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A Contrastive Analysis of Superstructure of Abstracts in English MA Theses Written by Native and (Arab) Non Native Speakers of English

A paper submitted to the Department of English , College of Education for Human Sciences , University of Babylon, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of bachelor in English language

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(بِسْمِ اللَّـهِ الرَّحْمَـٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ)

{ يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ}

صدق الله العلي العظيم

(المجادلة: 11).

Dedicaion

For those who taught me until I learned ,for being my first teacher . My parents

For my teachers

For everyone who supported me .

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The Abstract

The present study is about Contrastive analysis of Superstructure of MA theses abstracts written by native speakers and (Arab) non-native speakers of English. The aim of the present study is to identify the differences and similarities in superstructure of MA theses abstracts written by native and (Arab) non-native speakers of English. It is limited to the superstructure of MA theses abstracts . The purpose is to find out more about the superstructure of these abstracts and shed light on the differences and similarities.

It is concluded that the components of superstructure situation, problem, solution and evaluation are available in the two samples . The situation and Solution are equal in both groups of abstracts . Problem and evaluation in group one which is abstracts for native speakers of English are less than group two which is abstracts for (Arab) non-native speakers of English .

Chapter one

Introduction

This chapter is to introduce the present study. It is about making a contrastive analysis of superstructure of MA theses abstracts written by native speakers of English and (Arab) non-native speakers. To identify the differences and similarities in these abstracts.

2.1 Problem of the Study

The problem of the present study is that there is a need to identify the differences and similarities in superstructure of MA thesis written by native and (Arab) non-native speakers of English.

2.2 The Aim

The present study aims at clarifying the points of similarities and differences in writing MA theses abstracts by native and (Arab) non-native speakers in English language .

2.3 Limitation

The present study is limited to the superstructure of MA theses abstracts written by native and non native speakers of English .

2.4 Procedure

A number of MA theses written by native and (Arab) non-native speakers of English are taken . The superstructure of abstracts of those theses are identified to investigate similarities and differences .

2.5 Significance

The present study is hoped to be of a theoretical significance , to find out more about the superstructure of MA theses abstracts written by native

and (Arab) non native speakers of English , and shed the light on the differences and similarities of superstructure of these abstracts .

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Linguistics is the scientific study of the language . There are many branches of linguistics . One of these branches is discourse analysis. A discourse could be of several types like narrative, descriptive and argumentative .The present study is about argumentative discourse , which is presented in MA theses .The superstructure of these theses is the subject matter of the present study.

2.1 Superstructure

Connor and Lauer (1988) diffine superstructure as an organization plan of a text (P.142) As Benoit (1992:3) said there is no student or scholar can identify something without having an idea about it .

Van Dijk (1997:12), diffines superstructure as the global form of the structure. It is called a schematic structure .

Superstructures are made up of conventional, frequently hierarchically arranged categories that give the various levels of discourse further structure. Although semantic or even pragmatic units are frequently schematically arranged, the categories sometimes only have an impact on surface structures, such as metrical or prosodic patterns. As in all of these instances, the structures appear to be somehow additional or grafted onto the standard linguistic or grammatical organization of language. In order to distinguish the various kinds of superstructures, we will add the respective adjectives, and speak of metrical, rhetorical, argumentative, or narrative superstructures. (P:236)

There are some different kinds of superstructure as follows.:

2.1.1 Narrative superstructure

It is the schematic structures of a stories (such as novels, dramas, short stories,folktales, and myths) and it is the most well-known, even in everyday conversation(Van Dijk,1980:112). Narrative superstructures is important , if it comes to recalling and understanding stories (Van Dijk , 1983:57) , containing a set of different categories, such as Setting Complication, and Resolution.(P:16)

2.1.1.1 Setting

Setting is the first common category for narratives. Generally, settings include explanations of the original situation, the time and location of the various episodes , and it involves the description of the main characters and perhaps more detail regarding the social or historical setting of the events (Van Dijk,1980:113)

2.1.1.2   Complications

Complications are what happen in the sitting. An event or an action is contained in the category of complications . However, the semantic constraint is that it must be something that is valuable to tell in the first place . A "narratable" event is required. Just opening a door, a leaf falling, or driving a car in general does not qualify , because these are daily events that are neither exciting nor noteworthy . Therefore complication frequently contains content that violates the accepted habits, routines, expectations, balance, or regular plans or aims of participants. This is usually a situation that the participants find to be either pretty funny, dangerous, or just unexpected.(Van Dijk ,1980 :114)

2.1.1.3 Resolution

Language users want to know what "happens next," what the conclusion or consequence is, how a situation is resolved, etc.

Generally speaking, a Resolution depicts a person's (re-) action to a previous event or action. We can anticipate that the Resolution will refer to actions taken to try to restore the predicament that led to the complicating event if it was unintended or contrary to the participant's goals. Examples include how to deal with a problem, prevented an accident, resolved a situation, etc .(Van Dijk, 1980:117)

2.1.2 Argumentive Superstructure

Like the organization of narrative, the structure of reasoning and argumentation has been examined(Van Dijk, 1980:117) . Superstructure of an argument consisting of four parts , situation , problem, solution, and evaluation (Connor and Lauer ,1988:143)

Argumentations have typically been examined in terms of argumentative schemata, such as the Aristotelian syllogism. Such schematic structures, which refers to as superstructures, provide a discourse its overall form and can be rendered explicit in terms of the particular categories that characterize a discourse type(P:189)

The structural elements circumstance, problem, solution, and evaluation can all be found in an argumentative text's sequence. The text has designated "slots" for the problem, which is the initial undesirable condition, and the solution, which is the desired final state ,solution. The conjectured outcome of the recommended solution will be evaluated during the evaluation session. The circumstance slot is set aside for background information. (Tirkkonen-Condit.1985:30)

2.1.2.1 Situation

A situation that details facts and verifiable (Tirkkonen-Condit.1985). is that studying texts alone makes it impossible to analyze this kind of structure; instead, it must be done in conjunction with what language users know and expected. Since it helps lay the text's common rhetorical basis, the situation's component is an important component of the text's organizational plan. Where, when, why, how, and who are all explained by the context of an argument.

2.1.2. 2 Problem

A problem that highlights a problematic element of the situation and seeks a solution(Tirkkonen-condit.1985) Following the situation, the author should immediately introduce the problem. The outline of the problem should include its nature, historical context, causes, and effects.

2.1.2. 3 Solution

A solution either describes how the problem was fixed or makes suggestions and recommendations,(TTirkkone-condit.1985). The solution is the author's attempt to persuade the reader to adopt their point of view.

The solution component of an argument is the writer's contribution to the problem. It is important because both the arguer and the viewer hope for a positive outcome to the problem. The presence of a solution implies that the author has carefully examined the situation and has based his position on an objective, rational analysis. Typically, a solution is offered an attempt to solve the problem.

2.1.2. 4 Evaluation

Evaluation positively assesses the suggested solution. After a Solution component, a negative Evaluation results in a recycling pattern and a return to the problem . Trriconen-Condit (1985) states that the evaluation follows the solution   . As a qualitative rather than quantitative addition to the solution, the evaluation superstructure component wants to show the value of the solution that is suggested. Evaluation is the process of examining and weighing the author's solution in order to give the reader a better understanding of them .

2.2   Academic writing

The writing that will be done in college may cause a lot of anxiety and questions for a college students .The pupils concentrate on writing, additionally, give the value of writing as a communication skill

The secret of success to write effectively for academic purposes depends on the understanding of what are doing while writing , and how approach the writing task is heavily influenced by how they have presented it. (Charles &Pavel,2010:3)

Academic writing as(Ann, 2007:3) said , is the type of writing used in high school and college courses. Academic writing is formal; therefore, you should not use slang or contractions. Additionally, you must be careful to write in whole phrases and to put them in a specific order. It's likely that academic writing in English differs from academic writing in our native language. Most likely, they differ from the words, grammar, and organizational style we are used to.

It's important for writers to understand why they write. The most frequent causes for writing are as follows:

• to provide a report on research the author has done.

• to respond to a question the writer was asked or was provided

• to discuss a topic of common interest and present the author's point of view

• to summarize previous research on a subject.(Bailey,2011:3)

Academic writing used in :

2.1.3 Scholarly Paper

A scholarly paper may have a type of conventional or even Institutional schema in addition to narratives and arguments.

Such papers should begin with an Introduction outlining a particular problem and its background (such as how it has been treated by others), followed by the theoretical development of a new conception or the rejecting of competing theories, a theory that may be supported by specific analysis descriptions, or experiments .The Conclusion then comes next. Even while this schema may differ from discipline to discipline or even journal to journal, the fundamental components of scholarly communication are always present, even in writings that are more or less informal.

Several of the categories of the scholarly paper schema frequently include the argumentation schema as an embedded element. For lectures, monographs, various types of papers, and scholarly discourse in general, variations of this model may be prescribed.(Van Dijk,1980:120)

2.2.4 MA Theses

A long piece of writing with specific components (such as an abstract, conclusions, and a bibliography etc.) .A thesis is defined as "a proposition advanced and offered to be maintained by argument ".It is an argument that offers an answer to an issues or question and seeks to support that answer(Field &Neufville,1998:3)

2.2.5 Abstracts

An abstract is a brief summary of the main ideas in a thesis, academic work, or report. Writing an abstract when the report is finished is typically the simplest, to know what is the achievement and to summarize it .

However, it is an effective manner to prepare abstracts both before and when the research is being done to be able to explain where are going, how to plan to get there, and why completing this task is important. The abstracts length should be between 200 and 300 words as a maximum . The abstracts have a sammary about the content of the theses ,this includes

•The thesis's main element

•the technique;

•The evidence offered and a brief explanation of how it was gathered;

•Achieved outcomes;

•The recommendations and conclusions; and

•Any unique elements of the research (Field &Neufville,1998:11-12)

We have to learn the format, sentence structure, and organization for academic writing. Beginning with the paragraph

2.2.1 Paragraph

A paragraph is a collection of connected ideas that a writer develops on a certain subject. The topic's main point or idea is stated in the opening sentence. The preceding sentences in the paragraph support that idea . Unity is a main element of a good paragraph. All of the supporting sentences in a paragraph that is coherent focus on the same idea. Each sentence is directly related to the topic from beginning to end. (Ann,2007:67)

2.2.1.1 Narrative paragraph

Narration is a story writing . In a narrative paragraph, you describe events in the time order in which they occur. In other words, you structure your phrases using temporal order.

2.2.1.2 Descriptive paragraph

By appealing to the senses, descriptive writing describes how something appears, feels, smells, tastes, and/or sounds. A good description paints a picture in the reader's mind so that they can visualize the thing, place, or person being described.

A description typically follows a structure pattern known as spatial order. Things are arranged in space according to spatial order.

2.2.1.3 Process paragraph

Process paragraphs, often known as how to paragraphs, are ones in which you describe how to produce or do something. A process should be broken down into a series of steps with each step being explained in order to describe clearly how to achieve something(Ann,2007: 95)

2.2.1.4 Comparison – Contrast Paragraph

We use the technique of comparison and contrast every day. For instance, while choosing which classes to enroll in, we compare courses and teacher.

When we shop, we compare things and prices.

frequently we have to compare and contrast things in college courses. We might be asked to compare and contrast two historical personalities or two historical events in a history lesson, for instance. we might be required to compare two poems or two novels in a literature lesson.or two characters in a play.

When we compare two (or more) things , we point out their similarities. When we contrast two things, we point out their differences. Usually, the differences are emphasized, but occasionally a paragraph will discuss both similarities and differences . (Ann,2007:109)

An organized comparison/contrast paragraph can be set up in one of two ways. Block organization and point-by-point organizing .

In block organization, place all the similar things in one block and all the differences in another. Both sample paragraphs employ a block format.

All similarities

 All differences

In point-by-point we discuss similarities and differences structure.

2.2.2   Essay

Writing an essay its as writing of the paragraph but just it is longer than

Organization of the essay

There are three parts of an essay

- The Introductory Paragraph
- Body Paragraphs
- The Concluding Paragraph

Producing an essay is similar to writing a paragraph in difficulty. Just the essay is longer .(Ann,2007:147)

The purpose of an essay introduction is to interest the reader's enthusiasm and explain its subject. The thesis is stated in the final phrase of the introduction. A thesis statement identifies the specific subject of the essay, like the main phrase of a paragraph.

The body consists of one or several paragraphs . Every paragraph develops a different aspect of the topic.

The conclusion is a summary or review of the major points raised in the body, like the last sentence of a paragraph.

Similar to how a paragraph has coherence and unity, the essay has . (Ann,2007: 148)

Chapter Three

Analysis and Descusstion

In the present study, ten abstracts are being descussed to identify their superstructures . Five of them written by native speakers of English language, the other written by non-native speakers of English (Arabs) , in order to show the differences and similarities in writing the abstracts between the (Arab) non-native and the native speakers.

3.1 The First Group of Selected Abstracts by Native Speakers of English

The titles of the theses for these abstracts are as the following

1. A systematic Functional Approach for Applied Linguistic Article Conclusions by Viktoria Volkova
2. Taking Linguistics: Does an Introductory Linguistic class Results in increased
3. Broadening the Horizons : A Linguistic Anthropological Case Study of Language and Landscape at Acoma Pueblo by Vincent Maxwell Belletto
4. Language: A Bridge or Barrier to Social Groups by Adina S. Corke
5. Empowering Silence Voices : Implementing Critical Pedagogy to Move Toward Decolonising Music Education by Alexis Adams

To identify its superstructure, these abstracts are categorized using the Argumentative Superstructure , starting with situation, which is regarded as broad facts that are delivered to give the reader a general background , then to explain problems that are thought of as goals that should be attained, and the solutions of the problems in step three, the last step is an evaluation of the solutions .

Table (1) : Frequency of Occurrence of superstructure components in the First Group

Abstracts	Situation No.	%	Problems No.	%	Solution No.	%	Evaluation No	%
Abstract 1	0	0%	0	0%	1	20%	1	20%
Abstract 2	1	20%	0	0%	1	20%	1	20%
Abstract 3	1	20%	1	20%	1	20%	1	20%
Abstract 4	1	20%	1	20%	1	20%	0	0%
Abstract 5	1	20%	1	20%	1	20%	0	0%
Total	4	80%	3	60%	5	100%	3	60%

Analyzing the abstracts are in descending order. The first and the highest is the solution which is 100% , this means that it is highly used . All these five abstracts have a solutions for their problems of the researches . The situation comes in the second place . It gets 80% this means that it is less used than solution . Thirdly , problems and evaluations come in the same statistical proportions and they are equal , both of them are 60% , this means that they are the least in the use of superstructure components.

3.2 The Second Group of Selected Abstracts written by (Arab) Non-native speakers of English.

The same analysing of the abstracts of native speakers of English is done with the other group of abstracts, and the titles of the theses are:

1. A Contrastive Genre Analysis of Newspapers Editorials in E&A by Amjad
2. Apology in English and Arabic: A Contrastive Study by Intesam Mohammed Alawi
3. Lexical Signalling in Selected Novels by Akram
4. A Pragmatic Study of Argumentation in Sorne Selected Novels are by Ramia Fu'ad
5. A Pragmatic Study of Sarcasm in Selected American Comedy TV Shows by Ahmed Mukhef

Table(2):Frequency of Occurrence of Superstructure Components in the Second Group

Abstracts	Situation No.	%	Problems No.	%	Solution No.	%	Evaluation No	%
Abstract 1	1	20%	0	0%	1	20%	1	20%
Abstract 2	1	20%	1	20%	1	20%	1	20%
Abstract 3	1	20%	1	20%	1	20%	1	20%
Abstract 4	1	20%	1	20%	1	20%	1	20%
Abstract 5	0	0%	1	20%	1	20%	0	0%
Total	4	80%	4	80%	5	100%	4	80%

The analysing of these abstracts also will be descending order .In the first was solutions which get 100% . In second was situations, problems and evaluations each one of them gets 80% .This means that solution is highly used . While situation , problem and evaluation are equal and less used than evaluation

Chapter Four

Conclusion

The superstructure of group one which contains the abstracts of MA theses for native speakers of English and group two which contains the abstracts of MA theses for (Arab) non-native speakers of English . consist of situation, problem , solution and evaluation

1. Situation :situation in group one which contains the abstracts of MA theses for native speakers of English is equal to group two which contains the abstracts of MA theses for (Arab) non-native speakers of English . Some situation in group two is done at the end of the abstract

2. Problem : problem in group one (the abstracts which written by native speakers of English) is less than group two (the abstracts which written by non-native speakers of English) . Some problems are implicit problem and it counts as no problem , but in fact there is no researches or theses without a problem

3. Solution : solution in group one (the abstracts which written by native speakers of English) is equal to group two (the abstracts which written by non-native speakers of English) and they are highly used in both groups

4. Evaluation: evaluation in group one (the abstracts which written by native speakers of English) is less than group two (the abstracts which written by non-native speakers of English) .

They are similar in situation and solution in both groups. Problems and evaluation are similar too . Because academic writing is governed by strick rules .

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