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**GENRE ANALYSIS OF PHD THESIS LITERATURE REVIEWS**

**WRITTEN IN ENGLISH BY VIETNAMESE LEARNERS**

***Phân tích thể loại các chương tổng quan nghiên cứu trong các***

***luận án tiến sĩ của người Việt Nam viết bằng tiếng Anh***

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**SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL THESIS**

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale of the study

A thesis literature review is an important chapter in a PhD thesis, and it is advised to write that the first thing that should be done for a study is conducting a comprehensive literature review. However, because of the problem of accessibility, the daunting size of the texts, and considerable variation in expectations across disciplines, little was known about the genre of thesis literature from a point of view in written discourse. In addition, because of the internationalization in Vietnam recently and complaints about literature review texts by Swales and Lindermann (2002), there has been a high demand for writing a thesis in English among Vietnamese researchers. Therefore, it is necessary to propose guidelines for non-native writers to write a thesis in English so that they can save time and be more confident to facilitate their research process in a professional setting conducted in English. It is hoped that this study will help guide thesis writers in how to write a thesis literature review in English in accordance with the standard convention in terms of content and linguistic characterization.

**1.2 Aim and objectives of the study**

The overarching aim of the thesis is to explore what characterises the genre of the thesis literature review chapter written in English by Vietnamese PhD students to highlight the issues in light of general academic convention to help improve the quality of literature review writing among PhD students. The overarching aim can be specified in the following objectives:

1. Exploring the generic structure of the thesis literature review chapters written in English by Vietnamese PhD students.

2. Exploring the typical linguistic resourcesemployed inthe literature review chapters.

The following research questions are formulated to achieve the aim and objectives mentioned above:

1. What is the generic structure of the thesis LR chapters written in English by Vietnamese PhD students?

2. What typicallanguage features are employed to realize the generic structure of LR chapters written in English by Vietnamese PhD students, and how are they employed?

**1.3 Scope of the study**

This study investigates the general macro-structure and typical language features of thesis literature reviews written in English by PhD Vietnamese learners. The data includes 30 literature review chapters drawn from 30 accepted PhD theses in the field of humanities and social sciences in a university in Vietnam. The purpose is to explore how these 30 chapters are organized in terms of genre and to explore what outstanding language features are employed to operationalize fully the functions of LR chapters.

**1.4 Significance of the study**

It is expected that this study’s findings will enable Vietnamese PhD writers, researcher, English language learners to more successfully meet the requirements of academic discourse so that they can (i) understand more deeply the generic structure of a literature review chapter in a doctoral thesis, and (ii) write this LR chapter correctly and appropriately in terms of generic structure, communicative functions and linguistic realisations. Finally, this study aims to help these researchers feel more at ease participating in activities in a professional setting conducted in English.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis comprises six chapters. The introduction briefly presents the rationale of the study, research aims and objectives, scope, significance of the study, and the structure of the thesis, followed by chapter two reviews relevant literature to this study. Chater three provides in detail the research methodology of the study. Chapter 4 and chapter 5 present results and discussion of move analysis and linguistic analysis, respectively. Chapter 6 is the conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 What is genre?

2.1.1 The notion of genre

This part clarifies the term ‘genre’ used in this study. The most important definition of genre is by Swales (1990):

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains the choice of content and style. … In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience.

(Swales, 1990, p. 58)

2.1.2 Discourse community

According to Swales (1990), discourse communities are described as social-rhetorical networks that form in order to work towards sets of common goals. The members belonging to discourse communities are familiar with the genres used to convey those sets of goals. As a result, discourse communities possess their genres.

2.1.3 Genre approaches

It is common to classify three approaches to genre (Hyon, 1996; Bhatia, 1993; Hyland, 2003; Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010; Paltridge & Starfield, 2007): Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS), and English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

2.2 Genre analysis

Hyland (2004) argues that genre analysis is driven by a desire to understand the communicative character of discourse by looking at how individuals use language to engage in particular communicative situations.

Genre analysis is also related to discourse analysis as it gives an explanation for the convention of genre construction and interpretation, attempting to give the answer for the question: Why do members of specific discourse communities use the language the way they do? (Bhatia, 1997).

In sum, genre analysis seeks to identify:

* Identify how texts are structured in terms of functional stages or moves
* Identify the features that characterize texts and that help realize their communicative purposes
* Examine the understandings of those who write and read the genre
* Discover how the genre relates to users' activities
* Explain language choices in terms of social, cultural, and psychological contexts
* Provide insights for language teaching

2.3 Doctoral thesis literature review chapter

2.3.1 What is a thesis literature review?

Ridley (2000) defines that ‘literature review' is the part of the thesis where the “extensive references” related to the discussed research and theory have influenced the choice of the research topic and the methodology you are choosing to adopt (p. 3). It can also be used to identify problems of research and/or a gap in previous research that needs filling (Ridley, 2000, p. 3).

2.3.2 The functions of a thesis literature review

A range of functions identified in the literature were presented and discussed, including the following primary functions:

- to review of previous research, right up to their date of examination;

- to describe and synthesize the major studies related to the topic of the research;

- to clarify relevant terms used in the research;

- to identify a gap (or a need or a problem or a shortcoming) in the literature.

- to provide a rationale explaining why it is important and significant to fill the gap;

- to inform the design and methodology of the proposed study.

(Cresswell, 2003; Hart, 1998, 2001; Bitchener, 2010, Ridley, 2000, 2012, Kwan, 2006, Paltridge & Starfield, 2007)

2.3.3 Standard convention of a literature review chapter

Writing a literature review should be applied with all rules of good writing which is made up of a clear organizational structure with an introduction, conclusion, and transitions between sections (Kwan, 2006; Paltridge & Starfield, 2007; Swales & Freak, 2009; Bitchener, 2010; Ridley, 2012; Neuman, 2014).

The literature review body is organised with a series of themes or topic units which are made up of a series of moves and sub-moves (Bitchener, 2010, p. 66); each move is used to realize a specific overall communicative purpose through a variety of linguistics strategies (Swales, 1990; Kwan, 2006).

2.4 A review of the Creating a Research Space (CARS) model

2.4.1 The original Creating a Research Space (CARS) model

The Creating a Research Space [C.A.R.S.] model was first developed by John Swales in 1981 based upon his analysis of 40 introductions extracted from research articles of various science disciplines. The ‘4-move’ model model suggests that introductions in RAs could be organized in a routinized 4-part structure.

Swales (1990) reformulated the structure and create three-move scheme, known as Creating a Research Space (CARS) model. According to Swales (1990), the model indicates how scholars support and promote their contribution to the field by first identifying the field of inquiry and summarising previous research (Move 1: Establishing a research territory), then identifying a gap in the existing work that the author’s study aims to address (Move 2: Establishing a niche), and finally stating the purpose of the author’s research and summarising how they will fill this gap (Move 3: Occupying the niche).

2.4.2 Bunton’s (2002) modified CARS model

Bunton (2002) applies this CARS model to examine the PhD introduction move structure of introductions written by both native and non-native speakers of English at a university in Hong Kong in a variety of disciplines. The results shows that generally the PhD introductions follows the three-move structure, but displays some new steps, so Bunton (2002) makes a revised model for PhD thesis introductions.

2.4.3 Kwan’s (2006) modified CARS model

Kwan (2006) applies the Bunton’s (2002) modified CARS model to identify the rhetorical structure of the LR chapters of 20 PhD theses written by native English speaking students in the field of applied linguistics from various universities in the UK, Australia, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

The LR chapter of a PhD thesis is a complicated and very long text, so Kwan (2006) divided each LR chapter into thematic units according to their locations and content. Kwan also observes that many of the thematic units carry strategies that resemble the steps in Bunton's revised CARS model, though these strategies do not necessarily all appear in a sequential order.

2.4.4 Definition of a move, a step, a strategy, and a thematic unit

Move: a discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse; a functional unit, not a formal one; a move may be aligned with a grammatical unit such as a sentence, utterance, or paragraph, though it should be better to be seen as flexible in terms of its linguistic realization such as a clause or even several sentences (Swales, 2004, pp. 228-229).

Step: can be understood as a segment of a text containing a particular form of rhetorical work necessary for realising the communicative purpose of a move; they are mostly signaled by linguistic and discourse clues in the text or are inferred from the context (Swales (1990). Lewin, Fine, and Young (2001) realized that steps may be obligatory-optional, depending on their frequency of appearance.

Strategy: in place of ‘step’ to denote elements that do not appear regularly or in sequential order (Bhatia, 2004).

Thematic unit: represent a theme, which discusses one particular aspect of the writer's research topic (Kwan, 2006).

2.5 Previous studies in literature review sections of doctoral theses

2.5.1 Studies focusing on PhD thesis generic structure

Bunton’s (1998) study is one of the earlier works focusing on different sections of a PhD thesis such as *Abstract, Introduction,* and *Conclusion*.

Bunton (2002) makes use of Swales’ (1990) to creates modified CARS three-move structure for PhD introductions. According to Bunton (2002), the model is important for both supervisors and for students. Supervisors will be more able than their students to see what variations are conventional in their particular fields. The model can then work as a “pedagogic framework” around which they build the knowledge they already have, intuitively if not explicitly expressed, about the way research is presented in their disciplines (pp. 74-75).

Thompson (2001) also conducted research into macrostructure and linguistic features of PhD theses such as the uses of citations and modal verbs. The aim of the study is to achieve a richer understanding of the nature of the texts that are produced as PhD theses, to support the quality improvement for non-native speaker doctoral students who are preparing to write a thesis.

2.5.2 Studies focusing on literature review texts

The Bunton’s (2002) revised CARS model for PhD thesis introductions was used by Kwan in 2006 to identify the rhetorical structure of the exclusive LR chapters of 20 PhD theses written by native students of English in the field of applied linguistics from various universities in the UK, Australia, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

Another special study conducted for the structure of complete MA theses can be named Chen & Kuo’s (2012) study which also includes the framework for LR chapters. This study identified a new step in the move of creating a research need, which is not reported in Kwan (2006), that is, the step of concluding a part of literature review and/or showing transition to reviewing a different area. Pedagogically, the study provides a more complete model of moves and steps for thesis writing in applied linguistics.

2.5.3 Previous studies from Vietnamese authors

Nguyen (2014) presents an investigation into the rhetorical structure of literature review chapters of TESOL master’s theses written by Vietnamese graduates. This study shows that these Vietnamese MA students know the overall structure of the LR chapters but are not fully aware of the rhetorical functions of the steps. In fact, instead of synthesizing, arguing, and indicating the relevancy of the reviewed literature for the niche of their research to be established, they simply reported on the research topics of previous studies, showed their acceptance of the previous findings and ended the body parts with a summary (Nguyen and Pramoolsook, 2014).

Nguyen and Pramoolsook (2015) investigates how reporting verbs (RVs) were employed in LR chapters which contained the most citations among other chapters in 24 TESOL MA theses by Vietnamese postgraduate students. Thí study shows that these Vietnamese writers' use of a limited number of RVs, their mistakes used in reporting previous studies could reflect their deficit of vocabulary and their low level of language proficiency as indicated by Hyland (2002).

Nguyen and Pramoolsook (2016) published another linguistic analysis of the same study corpus: citations in LR chapters using Thompson and Tribble’s (2001) framework to categorize the types and functions of citations. The study shows that non-native novice writers could not fully understand the use of citations only by reading of the guidelines.

The latest study applying genre-based analysis is done by Nguyen (2019) in her doct*oral thesis:* Medical case reports in English and Vietnamese: A genre-based analysis. The study shows that the genre of the Vietnamese MCRs was made up of twelve conventional moves with 22 steps which were longer than the English ones because of the amount of the information presented in the reports. In addition, the typical phrases used in the Vietnamese MCRs were not as diversified as in the English MCRs due to the repetitive use of the same expressions in the reports. Finally, more reporting verbs were used in the English MCRs because the writers may lack the judicious use of the RVs, efficiency in using the verbs, or creativity of successful academic discourse. However, the study still points out some limitations such as the order of the moves was still neglected, and it would be better if the thesis dealt with reporting verbs in some depth, taking into consideration the interpersonal function of language.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Mixed methods research design

The mixed-methods research is described as the collection of both qualitative (open-ended) and quantitative (closed-ended) data in response to research questions (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). Traditionally, quantitative research is sometimes portrayed as being unimaginative while qualitative research is often criticized for lacking generalisation, being too reliant on the subjective interpretations of researchers, and being incapable of replication by subsequent researchers (Brewer & Hunter, 2006). According to Cresswell & Cresswell (2018), the reasons for choosing mixed methods research because of “exploiting” the strength of both qualitative and quantitative research and “minimizing” the limitations of both approaches (p. 297).

3.2 The present study

In this study, the mixed methods research employs the explanatory sequential approach to explore and understand the generic structure and the language features of the thesis literature review written in English by Vietnamese graduates because the data are collected in phases (sequential), which enables the qualitative (exploratory) findings from the first phase to help develop a model with the aid of quantitative data in the second phase to assist in the interpretation of qualitative findings (Creswell, 2009; Morgan, 1998).

3.4 Data collection

The LR texts analyzed in this study were drawn from 30 doctoral theses in the discipline of Social Science and Humanities such as English Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Translation, Cross-culture study, and English Language Teaching Methodology written by Vietnamese graduates in a university in Viet Nam. The theses were completed within 12 years by Vietnamese PhD students.

3.5 Data analysis procedure

In the first phase, 30 literature review chapters were selected and divided into themes for move analysis according to the discussed topics based on the different meta-discourse and their boundaries, which include the section headings in the table of contents, the LR introductory text, and the formatting features. The texts then were coded and categorized based on the communicative purposes and rhetorical features guided by Kwan’s (2006) modified CARS model to identify the common generic structure for a thesis literature review. Finally, the common rhetorical pattern for a thematic unit in the LR chapter was developed. This analysis is to find the answer to the first research question.

In the second phase, first, the rhetorical moves and strategies identified in the first phase were quantified to develop a more reliable model. Then, these moves were copied into separate files. Once the corpora of moves were made, they were stripped of all graphs, tables, diagrams, etc., and all the texts associated with them, then they were converted to and saved as plain text files for running in the software WordSmith Version 7.0 (Scott, 2016), the *Concord* Tool of which locates all references to any given word or phrase within the corpus, showing them in standard concordance lines with the search word centered and a variable amount of context at either side.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF MOVE ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction and conclusion texts of the LR chapters

This organisation of a thesis follows the rules of good writing which is made up of a clear organizational structure with an introduction, conclusion, and transitions between sections.

4.2 Thematic rhetorical structures in the body parts of the LR chapters

The result shows that 132 thematic units were identified in the body parts of 30 LR chapters. It means that on average each LR chapter consists of 4.4 themes. It is also found that many of the thematic unit's model features the three moves in the CARS model and in particular those proposed by Kwan (2006) for PhD thesis LR texts.

No move appears in the thematic units 100% of the time, suggesting that none of them are obligatory.

In terms of the move frequency distribution: Move 1 (354/695), Move 2 (276/695); Move 3 (65/695). The low rate of Move 3 is because it may be present in different parts of LR texts.

The most common pattern is the pairing of Move 1 and Move 2 which is expressed in the formula (1-2)n, in which 'n' refers to the number of times the pairing recurs. It is followed by the patterns of irregular 3-move, (1-2)n-1, and Move 1 only.

4.3 Move structures in the thematic units of the LR chapters

4.3.1 Move 1: Establishing one part of the territory of one's research

Strategy 1A (*surveying the non-research-related phenomena*) and Strategy 1C are the two most common realizations of Move 1, accounting for 54.80% and 54.24%.

The limited use of Strategy 1B (14.4%) is likely a result of the fact that Vietnamese writers are not able to make specific claims about the values of the research topic being employed or directly address the importance or relevance of a theme to the writer’s research or thesis-writing due to language background or an absence of relevant material in the researched topic.

4.3.2 Move 2: Creating a research niche

New strategies: The strategy summarises a segment in Move 2, so it is named 2F (concluding segment), and the strategy introduces the next segment to discuss, so it is named 2G (transitional segment).

The most frequent one (Strategy 2A) is present in only 29.35% of Move 2s.

Strategies 2A (29.35%) and 2F (26.45%) are the predominant Move 2 elements found in the corpus, which outnumbers the others by about two times and account for more than half of Move 2 instances.

The third frequently used strategy in Move 2 of this LR chapter corpus is Strategy 2E: 13.27% of Move 2s. This strategy is also found in the concluding text of a reviewed theme where the writer summarized the previously discussed literature and abstracted it in order to indicate her theoretical position.

2C, 2B, 2G: accounts for about 12-14 %, so it can be inferred that Vietnamese writers use a diversity of strategies to create a research niche for their study. However, that not many writers (only about 13%) include strength claiming and gap-indicating sections in their literature review may cause the writers to lose marks for their thesis if we use literature review scoring rubric by Boote and Beile (2005).

4.3.3 Move 3: Occupying the research niche

Most Move 3 instances carry Strategy 3D or Strategy 3A only, or the combination of 3A and 3D, suggesting that they are the predominant realizations found in the corpus, and the major function of this move is to occupy the niche created in Move 2.

If one has claimed a lack of research in one area in a preceding Move 2, it is expected that the most legitimate Move 3 strategy will be that of Strategy 3A. On the other hand, if one has positively evaluated a research methodology in the previous Move 2, it is natural for the writer to claim the adoption of the methodology (3C) in Move 3.

4.4 Generic modeling for a thesis literature review written in English by Vietnamese learners

| **Literature Review Chapter** | | **Frequency** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **LR introduction** | | 67.74% |
|  | **THEME x n\*** |  |
|  | ***Theme introducing text*** | 33.33% |
| **Move 1** | **Establishing one part of the territory of one’s own research** by: | **97.73%** |
| Strategy 1.1 | surveying the non-research-related phenomena or knowledge claims | 54.80% |
| Strategy 1.2 | surveying the research-related phenomena | 54.24% |
| Strategy 1.3 | claiming centrality | 15.25% |
| **Move 2** | **Creating a research niche(in response to Move 1) by:** | **78.79%** |
| Strategy 2.1 | Counter-claiming | 29.35% |
| *Strategy 2.2* | *Concluding a part in a theme* | 26.45% |
| Strategy 2.3 | Synthesizing the theoretical framework/position | 15.58% |
| Strategy 2.4 | Making confirmative claims | 14.13% |
| Strategy 2.5 | Gap-indicating | 13.04% |
| *Strategy 2.6* | *Indicating transition to a new part in a theme* | 12.68% |
| Strategy 2.7 | Relevancy-claiming | 06.16% |
| **Move 3** | **Occupying the research niche(in response to Move 2) by:** | **38.64%** |
| Strategy 3.1 | Announcing the adoption of terms or definitions of terms | 38.46% |
| Strategy 3.2 | Announcing aims of investigation | 30.77% |
| Strategy 3.3 | Announcing the theoretical position or the theoretical framework | 23.08% |
| Strategy 3.4 | Announcing the research methodology | 12.31% |
|  | ***Theme concluding text*** | 32.57% |
|  | ***Theme transitional text*** | 15.15% |
| **LR conclusion** | | 80.64% |
| ***Chapter transition*** | | 20.00% |
| \*: ‘n’ stands for recurring for ‘n’ times of theme | | |

A move structure is postulated below to describe the generic structure of the Vietnamese PhD LR chapters (see Table 4.11) with newly identified strategies in *italics*. The strategies in their respective moves are renamed according to strategy-numbering systems to avoid being mistaken between different revised CARS models. The numbering system means that the first number indicates the number of the move; it is separated from the numeral that indicates the descending order of frequency of occurrence (i.e., the strength of preference). The arrangement, therefore, does not imply any sequential structuring.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS OFLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

5.1 Citations

The study shows there are variations in the number of citation types used in each LR chapter in the corpus. This significant difference in the number of citations among texts may be due to the complexity of the research subject as well as the number of themes included in each chapter. The lower number of citations by Vietnamese writers in LR texts may indicate that they do not provide sufficient references for their research. This insufficiency of reference resources may be due to the lack of study resources in educational organizations, the limited ability of writers’ English proficiency and writing competence, the cognitive and cultural values, and the awareness and responsibility of writers in the academic community.

5.2 Reporting verbs

The analysis of all reporting verbs in the present corpus revealed a preference for reporting information as Discourse Acts, followed by Research acts and Cognition acts. The dominant use of Discourse Act verbs confirms the similar trend of using RVs in Nguyen and Pramoolsook’s (2015) study in TESOL and in Hyland’s (2002) study in the field of humanities and social sciences, which is considered suitable in an argument schema relating to the explicit interpretation, speculation, and complexity as "accepted aspects of knowledge" (p. 126).

The top ten RVs are named state, claim, suggest, define, conduct, argue, find out, propose, point out, and study, which represents 36.4 % of the cases.

The study also shows that Vietnamese writers favor using RVs mostly in three patterns: simple present, simple past, and present perfect. The most frequent choice for the reporting verb is present/active.

5.3 Modal verbs

This study also aimed to analyze the types, frequency, and functions of modal auxiliary verbs used in LR texts. The result shows that the PhD LR chapters written by Vietnamese authors use a variety of modal auxiliary verbs to operationalize their rhetorical purposes. From the discussion, it is noted that the most frequent auxiliary verb used is *can* with a frequency rate of nearly 50%. This is followed by *may* with a frequency of 15.01%, s*hould* and *will* with a frequency of 12.36% and 10.29% respectively. These modal verbs are used quite frequently to increase the efficiency of different rhetorical functions in different parts of the LR chapters.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of findings

- The proposed model to structure a thesis literature review is presented in Table 6.1 on the next page. The strategies in each move are named according to strategy-numbering systems to avoid being mistaken with different revised CARS models. This strategy-numbering system is applied to indicate the descending order of frequency of occurrence (i.e., the strength of preference). It should be noted that the theme organization may include one move/strategy or/ and others, and it is not necessary to include all moves or strategies in one theme.

Table 6. 1: The suggested generic structure of a thesis LR written in English by Vietnamese learners

| **Literature Review Chapter** | |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **LR introduction** | |  |
| **THEME x n\*** | | |
|  | **Theme introducing text** |  |
| **Move 1** | **Establishing one part of the territoryby:** | and/or |
| Strategy 1.1 | surveying the non-research-related phenomena |  |
| Strategy 1.2 | surveying the research-related phenomena | and/or |
| Strategy 1.3 | claiming centrality | and/or |
| **Move 2** | **Creating a research niche (in response to Move 1) by:** | and/or |
| Strategy 2.1 | Counter-claiming | and/or |
| Strategy 2.2 | Concluding a part | and/or |
| Strategy 2.3 | Synthesizing the theoretical framework/position | and/or |
| Strategy 2.4 | Making confirmative claims | and/or |
| Strategy 2.5 | Gap-indicating | and/or |
| Strategy 2.6 | Indicating transition | and/or |
| Strategy 2.7 | Relevancy-claiming |  |
| **Move 3** | **Occupying the research niche (in response to Move 2) by:** |  |
| Strategy 3.1 | Announcing the adoption of terms or definitions of terms | and/or |
| Strategy 3.2 | Announcing aims of investigation | and/or |
| Strategy 3.3 | Announcing the theoretical position or the theoretical framework | and/or |
| Strategy 3.4 | Announcing the research methodology |  |
|  | **Theme concluding text** |  |
|  | **Theme transitional text** |  |
| **LR conclusion** | |  |
| **Chapter transition** | |  |
| \*: ‘n’ stands for recurring for ‘n’ times of theme | | |

- Citations (citing the work of others) and modal verbs are key linguistic resources of the literature review chapters. Vietnamese researchers display a tendency to duplicate the author’s original wordings and make authors prominent through integral active verb-controlling forms. However, the low density of citations in the corpus reveals that Vietnamese researchers need to include more references for their research in order to provide sufficient background information so that the context of the discussed research is clear.

- The study also shows the limited use of a wide range of reporting verbs, but some of the reporting verbs don’t belong to the conventional reporting verb list suggested by Hyland (2002). It meansthat some Vietnamese writers invented their own words to report other people’s works and ideas. These findings require Vietnamese writersto gain greater familiarity with using reporting verbs for achieving thecommunicative purposes of literature chapters.

- The study also shows that *can* is the most dominant modal verbs used in all three moves. The reason why the proportion of *can* is so high in the Vietnamese texts might be that, in the Vietnamese language, the equivalent of *can* (deontic meaning) is used with a high proportion in both written and spoken forms. Besides, when being translated into Vietnamese, modal verbs *can, could, may, might* with their deontic and epistemic meanings and modal verbs *will, would* with their epistemic meanings have the same homophone ‘*có thể’*, so it is very confusing for Vietnamese writers to distinguish the meanings and usages of these 6 auxiliaries specifically. It also seems that *can* was easier for the Vietnamese authors to be comprehended and learned functionally than the other ones.

- The lower proportion of some modal auxiliaries (*might, could, would*) in the Vietnamese texts may be the result of the avoidance strategy adopted by the Vietnamese writers since some of these modals do not have clear and direct equivalents in the Vietnamese language. Vietnamese learners generally realize that *might, could,* and *would* are the past form of modal verbs *may, can*, and *will*, and they may be confused by the same modal expressing different functions or the same function expressed by different modal verbs.

- The exploratory sequential mixed method research design integrating both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis in a sequence of phases and the cross-methodological analysis providing the two levels of discourse structure have resulted in a more accurate, more detailed, and more complete understanding of how a thesis literature review written in English by Vietnamese learners is constructed.

6.2 Pedagogical implications

The main pedagogical implication of this study relates to the teaching and introducing of the genre of Vietnamese PhD LR chapters to PhD candidates, Vietnamese novice researchers, and scholars from different disciplines. Given that the social science PhD literature review constitutes a coherent genre, and that students and novice researchers need to be able to control this genre, it is important to consider how information about PhD literature review genre can be integrated into teaching. Therefore, the common approaches used for the teaching of the genre will be reviewed by introducing the organization of PhD LR chapter, using Authentic teaching material, and/or designing writing courses for novice non-native writers in English

6.3 Limitations of the study

- Limited data collection tools

- Subjective bias in qualitative part, the researcher’s experience as a PhD student might impose certain personal ideas on the interpretation of the data

- LR chapters in PhD theses are complex and dynamic, the findings of this study might not fully cover all aspects related to the procedure for genre analysis of such academic texts

6.4 Future research recommendations

- Extend the scope of the study to other chapters in a PhD thesis such as the Introduction, the Methodology, the Findings, Discussion, or the Conclusion chapter might help to deepen understanding of the genre analysis of a PhD thesis.

- Interview in person with the PhD writers and their supervisors so that the interview data may provide a deeper understanding of the practice of writing LR chapters in a PhD thesis as well as enrich the findings of this research.

- More lexicogrammatical features in the LR texts might be analysed. Such studies will help to characterize the overall linguistic features of such academic and sophisticated texts.

- Further research in using linguistic features among Vietnamese writers on different academic levels (articles, Master or Undergraduate theses).

- Compare the use of genre between the English corpus and the Vietnamese corpus.

- Analyse the generic structure and lexicogrammatical problems made by Vietnamese writers in the LR texts.

6.5 The concluding remarks

The study demonstrates that the combination of move analysis and linguistic analysis can enhance our understanding of how a thesis literature review is structured both at the macro level (the generic structure) and the micro level (linguistic features).

Another advanced point of this study is that computer software, WordSmith Tools, was employed to assist in the text analysis by locating and quantifying the search words in a short time with a large corpus to produce reliable results.

The present study shows that although the rhetorical move and strategy organisation in the suggested generic structure for writing a thesis literature review can be broadly understood to resemble Kwan’s modified CARS model, this model needs to be adapted to include some new moves and strategies to meet the requirements of a conventional thesis literature review and educational organisations.

Finally, it is hoped that this study may help to raise PhD students’ awareness of the genre of PhD thesis literature reviews, ease the research process for novice researchers who are seeking advice on how to write literature reviews properly, contribute to the existing literature of study of genre analysis, and benefit researchers, language teachers and learners in a number of ways.

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