

## Forewords of Edited Academic Books in Applied Linguistics: A Rhetorical Analysis

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### Abstract

A foreword is the introductory section of a book which includes comments on the book written by someone other than the author, generally a well-known scholar, with purpose(s) mainly promotional. Despite the important promotional role of forewords, they have been allocated a relatively small piece of literature regarding the investigation of their rhetorical structure. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the rhetorical structure of the forewords of edited academic books in applied linguistics. To achieve this research, move structure analysis based on Swales' analytic concept of moves is utilized. Precisely, using a qualitative approach, the study examines the texts in terms of the textual devices signaling the moves bearing communicative functions. The results revealed eight moves including claiming centrality, introducing the book idea, justifying the book as meeting the needs, invitation to further study, justifying the book subject as meeting the needs, admiring the book, specifying the readership, and stating an overview of the book. Also, it was found out that the forewords might not be empty of moves reflecting the purpose of attracting the readers' support. The findings could have significant use in ESP (English for Specific Purposes), genre analysis and discourse analysis, and could be of value for authors and researchers who are interested in knowing how to write forewords in academic context.

**Keywords:** Foreword, Rhetorical Analysis, Discourse Analysis, Genre Analysis, ESP

### دراسة بلاغية لمقدمات كتب مُحَرَّرَة بتخصص اللغويات التطبيقية

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### المستخلص

"المقدمة" هي القسم التمهيدي للكتاب الذي يتضمن تعليقات على الكتاب كتبها شخص آخر غير المؤلف، وهو عموماً أكاديمي مشهور، ولأغراض ترويجية بشكل أساسي. على الرغم من الدور الترويجي المهم للمقدمات، فقد تم تخصيص جزء صغير نسبياً من الأدبيات المتعلقة بالتحقيق في هيكلهم البلاغي. لذلك هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على البنية البلاغية لمقدمات الكتب الأكاديمية المحررة في علم اللغة التطبيقي. لانجاز هذا البحث، تم استخدام تحليل بنية الحركة بناءً على المفهوم التحليلي للحركات ما ينتمي إلى سويلز. على وجه التحديد، وباستخدام نهج نوعي، فحصت الدراسة النصوص من حيث الأجهزة النصية التي تشير إلى الحركات التي تحمل وظائف التواصل. كشفت النتائج عن ثماني حركات منها المطالبة بالمركزية، تقديم فكرة الكتاب، تسويق الكتاب على أنه يلبي الاحتياجات، الدعوة لمزيد من الدراسة، تسويق موضوع الكتاب على أنه تلبية للاحتياجات، الإعجاب بالكتاب، تحديد القراء، وتقديم لمحة عامة عن الكتاب. أيضاً، تم اكتشاف أن مقدمات قد لا تكون خالية من الحركات التي تعكس الغرض من جذب دعم القراء. يمكن أن يكون للنتائج استخدام كبير في مجال اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض محددة، تحليل النوع الخطاب، و تحليل الخطاب، وللمؤلفين والباحثين فيما يتعلق بكيفية كتابة مقدمات في السياق الأكاديمي.

الكلمات الدالة: مقدمة، تحليل بلاغي، تحليل الخطاب، تحليل نوع الخطاب، اللغة الإنجليزية لأغراض محددة

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## 1. Introduction

Genres, "ways in which people 'get things done' through their use of spoken and written discourse" [1,p.62], have been interesting for teaching academic writing [1]. More specifically, ESP imagines for the ESL learners success in accessing career opportunities, positive identities, and life choices, and sees competence in a range of written genres as a device for reaching such a success [2]. Analyses of the discourse of academic texts have been conducted in areas such as discourse structures of research articles, master theses and doctoral dissertations, the texts that students read in university courses, and so on [1]. Among such studies are those working on introductory parts of academic books [3], [4], [5], [6]. For example, Sorayyaei Azar [6] has determined the rhetorical structure of the preface of academic textbooks in applied linguistics. Also, Jalilifar and Golkar Musavi [4] have determined the rhetorical structure of the introductory parts of the academic books in applied linguistics. However, there is still a gap in the related literature regarding examination of the rhetorical structure of the introductory parts of *edited* academic books. This is the gap that inspires conducting the present study. The present study, specifically, aims to investigate the rhetorical structure of the forewords of edited academic books in applied linguistics.

Foreword, as Bhatia [7]states, includes comments on the book, written by someone other than the author, generally a well-known scholar, with purpose(s) mainly promotional. This study stands upon Swales' [8] analytic concept of move, bearing communicative purposes recognized by the expert members of discourse communities. It takes moves into account as making up the rhetorical structure of the forewords. Indeed, this study aims to answer the following question:

What moves are responsible for the rhetorical structure of forewords of edited academic books in applied linguistics?

The outcomes of this study can be useful for those who are interested in the functions taking place in forewords of edited academic books, particularly, scholars in ESP, genre analysis, and discourse analysis. Besides, the findings may strengthen current theoretical literature.

### 1.1. Literature Review

Swales [8] considers discourse communities as owning genres, while considering them as those whose nomenclature for genres is of authority. According to Swales, "a genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes" [8,p.58] recognizable by the experts of the associated discourse community. Accordingly, it is communicative purposes that are prototypical criteria for genre identity and, therefore, communicative purposes could be interpreted as the criteria for the diversity of genres [8]. For doing a genre analysis, which explains the communicative functions structuring a genre, Swales offers the concept of move to bear the communicative purposes. Since then, a body of genre research has been done on the base of the concept of move. Part of this research is related to academic writings such as research papers [9], [10],[11],[12], theses [13], [14], presentations [15], [16], introductory parts of academic books [3], [4], [5],[6], and so on. Given the subject of the present study, the introductory parts of academic books will be the focus of the review.

By reviewing the related literature, it could be seen that among the introductory parts of academic books including the introduction, preface, and foreword, the preface has gained a lot of attention regarding move-based analysis of rhetorical structure [3], [4], [5], [6]. Among the studies concerning prefaces of academic books is a study conducted by Kuhl [5], which analyzed the prefaces of textbooks in applied linguistics to identify their move structure. Another one is a study carried out by Sorayyaei Azar [6], which analyzed the move structure of the prefaces of academic textbooks in linguistics and applied linguistics, while offering results somewhat different from those of the former.

There were other studies which offered different results from the above-mentioned ones. For instance, a study conducted by Al-Zubaidi and Jasim [17] investigated prefaces in English and Arabic academic linguistics books in order to find out the differences regarding the move structure which originated from the language-related cultures. Their findings asserted that move structure of a given genre can vary in different languages. Another kind of diversity in writing a preface has been offered by the results of a study carried out by Asghar, Asghar, and Mahmood [18], who analyzed the preface section of English academic textbooks related to the field of linguistics. Their results revealed that distribution of the identified moves varied from writer to writer.

According to the results of the above-mentioned studies, what could be seen is that different studies have offered different move structures for preface section of academic books. This takes place while the field of the books under studies has been nearly the same. It could be seen that the researcher's recognition of the move structure, the culture within which the preface is written, and the preface writer's concerns, all have had the potential to manipulate the results. These may be just a few of many factors which prone to influence the identifiable move structure. However, by reviewing the related literature, it could be seen that just few studies have analyzed the rhetorical structure of preface texts on the basis of move concept or any other theoretical framework. Introduction and foreword, the other frequent introductory parts of academic books, despite their important role in attracting the readers, suffer from such a problem even more than preface. One of the few studies analyzing the rhetorical structure of introduction and foreword is that conducted by Jalilifar and Golkar Musavi [4], which examined the move structure of preface, introduction, and foreword sections of academic books in applied linguistics. The results of this study offered three models of move structure, each related to one of the genres.

To sum up, the review of literature revealed that analysis of introductory parts of academic books regarding rhetorical structure is still at the beginning of its way. Introductory parts of books play an important role in attracting readers and thus promoting the books. Given this fact, it is important to provide comprehensive explanations of communicative purposes included in these genres. Therefore, in order to add to the related literature, giving an explanation of the rhetorical structure of forewords of edited academic books in applied linguistics is the focus of the present study.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Materials

The dataset is forewords of five edited academic books which are selected on the basis of availability. There are few books which contained forewords and at the same time met the criteria determined by the researchers for selecting the books (mentioned below). Therefore, the small sample size is justifiable. In order to avoid any overgeneralization some matters are considered when selecting the books: only books in the category of edited academic books in applied linguistics published by Cambridge University Press are chosen. The forewords of those books are observed to be all written by somebody other than the editors of the books. Moreover, the books are limited to be published in 2018 to 2020.

### 2.2. Procedure

A qualitative approach is used to analyze the texts. On the basis of Swales' [8] analytic concept of moves, the study illuminates the communicative functions that the writers of the texts applied. To do so, it examines the texts in terms of the textual devices signaling the moves bearing those communicative functions. To assess the reliability of the findings, an inter-rater is needed to express opinion regarding the employed moves in the texts. The inter-rater's opinion was in agreement to the moves identified by the researchers. Therefore, it was proved that reliability was established.

## 3. Results

After careful examination of the dataset, eight moves were identified. Their distribution in the forewords are summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The Distribution of the Moves in the Forewords

| Move                                             | Book Title                |                                      |                                                                             |                                     |                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
|                                                  | Learning through Language | Practice in Second Language Learning | Literature, Spoken Language and Speaking Skills in Second Language Learning | Lessons from Good Language Teachers | Curriculum Integrated Language Teaching |
| Claiming Centrality                              | Y                         | Y                                    | N                                                                           | N                                   | N                                       |
| Introducing the Book Idea                        | Y                         | N                                    | N                                                                           | N                                   | N                                       |
| Justifying the Book as Meeting the Needs         | Y                         | Y                                    | Y                                                                           | Y                                   | Y                                       |
| Invitation to Further Study                      | N                         | Y                                    | N                                                                           | N                                   | N                                       |
| Justifying the Book Subject as Meeting the Needs | N                         | N                                    | Y                                                                           | N                                   | Y                                       |
| Admiring the Book                                | N                         | N                                    | N                                                                           | Y                                   | N                                       |
| Specifying the Readership                        | N                         | N                                    | N                                                                           | N                                   | Y                                       |
| Stating an Overview of the Book                  | N                         | N                                    | N                                                                           | N                                   | Y                                       |

The identified moves are explained below. In the following examples, the textual devices signaling the moves are written in bold:

The move of *claiming centrality* refers to the existence of an important body of research which the book in question is one of. For Swales [8], *claiming centrality* aims at persuading the readers that the research about to be reported is a part of lively, significant or well-established research area. In the foreword of *Learning through language*—a book focusing on the importance of context in language learning—the writer, firstly, takes the reader to days when there has been a lack of research on the subject of the book:

Less common was work motivated by questions about the context of language learning. . . .

Then the writer introduces an evolution taken place in that time, associated to the subject of the book:

An exception to this trend is the work of Catherine Snow. . . .

The writer elaborates the merits of that evolution and how that could be a solution to the needs of the day:

Within her expansive and innovative programme of research, Snow has paid special attention to identifying those high-lever interactions. . . .

Tracking with the increasing diversity of the school-age population, including linguistic diversity tied to immigration and globalization, the widening income-achievement gap and a press for policy and practice-based solutions to these challenges for education, Snow's early work. . . . was followed by almost two decades of work. . . .

Next, the writer gets closer to the main purpose of the move, referring to the important body of research which the book content is potentially a part of:

**This body of research ranges from** large-scale intervention work in US classrooms serving high numbers of linguistically diverse learners **to** preschool classrooms in Latin American serving academically vulnerable children.

And finally, while the reader has become aware of the importance of the book subject, the writer sees the time worth introducing the book:

Fittingly **then**, we have before us an unparalleled volume—one that **focuses on building a pedagogically relevant theory** of language learning.

The writer puts a main load of the move on two parts of the above mentioned statement: firstly, on *then*, stated at the initial position of the statement, to show the introducing of the book as a sequence of the stated wide range of work done on the book subject, and, secondly, on the place in which the focus of the book is introduced as in line with the previous work: *focuses on building a pedagogically relevant theory*.

The move of *introducing the book idea* expresses the idea which the book is based on. In the foreword of *Learning through language*, the writer starts this move simply and directly:

**This book is based on the idea that** developing an educationally relevant approach to language demands an investigation of language and literacy learning in its diverse cultural contexts. . . .

The writer continues by stating generally how the chapters of the book address the book idea:

. . . the chapters address how language exposure and language use in early childhood at home and in school are precursors to academic language use and literacy in the school years. The volume goes further to address how academic language. . . can be supported through instruction. . . at home and in classrooms.

The move of *justifying the book as meeting the needs* explains a situation in which there is a need requiring solutions, and describes the book as meeting that need. In the foreword of *Lessons from good language teachers*, the writer, a pre-service teacher trainer, tries to state a need which is raised from personal experiences and which leads to requiring such a book as that in question. The writer's experience of asking the trainees to state, based on their memories, who a good language teacher is, has been followed by a statement of the need raised from the trainees' low efficient responses:

They are **hardly sufficient** to do more than scratch the surface.

Next, the writer views the time worth introducing the book as a solution to the need:

**It is at this point that a book can help them dig deeper—such as the one you are about to read.**

In the above statement, the writer puts the load of the move on two parts: firstly, on *a book can help them dig deeper* in which the writer talks about helping with doing something in a better way. Secondly, on *such as the one you are about to read*, the next part of the statement in which the writer introduces the book as a good option to help doing that thing.

The move of *invitation to further study* considers the importance of the book subject, inviting the readers to study on the subject. In the foreword of *Practice in second language learning*, however, the writer does this indirectly, instead of asking to do something:

These questions, and the research field which this volume contributes to, show us that **exciting times lie ahead** for the study of this topic. . . .

The writer puts the load of this move on *exciting times lie ahead*, which is a statement referring to a good future, here, a future for doing work similar to the book in question.

The move of *justifying the book subject as meeting the needs* informs the readers of a need for which the book subject—what the book is focusing on—is a solution, and describes the book subject as meeting that need. In the foreword of *Literature, spoken language and speaking skills in second language learning*, the writer argues that the study of language to be complete needs something which is owned by working out literary discourse. At first, the writer states the need:

. . . **the study of linguistics cannot be complete** without some understanding of the linguistic patterns that comprise literature. . . .

Next, the writer views the book subject as meeting that need:



. . . **literary discourse asks very important questions about language and about the learning of language.**

The move of *admiring the book* refers to the book's great influence on the related matters. In the foreword of *Lessons from good language teachers*, the writer, at first, states personal experience of being influenced by using the book:

**It certainly triggered my brain. . . .**

Then, the writer states hope for other people to touch such an experience:

. . . hopefully, **it will spark my students' brains, too.**

The move of *specifying the readership* determines those who the book is for. In the foreword of *Curriculum integrated language teaching*, the writer, considering the book subject, exemplifies those who will be interested in the book:

. . . **scholars working in fields related to CLIL, such as immersion and bilingual education or content-based 'foreign' or second language education, will be keenly interested in this book.**

However, before that, the writer has not forgot to justify the relationship of the examples with the book subject—CLIL—in order to having been justifying the determined readership scope:

. . . despite their unique historical origins and associated language policies and ideologies, various forms of teaching language through academic content share many of the same programme designs and pedagogical concerns and interests.

Of course, these are all stated after introducing the book subject in relation to other similar subjects:

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) was born in Europe. . . . Scholars have debated whether CLIL is the same as or distinct from other content-driven forms of content-based language teaching, such as immersion or bilingual education. . . .

The move of *stating an overview of the book* shows the writer as having been studied the book as it informs the reader of the main topics of the book. In the foreword of *Curriculum integrated language teaching*, the writer starts with an overall overview:

**Throughout the book**, the editors and other contributors **explore many facets of CLIL** as it manifests in Anglophone contexts. . . . **A common thread emerging in the book is** reference to and utilization of Coyle's well-known foundational concepts. . . . **The topics emphasized in this book** resonate just as much in other Anglophone contexts, such as the United States, as they do in the contexts of United Kingdom and Australia. **Among those explored are issues** related to learner motivation; articulation of programmes. . . . **Another thread that emerges in multiple chapters** in this book is. . . .

Of course, the writer has not forgot to express her opinion during stating the overview:

Despite this theoretical agreement, we have questioned the wisdom behind encouraging students' use of L1. . . .

To sum up, eight moves with an almost free distribution across the forewords were identified.

#### 4. Discussion

The present study finds out that there is an almost varied use of moves by the studied forewords. The forewords are different in terms of both number and type of the moves used. This, in turn, shows that there has been a relatively free selection of the functions to apply by the writer. This is in accordance with Swales' belief in variability in move structure caused by different amounts of space available to the writer (as cited in [5]). Also, the results show that among the eight moves identified, there is a common one across all of the forewords—*justifying the book as meeting the needs*. This, in turn, shows that despite freely selecting the functions to apply, there still seems to be a flow towards a common main purpose; that of attracting the readers' support. The presence of such a purpose could also be supported by two other moves, *claiming centrality* and *justifying the book subject as meeting the needs* as in almost all of the forewords, one of these two moves is accompanying the move of *justifying the book as meeting the needs*. Given these parts' occupying a significant amount of the texts, it is clear that the main purpose of attracting the readers' support has been held in the writers' mind. Among the remaining five moves, which have been used once, there are two moves which have the potential to attract the readers' support: *admiring the book* and *invitation to further study*. These two moves could be felt as indirectly holding the function of attracting the readers' support in the form of being persuaded of the importance of the book and the importance of the book subject, respectively. Therefore, they could be viewed, at least, as implicit confirmations to the above-mentioned main purpose. To find out the forewords as attracting the readers' support is in line with Bhatia's [7] belief in the forewords being dealing with a promotional purpose. The rest of the moves, however, are somewhat distant from serving the main purpose. They are made closer to the readers themselves. Those three moves—*introducing the book idea*, *stating an overview of the book*, and *specifying the readership*—serve the readers in ways that benefit the readers by informing them of what they have in front of them.

The results of the present study, regarding the identified moves, are partially in line with the study conducted by Jalilifar and Golkar Musavi [4] a part of which explored the moves included in the forewords of applied linguistics textbooks. Jalilifar and Golkar Musavi identified six moves including: *describing the book's focus*, *expressing gratitude*, *specifying the purpose*, *specifying the readership*, *claiming centrality*, and *establishing the genesis of the book*. The moves of *claiming centrality* and *specifying the readership* are in common in the two studies. Also, the move of *stating an overview of the book*, identified by the present study, is nearly similar to the move of *describing the book focus* identified by the other study. Moreover, as another result of such a comparison, a major difference becomes revealed; a difference regarding detection of foreword writers' expressing a need to be met. The present study identified moves of *justifying the book as meeting the needs* and *justifying the book subject as meeting the needs* in which the writers were dealing with getting the readers aware of the existence of a need and trying



to show the book or paying attention to the book subject as necessary for meeting that need. Perhaps, this is due to the nature of the edited books, which are complexes of homogeneous research in which the researchers try to explain and meet similar, identified needs. In another word, the foreword writers seemingly have been to promote the researchers' voice. Also, it was seen that such functions as *justifying the book as meeting the needs* and *justifying the book subject as meeting the needs* were absent in the list of the moves identified by Jalilifar and Golkar Musavi. It should be noted that the forewords studied by Jalilifar and Golkar Musavi related to applied linguistics textbooks, while not being exactly stated, by the researchers, as edited or not.

It should be noted that as the sample of the present study limited to only forewords of edited academic books in applied linguistics published by Cambridge University Press, the readers should interpret and generalize the findings with great care.

## 5. Conclusions

The aim of the present study is to inspect the rhetorical structure of the forewords of the edited academic books in applied linguistics. It is found out that the forewords might not be empty of moves reflecting the main purpose of attracting the readers' support. The findings could be worth using when writing or evaluating the forewords of books that are of the same type as the books explored by the present study i.e. edited academic books. However, great care must be taken if the subject of the books is different from applied linguistics. The users of the findings may be inspired by the identified moves of the present study and apply them when writing or evaluating a foreword. However, the users must keep in mind that there may be variability in selecting move structure brought about by the different amounts of space available to the writer (as cited in [5]). Also, such findings may particularly be of importance to teach in ESP contexts where the purpose is helping the learners to succeed in acquiring knowledge and skills required to writing, interpreting, and evaluating forewords that are of the same type as the ones studied in this research. In such a context, first, the learners may be wanted to practice the identified moves in order to communicate their meanings in their written forewords. They may do this by using various examples for each move. However, they must be taught that their final product must be observed to have a logical rhetorical organization. Second, the learners may be taught, when writing their forewords, that their selection of moves could be relatively free. Therefore, provided that their product holds a logical rhetorical organization and includes a move to attract the readers' support, they can utilize their creativity regarding what moves to select as the building blocks of their final product. Third, the teacher, by providing the learners with textual devices appropriate for each move, may help the learners to overcome expressing their meanings in different ways. Fourth, the learners may judge, interpret and evaluate forewords on the basis of the knowledge inspired by the identified moves of the present study. However, when judging, interpreting, and evaluating the forewords, again, the learners must expect the inclusion of a move attracting the readers' support and the possibility of relatively free selection of move structure and also must be benefited from a broad amount of textual devices.

As an avenue for future research, further studies may investigate the forewords of edited academic books in other disciplines. Also, it is worth conducting studies on larger samples than that of the present study, leading to building a well-established framework against which forewords of various types of books as well as forewords of books in various disciplines could be investigated. Such a framework could also be used when writing forewords for edited academic books. Furthermore, interviews with the writers of the forewords may help to make it clearer why the texts were written the way the present study shows, adding more reliability to such findings.

### Conflicts of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

### CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

There are no conflicts of interest

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