

# CYCLICITY OF MOVES IN THE INTRODUCTION SECTION OF RESEARCH ARTICLES WRITTEN BY FILIPINO ACADEMIC WRITERS IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS

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## ABSTRACT

The scientific and practical contributions of published research articles have benefited researchers with similar interests in a particular field in progressing knowledge and its application. It is deemed that the dissemination and publication of research findings to reach the widest audience are the responsibilities of a researcher. Apart from these, publication creates an avenue where findings can be critically evaluated, supported, challenged, or even refuted which builds active participation between and among the members of the discourse community. Moreover, novice writers also refer to published articles for modeling and reference as they author their research articles. However, novice writers who aspire to publish their research works must be equipped with rhetorical strategies to meet the standards of academic scholars and reviewers for acceptance and publication. Acceptance of research articles can also be attributed to the way writers develop the structure of the introduction section of their research articles for it requires effective persuasion skills in providing the rationale of their study. This study, therefore, aimed at analyzing the rhetorical features of 30 research articles' introduction sections (RAIs) published in Applied Linguistics journals selected under similar contextual conditions. The "Creating a Research Space" (CARS) model for analyzing the discourse features at the sentence level was employed. The results of the study revealed that Moves 1, 2, and 3 are obligatory and the steps in realizing the moves do not follow a linear pattern but are interwoven. This study captured a basic representation of the rhetorical organization preferred by the writers in structuring their RAIs. This provision would give Filipino academic writers a wide range of discourse preferences in structuring the introduction section of their research articles to meet the required standards for acceptance and publication. Pedagogical implications were provided for future research directions.

**Keywords:** *rhetorical structure; cyclicity of moves; introduction section; research articles; Filipino academic writers; applied linguistics*



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## INTRODUCTION

Research is vital in progressing science. In the same way, the dissemination of research findings is of equal importance. One of the ways to disseminate research findings is through the publication of research articles (RAs) in scientific journals. Atai and Habibie (2012) assert that research articles are “the main channel for sharing research findings among scholars.” As a result, the contribution of published research articles has been remarkable in enriching the pool of literature in each focus across fields of specialization. Accordingly, it is necessary and virtuous to publish research articles since it is one of the ways to reach the widest audience. Wager and Kleinert (2010) believe that publication is the final stage of research and therefore a responsibility of all researchers. Scholarly publications are expected to provide a detailed and permanent record of research. Apart from that, publication creates an avenue where findings can be critically evaluated, supported, challenged, or even refuted which builds active participation between and among the members of the discourse community. Hence, the culmination of facts gathered through an extremely thorough and accurate approach that has been scrutinized makes research articles credible, thus gaining validity for decision-making. Moreover, novice writers also refer to these published articles for modeling and reference as they write their research articles.

Morales (2016) underscored that adherence to the different writing conventions that are academically acceptable to reviewers from a publication, or a field should be considered when writing and submitting research articles. Referring to the writing conventions of published research articles during the writing process would increase the chances of acceptance of a manuscript in terms of academic writing standards. Armed with better research writing skills, novice academic writers will be able to perform writing more independently and be able to communicate their thoughts more effectively. Therefore, it is necessary for one who attempts to publish a research article to employ rhetorical strategies and conventions to meet the standards of academic scholars and reviewers for acceptance and publication.

Through a much closer look, acceptance of research articles can also be attributed to the way writers develop the structure of their papers. Demystifying how research article sections are developed has solicited several rhetorical analyses from different researchers in the field. Among these sections, the introduction received notable attention from the scholarly community because it requires effective persuasion skills in providing the rationale of the study. Apart from this, Swales' (1990) “Creating a Research Space” (CARS) model paved its way as a distinguished framework in analyzing the rhetorical structure of the introduction section of RAs across fields of specialization and has built active participation from the discourse community stretching from academic scholars who tried to support, evaluate, challenge, and refute the model. Since then, the CARS model has become an important framework not only for discourse and linguistics analysts but also for novice writers. Fernandez (2016) hinted that the introduction section of the research paper would either make or break a research output. A poorly written

introduction would affect the authority of the paper as well as the interest of the readers for they might find it incomprehensible. According to Kashiha and Marandi (2019), the introduction section of a research paper establishes key concepts, themes, and theories depicting information about the background of the study, relevant and related studies, research gaps, the research problem, and objectives. However, this is a challenging task for novice writers, especially for those who are not aware of rhetorical strategies for conveying their purpose as this can greatly affect the overall presentation of arguments and assumptions.

Rahman et al. (2017) conducted a rhetorical study of 20 empirical RAIs in Applied Linguistics using Swales' 1990 and 2004 versions of the CARS model. They explained that the rhetorical moves analyzed can be utilized for pedagogical purposes for novice writers in Applied Linguistics. The findings of their study highlighted that the rhetorical structure of RAIs in Applied Linguistics, both conforms to and departs from the CARS model. Specifically, it was found that the three moves proposed by Swales are obligatory in the study's corpora. What makes the RAIs from Applied Linguistics negate the Swales model is Move 3, which is comprised of only five steps instead of seven. Moreover, the three moves including the steps do not occur in sequential order with 18 different structural patterns. Therefore, the move structural patterns deviated from the M1-M2-M3 structure as predicted by Swales' 2004 version of the CARS model. The findings of the study may facilitate a better understanding of RAIs for novice scholars in Applied Linguistics in an attempt to provide a wide range of rhetorical preferences in shaping the introduction section of their research articles.

In his 2012 published journal article, Briones reported on research on RAIs written in the field of Philosophy at the University of Santo Tomas. The study aimed at determining how RAIs are structured by the local discourse community by analyzing 30 RAIs at the sentence level to identify the moves and underlying steps. The study revealed that while there are similarities with the 2004 version of the Swales CARS model, minor differences were also observed. One major difference is Move 2, which is not observed in the majority of the RAIs analyzed. Drawing from his findings, Briones (2012) argued that teachers in research writing must acknowledge that there are inherent rhetorical patterns in different disciplines thereby assuming their own identities and evolving along the trails of disciplinary culture which are to a certain degree different from the structural framework developed by Swales.

In a comparative study, Behnam et al. (2017) employed Swales' 1990 version of the CARS model to examine the move structure of 40 RAIs in the Physical and Social Sciences. The results showed that the frequency of moves in the RAIs of both the Physical and Social Sciences implies similarities. However, it was noted that there was a significant difference between the frequency of steps. This means that although the employment of moves in the RAIs from both disciplines was the same, the steps employed in realizing each move were different. They emphasized that the results might present language teachers, students, and syllabus designers with useful information about the move structure of the introduction section of research

articles in the Physical and Social Sciences. These findings corroborate that of Briones (2012) as regards viewing that certain disciplines have a specific writing convention that assumes their identity.

Likewise, Fernandez (2016) analyzed 79 randomly sampled RAIs from the Biology, Statistics, and English programs employing Swales' 1990 version of the CARS model, which revealed that only the English program RAIs followed the sequence of moves and steps provided by Swales; the RAIs for Biology and Statistics followed only a few. Moreover, the RAIs from the English programs were found to be the wordiest and most cohesive based on the frequency of employed cohesions. The RAIs in the field of Statistics were appropriately condensed and moderately cohesive. The Biology RAIs, on the other hand, were the most abbreviated and disjunctive.

Jalilifar (2010) investigated the generic organization of 120 RAIs from local Iranian and international journals in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for General Purposes (EGP), and Discourse Analysis (DA). The findings revealed the existence of variations and marked differences in utilizing second and third moves across the RAIs in ESP, EGP, and DA published internationally. The results further suggested that the insufficient awareness of some Iranian writers regarding the generic structure of the introduction section pointed to the need for the writers to improve their RAIs. Awareness of the rhetorical specification of the introduction section is crucial, especially for those who wish to publish in international journals.

Much of the literature has explored the rhetorical structure of RAIs (Rahman et al., 2017; Briones, 2012; Ahamad & Yusof, 2012; Behnam & Nikoukhesal, 2017; Fernandez, 2016; Jalilifar, 2010) in Applied Linguistics claiming that awareness of the generic rhetorical structure can provide academic writers with widely practiced writing conventions acceptable in a discourse community. It can be noted that Behnam et al. (2017) and Briones (2012) argued that every discipline has its inherent rhetorical pattern that assumes its identity. They, including Rahman et al. (2017), further described that the moves and steps do not follow a sequential order as compared to those of Swales' model. Instead, the moves were interwoven, and different steps were employed to realize the moves. Moreover, Jalilifar (2012) and Rahman et al. (2017) suggested that understanding the rhetorical specifications of the introduction section as an important requirement would empower academic writers who wish to publish their papers and give them a greater chance to have their articles approved.

The pool of literature presented enables the current study to fill a gap since it can be gleaned that no one has explored the rhetorical structure as well as the cyclicity of moves that are evident in the RAIs written by Filipino academic writers that were published in international journals. This calls for more scientific inquiries as far as the RAIs are concerned. The goal of the current study is to equip academic writers in general, and Filipino academic writers in particular, with a rhetorical structure

that could provide them with a wide range of rhetorical preferences to structure and shape the introduction section of their research articles to meet the required standards and writing conventions, specifically in Applied Linguistics.

**Theoretical Framework**

The birth of the 2004 version of the Swales CARS model is due to the inapplicability of some steps in its 1990 version. Researchers like Anthony (1999) and Samraj (2002) asserted that some steps are lacking in the earlier version of the CARS model as they investigated research articles in the fields of Software Engineering and Wildlife Behavior and Conservation Biology, respectively. Since the present study is not concerned with research in those fields, the 1990 version of the CARS model was, therefore, employed. The choice of using the CARS model for this study is due to its prevalence, the availability of findings from diverse studies to be referred to, and its robustness. Additionally, Hirano (2009) believes that as an analytical tool, the 1990 version, still seems to be more widely used than the 2004 version, possibly due to the research tradition that has developed around that version. This study, therefore, adheres to that tradition.

The original CARS model includes three major moves: 1) Establishing a Territory; 2) Establishing a Niche, and 3) Occupying the Niche. Each move has several steps which may be obligatory and/or optional in some fields. Realizing the steps means achieving the major moves.

**Table 1**  
*Creating a Research Space (CARS) Model, 1990 Version*

<b>Moves</b>	<b>Steps</b>
Move 1, Establishing a territory	Step 1 : Claiming centrality Step 2 : Making topic generalization(s) Step 3 : Reviewing items of previous research
Move 2, Establishing a niche	Step 1A: Counter-claiming Step 1B: Indicating a gap Step 1C: Question-raising Step 1D: Continuing a tradition
Move 3, Occupying the niche	Step 1A: Outlining purposes Step 1B: Announcing the present research Step 2 : Announcing the principal findings Step 3 : Indicating the Research Article (RA) structure

Table 1 presents the moves and steps in the 1990 version of the CARS model. There are three rhetorical moves, namely Move 1 – Establishing a territory, Move 2 –

Establishing a niche, and Move 3 – Occupying the Niche. Each move has step/s to be taken to achieve the writing move.

In writing RAIs, providing the rationale and significance of the study, establishing that the study is worth exploring, and asserting that it is a part of an active well-established area is usually the first step that writers work on (Move 1-Establishing a territory).

Realizing such a move would mean adopting one or more strategies. The first strategy is Move 1 Step 1 (Claiming centrality). Writers typically begin by claiming that the area being studied is significant. Below are some of the typical linguistic signals for claiming centrality as cited in Swales (1990, p.144):

*Recently, there has been wide interest in...*  
*The explication of the relationship between... is a classic problem of...*  
*Knowledge of... has a great importance for...*  
*The study of... has become an important aspect of...*  
*The effect of... has been studied extensively in recent years...*  
*Many investigators have recently turned to...*

The second is Move 1 Step 2 (Making topic generalization/s). Writers make a centrality claim by referring to the current knowledge, practice, or phenomena of the topic in general terms. Below are some of the linguistic signals for M1S2 as cited by Swales (1990, p.146):

*The etiology and pathology of... is well known...*  
*There is now much evidence to support the hypothesis that...*  
*The properties of... are still not completely understood...*  
*Education core courses are often criticized for...*  
*...is a common finding in patients with...*  
*English is rich in related words exhibiting stress shifts...*

The third strategy is Move 1 Step 3 (Reviewing items of previous research). The writers of the research articles further claim to and describe a centrality by reviewing a selective and relevant group of previous studies in the field. This is the part where writers lay a foothold for their study by citing assumptions and results that would relate to the study they are venturing into.

After claiming and establishing the research territory, the writers try to set up a niche for their research (Move 2 - Establishing a Niche) by arguing that the previous research is somehow incomplete or has several limitations and weaknesses. This is usually done by employing one of the following strategies: making a bold claim about previous work and refuting it (Step 1A – Counter-claiming); signifying that there is a gap because the previous works have limitations and are insufficient (Step 1B- Indicating a gap); questioning previous research (Step 1C - Question-raising); or claiming that a new explanation is needed (Step 1D - Continuing a tradition).

Typically, Move 2 is signaled by terms like: “however,” “nevertheless,” “yet,” “unfortunately,” and “but”; negative quantifiers such as “no,” “little,” “none,” and “few”; and negative verbs or verb phrases such as “fail,” “lack,” “overlook,” “not,” “rarely,” and “ill.” Some examples of Move 2 as cited by Swales (1990, p.154) are:

*However, the previously mentioned methods suffer from some limitations...*  
*The first group cannot treat and is limited to...*  
*The second group is time-consuming and therefore expensive, and its...is not sufficiently accurate.*  
*Both suffer from the dependency on...*

Move 3 (Occupying the niche) is the last move where writers claim that they will address the problem identified in Move 2. Writers may opt to outline the purpose/s of the research about to be reported (Step 1A - Outlining purposes) and describe the main features of the present research (Step 1B - Announcing the present research). Apart from Step 1, which is the obligatory step in Move 3, other options that follow are the summary of the principal findings of the research (Step 2 - Announcing the principal findings), and the description of the structure or content of the rest of the research article (Step 3 - Indicating the RA structure).

Some examples of linguistic phrases that signal Move 3 as cited by Swales (1990, p.160) are the following:

*This paper reports on the results obtained...*  
*The aim of the present paper is to give...*  
*In this paper we give preliminary results of...*  
*The main purpose of the experiment reported here was to...*  
*This study was designed to evaluate...*  
*The present work extends the use of the last model...*  
*We now report the interaction of...*

The 1990 version of the Swales CARS model was operationally used in the current study and move analysis at the sentence level was employed to achieve the primary goal of this research. Annuai et al. (2013) credited that move analysis is one of the genre-based approaches used in the identification of the structure of research articles and has become a critical area of research. Thus, the present study employed a move analysis approach at the sentence level in the RAIs of the corpora. Relating to the literature presented, the cyclicity of moves was extensively studied to corroborate or negate the findings of previous studies as to how the moves and steps are realized by the writers of the corpora under investigation. The cyclicity of moves and steps was scrutinized to determine whether they are interwoven as argued by Behnam et al. (2017), Briones (2012), and Rahman et al. (2017), or follow the sequential order as proposed by Swales (1990).

## Research Questions

This study aimed to determine and analyze the rhetorical structure of some selected RAIs written by Filipino academic writers from non-high impact journals (NHIJ) in Applied Linguistics. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the cyclicity of moves and steps evident in the RAIs written by Filipino academic writers in Applied Linguistics?
2. What rhetorical structures in the introduction section are developed from the findings of the study?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study used a mixed method design: the qualitative analysis, which commenced through a genre-specific discourse study, and the move analysis to determine the cyclicity of writing moves and steps at the sentence level, which employed a descriptive analysis of the frequency of occurrences and is presented as quantitative data. The structure of the cyclicity of moves and steps was determined to either corroborate or negate the findings of previous studies in this area using Swales' (1990) CARS model. The ultimate goal of the study is to derive the rhetorical structure from an analysis of the prominent cyclicity of moves and steps of the corpora under investigation to demystify the rhetorical preferences of Filipino academic writers in shaping their RAIs.

### Research Corpus

Thirty RAIs were selected employing Moreno's (2008) criteria of data under similar contextual conditions. Moreno (2008, p. 35) explained that "for corpora to be considered comparable, the data need to comprise texts that have been produced under similar contextual conditions." Thus, the following criteria were used in selecting the corpus for this study:

1. All RAIs are written by Filipino academic writers.
2. The RAIs are extracted from NHIJ in Applied Linguistics. The impact factors of the journals were obtained from <https://www.Researchgate.net>. Moreover, publishing sources of NHIJ research articles were counterchecked in Beall's List(2021) to ensure the quality.
3. Research articles should have been published within the period 2015-2019.
4. The corpora should have the label "Introduction."

**Table 2***Distribution of Research Article (RA) Data from Applied Linguistic Journals*

<b>Journals in Applied Linguistics</b>	<b>No. of RAs</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Asian Journal of English Language Studies (AJELS)	15	50
Philippine Journal of Linguistics	6	20
AsTEN Journal of Teacher Education	2	6.7
The Philippine ESL Journal	2	6.7
International Journal of Education & Literacy Studies	2	6.7
Journal of Language Studies	1	3.3
Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies	1	3.3
International Journal on Language, Research and Education Studies	1	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows that a total of 30 RAs were extracted from the NHIJ in Applied Linguistics that were retrievable online. As evident from the table, the highest number of RAs extracted for this study were from the Asian Journal of English Language Studies.

### **Method of Analysis**

The purpose of this study was to examine the discourse features of the 30 empirical RAIs from published journals. A genre-specific discourse analysis was employed through a move analysis at the sentence level. Should there be two moves present in a sentence, the researchers, together with two independent coders, chose the more salient and dominant writing move. Linguistic signals were also considered in deciding which move is more salient, whenever applicable. The cyclicities of the moves were coded as Move 1 (Establishing a research territory), Move 2 (Establishing a niche), and Move 3 (Occupying the niche). Meanwhile, when presented with steps to realize a particular move, these were coded as M1S1 (Move 1 Step 1), M2S1 (Move 2 Step 1), M3S1 (Move 3 Step 1), and so on. The cyclicity of steps employed in each move was presented and discussed separately and was tagged, for example, as *M1S1+M1S2+M1S3+M1S4+M1S5* this pattern expresses the steps that the writers have opted to employ to realize Move 1. A careful analysis of the patterns of cyclicity of moves formed the rhetorical structure that Filipino academic writers employ when developing their RAIs. This method of analysis ensures that the research questions are appropriately addressed.

## **Research Procedure and Independent Coding**

To ensure a higher degree of accuracy in the identified rhetorical moves, an inter-coding reliability procedure was employed by assigning two independent coders. The inter-coding reliability agreement for this study was set at 95%. The authors held initial meetings with the independent coders to explain the objectives of the study as well as the procedures to be followed in coding. The independent coders were briefed regarding the framework for coding and provided with clear instructions on how to identify and code the major moves and steps, and how to determine the typical cyclicity of the moves in the RAIs. Concerns and questions were discussed about the analysis as well as the number of RAIs to be analyzed by the coders. The researchers tagged the moves and steps of all the RAIs, while the independent coders tagged 30% of the RAIs to achieve a higher degree of accuracy in the analysis. The researchers and the two independent coders also met to analytically compare the coded moves and the typical cyclicity of moves in each RAI for the inter-coder reliability procedure. This approach was adopted from Kanoksilapatham's (2011) study.

## **Descriptive Statistics**

The quantitative data were presented through the frequency of the discourse features (major moves and steps) found in the RAIs. The data obtained from analyzing the realized moves and steps were converted into quantitative data using the percentile formula adopted from the study of Kanoksilapatham (2011). The present study also determined the stability of the major move or step whether it is obligatory (100%), conventional (60% - 99%), or optional (below 60%).

A major move or step was considered obligatory if the frequency of occurrence reached 100%. Meanwhile, a move was deemed conventional if the frequency of occurrence was from 60% to 99%. Consequently, if the frequency of occurrence was below 60%, then the moves or steps were regarded as optional. When there were two moves or steps in a sentence, the researchers assigned the schematic unit to the move or step that was more prominent. Regarding the cyclicity of moves, patterns of move sequences were recorded. In cases where there were evident new moves in the corpora, the independent coders and the researchers assigned a new move in addition to the moves provided by the CARS model as this could be one of the salient features of the corpora under investigation.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

The analysis of discourse features in the different disciplines was extensively investigated since Swales introduced a framework for analyzing the communicative purposes found in the introduction section of research articles. Using the Swales (1990) framework, this study focused on the analysis of RAIs published and written by Filipino academic writers in the field of Applied Linguistics. To answer the first

research question, the frequency of realized moves and steps as well as the identification of move stability (i.e., obligatory, conventional, and optional) was determined. Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 identify the cyclicity of moves and steps evident in the corpora.

**Table 3**

*Frequency and Distribution of Occurrence of Major Rhetorical Moves and Steps in RAIs from Applied Linguistics Journals*

Moves	Steps	Frequency of Realized Rhetorical Moves in RAIs		Percentage of Occurrence in RAIs (Move Stability)
		F	%	%
Move 1, Establishing a territory	Step 1: Claiming centrality	86	3.86	96
	Step 2: Making topic generalization/s	202	9.06	96
	Step 3: Reviewing items of previous research	1386	62.18	100
	Step 4: Writer’s Evaluation*	16	0.72	26
	Step 5: Drawing Implications from Previous Studies*	9	0.40	20
			<b>76.22</b>	
Move 2, Establishing a niche	Step 1A: Counter-claiming	4	0.18	3
	Step 1B: Indicating a gap	40	1.79	66
	Step 1C: Question-raising	7	0.31	4
	Step 1D: Continuing a tradition	10	0.45	4
			<b>2.74</b>	
Move 3, Occupying the niche	Step 1A: Outlining purposes	120	5.38	93
	Step 1B: Announcing present research	23	1.03	46
	Step 2 : Announcing the principal findings	6	0.27	16
	Step 3 : Indicating the RA (Research Article) structure	2	0.09	3

**Table 3 (continuation)**

Moves	Steps	Frequency of Realized Rhetorical Moves in RAIs		Percentage of Occurrence in RAIs (Move Stability)
		F	%	%
Move 3, Occupying the Niche	Step 4 : Defining the framework	235	10.54	56
	Step 5 : Describing the subject	83	3.72	13
			<b>21.04</b>	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2229</b>	<b>100</b>	

*\*Additional move due to coding procedures*

Table 3 shows the frequency and distribution of occurrence of the realized rhetorical moves and steps in the RAIs under study. As evident from the table, *Move 1 - Establishing a Research Territory*, *Move 2 - Establishing a Niche*, and *Move 3 - Occupying the Niche* obtained a total of 100% frequency of occurrence and are, thus, considered obligatory rhetorical moves based on Kanoksilapatham’s (2011) category of move stability posited in a particular study. According to Kanoksilapatham (2011), a move is considered “obligatory” if it obtains 100% frequency of occurrence which means it is present in every RAI. When the occurrence ranges from 60-99%, the move is classified as “conventional,” while a move that occurs below 60% is “optional.” Although all the moves are present in all the RAIs, it can be noted that the steps employed in the different RAIs consist of various combinations. In particular, M1S3 (Reviewing items of previous research) obtained a 100% occurrence, which is obligatory, accumulating 62.18% of the total realized steps in Move 1. Both M1S1 (Claiming centrality) and M1S2 (Making topics generalization/s) are present in 28 RAIs (Table 4) with 96% occurrences (Table 3) but with different percentages of realized steps, 3.86 % and 9.06 %, respectively. Based on the results, it seems that Filipino academic writers prefer establishing a research territory by reviewing the literature and grounding their study against the existing literature. This seems evident because all writers perceived reviewing the literature as an obligatory step in the introduction section. A strong connection is also evident between M1S3 (Reviewing the literature) and M2S1B (Indicating a Gap) where writers establish a niche by indicating a gap from the literature thereby thriving on their research. Presenting a copious amount of literature in the introduction section to highlight the limitations of their reviewed studies and, thereafter, establishing a research gap are the patterns that the writers employed. This observation is also validated in the same table where the cyclicity of moves and steps for establishing a research territory is presented. In terms of occupying the niche, M3S1A (Outlining the Purpose of the study) seems the most opted strategy of

the writers. They consider outlining the purpose of their study as an important element in presenting what their research is all about after arguing that there are gaps in the existing literature.

The findings that all the moves are obligatory in the present corpora run parallel to those of Rahman et al. (2017), in their quest to demystify the rhetorical features of RAIs in Applied Linguistics. Moreover, a similar observation is also evident that although the three moves are obligatory, the steps utilized to realize the writing moves are different across RAIs. This means that the writers employed a variation in steps.

On a different note, as the nature of the analysis employed, specifically in the coding procedures which involved discussion, negotiation, and clarification with the independent coders, two steps were added in Move 1, namely *Writer's Evaluation*, and *Drawing implications from previous studies*, which were coded as Step 4 and Step 5, respectively. The added moves turned out to be the least employed steps in realizing Move 1, with Step 4 obtaining 0.72% and Step 5, 0.40%. This linguistic phenomenon indicates that writers prefer to simply provide the readers with a rationale for the research, assert its significance, and locate the research as part of an active, well-established area of study; they do not seem to be particular in evaluating and giving implications for related studies.

Below are sample paragraphs that employed M1S4 (Writer's evaluation) and M1S5 (Drawing implications from previous studies) in realizing Move 1:

RA No.2 (M1S4)

Sinclair (1995) describes an editorial as "an article in a newspaper that gives the opinion or ideology of the editor or publisher on a topic or item of news" (as cited in Ansary & Babaii, 2004, p. 7). Shams (2007, p.164) echoed that it "is the expression of the opinion or the position of the owners and editors of a newspaper on current issues in the news." **The definitions certainly point to one thing, editorials are the mouthpiece of any newspaper.**

RA No.2 (M1S5)

However, in the study of Munro, Derwing, and Morton (2006) on L2 speech, it was shown that regardless of the language background of the speakers, the listeners demonstrated moderate to high correlations between intelligibility and comprehensibility and accentedness. **It can therefore be deduced that L1 background and exposure to a certain kind of accent are not major players in understanding the L2 speech.**

**Table 4**

*Cyclicity of Moves/Steps in Research Article Introduction, Move 1*

<b>Cyclicity of Moves/Steps</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>M1S2+M1S3</i>	1	3
<i>M1S1+M1S3</i>	1	3
<i>M1S1+M1S2+M1S3</i>	17	57
<i>M1S1+M1S2+M1S3+M1S4*</i>	5	17
<i>M1S1+M1S2+M1S3+M1S5*</i>	2	7
<i>M1S1+M1S3+M1S4*+M1S5*</i>	1	3
<i>M1S2+M1S3+M1S4*+M1S5*</i>	1	3
<i>M1S1+M1S2+M1S3+M1S4*+M1S5*</i>	2	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

*\*Additional move due to coding procedures*

Table 4 illustrates the cyclicity of steps in realizing Move 1. As shown in the table the cyclical pattern M1S1+M1S2+M1S3 obtained 57%, the highest frequency of occurrence among the patterns. This also means that this cyclical pattern was found to be the most common as it was recognized in 17 RAIs, which is more than half of the corpora. The result implies that Filipino academic writers were able to establish a research territory and prefer employing the 1990 version of the Swales CARS model. Specifically, Move 1 Step 3 (Reviewing items of previous research) was consistently found throughout the RAIs of the corpora reflecting the richness of literature in Applied Linguistics. Table 3 shows Step 3, occurring 1,386 times in all the cyclical patterns recognized in realizing Move 1 throughout the corpora. Meanwhile, it can be noted in Table 4 that Move 1 Step 1 and Move 1 Step 2 were pervasive in the corpus; both were used in 28 out of the 30 RAIs. This observation suggests that persuading readers that a topic is worth investigating and providing an overview of the subject is necessary for academic writers who aspire to publish their research articles in international Applied Linguistics journals. As far as the added steps are concerned, it can be noted in Table 4 that Move 1 Step 4 (Writer’s Evaluation) was recognized in 9 RAIs, corresponding to the 16 instances in Table 3, while Move 1 Step 5 (Drawing Implications from the previous studies) was recognized in 6 RAIs (Table 4) corresponding to nine instances in Table 3. Although not as pervasive as the other steps, some writers in the field of Applied Linguistics provide their evaluation of the literature review as well as the implications of the assumptions presented. The reason for the added steps and considered deviation is due to the lack of steps to categorize sentences that are not covered by the description of steps provided by Swales (1990). In consonance with the assumption that all writers in this corpus have emphasized the review of previous research, hence, positioning their study against the gaps that the literature has offered, it is evident that in all the patterns emanated, M1S3 coupled with M1S1 and M1S2 assumed their way as a part of the identity of the rhetorical structure Filipino writers employ in establishing the research territory. Although the presentation in Table 4 explicates a sequential order, the authors of the current study would like to clarify

that the cyclicity of steps to realize the moves are interwoven, including Moves 2 and 3. This means that not all the steps that appeared in the RAIs followed a sequential order as proposed by Swales (1990). This finding also corroborates what Rahman et al. (2017) found in their study, that the steps do not follow a sequential order to realize a certain move. The results of this study are expected to be beneficial to researchers in assuming their own identity as far as the rhetorical structure of the RAIs is concerned.

**Table 5**  
*Cyclicity of Moves/Steps in Research Article Introduction, Move 2*

<b>Cyclicity of Moves/Steps</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>M2S1B</i>	14	47
<i>M2S1C</i>	1	3
<i>M2S1A+M2S1B</i>	1	3
<i>M2S1B+M2S1C</i>	2	7
<i>M2S1B+M2S1D</i>	2	7
<i>M2S1A+M2S1B+M2S1D</i>	1	3
<i>M2S1A+M2S1B+M2S1C+M2S1D</i>	1	3
<i>No M2 was employed</i>	8	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

As shown in Table 5, there are 7 cyclical patterns of steps identified in realizing Move 2 (Establishing a Niche). The most frequent pattern observed is M2S1B (Indicating a gap), which is recognized in 21 out of the 30 RAIs and employed singly by academic writers in 14 RAIs. The least employed step in realizing Move 2 is Step 1A (M2S1A) (Counter-claiming) with an obtained frequency of 3 and corresponding to a frequency rate of 0.18% in Table 3. This implies that academic writers in this group do not opt to question previous research to establish a niche. The result further suggests that academic writers prefer to underscore that their current study provides a major contribution to filling the seeming gap in the literature under study. This also indicates that writers are familiar with emphasizing what can be gained from the current research and its importance. Therefore, the rhetorical identity of the corpus significantly includes indicating a gap from previous studies which is also a direct manifestation of the role of parsimoniously reviewing a copious amount of literature in the introduction section. In addition, the cyclicity of steps in realizing Move 2 is interwoven similar to the patterns of steps in Move 1. Meanwhile, it is noteworthy that eight of the 30 RAIs do not employ Move 2 as there are no steps identified. Looking into the findings of Briones (2012), the RAIs written by Filipino writers in the field of Philosophy have been observed to exclude Move 2 (Establishing a Niche). This is similar to the findings of this study (Table 5), where only eight of the total corpus were found to exclude Move 2, leading the authors to assume that the writers prefer not to establish a niche in their introduction.

The sample paragraphs below exemplify the use of M2S1B (Indicating a Gap):

RA No.4 (M2S1B)

It can be argued then that various areas of discipline have distinct ways of learning, which may be reflected on how language learners from across fields of specialization may differently perceive and practice language learner autonomy. **While there have been studies that examined the views on learner autonomy and the autonomous practices of language learners, and the learning styles and strategies of learners from varying disciplines, it seems that no study on a substantial body of literature has been conducted to compare the learner autonomy of tertiary language learners from different disciplines.** Thus, it is of interest to investigate how the beliefs of language learners from two different language learning contexts influence their autonomous learning practices.

RA No.16 (M2S1B)

Several studies and constructs on the modal must have been conducted (e.g., Collins, 2009; Gustilo, 2011; Jacobsson, 2008; Nartey & Yankson, 2014; Nkemleke, 2005); **however, less attention has been given to the functional semanticity of the modal must found in editorial texts.**

**Table 6**  
Cyclicity of Moves/Steps in Research Article Introduction, Move 3

Cyclicity of Moves/Steps	Frequency	Percentage
M3S1A	5	17
M3S1A+M3S2	2	7
M3S1B+M3S5	1	3
M3S1A+M3S3	1	3
M3S1A+M3S4	8	27
M3S1A+M3S1B	2	7
M3S1A+M3S2+M3S4	1	3
M3S1A+M3S1B+M3S4	7	23
M3S1A+M3S1B+M3S2	1	3
M3S1A+M3S1B+M3S2+M3S4	1	3
M3S1A+M3S1B+M3S4+M3S5	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6 shows the cyclical pattern of steps in realizing Move 3 in the RAIs studied. M3S1A+M3S4 and M3S1A+M3S1B+M3S4 patterns were easily identified in 8 and 7 RAIs, respectively. Next to these is the one-step pattern M3S1A (Outlining purposes) to realize Move 3, which had five frequencies. Moreover, it can be observed that

M3S1A is present in 10 out of 11 cyclical patterns identified in achieving Move 3. Table 3 shows that a total of 120 instances were recognized using M3S1A in combination patterns as means to achieve Move 3. As far as Move 3 (Occupying the niche) is concerned, academic writers seemed to have opted to outline the purpose/s of the research about to be reported as evidenced by the 120 total instances observed rather than announcing the features of the present research (M3S1B), announcing the principal findings (M3S2), or indicating the RA structure or content (M3S3) as means to realize Move 1 or to occupy the niche that has been identified as the rationale of their study.

Going back to Table 6, since M3S1A coupled with M3S4 are the most prominent steps in realizing Move 3, it is assumed that this is the rhetorical identity of RAIs written by Filipino academic writers in terms of occupying the niche. Moreover, the appearances of steps in realizing this move are also interwoven.

Below are sample paragraphs to exemplify RAIs that employ M3S1A (Outlining Purposes):

RA No.3 (*M3S1A*)

**The objective of this paper is to examine the discourse organization of Filipino university students written opinion articles in selected campus newspaper publications.**

Specifically, it seeks answers to the following questions:

- a. What are the rhetorical moves in the orientation, exposition, and summation blocks of Filipino university-student written opinion columns?

RA No.6 (*M3S1A*)

Previous studies on Multimodal Discourse Analysis focused on advertisements as the most common subject (Rodriguez, 2016).

However, **this study aims to show that multimodal perspective can be applied to the representation and interpretation of meaning by analyzing LRT Line 1's publication materials in terms of modes, meta-functions, and communicative acts.**

Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions:

RA No.4 (*M3S1A*)

**The primary objective of this paper was to explore how Filipino college students from the liberal arts and natural sciences disciplines view learner autonomy in English language learning.**

Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

**Table 7**  
*Inter-coding Reliability*

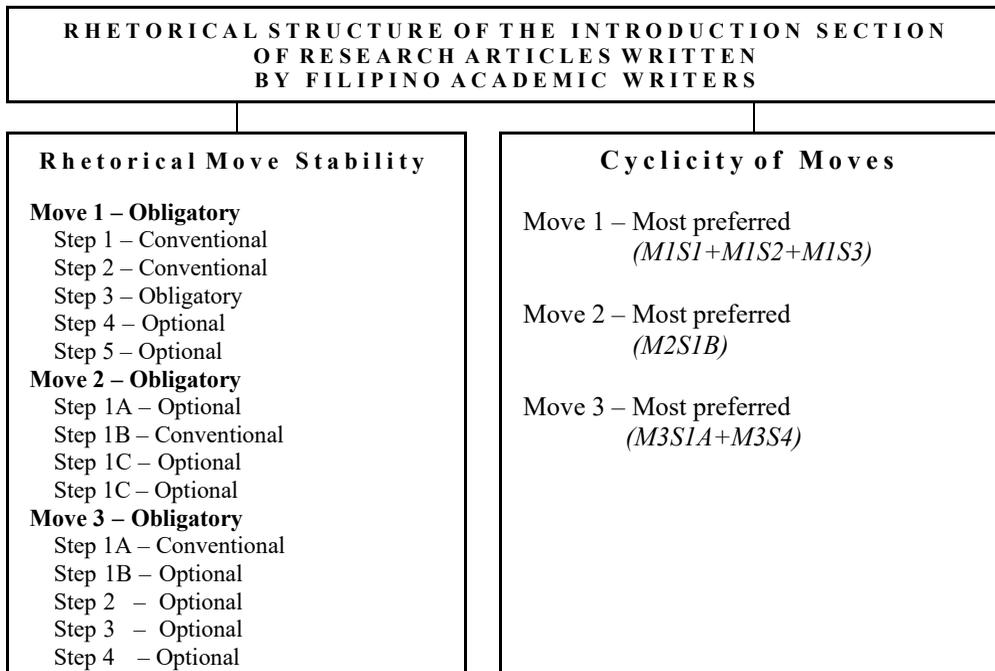
Moves	Coded Unit	Agreement	Disagreement	Percent
Move 1	2017	2016	1	99
Move 2	58	58	0	100
Move 3	151	151	0	100
<b>Total</b>	2,226	2,225	1	99.6

In terms of the inter-coding reliability agreement, which was set at 95%, the percentage of agreement among the computed data of the coders (Table 7) revealed that there was a high consistency (99.6%) of the application of the coding system between and among the independent coders. Categorically, the devised coding system was a reliable tool for tagging the major moves and/or steps in the employed linguistic and discourse frameworks.

**Developed Rhetorical Structures of RAIs**

To determine the structure of the discourse features of the RAIs, genre analysis was employed. Figure 1 illustrates the rhetorical structure and cyclicity of moves preferred by Filipino academic writers in developing the RAIs in Applied Linguistics.

**Figure 1**  
*Developed Rhetorical Structure of the Introduction Section of Research Articles Written by Filipino Academic Writers*



Concerning the moves and cyclicity of moves evident in the corpus, Figure 1 shows that moves do not occur linearly in the corpus but are often, and by nature, interwoven. It can be noted, based on the structure developed, that academic writers have a distinct rhetorical preference more specifically in realizing each move. This may imply that existing linguistic frameworks are utilized by academic writers as guides in drafting their RAIs. Furthermore, it was found that Moves 1,2, and 3 are categorized as obligatory moves based on stability measures for writing moves as they appeared in the corpus.

The rhetorical structure developed in this study highlights a few significant points for the following: those who aspire to publish their works in journals, novice academic writers, curriculum designers, and school heads, teachers of research in senior high school, and Filipino academic writers in Applied Linguistics.

- Writers who aspire to get their works published in local or international journals, as well as novice writers would benefit from familiarizing themselves with the features found in the established structure. This can enable them to write guided by standard rhetorical preferences and linguistic structures that will be acceptable to academic scholars and reviewers. Shaping the introduction section with a reference would facilitate the writing process of this section since the target reader shall already gain an insight into what to expect in the content.
- Curriculum designers and school heads as research leaders in public schools can use the rhetorical structure developed as a blueprint, particularly as research is a symbol of professional advancement and innovation.
- Teachers of research in senior high school, guided by the rhetorical structure, may localize their curriculum guide to get their students accustomed to being aware of the rhetorical features that should be employed in writing research papers.
- Filipino academic writers in the field of Applied Linguistics may gain insights that would enable them to diversify or use the structure found in this study as an analytical tool to enrich the current writing practices.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The findings of the study provide a range of standard rhetorical preferences and linguistic structures that can serve as guides for academic writers in developing their RAIs, thereby enriching the ever-evolving notion that a specific discipline is understood to have its inherent writing conventions. The analysis of the rhetorical organization developed from this study offers an in-depth assessment and understanding of the formation of the proposed standard elements of RAIs. Although some rhetorical moves and cyclical patterns of moves and steps are more stable compared to others, it can still be noted that writers incorporate flexibility in exhibiting the communicative purpose of their RAIs. It is hoped that novice writers, curriculum designers, research teachers, and aspiring writers who intend to publish

their research works are informed and guided by the writing conventions that are academically acceptable in the discourse community.

The main limitation of this study is the size of the corpus. The sample size may not be large enough to generalize the results, but it seems sufficient to show the writing conventions developed in the study since it is anchored on focused and identified criteria of comparability.

The study hopes to enrich the existing literature on the analysis of discourse features in Applied Linguistics and serve as a reference and springboard for future studies. In addition to the theoretical contributions of the study, the rhetorical structures captured may offer practical and pedagogical implications to students, teachers, researchers, and curriculum designers and empower them to become proficient academic readers and writers.

Below are the pedagogical implications of the study:

- The structure emanated from the study is only a means of directing ideas to organize the text; it does not conclude that the text is expected to be linearly organized by the writers; rather, it is highlighted that the moves and steps present in the structure are interwoven.
- As far as the proposed rhetorical model is concerned, the revision of the structure is likewise recommended to enrich a wide range of rhetorical preferences.

The end goal of this study is to capture the rhetorical structure of the discourse features from RAIs written and published by Filipino academic writers. The following are the authors' recommendations:

- The proposed structure can serve as a guide in demystifying academic writing and writing conventions in the discourse community, thereby enabling novice writers to produce publishable and acceptable research articles.
- The rhetorical structure can be presented to senior high school students to make them aware of discipline-specific reading skills. The awareness of the conventions of research articles can empower students to become more proficient academic readers.
- The rhetorical structure can be presented to research teachers and curriculum designers as a rhetorical benchmark.
- The structure can be presented to the graduate school, especially for students who aspire to publish in international journals.
- Future studies are encouraged to establish an exhaustive analysis to authenticate the rhetorical preferences derived from the corpus composed of RAIs written by Filipino writers in this discipline. Using similar variables with a larger sample size can be done to validate the claims of the present study.

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