significant effect using computer-mediated corrective feedback on student writing. The research intervention, over a period of eight weeks, focused on eleven major writing error types. There were three groups who received the track changes feedback, word processor feedback, and a combination of both track changes and word processor feedback respectively. All the three groups have outperformed the control group. It is interesting to note that the group who received both track changes and word processor was the most effective and preferred. On top of that, students have done better on the immediate post-test, suggesting the effectiveness of using computer-mediated corrective feedback on student writing.

Another study conducted by Shintani and Aubrey (2016) investigated the effectiveness of synchronous and asynchronous corrective feedback. The results of their study showed that synchronous corrective feedback was more effective than asynchronous corrective feedback. According to Shintani and Aubrey, synchronous corrective feedback occurred in an online computer-mediated environment in which the teacher provided corrective feedback while students were composing their texts. Therefore, the number of errors decreased significantly compared to that of asynchronous corrective feedback. Students in the synchronous group also exhibited signs of gradual improvement in terms of accuracy of writing.

In a recent study carried out by Elola and Oskoz (2016), the study showed that it was useful for the instructors to make use of technology to provide feedback. These instructors provided more succinct feedback on the grammatical aspect of language with the help of the coding system in Word. They also were able to provide

more feedback in terms of content, structure, and organisation. The student writing has improved with computer-mediated feedback.

Claim 4: Written Corrective Feedback is More Effective when it is Used Concurrently with Collaborative Tasks

Over the years, some studies have examined written corrective feedback with other collaborative aspects (Abadikhah & Ashoori, 2012; Kassim & Luan, 2014; Mansourizadeh & Abdullah, 2014). These collaborative aspects include collaborative dialogue and output tasks.

Researchers have investigated the use of collaborative methods to increase the effectiveness of written corrective feedback on student writing. For example, Abadikhah and Ashoori (2012) conducted a research which involved a combination of students' collaborative output task of error identification and teacher written corrective feedback. During the collaborative task, students were asked to work in pairs to discuss the mistakes and to correct the mistakes themselves. After completing the collaborative task, students received teacher's written feedback.

Abadikhah and Ashoori's (2012) study is similar to the research conducted by Kassim and Luan (2014). Kassim and Luan included collaborative dialogue in the research intervention for students to discuss their writing errors with their peers. In both studies, the results have shown that it was more effective for the groups that received the treatment of both collaborative output and written corrective feedback. These results support Bitchener and Storch's (2016) argument is that peer feedback sometimes is more useful because students are aware of their own learning needs and become more responsive to these feedback.

In another research conducted by Mansourizadeh and Abdullah (2014), among the three sample groups, one of the groups received an additional collaboration interactional activity where the students discussed the grammar of the target language for five minutes. The results of the study have shown that the group that received an additional collaboration interactional activity improved, as compared to the groups which only received written corrective feedback. These studies have supported the claim that written corrective feedback can be more effective if it is used concurrently with other collaborative tasks.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this paper, we have presented four claims in relation to the topic of written corrective feedback. However, it is important to note that each claim needs to be further clarified and evaluated in future research. The scope of this research collated some key issues across a series of empirical studies. We have emphasised important aspects such as computer-mediated feedback, value-added collaborative tasks, individual differences among students, students' and teachers' perceptions, in influencing the effectiveness of written corrective feedback.

There were some studies that showed the importance of individual differences (Han & Hyland, 2015; Junqueira & Payant, 2015; Li & Li, 2012; Rahimi, 2015; Zacharias, 2007) but they may not support the claim that individual

differences play a part in our understanding of written corrective feedback. Some studies have shown signs of potential individual differences in students which affected the effectiveness of written corrective feedback. To minimise the inconsistent results of effectiveness of the different types of feedback, the treatment process and context of studies should be kept constant. This will reduce research design flaws as well as provide effective comparisons between studies. To further maximise this, approximate replication studies should be considered as they may help to reduce the number of design variables (Bitchener & Storch, 2016).

In Lee's (2008) study, written corrective feedback was given based on the expectations of schools and parents. That is, the more the written feedback to students, the better. In this way, we need to look into ways to ensure the quantity and the quality of written corrective feedback among teachers with the environment that they are situated in. Future research may examine the reasons for the differences in teachers' motives and perception of written corrective feedback. Some teachers genuinely want to help students improve their writing. Other teachers give extensive feedback mainly to meet their performance criteria in the annual staff appraisal. This is to say, teachers' motives and perception may foster or hinder the effectiveness of written corrective feedback.

Some studies have suggested the positive impact of the use of written corrective feedback with concurrent collaborative tasks. Giving written corrective feedback is a time consuming process for teachers as they have to go through students' writings in detail and provide feedback. With the additional collaborative tasks, the main question would be whether the collaborative tasks would take up even more classroom time and discourage teachers from providing the corrective feedback. This is related to teachers' perception of written corrective feedback in conjunction with concurrent student collaboration tasks which warrant further research in this area.

To conclude, this synthesis study can contribute to our current knowledge of written corrective feedback in three main ways. First, the interrelatedness of student individual factors, teachers' and students' perceptions suggest the need to consider affective factors in the understanding of written feedback practice. Second, written corrective feedback can be built on the affordance of technology, while the use of technology in feedback practice is important in facilitating collaborative learning and self-directed learning of the students in the 21st century. Third, written corrective feedback can be used concurrently with student collaborative tasks. In other words, written corrective feedback may go beyond one-on-one basis (i.e., one teacher and one student).

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Appendix 1

Summary of the studies reviewed

Focus of Analysis	**Study**	**Number of partici-pants**	**Educational Level**	**Country of Research**	**Language (L1 = First Language; L2 = Second Language)**
Types of corrective feedback and Involve-ment of individual differen-ces	Sachs & Polio (2007)	69	Undergraduates	United States	English (L2)
	Sheen (2007)	91	College	United States	English (L2)
	Truscott and Hsu (2008)	47	Graduates	Taiwan	English (L2)
	Bitchner (2008)	75	International Students	New Zealand	English (L2)
	Liu (2008)	12	Undergraduates	New Zealand	English (L2)
	Ellis, Sheen, Murakami & Takashima (2008)	49	Undergraduates	Japan	English (L2)
	Bitchener & Knoch (2008)	144	Undergraduates	New Zealand	English (L2)
	Sheen, Wright & Moldawa (2009)	80	Undergraduates	United States	English (L2)
	Bitchener & Knoch (2009a)	39	Undergraduates	New Zealand	English (L2)
	Bitchener & Knoch (2009b)	52	Undergraduates	New Zealand	English (L2)
	Evans, Hartshorn, McCollum & Wolfersberger (2010)	27	Undergraduates/Graduates	United States	English (L2)
	Sheen (2010)	177	College	United States	English (L2)

Appendix 1 (continued).

Focus of Analysis	**Study**	**Number of partici-pants**	**Educational Level**	**Country of Research**	**Language (L1 = First Language; L2 = Second Language)**
	Hartshorn, Evans, Merrill, Sudweeks, Strong-Krause & Anderson (2010)	47	Undergraduates	United States	English (L2)
	Storch & Wigglesworth (2010)	40	Graduates	Australia	English (L2)
	Santos, Serrano & Manchón (2010)	8	High School	Spain	English (L2)
	Bitchener & Knoch (2010a)	63	Undergraduates	United States	English (L2)
	Bitchener & Knoch (2010b)	52	Undergraduates	New Zealand	English (L2)
	Fahim & Hashemnezhad (2011)	80	Undergraduates	Iran	English (L2)
	Siewert (2011)	22	5th grade students	United States	English (L1)
	Evans, Hartshorn & Strong-Krause (2011)	30	Undergraduates	United States	English (L2)
	Li & Li (2012)	45	College	China	English (L2)
	Afraz, & Ghaemi (2012)	30	Students (Learning Institute)	Iran	English (L2)
	Van Beuningen, De Jong & Kuiken (2012)	268	Secondary School	Netherlands	English (L2)

Appendix 1 (continued).

Focus of Analysis	**Study**	**Number of partici-pants**	**Educational Level**	**Country of Research**	**Language (L1 = First Language; L2 = Second Language)**
	Farrokhi & Sattarpour (2012)	60	Undergraduates	Iran	English (L2)
	Shintani & Ellis (2013)	49	Students (English Learning Programme)	United States	English (L2)
	Kim (2013)	32	Undergraduates	South Korea	English (L2)
	Amirghassemi & Saeidi (2013)	115	Undergraduates	Iran	English (L2)
	Maleki & Eslami (2013)	90	Students (English Language School)	Iran	English (L2)
	Ferris, Liu, Sinha & Senna (2013)	40	Undergraduates	United States	English (L2)
	Shintani, Ellis & Suzuki (2014)	171	Undergraduates	Japan	English (L2)
	Ahmadi-Azad (2014)	54	Undergraduates	Iran	English (L2)
	Ebadi (2014)	60	Undergraduates	Iran	English (L2)
	Pakbaz (2014)	20	Undergraduates	Iran	English (L2)
	Mansourizadeh & Abdullah (2014)	47	Undergraduates	Malaysia	English (L2)
	Daneshvar & Rahimi (2014)	90	Undergraduates	Iran	English (L2)
	Stefanou & Revesz (2015)	89	High School	Cyprus	English (L2)
	Diab (2015)	57	Undergraduates	Lebanon	English (L2)
	Salimi & Valizadeh (2015)	15	Students (14 to 17 years old)	Iran	English (L2)

Appendix 1 (continued).

Focus of Analysis	**Study**	**Number of partici-pants**	**Educational Level**	**Country of Research**	**Language (L1 = First Language; L2 = Second Language)**
Students' and teachers' perceptions	Sarvestani & Pishkar (2015)	60	Students (Language Learning)	Iran	English (L2)
	Rummel & Bitchener (2015)	42	Students (Language Learning Centre)	Laos	English (L2)
	Rahimi (2015)	127	Undergraduates	Iran	English (L2)
	Kim (2015)	52	Young students (Language Learning Academy)	Korea	English (L2)
	Frear & Chiu (2015)	66	College	Taiwan	English (L2)
	Moradian, Miri & Hossein Nasab (2016)	38	Students (Language Learning)	Iran	English (L2)
	Kormos (2012)	NA	NA	NA	NA
	Aghajanloo, Mobini & Khosravi (2016)	120	Students (Language Learning)	Iran	English (L2)
	Weaver (2006)	44	Undergraduates	Nottingham	English (L1)
	Montgomery & Baker (2007)	98	Undergraduates	United States	English (L2)
	Lee (2008)	26	Teachers	Hong Kong	NA
	Evans, Hartshorn & Tuioti (2010)	1053	Teachers	69 different countries	NA
	Amrhein & Nassaji (2010)	64	Teachers and students (private learning schools)	Canada	English (L2)

Appendix 1 (continued).

Focus of Analysis	**Study**	**Number of partici-pants**	**Educational Level**	**Country of Research**	**Language (L1 = First Language; L2 = Second Language)**
	Jodaie, Farrokhi, & Zoghi (2011)	130	Teachers and high school students	Iran	English (L2)
	Robinson, Pope, & Holyoak (2013)	166	Undergraduates	United Kingdom	English (L1)
	Dowden, Pittaway, Yost & McCarthy (2013)	62	Undergraduates	Australia	English (L1)
	Guénette & Lyster (2013)	79	Teachers and high school students	Canada	English (L2)
	Han & Hyland (2015)	4	Undergraduates	China	English (L2)
	Best, Jones-Katz, Smolarek, Stolzenburg & Williamson (2015)	20	Undergraduates	United States	English (L2)
	Junqueira & Payant (2015)	1	Teachers	United States	English (L2)
	Jafarigohar & Kheiri (2015)	100	Teachers	Iran	English (L2)
	Chen, Nassaji & Liu (2016)	64	Undergraduates	China	English (L2)
Use of collaborative tasks or dialogues with written corrective feedback	Abadikhah & Ashoori (2012)	24	High intermediate language learners	Iran	English (L2)
	Mansourizadeh & Abdullah (2014)	47	Undergraduates	Malaysia	English (L2)
	Mikume & Oyoo (2010)	4	Secondary School	Tanzania	English (L2)
	Kassim & Luan (2014)	90	Undergraduates	Malaysia	English (L2)

Appendix 1 (continued).

Focus of Analysis	**Study**	**Number of partici-pants**	**Educational Level**	**Country of Research**	**Language (L1 = First Language; L2 = Second Language)**
Use of technolo-gy and computer-mediated feedback	Guardado & Shi (2007)	22	Undergraduates	Canada	English (L2)
	AbuSeileek (2013)	64	Undergraduates	Jordan	English (L2)
	AbuSeileek & Abualsha'r (2014)	64	Undergraduates	Jordan	English (L2)
	Shintani & Aubrey (2016)	68	Undergraduates	Japan	English (L2)
	Elola & Oskoz (2016)	4	Undergraduates	United States	Spanish (L2)