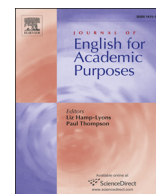


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## Furthering and applying move/step constructs: Technology-driven marshalling of Swalesian genre theory for EAP pedagogy



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### ABSTRACT

John Swales' seminal work has inspired a wealth of research with important pedagogical implications for genre-based writing instruction. Continuing the prolific move analysis tradition in EAP research, this article presents empirically devised and validated cross-disciplinary IMRD move/step frameworks for the research article genre and demonstrates how Swales' move and step concepts underlying these frameworks formed the foundation of innovative genre-based automated writing evaluation technology. Overall, this paper makes the relationships between genre theory, genre analysis, and genre instruction explicit, demonstrating that move analysis is a powerful and promising theoretical, analytic, and teaching construct. With that, we take Swales' vision to a new dimension of conceptualizing EAP.

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### 1. Introduction

John Swales' work has immensely advanced genre-based scholarship, especially since the publication of *Genre Analysis* where he theorizes the concept of genre for research and teaching. The 'move' embodiment of communicative purpose, defined as a "rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function" (Swales, 2004, p. 228–229), enabled the interpretation of genres as reflective of "language use in a conventionalized communicative setting in order to give expression to a communicative set of goals of a disciplinary or social institution" (Bhatia, 2004, p. 23). Swales' conceptualization made headway for a vibrant research agenda with multi-level analyses of socially situated discourse, which intertwine a range of analytic trajectories from systemic functional linguistics (SFL), corpus linguistics, and English for specific and academic purposes (ESP/EAP). Arguably, Swales' approach to genre analysis bridges these linguistic traditions with contesting rhetorical perspectives by conjoining genre, structure, communicative purpose, language choice, context, and discourse community.<sup>1</sup> His rhetorical move framework is, thus, a major contribution to the understanding of genres, genre sets, genre systems, and meta-genres, as well as of the relatedness and variation within and among them.

Equipped with a conceptual framework of rhetorical moves, which encompass specific functional 'steps,' EAP/ESP researchers have investigated a range of academic and non-academic genres. Most extensively, however, move analysis has

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<sup>1</sup> Unlike the linguistic approaches that focus on texts in contexts, the New Rhetoric, New Literacy, and Academic Literacies traditions focus on writers in contexts; i.e. on socio-rhetorical climates, audiences, purposes, and conditions of text use that may influence writers' choices and the rhetorical structures of genres.

been applied to the research article (RA) genre, and John Swales, who pioneered the 'create a research space' (CARS) model for RA Introduction sections, is rightfully called the father of RA studies (Atkinson, 2013). A myriad of studies have validated the CARS model through analyses of corpora in different academic fields (Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011; Crookes, 1986; Durrant & Matheus-Aydinli, 2011; Loi, 2010; Milagros del Saz Rubio, 2011; Ozturk, 2007; Samraj, 2002; Sheldon, 2011). In like manner, move frameworks have been devised for Methods sections (Chang & Kuo, 2011; Kanoksilapatham, 2007; Lim, 2006; Zhang, Kopak, Freund, & Rasmussen, 2011), for Results (Brett, 1994; Bruce, 2008; Lim, 2010; Nwogu, 1997; Swales & Feak, 2004; Williams, 1999), and for Discussion/Conclusions (Dudley-Evans, 1997; Holmes, 1997; Parkinson, 2011; Peacock, 2002; Yang & Allison, 2004). Cumulatively, these works demonstrate that RAs share similar communicative purposes and that academic discourse varies across disciplines (Anthony, 1999; Hyland, 2000; Nwogu, 1997; Posteguillo, 1999; Samraj, 2002).

This thrust of move analysis research, like Swales' work – often motivated by teaching needs, has strengthened the relationship between linguistic inquiry and EAP pedagogy. Genre-based writing instruction (GBWI) (see Johns, 2011), in particular, has benefited from Swales' modeling of how genre study results can be applied to materials development and course design. *Academic Writing for Graduate Students, English in Today's Research World*, and the monographs in the Michigan Series in English for Academic and Professional Purposes co-authored with Christine Feak (e.g., Feak & Swales, 2009; Swales & Feak, 2009) are illustrative examples of the research-practice convergence informing GBWI. Explicit teaching of moves and steps to develop students' genre awareness and rhetorical consciousness-raising (Swales, 1990) have been progressively endorsed in graduate writing courses that target the RA and other research-related genres. Such focus on rhetorical complexity carries considerable pedagogical promise (see Bianchi & Pazzaglia, 2007; Chang & Kuo, 2011; Charles, 2007; Cortes, 2007, 2011; Lee & Swales, 2006; Swales, Barks, Ostermann, & Simpson, 2001; Swales & Lindemann, 2002; Swales & Luebs, 2002).

Swales' theory of genre is slowly but confidently entering the arena of computer-assisted writing tools. For example, the Type Your Own Script (TYOS) online writing tool was developed "to highlight rhetorical strategies and linguistic choices" in a small corpus of RA Introductions produced by L2 writers, which includes first drafts and their revised versions that were analyzed and pedagogically processed (Birch-Bécaas & Cooke, 2012, p. 242). Advances in technology also allow for developing intelligent tools powered by applied natural language processing (ANLP), where move analysis is viewed as a relatively robust analytic framework (Kent & McCarthy, 2012).<sup>2</sup> Although to date there are very few instructional applications that are based on probabilistic computational models and semi-automated and automated analysis of RA discourse, the existing applications serve as encouraging proof-of-concept evidence for the potential of move analysis for instruction-driven computational investigations of discourse. For example, Sun (2007) created the Scholarly Writing Template (SWT), which provides students with an information template containing an outline of moves for the writing of research papers. Anthony and Lashkia (2003) applied machine learning techniques to developing the Mover, a software tool that presents learners with the move structure of RA Abstracts. Cotos, 2009 took a step further, developing a genre-based automated writing evaluation (AWE) program called the Intelligent Automated Discourse Evaluator (IADE). This tool, grounded in second language and skill acquisition theories, translates the results of automated move analysis to move-level feedback, facilitating students' focus on the functional meaning of the RA Introduction discourse, learning of Introduction conventions, and improvement of research writing quality (Cotos, 2011, 2012, 2014).

These technological applications are reactive to pedagogical needs, which inadvertently pose challenges. While research in instructional settings has shown that explicit analysis of specialized corpora can be an empowering GBWI approach, there have also been reports of less successful endeavors, among which Swales himself reasons about experiences that he evaluates as educational "shots in the dark" (Swales, 2002, p. 162). Instructional missteps are not only due to certain limitations of a chosen pedagogical approach, but also to contextual factors. One such factor is disciplinary heterogeneity in the classroom, where students from a variety of majors need to learn the discursive practices of their particular fields. Limited individualized opportunities for genre learning and practice add an extra layer to the challenge of teaching writing in the disciplines. Motivated by this pedagogical conundrum, we marshal the move construct and AWE to provide GBWI with an intelligent interactive tool for teaching and learning disciplinary research writing.

## 2. Technology driven marshalling of the move construct

Despite the abundance of research on the structural interpretation and linguistic description of RAs, practitioners are still in wait for a comprehensive framework that would allow for cross-disciplinary analysis of the rhetorical composition of each IMRD section and would thus permit the development of instructional materials and technologies to adequately address discipline specificity. In a large-scale project, we set out to accomplish a two-fold purpose: (1) to devise and validate cross-disciplinary move/step IMRD frameworks, and (2) to computationally operationalize these frameworks in a genre-based AWE program, called the Research Writing Tutor (RWT). This tool is unique in that it analyzes students' research articles, generates discipline-specific feedback based on the rhetorical conventions of this genre, and provides different forms of corpus-based scaffolding to foster learning and writing improvement. Our ultimate goal for the use of RWT in GBWI is to foster the writing

<sup>2</sup> Applied natural language processing is defined as an area of study that applies computational techniques to linguistic data to investigate and identify solutions to real-life language-related issues (Brunelle & Boonthum-Denecke, 2012). Here, discourse analysis adopts a functional emphasis on what language does, and, in that sense, it assesses the function of a text in view of move analysis (McCarthy & McNamara, 2012).

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