Introductions in Examination Essays: The Case of Two Undergraduate Courses

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Abstract: Considerable interest has been shown in studies in the disciplinary rhetoric of student academic writing in the last decade (e.g. Bunton, 2002; Kusel, 1992; Samraj, 2005; Thompson, 2001). However, the rhetorical aspects of student writing in Africa, and especially in Ghana, remain largely under-researched. Drawing on a modified version of Swales' (1990) move analysis, the present study investigates the generic structure of introductions in a total of 120 writing samples of Ghanaian undergraduates from two departments. Specifically, I consider the frequency of occurrence, textual space, and sequence of move. The study revealed three key findings. Regarding similarities, first, English and Sociology did indeed introduce their essays, allocating the greatest space to Move 2. Second, both English and Sociology students utilized a linear sequence of three moves. The key difference between the two disciplinary texts lay in the English students who preferred a two-move sequence, while the Sociology students preferred a three-move sequence. Seen properly as tendencies, these findings have important implications for disciplinary rhetoric, writing pedagogy, and future research in disciplinary rhetoric.

Key words: introduction, examination essay, rhetoric, undergraduates, Sociology, English

In the last two decades there have been increasing attempts by applied linguists and literacy specialists to investigate student writing in order to make the rhetorical and epistemological dispositions in various disciplinary communities more explicit, thereby facilitating students' enculturation in their various disciplinary communities, (e.g. Gee, 1996; Gupta, 1995; Hewings, 2004; Stockton, 1995). Among other reasons, the massification of student numbers in higher education and the need for stakeholders in the delivery of higher education to be more accountable have made such investigations into student writing imperative.

Consequently, considerable attention has been paid to curriculum genres, which represent very useful documents through which undergraduate and graduate students demonstrate their knowledge and preparedness to assume their place in the academic community (Hewings, 2002). In particular, several studies have been conducted into curriculum genres such as thesis/dissertations (e.g. Bunton, 2002; Cooley & Lewkowicz, 1997; Thompson, 2001) and to some extent coursework essays (North, 2005; Starfield, 2004) as well as examination essays (e.g. Lawe-Davies, 1998; Lukmani, 1994).

Undoubtedly, a key organizational aspect of all these written school genres is the introduction. The fact is that making a deep impact in an academic writing, and in particular student writing (Hewings, 2002), requires effective control over both the global format and content schemata for structuring, before attention can be paid to the lexico-grammatical forms which instantiate them. Moreover, academic writing values introduction (Gupta, 1995), as evident in the frequent attention devoted to it in several pedagogic texts (e.g. Opoku-Agyeman, 1998; Oshima & Hogue, 1988; Rosenwasser & Stephen, 1997). Not surprisingly, Swales (1990a) is noted to have acknowledged the introduction as a troublesome aspect of expert writing; and for learners this could be more daunting.

In this paper, I investigate the use of introductions written by second-year undergraduates from the departments of English and Sociology in a Ghanaian university, asking the following questions:

- Do English Studies and Sociology students introduce their essays and how much textual space is given to the introduction relative to the text as a whole?
- How frequently are the moves used in introductions of the two disciplines?
- How much space is given to each move in the introductions of the selected disciplines?
- How are the moves within the introductions of the selected disciplines sequenced?

To accomplish this task, the paper is set out in the following ways. First, I outline the conceptual framework of the study by drawing on a key notion in academic discourse and reviewing some relevant studies on disciplinary rhetoric. I then set out the methodological framework, which encompasses the analytical approach. Next, I discuss the results of my findings and finally end with the conclusion and implications

Conceptual Framework

I elaborate on two aspects, theoretical framework and literature review, in order to provide a fitting context within which the present study is undertaken.

Key Notion: Disciplinary variation

One key perspective underpinning the present study is disciplinary variation. Although in the last decade alone there had been an exponential rise in the study of academic writing from this perspective (e.g. Holmes, 1997; Samraj, 2002), the early days of ESP/EAP scholarship witnessed a controversy from two camps: common core and discipline-specific approach to academic writing. Some scholars (Trimble, 1985; Widdowson, 1979) gave credence to the univariant nature (also termed common core) of scientific and/or academic discourse, while others (e.g., Halliday, 1988; Halliday, McIntosh & Strevens, 1964) extolled linguistic variations resulting from functional variations inherent in different disciplines.

Around the same time that the controversy between the common core adherents and discipline-specific adherents was raging, other scholars were engaged in systematically characterizing the various knowledges in academia, approaching it from the cognitive (e.g. Biglan, 1973; Kolb, 1981), historical (Shumway & Messer-Davidow, 1990), and sociological (Kuhn, 1962; Merton, 1973) standpoints. In particular, insights from the cognitive perspective have led to dichotomies such as hard/soft, applied/pure, convergent/divergent. Drawing on insights from these earlier works, Bazerman (1981), Becher (1989), and MacDonald (1994) underscore the strong connection between disciplinary culture and disciplinary knowledge.

One popular classificatory system for characterizing knowledge domains is the cline below (Figure 1), showing Science at one end and the Humanities at the other end with the Social Sciences positioned in the middle.

Figure 1. The Academic Knowledge Continuum

Science   Social Sciences   Arts/Humanities
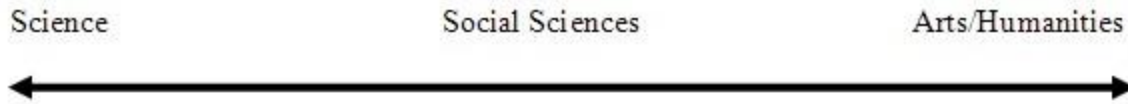
The above classificatory system, like others, is not free from the charge of reductionism; that is, it tends to ignore the subtleties and complexities of differences that are present in each of the three knowledge domains. But as far as I am aware, MacDonald's (1994) exposition on the nature of disciplinary variation is by far the most succinct and enlightening, coinciding with my own thinking. While she accepts the "traditional" classification of academic discourse into the Sciences, the Social Sciences, and the Humanities, she also suggests that in reality bodies of knowledge do not always fall neatly into these three categories, drawing on one another.

From this perspective, therefore, we can fairly admit that English and Sociology (the selected disciplines in the present study) constitute distinct disciplinary communities. Both disciplines represent different epistemological and rhetorical dispositions which their members affect in order to carry on an appropriate "conversation", that is knowledge construction, transmission, and sharing.

Literature Review

In the past decade, there has been an exponential growth of studies exploring the rhetoric of published writing (e.g. Hyland, 2000; Varghese & Abraham, 2004), graduate writing (e.g. Prior, 1994; Samraj, 2004, 2005), and to a minimal extent undergraduate writing (e.g. Haas, 1994; North, 2005). These studies have employed different theoretical models to show that there are differences in both the epistemology and rhetorical dispositions of various subject disciplines.

Indeed, as far back as 1981, Swales produced a groundbreaking exploration into the rhetoric of the introduction of research articles (RAs), using the CARS (Create a research space) model, although initial criticism of it led to its revision. In his revised work, Swales indicates the three "moves" which are undertaken by expert writers: establishing a territory, establishing a niche, and occupying the niche. Following the Swalesian move analysis approach, in investigating the rhetoric of various subject disciplines, studies on published writing conducted by scholars such as Hyland (2000) and Varghese and Abraham (2004) have articulated clear differences in the way various subject disciplines structure their introduction.

Similarly, studies on the generic structure of curriculum genres such as graduate theses (e.g. Bunton, 2002; Samraj, 2005; Thompson, 2001) and coursework essays (Swales, 1990b), using Swales' move analysis, have further deepened our awareness of disciplinary variation in introductions. Studies on the rhetoric of introduction in undergraduate writing, contrary to those on published and graduate writing, have tended to use more encompassing rhetorical models, including, of course, the popular Swalesian approach. In addition, while studies on the rhetoric of introductions in undergraduate writing have often been in the Anglo-American (Hult, 1986; Kroll, 1990; Kusel, 1992; Scarcella, 1984) and Asia-Pacific (Drury, 2001; Lawe-Davies, 1998; Lukmani, 1994; Tan, 1993) contexts, that in the African context has remained largely under-investigated.

As far as I know, Kusel's (1992) work is by far the most relevant to the present study, although it should be noted that he also includes the conclusion. Using a rhetorical-functional approach, Kusel

analyzes the generic structure of introductions in 50 essays written by final-year native English students drawn equally from five departments (Teacher Education, English Literature, History, Geography, and Language Teaching), in Christ Church College of Higher Education, Canterbury. The results suggest that the rhetorical organization of the introduction of the essays is dictated greatly by the conventions adopted by each department.

The present study differs from Kusel's (1992) on three fronts while maintaining an affinity with the present study in one respect. The first difference relates to the background of the students chosen for the present study: non-native speakers. Second, in terms of the number and nature of subject departments, the present study reports findings of two departments, namely, Sociology and English. Finally, the curriculum genre chosen for the present study is the examination, rather than the coursework, essay in Kusel's study. I focus on the examination essay in the present research as it is acknowledged to be the most recognized and frequently used genre among the other tertiary literacy genres (Horowitz, 1989; Johns, 1997). More importantly, being end-of-semester examination essays, they reflect students' internalized knowledge and use of rhetorical conventions typical of their disciplines. These differences, notwithstanding, the present study is similar to Kusel's study in that it attempts to explore the rhetorical features in two disciplinary communities, using an adapted form of Swales' (1990a) move analytic model.

Methods and Procedures

Research Design

The present study is part of a wider study (Afful, 2005) which employs a combination of textual analysis and ethnographic approach in an attempt to understand disciplinary rhetoric in three disciplines in line with current methodological approaches that examine social rhetorics and the impact of cultural rhetorics on literacy and writing.

In this study, however, I report on the textual analytical approach utilized in examining the textual data of two disciplines in order to make a call to Compositionists, Rhetoricians, and Discourse Analysts that a quantitative as well as a cognitive approach can provide helpful complement to the current emphasis on socio-rhetorical approach. Some descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and mean are accordingly used mainly to help determine trends and patterns regarding the frequency, textual space, and sequence of moves in the selected rhetorical features. Other uses relate to text length in terms of T-units.

National and Educational Setting

I now describe the national and institutional context in tandem with current studies on student writing which seek to relate linguistic features to specific contextual variables (e.g. Johns, 1997; Samraj, 2002).

Ghana was until 1957 a British colony. A multilingual country, Ghana, however, continues to use English besides two other main language groups: indigenous languages; and other exoglossic languages such as French, German, and Swahili. English remains understandably unique among the other exoglossic languages in terms of its pervasive influence over the Ghanaian people in official domains to serve the practical needs of the country, both internally and externally (Dseagu, 1996). On the one hand, as in several other postcolonial settings, Ghanaians value English language as it enables socio-economic mobility and acts as the lingua franca for inter-ethnic communication among the country's several ethnolinguistic groups. On the other hand, the linguistic context in Ghana where English is the sole official language contrasts with that in some Commonwealth countries such as

Singapore, India, and South Africa, where their indigenous languages are on par with English as official languages.

But in no aspect of the national life of Ghana is the dominance of English felt more acutely than in education (Sackey, 1997). Thus, the institutional context for this research, the University of Cape Coast (UCC), provides undergraduate and graduate courses for about 15, 000 local and international students through its five faculties (Agriculture, Arts/Humanities, Education, Science, and Social Sciences) in English language, the exception being other language departments. As in the other four public universities in Ghana, English remains one of the entry requirements into UCC and is offered as a compulsory writing course, Communicative Skills (CS), otherwise termed English for Academic Purposes and Freshman Composition elsewhere. The University of Cape Coast is chosen for this study because of my involvement there as a teacher. Consequently, I can draw on my role as an "insider" for the benefit of the present research.

Among the various students in UCC, second-year undergraduates have been selected for the present study on the basis that they will have done at least one year of university work (including CS), thus being a fairly homogeneous group, notwithstanding their possible varying pre-university experiences and socio-economic backgrounds. The fact that they have all spent at least a year in the university should enable us to see the extent to which they are being socialized into their various disciplinary communities. Moreover, they represent a group with distinct linguistic, cultural, and educational traditions worth considering in English as Second Language (ESL) writing as according to Love (1999) several studies on the writing of non-native students have tended to focus on the more lucrative Middle East, Asia, and Europe.

Two second-year courses are selected for the present study: *Introduction to Literature* and *Family and Socialization*. These English and Sociology courses are chosen because they both encourage a reasonably sustained extended writing in both examination and non-examination situations. As I learnt from the handouts obtained from the department and interactions with students and faculty, the English course, which is foundational, introduces students to the fundamental literary tools in poetry (selected from African, Anglo-American, and Commonwealth contexts) to enable them to respond personally to poetic texts. The Sociology course, also foundational, proceeds from the viewpoint that the family is one of the oldest social institutions and aims at familiarizing undergraduates with the meaning of a family from the traditional, modern, and postmodern perspectives. The concept of marriage as an agent of socialization in its varying ramifications is also explored.

Data

For the present study 120 examination essay (EE) answers produced by second-year English and Sociology undergraduates in 2001/2002 academic year were obtained. These essays were in response to two examination prompts (EPs) from each of the two departments as presented below:

- Identify and explain the significance of any three literary devices used in Jared Angira's "No Coffin No Grave" (EEP 1)
- With reference to any two sonnets, comment on the significance of the structure of the sonnet. (EEP 2)
- Examine some of the circumstances that normally give rise to marital violence. (SEP 1)
- Examine any five sexual paraphelia (abnormalities) and show how these impact negatively on marriage (SEP 2)

Since students were given the opportunity to select questions of their choice, it was difficult to obtain all the 60 EEs responding to one prompt from each department, hence two prompts from each discipline were selected.

Analytical framework

To answer the research questions (see Section 1.0), I utilized a rhetorical analytical approach, drawing on a modified version of Swales' (1981, 1990a) move analysis of introductions of RAs. Three moves were identified in the present data, as shown below:

- Move 1: Backgrounding issues raised in the examination prompt
- Move 2: Narrowing the field or issue/s of concern
- Move 3: Previewing the structure of the essay

Essentially, Move 1 (backgrounding, hereafter) contextualizes the issues raised in the EP and differs from Swales' (1990) Move1, as no attempt is made towards suggesting the centrality or importance of the issue. Move 2 (narrowing, hereafter) shows a greater and closer engagement with issues raised in the EP. In this case, Move 2 differs from Swales' Move 2, which establishes a knowledge gap. Move 3 (previewing, hereafter), the last move, basically previews the essay's structure or declares the writer's purpose, thus being similar to Swales' last move.

Three specific tasks are undertaken to enable analysis of the examination essays. The first concerns defining the key variables in the study: "introduction" and "moves". I define "introduction" in terms of both structure and function; structurally, the introduction is considered as the first of a number of paragraphs, while functionally it orients readers towards the "body" of the essay. To qualify as an introduction, a cluster of sentences needs to satisfy both criterial features. A "move" is considered as a functional unit that contributes to the overall communicative purpose of a text. The essential point to note here is that a move is not coterminous with structural units such as a sentence or a paragraph as indicated by Bhatia (1993). The next tasks involved identifying the introductions and the moves. I first carried out the two tasks and solicited the help of two different groups of research assistants to enhance the reliability of the tasks. The inter-coder reliability scores of identifying the introductions for the English and Sociology essays were 94 per cent and 92 per cent respectively, while the inter-coder reliability scores of identifying the moves in introductions for the English and Sociology essays were 87 percent and 85 percent respectively. These scores were considered high to enable further analysis of the introductions.

Two unedited examples of an introduction from both disciplines are offered below to show how their generic structure is instantiated.

English

1. Structure is the form in which the poet represents his ideas in lines of poetry. (**Move 1**) Sonnet is a fourteen line poem with ten syllables each. The lines are divided into two, octave and sestet. As such, the idea is represented in the octave and there is resolution in the sestet. However, there is a further division of the sonnet into quatrains. In each quatrain, the poet discusses his ideas. (**Move 2**) In commenting on the significance of structure of the sonnet, I shall make reference to two of Shakespearean sonnets, three and eighteen. (**Move 3**) EST 46

As shown in Example 1 (English introduction), a response to EEP 2, contextualization is made in Move 1 by offering a generalized definition of the term, "structure". This generalization is then related to the "sonnet", as the candidate proceeds to define the term "sonnet" in Move 2: this can be seen as an elaboration and a closer engagement with the prompt. In Move 3 (previewing), the candidate heralds the structure of the essay, indicating his/her intention to provide detailed explanation of the structure of sonnets by referring to Shakespearean sonnets, three and eighteen. Next, we turn to a Sociology introduction.

Sociology

2. Randal Collins is a sociologist who describes marriage as a socially and culturally approved and sanctioned union between a man and a woman to perform certain social functions and to satisfy certain biological demands. (**Move 1**) Marriage in our Ghanaian society is very important and without marriage at a particular age or point in time of one's life, one is considered as an irresponsible person. There are many types of marriage in our societies. These are polygamous marriage, monogamous marriage, matrifocal, patrifocal, childless, group marriage, among others. (**Move 2**) Even though marriage is very important and interesting, certain little things can lead to conflict and violence in marriage which at the long run can lead to breakdown of the marriage. Some of the main circumstances that can lead to conflict or violence in marriage are premature marriage, external pressures, alcoholism, marriage without a better alternative, arrival of children, extra marital adventures, differences in sizes, frigidity by either of the couples. (**Move 3**) SST 1

As in Example 1, Example 2 (Sociology introduction), a response to SEP 1, shows three distinct moves made by a Sociology candidate. In Move 1, the examinee contextualizes the essay by attributing the meaning of marriage to a notable sociologist. In Move 2, the student goes on to localize his/her meaning of marriage in Ghana. Move 3 gives a hint of the circumstances to be discussed. Taken together, both examples show purposeful activities going on in distinct but related stages in order to achieve their communicative purposes.

Besides the choice of Swales' (1990a) rhetorical framework, it was important to consider the unit of measurement of the introductions, given that I choose to examine textual space allocated to the moves, among others. The T-unit was used as it provides a fair means of judging each student's length of text. Thus, the main clause as well as subordinate clauses constituted one T-unit. Further, to assure anonymity, the texts were labeled EST (Text of English student) and SST (Text of Sociology student) followed by a number to distinguish the various student essay answers.

Findings and Discussion

I report the findings of the study according to the four questions outlined in Section 1. Each research question is repeated here for ease of reference, followed by the results and discussion thereof.

Question 1: Do English Studies and Sociology students introduce their essays and how much textual space is given to the introduction relative to the text as a whole?

It was expected that English and Sociology students would introduce their essays. Table 1 thus displays the length of both the entire text and introduction of the English and Sociology texts.

Table 1. Presence of Introduction and Relative Lengths of Introduction

	English (n=60)		Sociology (n=60)		Total (n=120)	
Introduction						
Present	56	(93%)	60	(100%)	116	(67%)
Absent	4 (7%)		-		4 (3.3%)	
Introduction						
Overall	284	(13.24%)	404	(14.21%)	688	(13.79%)
Mean	5.07		6.73		5.93	
Total Text (T-units)						
Overall	2144	(100%)	2842	(100%)	4986	(100%)
Mean	35.73		47.36		41.55	

All 60 (100%) of the Sociology students and 56 (93%) of the English students introduced their essays. In terms of the relative space given to the introduction, the percentage for English and Sociology is about the same, at 13% and 14% respectively. These findings suggest that the introduction may be deemed rhetorically important by the two disciplines in the present study. Given the lack of studies on the rhetoric of introductions in disciplinary communities, it is difficult to relate these findings to extant works. The only pertinent study by Kusel (1992) is inadequate in explaining these findings, as different subject disciplines are involved in his study.

Nonetheless, it is worth commenting on the occurrence of introductions in the two disciplines. That the Sociology students introduced all their essays is surprising, given that in my experience as a lecturer in the English department, students are explicitly told in Literature classes to state their purpose/thesis statement up front. Similarly, it was surprising to note that the Sociology introductions were on the average longer than those written by their English counterparts (although by a minimal margin), given the general view that the Humanities disciplines tend to engage in more discursive writing (Becher, 1989). The rhetorical behaviour of students from both disciplines in the present study also finds general support in theorization on disciplinary variation, as espoused by Bazerman (1981) and Becher (1989) and as explored in other recent studies (Parry, 1998). These theorizations suggest that given their discursive nature, one way in which academic writing in Sociology and English seeks to establish a credible perspective with its audience is through the use of introductions.

Question 2: How frequently are the moves used in the introductions of the two disciplines?

With respect to the frequency of occurrence of moves, it was expected that all three moves will be present in students' examination essays across both disciplines (English and Sociology), although my feeling was that Move 2 (narrowing) would be the most frequently used move, as it represents the clearest opportunity for examinees to show their understanding of EPs. Table 2 displays the frequency of occurrence of each of the three moves in the introductions of all three disciplines.

Table 2. Frequency of Occurrence of Moves in the Introduction

		English Frequency	(n=56)	Sociology Frequency	(n=60)
Move	1	30/56	(54%)	51/60	(85%)
Move	2	40/56	(79%)	50/60	(83%)
Move 3		43/56 (77%)		57/60 (95%)	

As can be seen from the table, both English and Sociology students employed all three moves. Secondly, Sociology candidates used all three moves much consistently while English candidates used Moves 2 (narrowing) and 3 (previewing) more than Move 1. It can, therefore, be concluded that in terms of frequency of occurrence of introductions, English and Sociology students considered different moves as rhetorically important.

The similarity between English and Sociology in terms of the occurrence of all three moves is not surprising, given Becher's (1989) work that suggests that Sociology shares some features with the Humanities disciplines with respect to its rhetorical orientation. However, it was surprising to note that Sociology students deployed Move 3 (previewing) more frequently than their English counterparts, who rather used Move 2 more frequently. This reversal of expectation is interesting. One way of explaining this reversal is to argue, however, remotely speculative that Sociology faculty tended to reinforce the need for students to preview their essay as taught in Communicative Skills (otherwise termed English for Academic Purposes elsewhere). In this light perhaps, it may further be argued that English faculty emphasize the quality of Move 3, rather than its frequency of occurrence.

Question 3: How much space is given to each move in the selected disciplines?

Based on my experience in teaching undergraduates in the English department as well as other departments and my interaction with faculty and students at the research site, it was expected that examinees from the English and Sociology departments would allocate more textual space to Move 2 (narrowing). The frequency of occurrence together with the textual space allocated to a move could determine the relative rhetorical importance that students attach to a particular move. Table 3 shows the textual space given to each of the three moves in the introduction by the two groups of students.

Table 3. Textual Space Allocated to Moves in the Introduction

		English (T-units =284)		Sociology (T-units=404)	
Move	*1*				
T-units		70	(25%)	130	(32%)
Mean T-units		2.3		2.9	
Move	*2*				
T-units		131	(46%)	167	(41%)
Mean T-units		2.9		3.3	

Move	3			
T-units	83	(29%)	107	(27%)
Mean T-units	1.9		1.8	

As can be seen from Table 3, English students gave the most space to Move 2 (46%), followed by Move 3 (29%) and Move 1 (25%). Sociology students, similarly, gave the most space to Move 2 (41%), followed by Move 1 (32%) and Move 3 (27%). We can conclude that Move 2 is more rhetorically important than Moves 1 and 3 to the examinees in both disciplines.

Given that it is Move 2 (narrowing) which offers examinees the opportunity right from the beginning to evince understanding and to make a lasting impression on readers, this finding is not surprising. Students deepen specificity in their answers through references to names of, for instance, literary devices, places, organisms, and authorities in their respective disciplines. This finding suggests that students are aware of the need to show more commitment to answering the EPs, and ultimately displaying their grasp of the conceptual terrain laid out in their various courses or disciplines, similar to the finding in Henry and Roseberry (1997).

Taken together, the similarity in the textual space allocated to Move 2 in both disciplinary texts seem to be in tandem with the finding in RA introductions where expert writers are keen on establishing a knowledge gap. Though student-writers do not lay claims to new knowledge in their introduction, the allocation of textual space to Move 2 indicates their acknowledgement of the constraint imposed on them by the communicative situation. Thus, through Move 2, they display their knowledge as demanded by the examination prompt.

Question 4: How are the moves within the introduction sequenced?

In terms of the sequencing of moves, a three-move pattern that systematically proceeds from the general to the specific, as outlined in English writing manuals (e.g. Opoku-Agyeman, 1998; Oshima & Hogue, 1988), was expected in an essay across both disciplines. Table 4 below shows the actual sequence of moves used by examinees in the present study.

Table 4. Sequence of Moves in the Introduction

Pattern	English (n=56)		Sociology (n=60)	
3-Move Sequence	20	(36%)	40	(67%)
1,2,3	14	(70%)	37	(93%)
1,3,2	2	(10%)	1	(3%)
2,1,3	2	(10%)	1	(3%)
2,3,1	-		1	(3%)
3,1,2	2	(10%)	-	
2-Move Sequence	25	(44%)	17	(28%)
1,2	8	(32%)	2	(12%)
1,3	4	(16%)	8	(47%)
2,1	-		1	(6%)
2,3	13	(52%)	6	(35%)

1-Move Sequence	**11**	**(20%)**	**3**	**(5%)**
1	-		3	(100%)
2	5	(46%)	-	
3	6 (55%)		-	

With respect to the sequencing of moves in both English and Sociology introductions, two key findings can be noted. First, most of the EEs had a clear linear Move 1 > 2 > 3 pattern, with English and Sociology examinees respectively presenting sequence variation in their introductions. Second, the two disciplines had different preferences in respect of the kind of move-sequence, with English examinees (45%) preferring a two-move-sequence and Sociology students (67%) preferring a three-move sequence. The pattern presented here is complex, revealing similarity in the preference for sequence variation of moves among students from both disciplines but a difference in the preference of a specific sequence pattern.

The above finding related to the sequence is illustrated with two examples below, one each, from both disciplines:

English

3. In Jared Angira's "No Coffin, No Grave", which is about how a statesman had wanted to be buried in a luxurious way but didn't get that type of burial when he finally died due to his type of death, he makes use of a lot of literary devices that play a significant role in bringing out the meaning of the poem. (**Move 2**) I will talk about the use of irony, metaphor and personification (**Move 3**) (EST 1)

Sociology

4. Marriage is defined as the socially and culturally approved and sanctioned union between a man and woman to perform certain social functions and to satisfy certain biological impulses. (**Move 1**) Marriage is not always smooth as people sometimes perceive it before entering into it. (**Move 2**) There is a conflict or violence in marriage. The arrival of the violence in marriage may be attributed to the factors listed and discussed below. These include premature marriage, sexual problems, finance, lack of communication, social associations, arrival of children, unfulfilled dreams and external pressures. (**Move 3**) (SST 16)

The above examples reflect the general observation regarding the use of sequencing of moves: while the English preferred a two-move-sequence, the Sociology students favored a three-move sequence. It must be noted that both samples reflecting findings from Table 4 show that it was typical for a candidate to start from Move 1 and continue with Move 2 and then Move 3 or variants such as Move 2> Move 3 and Move 1 > Move 3.

Two reasons may be adduced to explain the general-specific pattern in the sequencing of moves used by both groups of students. The first is a "cultural explanation" (Kelly *et al.,* 2002), that is, there is an institutional demand that exposes students to English rhetoric (general-specific pattern) as taught in CS at the research site. My awareness of the teaching and learning of CS is based on my experience as an instructor of CS at the research site prior to the commencement of my present study and an informal interview I had with the CS Program Coordinator. The second reason has to do with the interaction between the influence of CS and faculty teaching the two discipline-specific courses. A

more specific way of looking at this second factor is to argue that the English and Sociology course lecturers reinforce writing instructions given in CS insofar as they are aligned with their respective disciplinary norms and practices.

It is more difficult to account for the different preferences of the two disciplines with respect to the specific move-sequence patterns. Though this is entirely speculative, one could argue for the more expansive nature of Sociology to account for the three-sequence move used by students as against the two-sequence move preferred by the English students. In the end, it could be argued that the three-move sequence of the Sociology introductions reflect a more rhetorically complex pattern than the two-sequence of the English introductions.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the interface between the rhetoric of introductions and disciplinary writing at the undergraduate level, focusing on two disciplines. The findings suggest that there are similarities and differences in the generic structure of the English and Sociology introductions. In one respect, English and Sociology tended to be more alike in terms of occurrence of introductions, sequencing of moves, and allocation of textual space. A key difference between the two departments lay in the specific move-sequence used, a two-move sequence for the English students and a three-move sequence for the Sociology students.

These findings have important implications for theory, pedagogy and research in disciplinary rhetoric. Theoretically, this study contributes to the description of undergraduate writing at the global level as well as disciplinary rhetoric, in general, and undergraduate writing in Ghana, specifically. As well, two pedagogical issues emerge from the study. The first is that since discourse analytical studies and psycholinguistics have shown the role of text structure awareness in reading and writing, the three-move schema of introductions proposed in this study could be of use to *English for Academic Purposes* and *Writing in the Discipline* instructors in helping undergraduates to write rhetorically effective essays in their respective disciplines. The next point has to do with raising the rhetorical consciousness of students about the relationship between the content of the examination answer, on the one hand, and information structure (that is, the frequency of moves, textual space allocated to each move, the sequencing of moves, and the linguistic realization across each move) on the other hand.

Further research might also be conducted to describe the generic structure of introductions in other courses or disciplinary communities to ascertain the extent to which the findings of the present research can be generalized across the Humanities and Social Sciences. A second line of research could be to engage undergraduates in ethnographic studies regarding the introduction in their respective disciplines in a bid to raise their rhetorical consciousness.

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