Introducing the Literary Critic: The CARS Model in the Introductions of Academic Papers in Literary Criticism

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ABSTRACT

Genre analysis as a "meta-study" is a topic that has been deeply investigated in the field of applied linguistics, one of its more specific areas of interest being research article introductions (RAIs). However, there are still certain kinds of scholarly activity that have received relatively little attention in this regard, such as literary criticism. The paper presents and discusses the results of a small-scale study of the introductions of ten academic essays in this field. The paper's aim is to see how Swales' (1990) CARS model can be applied to the rhetorical structure of these RAIs. It is found that at the cost of certain modifications necessitated by the structure of the essays in the corpus, it is not impossible to analyze critical texts produced by scholars belonging in the latter area. The demonstration of this has significance in fulfilling a perceived need for literary criticism to be considered among those disciplines that are worthy of the attention of applied linguistic research.

1. Introduction

Studying genres of texts has always attracted attention for practical purposes. Making the conventions of a given genre explicit draws attention to such formal features that might present difficulties in dealing with the content if left uninvestigated. Thereby it has the potential to aid both readers and writers in processing as well as producing appropriate texts in a given field of interest that has a recognizable set of such conventions. An area where the study of genres has been a central concern in recent years is the academic context. Genre analysis has grown into an autonomous research area in applied linguistics, so much so that even specific functional elements of texts have been investigated thoroughly. One such element in academic papers is the introduction.

One of the most often cited authors in any discussion of the topic is John M. Swales. His initial study of research article introductions (RAIs, Swales, 1981) revealed fundamental similarities in this text type. To account more thoroughly for these similarities, Swales revised his study in 1990 and presented an improved model of Creating a Research Space (CARS) that has been a common reference point in most investigations in the field. He further revised certain aspects of the model in Swales (2004). Already the 1990 version's three-move model describes the rhetorical organization of what may be called a standard RAI in most disciplines. The name "CARS" is interpreted in Károly (2007) as referring to the fact that the writer's responsibility in the introduction is to define and justify the chosen topic (pp. 153–154). The centrality of Swales' (1990) achievement is evident from the fact that several studies have taken this model as their starting point since then. For example, Bhatia (1993) investigated subgenres within the RA, while Károly

(2006) compared expert and EFL students' writing on the basis of the model with slight modifications introduced to it. Sub-disciplinary variations have also been investigated. Atai and Habibie (2012) explored the fields of English for Specific Purposes, Psycholinguistics, and Sociolinguistics, while Chahal (2014) studied the model's applicability in cultural studies.

Already large and expanding still as it may be, however, the field of genre analysis still seems to ignore some academic disciplines. It is especially the disciplines in the humanities, as Chahal (2014) argues, that have been neglected. Such a discipline is literary criticism. At the time of writing the present paper, only one source could be found that appeared to treat academic papers from this discipline at all (Rizomilioti, cited in Dudley-Evans, 2000, p. 8). As Swales (2004) himself acknowledges, his initial studies were chiefly based on RAs in the sciences (physics, psychology, linguistics, etc.). He does mention genre-related questions in the *belles lettres* (1990, p. 36), but they concern only *primary* literature (i.e., literary texts proper), not *secondary* or critical texts.

However, already Northrop Frye has pointed out that literary criticism "is a structure of thought and knowledge existing in its own right, with some measure of independence from the art it deals with" (1957/1971, p. 5). A more recent voice advocating the idea that the disciplinary nature of the humanities, and of literary studies among them, should be stressed in order to avoid the charge of being too complicated and self-contained to be of any use to contemporary society, is Kovács (2011). The underlying motivation of the present paper, therefore, is to call attention to literary criticism as a discipline still in need of more work to be carried out on the structural conventions of the works that it

produces. The paper wishes to demonstrate how a method already well-established in other areas can be applied in the study of published academic essays in this discipline.

The aim of the paper is twofold. On the one hand, it attempts to demonstrate how an approach to examining RAIs in literary criticism is comparable to that applied in other fields. The study is based on the 1990 version of Swales' CARS, which, despite some revisions proposed to it in Swales (2004), has remained "the predominant analytical tool used in the examination of the Introduction component of RAs" (Chahal, 2014, p. 2). As most of the changes in Swales (2004) were informed by disciplines coming similarly from the sciences (e.g., neuroscience, computer sciences), neither version displays influence from the field the present paper is concerned with. Moreover, Swales (2004), bearing the title Research Genres: *Explorations and Applications*, is primarily concerned with the kinds of genre to be found in the academic world as a whole, not particularly with RAIs proper. (For a critical discussion of the differences between the 1990 and the 2004 versions of the CARS model, see Sheldon, 2013, pp. 40–42.) On the other hand, the present paper also points at certain general tendencies in the rhetorical organization of introductions in a limited selection of such RAs. These tendencies are hoped to be suitable for generating hypotheses for later research. The central question the paper attempts to answer is how the structural elements of Swales' (1990) CARS model can be applied to the structure of academic papers in literary criticism. For the sake of convenience, Table 1 presents a list of the Moves and Steps comprising the model.

Table 1: Swales' (1990) Moves and Steps

Move 1: Establishing a Territory	Step 1: Claiming Centrality and/or
	Step 2: Making Topic Generalizations and/or
	Step 3: Reviewing Items of Previous Research
Move 2: Establishing a Niche	Step 1A: Counter-Claiming or
	Step 1B: Indicating a Gap or
	Step 1C: Question-Raising or
	Step 1D: Continuing a Tradition
Move 3: Occupying the Niche	Step 1A: Outlining Purposes or
	Step 1B: Announcing Present Research
	Step 2: Announcing Principal Findings
	Step 3: Indicating Research Article Structure

The Methodology section of the paper discusses how the corpus of the research was compiled and describes the procedures of data analysis. The next section is devoted to the evaluation of the results and tries to arrive at the possible reasons that should explain them. The Conclusion summarizes the findings as well as their interpretation.

2. Methodology

2.1 Corpus

The paper presents and discusses the results of a small-scale study conducted on ten essays of varying length published in scholarly journals in literary criticism between 1947 and 2004. All of the essays are analyses of given literary works (novels, plays, poems) and are considered functionally equivalent to empirical RAs in applied linguistics or other sciences. In order to avoid possible biases arising from sameness of topics, authors, or the publishing conventions of one journal, it seemed desirable to select each text from a different author, on a different topic (literary piece), and from a different journal at random. This yielded ten authors' papers on ten different literary pieces that appeared in ten different journals each. The relatively low number of the essays indicates a necessarily narrow scale of the study with conclusions of a consequently limited applicability;

nevertheless, the confines of the present paper may excuse such a disadvantage. The central aim of the project, after all, is by no means the establishment of a comprehensive theory of the rhetorical organization of the introductions of papers in literary criticism, but an attempt at testing the CARS model on intentionally random RAIs in order to generate hypotheses. A list of the selected papers with all bibliographical data can be found in the References section.

2.2 Procedures of data analysis

The first task with the selected pieces was to delineate the parts to be labeled "introductions." The need for this arose from the fact that the RAs selected for analysis did not have section headings to mark off such structural elements as "introduction," "methodology," etc. This seems to be the usual practice in literary criticism; only a few pieces exploit even such means as splitting the body of the text by inserting Roman numerals between sets of paragraphs, as in Egan (1979), Burhans (1960), and Carkson and Warren (1947). Therefore, it should be admitted that delineating "introductions" in the analyzed essays may be debated. However, the method used for making a decision has been consistent. If the introduction could not be delineated visually (e.g., being marked off from the rest of the text by a Roman numeral or simple spacing), then the last paragraph that was found to correspond to a Step in Swales' (1990) model was considered the closing of the introduction. The sentences in the introductions identified this way were numbered so that they could be attached to each Move or Step of the model. The lengths of the introductions varied from three sentences (one paragraph, as in Carkson and Warren (1947) to fifty-five sentences (thirteen paragraphs, as in Stempel (1976)).

The next step was to create a template chart to be used with each of the papers for marking the following information. Rows correspond to the Moves and Steps as found in Swales (1990) with four additions. Three Additional Moves and Steps and an unusual extra Move, labeled "Motto," which almost half of the examined papers shared, have been added. Columns, on the other hand, were used to mark the following: the presence or absence of each Step (and the Motto); the number(s) of the sentence(s) that represented each Step (the sentence(s) of the Motto were not considered among those making up the rest of the introduction); comments to each Step; and to summarize the content of the given Step. (The template is included in the Appendix.)

The third task consisted in going through the selected essays one by one. The charts were filled with the relevant information, and modifications were made if necessitated by an essay structure that appeared to be in any way incompatible with Swales' (1990) model. The last step was to summarize the total findings in a separate table somewhat modified to satisfy the needs of such a summary.

3. Analysis and Discussion

One of the most striking findings of the study was that not a single Step in the model could be found in *all* of the examined papers. Move 1 Step 2 (Making Topic Generalizations) was the most common in the introductions, identified in eight of them. The second place could be given to Step 3 of the same Move (Reviewing Items of Previous Research), retained without doubt in six of the ten. One (Lyon, 1961) posed a problem. It contains what might be called a quasi-literature review. The author makes two general statements referring to previous studies conducted in the same topic (Orwell's fiction) in the form "Many have had the same impression…" and "The consensus has been…" Nevertheless, he mentions no examples from the critical literature, not even

in a footnote (which, by the way, was quite widespread in the rest of the papers).

Apart from the fact that there was no Step common to all introductions, it is also worth mentioning that there were a few which appeared in none; namely, Move 2 Steps 1C and D (Question-Raising and Continuing a Tradition). (It should be noted that Swales, in 2004, simplified this Move greatly.) Another surprising result proved to be the complete absence of Move 3 (Occupying the Niche) in one of the essays. Clarkson Holstein's (2004) analysis of Brian Friel's play *Translations* did not feature the Move that would otherwise serve as the closing of an RA introduction. However, Move 3 may be retained with the help of Károly (2006), who, based on her research on a set of Hungarian EFL writings, introduced a number of Steps into Swales' 1990 model. The last Step in Clarkson Holstein's paper, which was labeled Move 2 Step 1B/8 (Indicating a Gap—Problem Raising), might be renamed Move 3 Step 1E (Formulating Hypotheses) borrowed from Károly (2006), saving Move 3 and thus ensuring that all Moves are included in this RAI as well. (It contains three more Steps from Move 2: a Step 1A (Counter-Claiming) and two Additional Steps.) Here is the passage from Clarkson Holstein that contains Move 2 (and Move 3 as in Károly (2006); the numerals in the upper-left index indicate sentence numbers):

[7]Friel must have pondered this question personally at times. [8]His birth certificate reads "Bernard Friel," because the Protestant bureaucracy of Derry discouraged "Gaelic" names (Pine 15). *[Move 2 Additional Step 1: parallel between the author of the work and a main character]* [9]Although we know Juliet tried to persuade herself and Romeo that "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet,"

we also recognize almost viscerally the power of naming, the entitlement to identify and designate ourselves and that which we believe belongs to us. [10]It startles us when we hear such examples of that power being usurped. *[Move 2 Step 1A: refuting counter found in a different literary work by appealing to common experience]* [11]Given the enterprise that Owen/Roland is engaged in, that of assisting to re-configure his homeland and change Gaelic place names to English ones, he has a practical need to shrug off that uneasiness we feel when we are misidentified by others. [12]But just as my sister's powerlessness resulted in some lasting disorientation, so Owen comes to discover that relinquishing the power to denominate himself reverberates in the problematic undertaking he champions. *[Move 2 Additional Step 2: relating the work to the common field of experience established above to a personal account-account introduced earlier in the text]*[13] The answer to the question he poses ("[I]t's the same me, isn't it?") becomes, I think, "probably not." *[either Move 2 Step 1B-implicit reference to within the work-or Move 3 Step 1E]* (p. 1)

This example also reveals that in literary criticism it is sometimes the case that a counter-argument to be refuted (or a support for the author's claim) is formulated not based on another work in the critical literature, but by referring to a literary piece other than the one being interpreted. Yet another peculiarity to which the passage testifies is the need for certain "Additional Steps" to be introduced in the analysis. This is necessary in order to account for some rhetorical movements which could not be covered by either Swales' (1990) or Károly's (2006)categories.

Two other necessary additions should be mentioned. The first is a Move that is labeled "Motto." This Move may be considered as part of the introduction (although the sentences in this Move were not numbered, indicating that the Motto is such a Move that is always a word-to-word quotation of another text). Four out of the ten papers used this Move. The second addition, this time a Step, was labeled "Reference to Another Work of the Author (of the work discussed in the essay)." It was considered part of Move 1 (Establishing a Territory). Such additions do not feature in Swales (2004) either. The "Reference to Another Work of the Author" was found in three of the papers examined, all of them placing it before the Step 1 of the same Move. There was one exception: Hagen (1991) in her paper on John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman* refers to an interview with Fowles instead of another novel by him, and she places this Step between Move 1 Steps 1 and 2. Nevertheless, this instance may still be seen as a subtype of the same Step, its position being possibly an exception to a supposed rule. It was labeled a Step and not a Move because it was found to contribute to establishing the territory that would provide the wider topic. It referred to a typical idea, for example, found in a piece of the writer other than the one being discussed. This feature would introduce the oeuvre of the writer. Within this territory, the author of the paper would then investigate a narrower phenomenon (e.g., one particular work by the writer). Table 2 illustrates the points mentioned above.

Table 2: Swales' (1990) CARS Model as Applied to the Corpus of the Study

Move/Step	Details		HAS	HASN'T	ADDITIONAL STEPS
Motto[1]			4/10		
Additional Moves	*Additional Steps*		0/10		
Move 1	Step 1		5/10	0/10	4/10[2]
	Step 2		8/10		
	Step 3		6(7)/10		
Additional Moves	*Additional Steps*		1/10		
Move 2	Step 1A		5/10	0/10	2/10
	Step 1B		7/10		
	Step 1C		0/10		
	Step 1D		0/10		
Additional Moves	*Additional Steps*		3/10		
Move 3	Step 1A		3/10	1/10[3]	2/10
	Step 1B		4/10		
	Step 2		4/10		
	Step 3		1/10		
Additional Moves	*Additional Steps*		1/10		

Overall, it can be noted that most of the essays could be described, albeit with modifications, using Swales' (1990) model. There was only one exception, Egan (1979), which proved to be highly incompatible with it. First, the sequence of Step 1 (Claiming Centrality) and Step 2 (Making Topic Generalizations) in Move 1 is changed. Second, a Move 2 Step 1A is followed by another Step in Move 1, Step 3. After Move 3 Step 1B (Announcing Present Research) comes an Additional Move with three Steps. Here a preliminary assumption about the interpretation of the work—not a hypothesis—is put forward, supported by a refutation of a different approach indicated in a footnote. Then two Steps of Move 3 intervene before Move 1 Step 3. This Step in turn is followed by another Additional Move with two Steps (noting a possible constraint in the author of the RA's approach that is turned to his advantage in the second Step). Table 3 presents the chart of this essay, which is concerned with Tom Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead.
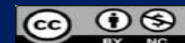
Table 3:

Move/Step	Details	HAS/N'T	SENT(S)	COMMENT	CONTENT
Motto		x			
Move 1	*Step 2*	✓	1–2	quoting the author of the work to make a general statement about it, mentioning other works—opinion "still being formed" about them	"gathering weight as it goes on;" *The Real Inspector Hound, Jumpers, Travesties*
	Step 1	✓	3–5	claiming the centrality for the work + support	"finding a stable place in our shared opinion;" persists on stage, gets on college reading lists; in the future: to become "a modern classic"?
Move 2	Step 1A	✓	6	expressing doubt about a full understanding of the work	have we fully understood the work?
Move 1	*Step 3*	✓	7–8	disagreeing with previous opinion about the work	Robert Brustein's charge of "theatrical parasitism;" others since then retaining a similar view
Move 3	Step 1A	x			
	Step 1B.*1*	✓	9	suggesting an alternative perspective	
	Step 2	x			
	Step 3	x			
Additional Move I.	*Additional Step 1*	✓	10–11	preliminary assumption (*not* hypothesis!) put forward	claiming autonomy for the work
	Additional Step 2	✓	12–26	refutation → parallels with two other works; proving assumption through analysis + 1 ref. to previous research in footnote to sentence 25	parallels between *Waiting for Godot* and the work; arguing for the autonomy of the latter gained from the former
	Additional Step 3	✓	27–28	restating preliminary assumption—what the work is *not*	claiming autonomy for the work; implicit indication of motivating factor for the project (the play is not about hopelessness)
Move 3	Step 1B.2	✓	29	presenting the focus of the author of the paper	—
	Step 2	✓	30	presenting the "contention" of the author of the paper	—
Move 1	Step 3	✓	footnote to 30 (& 25)	with commentary	—
Additional Move II.	*Additional Step 1*	✓	31–32	noting possible constraint	personal bias: having played the role of the Player
	Additional Step 2	✓	33–34	refuting implicit invalidating effect of constraint & taking advantage of it	that way he might be afforded "a practical hint" of the central concern of the paper

Table 4: The Rhetorical Structure of Egan's (1979) Introduction

This example, although unique in the corpus, may be indicative of further texts that potentially display similar inadequacies for the application of the CARS model to *some* of the papers in the field of literary criticism. It is by all means possible that another model for dealing with subgenres (cf. Bhatia , 1993) of the kind of essays analyzed here might solve the problem.

There are certain limitations in the present study that should be admitted. The corpus for the present research is not an encompassing one; indeed, it cannot claim much generality. It is narrow enough, considering only ten RAIs—although, for instance, Chahal (2014) treats only six RAs in her study of the CARS model in the field of cultural studies. Moreover, the selection of RAs has intentionally been rather wide in its scope both temporally and regarding the choice of journals from which the RAs were included. This, of course, allows for the

likely event that the results would have shown much less variation if the paper had relied on a more homogenous corpus. It is also clear that each journal has its own internal standard, which in itself accounts in part for differences between academic papers generally. What is more, as Swales (2004) also observes, much has happened already between the 1980s and the early 2000s only within the field of applied linguistics itself (p. 1), not to speak of the present day. What had it been, then, that still retained the rationale for carrying out this investigation?

The study never promised to describe how Swales' (1990) CARS model could be applied to the conventions of a particular journal or a given time period in literary criticism. The reason for being eclectic, as it were, in selecting the RAs was to get an impression, haphazard though it may be, of what literary criticism *has been* like, not only in recent years but in a wider temporal scope. Internal evolution within this discipline is by all means possible to have occurred; however, investigating that aspect of literary criticism must be left to a different study. Here the main goal has been to pose and illustrate the problem that, although much has been learned about the discoursal strategies of "Science-based disciplines" (Chahal, 2014, p. 2), research in the humanities, specifically in the study of literature, has a long way to go yet, both on the temporal as well as on the synchronic scale. It is hoped that for these purposes the selection strategy of the present study has been fortuitous.

4. Conclusion

The paper has tried to show how the CARS model proposed by Swales (1990) for analyzing the rhetorical organization of RAIs may be applied to research papers in literary criticism, a scholarly field that has not received much attention as regards its structural peculiarities. The research was conducted on a non-representative sample of ten different essays published in the area. The paper has found that certain modifications may enable the CARS model, admitting some difficulties, to be applied in describing the rhetorical structure of most RAIs examined here. Such modifications include, most importantly, the introduction of an additional Move, the Motto, and that of an additional Step, the Reference to Another Work of the Author. Two Steps in the original Swalesian model, Move 1 Step 2 and Move 2 Step 1B, were found to be common to most of the examined introductions. A Step that would have been common to *all* of them was not found, though. Nevertheless, if the 1990 CARS model is supplemented with the addition of Move 3 Step 1E (Formulating Hypotheses) proposed in Károly (2006), all three Moves of Swales can be retained in the RAIs of the corpus. This indicates that it may be possible to apply Swales' model to essays in literary criticism as well, provided that we make certain modifications.

It has to be admitted that the research has certain limitations. The corpus examined here is by no means representative of the discipline of literary criticism as a whole, and consequently the results may easily be debated by citing counterexamples from the same field. However, Swales (1990)'s own apology may also provide some excuse for the present endeavor as well:

[C]onclusions must at present be considered tentative, partly because the enormous size of the genre means that the number of texts examined represents extremely minute proportions of the whole, and partly because we still experience considerable difficulty in making well-validated decisions about how that whole should be divided up. (p. 110)

As Frye (1957/1971) has argued, literary criticism is just as well a science as an art, and therefore it should be possible to make

general observations about it too as a field of scholarly activity. Future studies may have the capacity to shed more light on the subject than it has been possible for the present work. Nevertheless, it is still hoped that the importance of emphasizing the scholarly nature of the discipline will persist and bring results that can confirm its status as an occupation worthy of regaining the acknowledgement of its social function and importance.

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End Notes:
[1] New Moves and Steps established in the present research and those whose order was found to change in the examined introductions are in *italics*.
[2] Move 1 Additional Step: Reference to Another Work of the Author (and Hagen's (1991) reference to an interview with the author).
[3] If Károly's (2006) Move 3 Step 1E is added to Swales (1990)'s model, the ratio can be reduced to 0/10.

Appendix:
Template for the analysis of the papers

Move/Step	Details	HAS/N'T	SENT(S)	COMMENT	CONTENT
Motto					
Additional Move I.	*Additional Step 1*				
Move 1	Step 1				
	Step 2				
	Step 3				
Move 2	Step 1A				
	Step 1B				
	Step 1C				
	Step 1D				
Move 3	Step 1A				
	Step 1B				
	Step 2				
	Step 3				
Additional Move II.	*Additional Step 1*				