A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF EXAMINATION ESSAYS IN THREE DISCIPLINES: THE CASE OF GHANAIAN UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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(B.A. (Hons), Dip. Ed., MPhil)

A THESIS SUBMITTED

FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEPARTMENT OF

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

2005

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am very grateful to many people from diverse backgrounds for their invaluable contributions in several forms towards the completion of this work.

First, I owe a great debt of gratitude to Dr. Sunita Anne Abraham, who has been helpful as principal supervisor and inspiring with her invaluable guidance, able supervision, and unflagging interest in my research. I would also like to express my profound gratitude to Associate Professor Christopher Stroud and Dr. Peter Tan Kok Wan, the other members of my thesis committee, for their encouragement, which has made the completion of this work possible.

I have greatly benefited from discussions with Professor Desmond Allison, Associate Professor Paul Matsuda, Professor Ken Hyland, Professor Tony Silva, Dr. Paul Bruthiaux, Dr Lawe-Davies, and Ms. Juno Price during the initial stages of the work, while shaping the research proposal. Their suggestions were very helpful in guiding me to current literature in the area of study.

I am indebted to the National University of Singapore (NUS) for offering me both admission and a research scholarship to enable me to conduct the study. I am thankful to my mates in the Department of English Language and Literature – Ms. Anggara Mah and Ms. Jennifer Tan – and fellow students from other departments in NUS – Mr. Edward Bannerman-Wood, Mr. Ajibade Aibinu, and Mr. Issahaq Umar – for providing different forms of assistance (rating of textual data, analysis of the data, word processing, and statistical assistance) and crucial social support during the different stages of the research and throughout the entire period of my candidature.

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SUMMARY

Recent discourse analytic studies indicate that rhetoric in academic writing differs across disciplines (e.g. Bazerman, 1981; Hyland, 2000; Samraj, 2002a; Hewings, 2004). Consequently, in the last decade, a growing number of studies have investigated this notion, focusing on expert writing (Hyland, 2000, 2001a; Vartalla, 2003; Abraham & Varghese, 2004); graduate writing (Samraj, 1995, 2004, 2005b; Thompson, 2001; Hyland, 2004); and, to a lesser extent, undergraduate writing (Kusel, 1992). The studies on undergraduate writing, however, have tended to focus on writing in Anglo-American and Asia-Pacific contexts, leaving the rhetorical aspects of student writing in Africa, and Ghana, in particular, largely under-researched.

The present study seeks to fill this research gap by exploring the use of two key rhetorical features, introduction and conclusion, in undergraduate writing across three disciplinary communities, using a modified version of Swales' (1981a, 1990a) Create a Research Model (CARS) model. Specifically, I consider four parameters: (1) the frequency of moves; (2) the sequencing of moves; (3) the textual space allocated to each move; and (4) the linguistic features instantiating particular moves. A total of 180 examination essays (60 each from the departments of English, Sociology, and Zoology, at the University of Cape Coast) written by second-year undergraduates were investigated, supplemented by interview and survey data obtained from second-year undergraduates and faculty (Deans, Heads of Department, and course lecturers) as well as observation of classroom interactions.

The analysis of moves in the introduction and conclusion revealed four key findings. (1) With respect to the introduction, all three disciplines allocated the greatest

space to Move 2, adopting a three-move sequence, contextualizing > engaging closely with issue(s) > previewing. (2) In terms of linguistic features, English examinees differed from their Sociology and Zoology counterparts in their deployment of verbal processes, metatextual expressions, and personal pronouns to instantiate Move 3, while Sociology examinees differed from their English and Zoology counterparts in the use of attribution in Move 2. (3) With respect to the conclusion, English and Sociology examinees adopted a two-move pattern (summarizing > expanding), while preferring a one-move pattern. In addition, both groups of examinees favoured and allocated greater space to Move 1 (Zoology scripts contained no conclusions.) And, (4) English and Sociology scripts differed from each other in the use of evaluative terms in Move 1, modalized processes in Move 2, and personal pronouns in Moves 1 and 2.

These findings, seen properly as tendencies, indicate that there are indeed differences in the rhetorical features of undergraduate examination essays, given the variation in the introductory and concluding moves and linguistic expressions used to instantiate these moves in the three disciplinary communities investigated in this study. These findings have important implications for studies in disciplinary discourse, writing pedagogy and future research in disciplinary rhetoric at the undergraduate level.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CS   : Communicative Skills

EAP   : English for Academic Purpose

EFL   : English as a Foreign Language

ESL   : English as a Second Language

NUS   : National University of Singapore

RA   : Research Article

UCC   : University of Cape Coast

WAC   : Writing across Curriculum

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0   Introduction

In the last two decades, recognition of the complexity of learning to write at the tertiary level has prompted teachers, applied linguists, literacy specialists, and other researchers to find ways of helping students understand the norms and practices of various disciplinary communities (Hewings, 2002a; Ravelli & Ellis, 2004). This awareness has led to considerable interest in describing disciplinary writing at undergraduate and graduate levels. Given the centrality of student writing in tertiary-level teaching and learning (Lillis, 2001; Coffin *et al.*, 2003), it is worth exploring student writing in order to better understand its demands and to better facilitate students' enculturation in their disciplinary communities.

Against this background, the present research should be seen as a modest contribution to genre studies and the on-going discussion of disciplinary discourse, in general, and disciplinary writing, in particular, by focusing on how undergraduates orient readers in a specific curriculum genre, the examination essay. The core of this study is a rhetorical analysis of the introductions and conclusions of examination essays in three disciplines, namely, English, Sociology, and Zoology. (See Section 1.3 for a more detailed account of the research questions.)

To achieve the above purpose, I first provide the rationale for the present study in terms of my own motivation as a teacher and researcher. This personal motivation is then related to the research on native and non-native student writing in Section 1.2, in terms of

three motifs, namely, the relationship between student and expert writing; the link between general academic writing and discipline-specific writing; and, the main pedagogical approaches informing student writing. Next, I state the two research questions investigated in this study (Section 1.3) and examine the scope, assumptions, and significance of the present study in Sections 1.4-1.6. The purpose of exploring these three facets – personal motivation, research on student writing, and scope of the present study – is to establish a strong link between past research and the ramifications of this study in order to provide a basis for the study. Finally, a brief outline of the structure of the thesis is presented in Section 1.7.

1.1 Motivation for this Study

This study is both pedagogically motivated and curiosity (theoretically) driven. It is pedagogically driven because of my involvement in English language education in Ghana, leading to the basic questions and orientations that underpin the present research. My early experience as a teacher of English Language and Literature at the secondary level was instrumental in sensitizing me to issues involving English language education in Ghana.

But, it was not until I commenced postgraduate studies at the University of Cape Coast (UCC) and interacted with undergraduates through tutorials, conferencing, and occasional lectures that I realized that the writing difficulties that these students faced were both grammatical and discoursal/rhetorical. I noticed further problems in student writing when I was employed as a lecturer. These were mainly rhetorical: poor citation practices, an absence of criticality, and ineffective global coherence. Although the first

two instantiations of rhetorical infelicity also merit attention in academic writing, I felt that the weak structuring of examination essays was an aspect of writing that students could very easily tackle in order to improve on their writing. Since the Communicative Skills (CS) programme in UCC pays particular attention to coherence, I wondered why achieving global coherence was a source of difficulty to students. My interaction with colleagues in other departments at UCC and later involvement in Ghana English Studies Association suggested that students' inability to properly structure their essays, especially examination essays, was common in other Ghanaian universities. These experiences I had from teaching in various educational institutions, coupled with observations by faculty and students alike, provide the primary impetus for this study.

The second reason for my undertaking this project emanates from my intellectual curiosity about students' attempts to achieve coherence in their writing, especially examination essays in different disciplinary communities. My teaching and marking of essays of undergraduates from various disciplinary backgrounds in general university courses, such as *Communicative Skills (CS); Language, Literature and Society;* and *The Art of Speaking in Traditional African Society* has in turn led me to the notion that students from different disciplines attach different levels of importance to the organization of their essays. This explains my interest in examining how students from different disciplinary backgrounds attempt to achieve global coherence in their writing, a concern that goes against most research in Applied English Language Studies in Ghana that tend to focus on the morphological and syntactic aspects of the language.

While my involvement in English language education in Ghanaian universities largely provides the impetus for the present study, the latter is also inextricably linked with recent research on student academic writing, which I turn to in the next section.

1.2   Research on Student Academic Writing

In general, academic writing, under which student writing is subsumed, has been noted to be complex and multifaceted (Paltridge, 2002). Nevertheless, it is possible to characterize student writing along three major parameters: the relationship between student and expert writing, the link between general academic writing and discipline-specific writing, and, the pedagogical approaches to student writing as outlined in the ensuing sub-sections.

1.2.1   Student Writing

It is impossible to effectively characterize student writing without referring to expert writing, from which students learn. For a detailed account of the distinction between these two groups, see Bereiter & Scardamalia (1987), Geisler (1994), and Samraj (1995). In this sub-section, I first draw on MacDonald's (1994) exposition on academic writing and later the triad of purpose, audience, and genre to describe student writing.

The two main participants in academic writing in higher education – experts and students – can be presented on a continuum, as shown in Figure 1:

Undergraduate ⟶ Graduate ⟶ Threshold Practitioners ⟶ Expert

Figure 1.1 Continuum of Academic Writing

MacDonald (1994) has also suggested a similar continuum along which students advance from non-academic to general academic writing, then through novice approximations of disciplinary genres to the prose of expert insiders. Her continuum also takes into account secondary school students at the novice end of the cline, a view which concurs with recent studies, especially, in primary and secondary schools in Australia (Veel & Coffin, 1996; Coffin, 1997; Rose, 1997). Ultimately, it may be argued that both expert and student writers engage in disciplinarisation, a continual process where "an ambiguous cast of relative newcomers and relative old-timers (re) produce themselves, their practices and their communities" (Prior, 1998: xii).

Apart from this explication of the two major players in academic writing (experts and students), there are three interconnected factors – purpose, audience, and genre – which are helpful in characterizing student writing. As peripheral participants in the academic discourse community (Lave & Wenger, 1991), students primarily display high knowledge content, identified in Bereiter and Scardamalia's (1987) model of knowledge-telling, which is a simpler, less analytic and developmentally less advanced approach to writing. Additionally, students may have individual purposes for proving themselves through academic writing, such as clarification of thought (Marshal & Rowland, 1981); improvement of personal professional status, advancement of one's profession, and financial benefits (Damerst, 1972); and, stating new ideas and teaching (Peters, 1985).

As in the realization of purpose, the audiences for student writing tend to differ from that of expert writing. Although Tribble (1996:119) variously refers to the reader of students' texts as "audience", "assistant", "evaluator", and "examiner", students themselves often perceive their reader as their subject teacher. Hyland (2001a) has also

argued that it is more instructive to conceive of students' audiences as specialists, practitioners, students, lay people, and other interested members of the disciplines. Further, who the students' audiences are depends on which students one is referring to – that is, graduate or undergraduates, master's or doctoral students. Clearly, whichever way we view things, the audience of student writing points not only to a heterogeneous grouping but also an asymmetrical relationship between students and their instructors (Brookes & Grundy, 1990; Johns, 1990; Kamler & Threadgold, 1997; Tinkler & Jackson, 2004).

Besides purpose and audience, genre also provides invaluable insight into the nature of student writing. Hewings and Hewings (2001a: 72) refer to "classroom genres" (also known as curriculum or school genres) as those produced by students for assessment, such as dissertations and theses, essays, laboratory reports, and literature reviews; and "professional genres" as those produced by scholars when communicating with their peers, such as monographs, conference papers, research articles (RAs), working papers, reviewers' comments, and grant proposals. This dual classification of academic genres as professional and curriculum genres appears overly simplistic in certain respects as Casanave and Hubbard (1992) suggest that the writing assignments of, for instance, doctoral students impose different demands on them. In practice, unlike undergraduates, many postgraduates practise expert genres as part of their professional education (Craswell, 2005).

In fact, studies show that there is a vast difference between the cultures of undergraduate and graduate studies regarding the specific instruction and situated nature of learning, writing, and writing instruction (Casanave, 1995; Prior, 1998; Johns &

Swales, 2002; Craswell, 2005). Not surprisingly, Johns and Swales (2002:18) express disquiet about calling doctoral dissertations "school genres", given their varied and complex dissertational objectives**.** A further issue, as Swales (1990a) points out, is evidenced by postgraduates who are experienced academics who decide to pursue higher studies in order to create networks, clarify thoughts, and explore further possibilities.

Insightful as characterizing student writing from MacDonald's (1994) perspective and the trinity of purpose, genre, and audience may be, it is still inadequate. Thus, the next sub-section presents the apparently dichotomous relationship between generic and discipline-specific writing.

1.2.2   General Academic Writing and Discipline-Specific Writing

Student writing can be explored at two interrelated levels: generic and discipline-specific. The relevance of both discourses in higher education has been the subject of an on-going debate (Spack, 1988; Jordan, 1997; Lea & Street, 1999; Hyland, 2002a). The salient features of both generalist and specific writing are briefly explored in the ensuing paragraphs.

The earlier of the two, general academic writing assumed some importance for educationists and literacy specialists in the 1970s with the increasing internationalization of student populations in educational institutions in the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA), and Australia, leading to writing programmes such as English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and Freshman Composition (Spack, 1988; Jordan, 1997). The key element in such generic academic discourse, as represented by various writing programmes, was their usual identification with Western traditions of scholarship

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(Nash, 1990). (For a brief account of CS, a general academic writing programme taught at the research site of the present study, see Section 4.2.)

Besides the origin of general academic writing, the assumptions on which it is predicated are worth looking at. First, general academic writing, also referred to as the "wide angle" perspective, or what Bloor and Bloor (1986) call the "common core hypothesis", assumes the existence of a single invariant literacy that is transferable and usable in any situation (Hyland, 2002a). Second, general academic writing is fundamentally dualistic; that is, content is assumed to be separable from language. These two underlying assumptions underpin Kaufer and Young's (1993: 78) expression of general academic writing in three familiar dictums, namely, "writing must be about something; teachers and students must share some knowledge about the subject of writing; and learning to write requires textual modes". This generalist view is shared and elaborated on by Johns (1997, 2003) and Kaldor and Rochecouste (2002).

Discipline-specific writing emerged as Writing across Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Disciplines at about the same time as EAP to meet the language needs of L1 students (Russell, 1991). Programmes in WAC usually focus on teaching rhetorical skills that are necessary in all sorts of courses and so tend to emphasize rhetorical modes such as definition, comparison-contrast, and cause-effect. Additionally, WAC programmes are concerned with students' ability to examine ideas carefully and support them with evidence as well as their ability to interpret and synthesize information. In contrast, Writing in the Disciplines programmes focus on rhetorical convention as they are specific to given disciplines. That is, themes and topics related to the disciplines frequently form the basis of the writing process and classroom writing activities. The

Writing in the Disciplines programmes in particular received support through the institutionalization of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), a writing programme which deals with the needs of students in specific disciplines. Since then, similar writing programmes, notably English for Business and English for Technical Writing, have been instituted in polytechnics, technical, and business institutions.

As in general academic writing, two important assumptions underpin discipline-specific writing. The first is the notion of multiple literacies, aptly captured by Hyland:

> The discourses of the academy do not form an undifferentiated, unitary mass but a variety of subject-specific literacies. Disciplines have different views of knowledge, different research practices, and different ways of seeing the world, and as a result … will inevitably take us to greater specificity.
>
> (Hyland, 2002a: 389)

In other words, discipline-specific writing is contextual (Jolliffe & Brier, 1988; Prior, 1998) in that it goes against universals that exist independent of local situations. Second, discipline-specific writing is monistic; that is, language and content are treated as inextricably linked. Taken together, these two assumptions affirm that content makes a significant contribution in how writing differs from one discipline to another (Kaufer & Young, 1993).

Disciplinary-specific academic writing, however, is not absolutely discrete as it draws on the broad features identifiable with general academic writing (for these features, see Kaldor & Rochecouste, 2002). That is, the actualization of features of writing in a specific discipline depends very much on the use of multimodal semiotic representations such as graphs, tables, diagrams, symbols, and figures; lexical, collocational, and phraseological features; and, taxonomies, detachment, and genres. For instance, Chemistry discourse can be differentiated from that of History based on the former's

dominant use of symbols and the latter's use of emplotment built around causation. Thus, the absence or presence, frequency, and distribution of linguistic or multimodal representations reflect the character of writing in a particular discipline.

It is not surprising that scholars continually draw on both general and specialist discourses to investigate student writing. For instance, general academic writing has been explored from various perspectives: literacy practices (e.g. Gee, 1996), rhetorical practices (e.g. Bazerman, 1997, 2004; Bizzell, 1982, 1994), linguistic features (Halliday, 1993; Ivanic, 1998), and ideology (Bizzell, 1990, 1992, 1994; Clark & Ivanic, 1997; Lillis, 2001). Examples of writers actively working in the specialist mode, though in differing ways, include Bazerman (1981, 1988), Myers (1985), Hyland (2001a, 2002b), Kelly *et al.* (2002), Plum & Candlin (2002), Kelly & Bazerman (2003), Samraj (2002a, 2004), and North (2005a, 2005b). In particular, while Hyland has conducted numerous studies on rhetorical differences across traditional academic disciplines, Kelly *et al.* (2002), Samraj (2004), and North (2003) have focused on the use of rhetoric in disciplines such as Oceanography, Wildlife Behaviour, and History of Science respectively.

1.2.3   *The Teaching of Student Academic Writing*

Given that the present study focuses on student writing, it is important to draw brief attention to the three main pedagogical approaches that have informed student writing over the last four decades namely, product, process, and genre approaches (Raimes, 1998; Silva & Matsuda, 2001; Hyland, 2003; Silva & Brice, 2004).

The earliest of the three key writing pedagogies, product-based pedagogy emerged and became popular in the post-war period (Warschauer, 2002) partly in order to meet the language needs of the overwhelming number of international students enrolled in Anglo-American institutions in English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) within EAP programmes. The distinctive features of this approach are its text-oriented nature, formalism, and decontextualization. The text-orientedness of the product approach alludes to a coherent arrangement of elements structured according to a system of rules. In emphasizing text, this approach extols form. It was common in the mid-sixties for EAP courses to pay strict attention to the conventionalized structure of western rhetoric, that is, how to recognize and write a topic sentence, a well-formed paragraph, and a five-paragraph essay (White, 1988; Warschauer, 2002). Since the target of the product approach (international students) could not produce the envisaged correct academic text, the writing teacher or the textbook became a good model (White, 1988: 5). Unfortunately, this approach had a predilection toward decontextualization insofar as it neglected the context of interpretation, thus reflecting a mechanistic view of writing as the mere transference of ideas from one mind to another.

In the 1960s and 1970s, an alternative approach to the study of writing (Hayes & Flower, 1983) became popular. This new approach, which was process-based, emphasized the role of the writer, writing as a cognitive process, and the importance of feedback from authentic readers. In principle, the process-based pedagogy sought to circumvent the ills of the earlier approach, the disregard of all the processes that precede the "product", acontextuality, and the subtle denigration of the writer as a mere receptacle

of instructions from the teacher. Instead of controlling the class in the writing activity, the teacher's role in this approach is to offer guidance and intervention before the imposition of any organizational patterns: the teacher helps students in getting started, drafting, revising, and editing. Thus, writing is considered from the process perspective as a recursive, complex, and creative activity.

A still later approach introduced in the 1980s was genre-based writing pedagogy, which seeks to underscore the social dimension of writing, a reaction to the process approach which overemphasized the individual's psychological functioning (Horowitz, 1986a) and thus neglected variations in writing processes due to differences in individuals, writing tasks, and rhetorical situations (Reid, 1984). Motivated by the need to empower students to handle the kinds of writing legitimized in diverse academic discourse communities, genre-based pedagogy highlights writing as social interaction and social construction (Hyland, 2002c). While the concept of writing as a social interaction foregrounds the communicative dimension of writing by emphasizing the understanding, interests, and needs of the potential audience/reader, the notion of social constructionism enables us to see writing as a social artifact in the sense that the writer engages in writing to reflect the preferred typifications and regularities of discourse practices of particular academic communities. Interestingly, genre-based pedagogy continues to influence a lot of writing programmes in higher education.

Two salient observations can be made from the brief vignette of these three writing pedagogies. First, the fundamental pedagogical orientation to student writing has tended to revolve around the notion that writing does not only refer to text in written script but also acts of thinking and composing which are interactive insofar as they are

located in particular socio-cultural contexts. Second, these pedagogical approaches are located in different spatio-temporal contexts, emerging first from the "centre" (that is, Anglo-American contexts) and spreading later to other areas, sometimes described in politico-economic terms as "peripheral" areas such as Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Phillipson, 1992; Holliday, 1994; Canagarajah, 1999, 2002). Often, the time lag in applying an "imported" writing pedagogy in peripheral areas has been the result of institutional, economic, material, and cultural constraints (Muchiri *et al*., 1995; Canagarajah, 1999), which is why the approach has yet to gain popularity in certain peripheral areas such as Ghana.

It is also worth pointing out that while these three approaches remain dominant in teaching writing to both native and non-native students, in the past five years, a technology (computer)-mediated pedagogy has been fast assuming prominence, as Silva and Brice (2004), among others, point out. Equally gaining prominence has been critical pedagogy which considers the interplay of power and ideology in the institutional and cultural contexts in which writing occurs. According to critical pedagogues (e.g. Kanpol, 1994, 1997; Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycock, 2001), the presentation of student writing may reveal interests, values, and power relations at play in institutional and socio-historical contexts (Comber & Simpson, 2001)

Clearly, the above perspectives – expert/student writing, generalist/specialist writing, and writing pedagogies – have been valuable in their individual and collective respects in distinguishing the major orientations adopted in inquiry into student academic writing. Against the above background of research on student writing and writing pedagogy, the research questions of the present study are now introduced.

1.3   Research Questions

This study examines the extent of disciplinary variation in two salient rhetorical features within the examination essays written by non-native speakers of English, *viz*., Ghanaian undergraduates. In particular, I explore how second-year undergraduates orient their readers to their examination essays with respect to the use of introductions and conclusions in three different disciplines, namely, English, Sociology, and Zoology.

Specifically, I intend to answer the following two questions in turn:

Question 1: What similarities and differences are noticeable in the introductions of

student examination essays in English, Sociology, and Zoology?

Question 2: What similarities and differences are noticeable in the conclusions of student

examination essays in English, Sociology, and Zoology?

Swales' (1981a, 1990a) move analysis approach is adopted (see Sections 2.1) to answer these questions; and the similarities and differences are discussed in terms of four parameters, namely:

- the frequency of moves in the introductions and the conclusions within and across the three disciplines;

- the textual space given to each move in the introductions and the conclusions relative to other moves across the three discipline;

- the sequencing of moves within the introductions and the conclusions across the three disciplines; and,

- the linguistic realization of each move in the introductions and the conclusions across the three disciplines.

Such an examination is worth considering in light of the implication it has for the theorization of disciplinary rhetoric at undergraduate level. A skilful rhetor, in this case, the undergraduate writer in a disciplinary community, may be seen as one who carefully apportions and sequences ideas stimulated by the examination prompt to maximize the impact of organizational features such as the introduction and the conclusion on the minds of the audience.

Having articulated the research questions and the four parameters, I now explore the scope, assumptions, and significance of the present study.

1.4   Scope of Study

To ensure a fairly manageable scope for the present research, the study is conducted along four key parameters: disciplines involved in the study, mode of enquiry of this study, rhetorical units selected for analysis, and background of the students in this study.

The first parameter concerns the selection of the three disciplines, English, Sociology, and Zoology. English is chosen because it values language in general and writing in particular as powerful and fundamental tools of teaching and learning. I also felt that my being a member of the Department of English and my interaction with faculty would greatly assist me in the interpretation of data from this department. Similarly, Sociology, as the prototype discipline in the Social Sciences, recognizes the importance of extended writing skills (Casanave & Hubbard, 1992). While the hard sciences – Engineering, Physics, Computer Science – are associated with very little extended writing, the soft sciences (e.g. Zoology, Botany) encourage some amount of sustained writing (Myers, 1990); hence, the inclusion of Zoology in the present study. In

short, each selected discipline from the Humanities, Social Sciences, and Science emphasizes extended writing.

Second, textual analysis is employed in this study as the primary mode of enquiry on account of its potential in offering a description as well as understanding of specific writing practices. This approach recognizes that texts in tertiary education play a significant role in assessment, and contribute greatly and directly to students' success or failure. Examiners use texts to reconstruct the students' meanings, and through them determine how far they (the texts) meet assessment criteria. In addition, since texts do not exist in a vacuum (Johns, 1997; Samraj, 2002b), insights from the ethnography tradition that takes social contexts as its starting point have been incorporated. (For a full account of the cultural and institutional contexts, see Section 4.1- 4.3.)

Third, concentrating on the introductions and conclusions in student writing stems from three concerns. The first relates to the fact that making a deep impact in an examination essay requires first and foremost effective control over both the global format and content schemata for structuring, before attention can be paid to the lexis and syntactic forms which instantiate them. The second reason stems from the primacy and recency effect highlighted in communication research (Crano, 1977; Igou & Bless, 2003), which suggests that what is placed at the beginning and end of texts has an overwhelming effect on readers, and their evaluation of a text. The last point is that academic writing, in general, values introductions and conclusions in several genres, the exemplar of which is the RA. There is a sense in which the quality of academic writing by student-writers is partly determined by these two rhetorical units, as evident in the frequent attention and enormous space devoted to it in several writing guides (e.g. Rosenwasser & Stephen,

1997; Opoku Agyeman, 1998; Ng, 2003). Not surprisingly, the faculty interviewed in this study recognized the importance of introductions and conclusions in student writing, examination essays (see Section 6.4.2).

Finally, in order to ensure some reasonable measure of homogeneity in terms of both linguistic and educational background, the study is limited to Ghanaian undergraduates. These students represent a group with distinct linguistic, cultural, and educational traditions worth considering in English as Second Language (ESL) writing. Within this group, second-year undergraduates have been selected on the basis of their accessibility and the fact that these students will have done at least one year of university work (including CS), while being free from the anxieties of both the first and final years of university work, thus making them more willing to participate in the study.

Notwithstanding this general characterization of students in the present study, it is possible to allude to other basis of distinctions among the undergraduate population in Ghana. One basis of distinction is ethnicity, given the fact that Ghana is a multi-ethnic society with the dominant ethnic groups being Akan, Ewe, Ga-Adangbe, Mole-Dagbani, Nzema, and Guan (Bodomo, 1996). Other ways of distinguishing Ghanaian undergraduates include their socio-economic backgrounds and diverse pre-university experiences. But neither of these bases of social stratification is given attention in the admission of students in UCC, the research site of the present study; nor are they considered in the sampling of the research participants (see Section 5.2.1).

1.5   Assumptions Underlying the Study

Three key assumptions underpin this study. The first is that writing, like speaking, is a social activity (Lave &Wenger, 1991; Bizzell, 1992; Bazerman, 1994; Russell, 1997). This perspective recognizes that writing is a learned behaviour, culture-specific or, even, sub-culture specific (Ong, 1982; Street, 1995; Malcom, 1999), with writers appropriating the communicative means that are highly prized by members of their discourse communities. This requires, for instance, students utilizing the norms, values, and mores (including rhetorical practices) in their disciplinary communities as they move horizontally (from one course to another) and vertically (undergraduate to graduate, learner to expert) to reflect varying degrees of sophistication and complexity of resources utilized (Johns & Swales, 2002).

The second assumption underlying this study is that language is fundamental and integral in the construction and reflection of everything we know about the world and our experience (Bruce, 1993; Turner, 2004). Language, in this sense, is the interpretive medium by which knowledge is constructed, negotiated, and transmitted within and across disciplines. The conventions and norms (e.g. structuring, content, citational information, style, rhetoric, and documentation) which typify various disciplines are best given expression in the use of language. Thus, language both reflects and constitutes social practices, including academic discourse.

Finally, it is assumed that coherence plays a key role in defining and assessing competence in writing, as problems can easily arise from lack of coherence in both reading and writing (Cook, 1989; McCarthy, 1991). As a governing principle in written and spoken communication, coherence expresses the interface between knowledge of the

subject and linguistic appropriateness to the assignment at hand. Teachers in both applied linguistics and non-applied linguistics disciplines consciously or unconsciously pay attention to it in their own written and oral presentations and assessment of student writing.

Thus, these three assumptions are central to the present study insofar as they individually and collectively highlight the notions of context, use of language, and organizational features, which the present study concerns itself with.

1.6   Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is two-pronged: theoretical and pedagogical. Theoretically, an investigation into the rhetorical features in text production should yield valuable insights for practitioners and researchers on how non-native undergraduates utilize rhetorical features. Although there is increasing attention being paid to the description of novice writing (O'Brien, 1995; Schleppegrell & Colombi, 1997; Young & Leinhardt, 1998), as pointed out by Love (1999), this has often been limited to the more lucrative English as a Foreign Language (EFL) markets in the Far East, Middle East, and Europe. This study, therefore, focuses on two crucial features (introductions and conclusions) of undergraduate examination essays written by second language users of English in Africa. Further, from a theoretical point of view, this research is important as it is argued that a modified version of Swales' (1981a, 1990a) genre analysis, the analytical paradigm used in the present study, is insightful in studying undergraduate examination writing as well as the more researched professional discourses researched within the Swalesian tradition, like the RA and postgraduate theses.

Pedagogically, this study seeks to contribute to the solution of problems related to disciplinary writing and the designing of writing programmes in English-medium universities. Specifically, for discipline-specific teachers, this study aims at providing an empirical basis to assist undergraduates in acceptable examination writing in the three selected disciplines. Additionally, because the theoretical framework of this study reflects rhetorical practices in disciplinary communities, this research may prove useful for writing instructors in the teaching of CS and similar writing programmes in English-medium universities in both African and non-African contexts. Ultimately, the present study argues for an active and continuing collaborative exchange between English departments and other departments in order to assist undergraduates in their writing (see Section 9.2.2). (The significance of the present study is fully discussed in Section 9.2.)

1.7   Overview of the Thesis

This thesis comprises nine chapters, beginning with the background to the study. The first section of **Chapter One** offers a rationale for the entire study, followed by a brief sketch of the research and pedagogy on student writing, especially, the literature on generalist and discipline-specific student writing. This is followed by the research questions. Chapter One also outlined the scope, assumptions, and significance of the study with the view to forging a link between the extant knowledge and the goals of the present study.

Chapter Two focuses on the conceptual framework of the present study. This chapter provides a description and justification of the use of the modified version of Swales' (1990a) genre analysis in examining the two selected rhetorical units (introduction and conclusion) in student writing. Fundamental concepts underpinning the

study such as disciplinary variation, rhetoric, and examination essay are also explained. **Chapter Three** provides a review of a selection of relevant empirical studies from Applied Linguistics, in general, and Discourse Analysis, Composition and Rhetoric, and English for Specific Purposes, in particular. Unlike the conceptual framework, the review of relevant literature is more analytical and evaluative, as it attempts to place the pertinent studies in an overall scheme, make intertextual links, build on and establish existing knowledge as well as point to the knowledge gap which needs to be filled. **Chapter Four** sets the scene for the study by describing the national, institutional, and disciplinary contexts of the university that constitutes the research site.

The second half of the thesis touches on how the data were collected and analyzed. In this vein, **Chapter Five** concentrates on three aspects: the methodology and analysis; issues of reliability, validity and ethics; and, problems encountered during the fieldwork and how they were solved. The next three chapters (**Chapters Six to Eight**) present the results and discussion of both the primary (examination essays) and corroborating (interviews, questionnaires, and observation of classroom interaction) data. A preliminary analysis is presented in Chapter Six, followed by the results and discussion of the two main research questions in the next two chapters.

The purpose of **Chapter Nine** is three-fold. First, it briefly summarizes the key findings of the present study. It then considers the pedagogical and research implications of these findings. The chapter concludes with specific recommendations for future research in tertiary literacy and disciplinarity.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW I: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

In the opening chapter I outlined the motivation for this study of student writing in a non-native setting by first referring to my personal involvement in the teaching of English, especially at undergraduate level, and relating this interest to a brief sketch of research on student writing. Chapter Two discusses two main issues: the relevant analytical framework underpinning the study (Section 2.1) and an analytical review of key concepts utilized in the study (Section 2.2). The overall goal is to provide the necessary conceptual framework to support the detailed rhetorical and linguistic analysis of disciplinary texts undertaken to answer the two research questions driving this study.

2.1 Analytical Framework

This section takes a three-pronged approach. First, a general discussion is offered on key approaches utilized in rhetorical studies, followed by a discussion of the three main traditions of genre theory, with sub-section 2.1.3 highlighting the Swalesian rhetorical approach used in the present research.

2.1.1 *Approaches in Rhetorical Analysis*

Essentially, rhetorical analysis in applied linguistics (which this study is concerned with), has ranged from surface-level description to functional-level language description

(Bhatia, 1993), yielding several paradigms. In the ensuing paragraphs selected approaches in rhetorical analysis are briefly discussed, with a view to showing how the Swalesian rhetorical approach was chosen for use in this study.

In the search for an appropriate analytical approach, Kinneavy's (1971) Theory of Discourse, Polanyi's (1985) Linguistic Discourse Model, and Meyer's (1975, 1985) Discourse Structure Analysis were first considered. Three basic levels of organization are recognizable in Meyer's rhetorical approach: (1) the overall organization of the text; (ii) the macropropositional level which relates to logical organization and argumentation; and, (iii) the micropropositional level, which is concerned with the way sentences cohere and are organized within at text. Unlike Meyer's approach, Polanyi's (1985) model offers insight into the linear and hierarchical relationships that underlie discourse, utilizing parsing as its analytical tool to segment discourse into salient units, on a clause-by-clause basis. Concerned with the finished product as in the previous two approaches, Kinneavy's (1971) model is best known for its emphasis on purpose. In Kinneavy's view, the authorial purpose of a text can be descriptive, narrative, expository, or argumentative, although writers can use several other modes in a simple discourse to best serve their larger purpose.

Given the common perception that text structures underlie the information which students encounter and are supposed to produce (Carrell, 1984, 1988), the above rhetorical approaches were initially thought to be pertinent. A closer look at each of them, however, suggested that they were unsuitable for my purpose for various reasons. For instance, Polanyi's (*ibid*) rhetorical model seemed both too unwieldy to be used, given the number of examination essays to be investigated, and was found to be appropriate

only in examining the issue of disjointedness in a limited number of texts as demonstrated in studies by Gupta (1995) and Wu (1997). Kinneavy (*ibid*) and Meyer's (*ibid*) rhetorical approaches in turn turned out to be too broad in handling the issues to be investigated in the present study.

The rhetorical approach initiated by Lackstrom, Selinker, and Trimble (1973) was also considered. Responding partially to the development of textlinguistics and to the demands of non-native speakers of English doing Science and Technology, these researchers demonstrated an interpenetration of grammar and rhetoric as found in the organizational units of scientific reports (introduction, method, results, and discussion). This grammatical-rhetorical approach involves identifying rhetorically motivated differences in the use of grammatical categories such as tense, definite *vs* indefinite articles, and choices involving adverbs, aspect, agent phrases, and nominalization. Studies such as Selinker and Trimble (1974), Swales (1974), Selinker, Todd-Trimble, Trimble (1976) and a more recent study by Taylor (2001) suggest the usefulness of such an approach in investigating the interplay between rhetoric and linguistic choice. However, utilizing Lackstrom, Selinker, and Trimble's approach would have meant inverting the primary and secondary focus of the present study. Lackstrom, Selinker, and Trimble focus primarily on grammatical issues whereas the focus of the present study is mainly functional, and the lexico-grammatical aspects, secondary.

The third set of rhetorical approaches that merited attention involved reader orientation, topic development, topic support and metadiscourse. These appeared suitable for use since they could be applied to the two organizational units focused on in the investigation (introductions and conclusions). Even more attractive was the fact that they

had been employed in a considerable number of studies involving examination essays: reader orientation (Scarcella, 1984), topic development (Lautamatti, 1986), topic support (Connor & Farmer, 1990), and metadiscourse (Vande Kopple, 1985). Scarcella's (*ibid*) framework seemed the most suitable of these rhetorical approaches, given its broad concerns with reader orientation. (For further elaboration of Scarcella's study, see Section 3.2.1.) Her approach, however, yields only limited information on the generic structure of student examination essays, and was thus rejected.

In the absence of more suitable approaches, the genre rhetorical approach appeared suitable for reasons I turn to in the next section, justifying the particular genre analytical approach adopted in the present study.

2.1.2 Genre Theory

Although the notion of genre originally comes from ancient Greek poetics and rhetoric (Maingueneau, 2002), it is only more recently that scholars in Rhetoric, Composition, Discourse Analysis, and ESP have paid considerable attention to it. Three traditions of genre theory – the ESP School, the North American School, and the Sydney School – are often mentioned in the literature (Hyon, 1996; Hyland, 2002c.). Their similarities and differences are worth delineating in order to establish the present study's identification with the ESP tradition.

The motivation of all three traditions comes from the dissatisfaction with previous writing pedagogy extolling the cognitive processes and expressiveness of the writer (see Section 1.2.3 for a fuller treatment of the process and product approaches). All three traditions of genre theory demonstrate a concern for EAP reading and writing pedagogies

to actively address the acculturation of non-native learners into the academic community (Raimes, 1991). This concern necessitates the focus on the readers' and writers' aims and on how a rhetorically structured unit of language functions to mediate their interaction.

Given the broad aim of all three traditions of genre theory, there is a common platform from which they launch their activities: the study of situated linguistic behaviour in institutionalized and professional settings. This is even more evident in the meanings of genre given by key proponents of the three traditions: Miller (1994), representing the American School, stresses the typifications of rhetorical action; for Martin (1984), representing the Sydney School, it is regularities of staged, goal-oriented social processes; and for Bhatia (1993, 1997), representing the ESP tradition, it is consistency of communicative purpose. Thus, the social view of writing is underscored in all three perspectives of genre.

These similarities notwithstanding, there are three key differences in the three genre traditions. The first concerns the specific educational or professional context of their activities. While the educational context of the ESP tradition primarily deals with non-native speakers of English at university and the Sydney School focuses on mother tongue education in primary and secondary schools and lately immigrant education, the American School has tended to focus on advanced (graduate) students (Hyon, 1996; Yunick, 1997) and writing in the professions. The second issue relates to differences in theoretical dispositions. The ESP tradition draws on an eclectic model, ethnographic and lexico-grammatical features, showing concern for various patterns of "structure, style, content, and intended audience" (Swales, 1990a: 58); the Sydney School mainly draws on Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics; while the American School relies on a

multidisciplinary approach, employing anthropological, social, literary, and rhetorical theories. The third difference is the actual commitment of the three traditions. Specifically, whereas, as Hyon (*ibid*) observes, the ESP School focuses on identifying the formal features and communicative purposes in social contexts of genres, the American School is concerned with social purposes and action, using ethnographic methods to explore the situational context, while the Sydney School focuses on the linguistic features of texts.

The pedagogical orientations of these three traditions of genre theory provide a basis for the choice of the ESP tradition in this research. At the outset, it must be stressed that both the ESP and Sydney Schools operate within a strong pedagogical framework, unlike the American School that is less enthusiastic about an explicit instructional framework. This difference stems from the fact that, as Miller (1994) notes, both the Sydney School and the ESP tradition find genre relatively stable and, therefore, teachable, whereas the American School considers genre as relatively unstable and, hence, not teachable. Of the two schools that believe in the pedagogical significance of genre-based pedagogy, the Sydney School has more elaborate instructional frameworks.

Clearly, the pedagogical (and theoretical) thrust of the present research makes it worthwhile to consider the Sydney and the ESP schools. However, I chose the latter, firstly, on the basis of its flexible view of acquainting students with the extensive knowledge of generic conventions as a useful step in socialization into a discourse community. Second, it is the ESP tradition that is concerned with non-native students in universities rather than the Sydney School's instructional framework which focuses on

primary and secondary pupils as well as immigrants. In the next section, therefore, I examine the ESP tradition in greater detail.

2.1.3   Swales' (1981a, 1990a) Approach to Genre Analysis

First postulated in 1981 and later developed in his groundbreaking monograph, *Genre Analysis* (1990a), the main concern of Swales genre-based rhetorical approach to the description of text is to identify the rhetorical structure of a genre and relate it to its communicative purpose while recognizing the social context in which it occurs. In this light, Swales defines genre as "a class of communicative events, the members of which share a set of communicative purposes" (Swales, 1990a: 58). Thus, a genre can be said to be an institutionalized template for social interaction.

Two fundamental concepts underscore the Swalesian definition of genre: "discourse community" and "communicative purpose". Swales (*ibid*) proposes six defining characteristics of discourse community as follows:

- A broadly agreed set of common public goals

- A mechanism of inter communication among its members

- A participatory mechanism primarily to provide information and feedback

- The utilization and possession of one or more genres in the communication in furtherance of its aims

- Acquisition of some specialist texts

- A threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discoursal expertise

(Swales, 1990a: 24-27)

The term "discourse community" has received considerable attention. Harris (1989), for instance, refers to "discourse community" as an institutional context of culture to focus attention on the role of language in the epistemological disposition of disciplines. Such delineation of "discourse community" evokes a similar term, "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). According to Bhatia (2004), the term "community of practice" differs from "discourse community" in terms of focus, as the former highlights the practices and values that hold a community together rather than their language *per se*. These two terms are, however, used interchangeably in the present study insofar as they both foreground social interaction and beliefs (Hyland, 2000). Further, given technological advancement and the attendant use of the internet, Miller (1994) advocates the use of "virtual community" instead of "discourse community", leading to Swales' (1998) reconfiguring discourse community as constitutive of a Place Discourse Community and a Focus Discourse Community.

The above meanings of "discourse community" imply a monolithic and homogeneous construct, a view that has been contested by several scholars (Raforth, 1990; Killingsworth, 1992; Chin, 1994; Prior, 1998). In particular, Raforth (1990) argues that a "discourse community" tends to be essentially diverse, rather than homogeneous, while Prior, Cooper, and Chin express dissatisfaction with its static and deterministic nature. Also, Thompson (2001), echoing Raforth's stance, contests the assumed homogeneity of engagement by the different members of the academic community in its application to the university set-up. The term "discourse community" according to several other scholars (e. g. Porter, 1992; Hyland, 2000) masks the different sub-groups of people (e.g. research communities, departments, forum, conferences) engaged in

knowledge production, transmission, and sharing. The term also fails to acknowledge the various power structures and relations which are played out either in the sub-groups or across the various sub-groups.

Unlike the notion of "discourse community", the second major feature of genre ("communicative purpose") has been subjected to less intense discussion (Swales, 1990a; Bhatia, 1993; Trosborg, 1997; and Askehave & Swales, 2001). Interestingly, Swales leads the way in this discussion by arguing that letters, in general, would not constitute a genre since they do not have a common communicative purpose, whereas a letter of complaint can be said to be a genre because it has a well-defined communicative purpose. Bhatia (*ibid*), in turn, argues that over-privileging "communicative purpose" leads to the classification of advertisements and job applications as belonging to the same genre, as they promote the value of something, be it an article, a person, or service. Consequently, Trosborg (1997:11) views "communicative purpose" as dubious, suggesting a "multicriterial model in which all relevant dimensions count". Accepting these views as valid, Swales and Askehave (2001: 209) propose a two-tier paradigm, or rather a continuum, in which the communicative purpose is ascribed during early stages of analyzing a text and fully specified only in the process of doing the "extensive text-in-context enquiry".

Notwithstanding the difficulty in defining "genre" partly because of the problems posed by the two privileged features – "discourse community" and "communicative purpose" – in general, the term "genre" and other contiguous terms such as "register" and "text" seem fairly distinguishable. As suggested by Wysocki (2004), there is a change in the way "text" is construed as a result of technological advancement. In this study,

following Bazerman and Prior (2004), "text" is considered as any written inscription. Such a view brings into sharp focus the objectivist and functionalist notions of text. Whereas the former simply considers text as a string of linguistic symbols fixed on paper (Bex, 1996), the latter is associated with a sequence of symbols with a communicative purpose (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Martin, 1992). The second view is adopted in this study, given that students' examination essays are produced with a particular set of communicative purposes in mind.

As for the relationship between the two terms "genre" and "register", there is a nexus of configurations, which tends to be confusing, especially among some systemic functional grammarians (Kress, 1993; Martin, 1993; Eggins & Martin, 1997). While Kress (1993) considers both terms to be situated within the broader context of situational and social structure, Martin (1993) views the two terms – "genre" and "register" – as different. He argues that "genre" tends to be associated more with organization of culture and social purposes around language and is tied more closely to consideration of ideology and power, whereas "register" is associated with organization of situation or immediate context as a configuration of field (activity-and-object orientations), tenor (interactant relations), and mode (various communication media realizations) choices in Hallidayan grammatical terms.

My preferred way of distinguishing between the two terms, "genre" and register" is in line with Martin's (1993) view. Moreover, I consider "genre" and "register" as essentially two different viewpoints covering the same ground in the same way that we view language simultaneously from the viewpoint of form, function or meaning. I use the term "register" when viewing a text as the instantiation of a conventionalized, functional

configuration of lexico-grammatical features tied to societal situations, that is, variety according to use. I use the term "genre" when viewing text as a member of a category: a culturally recognized artifact, a grouping of texts according to some conventionally recognized criteria, a grouping according to culturally-defined purposive goals. Thus, two texts may be from the same genre, but show variation in register. Moreover, genres may evoke more than one register, and so have the lexico-grammatical and discoursal-semantic configurations of their constitutive registers, in addition to specific generic socio-cultural expectations built in. Thus, we can consider "genre" and "register" as two different realizational planes of "text".

Having dealt with the apparent terminological uncertainty surrounding the term "genre" and related terms such as "discourse community", "communicative purpose", "register", and "text", let us consider in further detail how Swales specifically applies genre theory. In his pioneering work on RA introductions, Swales (1981a) proposed what he terms the CARS (Creating a Research Space) model, comprising four basic moves. In response to criticisms over the application of the original four-move model, Swales (1990a) adapted the original move structure model for a three-move model, which shows greater sensitivity to writers' rhetorical or social purposes in structuring and wording the RA introduction. Identifying the rhetorical structures of RA introductions as a sequence of "moves", Swales postulates that a "move" represents a distinctive pattern of organization of discourse that occurs usually either within a paragraph or spans a number of paragraphs. Because moves represent distinct sub-communicative acts within the overall communicative purpose of a text, their linguistic realizations are likely to differ. Further, according to Swales, for a text to be accepted as an instantiation of a genre, these

moves ought to be obligatory. In addition, moves often have rhetorical and lexico-grammatical features which permit both the speaker/writer and listener/reader to negotiate the meaning of a text.

Since Swales' pioneering work on move analysis of scientific RAs, several similar studies have been conducted on both academic and non-academic discourses, highlighting the various moves that are used by members of a particular discourse community. Leading this burgeoning application of rhetorical-move analysis are a number of genre studies that have concerned themselves with the overall organization of various parts of written genres such as the RA (Swales & Najjar, 1987; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Brett, 1994; Holmes, 2001; Yang & Allison, 2003, 2004), abstract (Nwogu, 1990; Swales, 1990a), dissertation/thesis (Dudley-Evans, 1986; Thompson, 2001; Bunton, 2002), popularized report (Nwogu, 1991), critical debate (Dudley-Evans, 1993a), submission letter (Swales, 1996), and acknowledgement in dissertations (Hyland, 2004) as well as spoken academic genres such as conference presentation (Dubois, 1980), graduate seminar (Weissberg, 1993), the lecture (Thompson, 1994), and, non-academic genres such as sales promotion letter, job application, legislative instrument (Bhatia, 1993), corporate mission statements (Swales & Rogers, 1995), tourist information guide (Henry & Roseberry, 1996), and inaugural address (Trosborg, 2000).

Given the pedagogical rationale of genre studies involving disciplinary writing (Dudley-Evans, 1986, 1987), the pertinent question here is why it should be applied to a curriculum genre such as the examination essay in the present study. First, demonstrating a nexus of socio-cognitive explanations, linguistic as well as rhetorical insights, Swales' genre approach, in my view, offers the best fit for the description and analysis of the texts

that I wish to investigate – the introduction and conclusion sections written by undergraduates in their examination essays. Second, following from the findings of Kusel (1992) which indicate that undergraduates make specific and identifiable moves in crafting their introduction and conclusion in coursework essays, utilizing Swales' move analysis in the study of examination essays could have pedagogical value in raising the rhetorical awareness of undergraduates about their own writing. It has the potential to develop detailed specifications of the staging structures and realizational features of examination essays. And, finally, in this vein, findings from the study could be drawn on for the benefit of both students and faculty not only in the research site but other English-medium universities in enhancing communication in the disciplinary communities.

Having said that, I have modified Swales' (1981a, 1990a) analytical framework, taking into account the particular curriculum genre (examination essay) being investigated and the educational level of the students involved. For example, the examination essay at the undergraduate level is hardly likely to contain Move 2 of Swales' CARS model, which focuses on suggesting a gap in the literature and thus making a claim for novelty on the basis of findings from past studies, given the communicative purpose/s of examination essays. (For further discussion on the communicative units adopted for the present study, see Section 5.4.)

2.2   Key Concepts

The previous section outlined the analytical framework on which the study rests, throwing up concepts, some of which are key terms in the title of the present thesis, and which need further explication. To provide the reader with a general orientation on the

conceptual terrain of the research study, three key terms, namely "disciplinary variation", "rhetoric", and "examination essay" are discussed.

2.2.1 Disciplinary Variation

The expression "disciplinary variation" readily evokes other terms such as "discipline", "disciplinary community", "department", "subject", and "courses". An attempt is made first to explicate these terms, as this will lead to understanding the key term.

Becher (1989) contends that there are no simple definitions of the term "discipline", and that the concept of an academic discipline is not as straightforward as it would appear. In fact, the term "discipline" was originally defined historically (Shumway & Messer-Davidow, 1991) and cognitively (Biglan, 1973, Kolb, 1981). More recently, it has been explained in sociological terms (Becher, 1989; Lindholm-Romantschuk, 1998). Where the term "discipline" has been discussed both in terms of substantive epistemological (intellectual) content and other more social aspects, the term "department" has often been used instead. Although as Lindholm-Romantschuk (1998) suggests, "department" is considered to be the administrative unit of a "discipline", the relationship between "department" and "discipline" still remains unresolved (Becher & Trowler, 2001). Whichever – "department" or "discipline" – is stressed, there is one commonality: the sharing of certain attitudes, activities, and cognitive styles, revolving around a domain of knowledge, and the structuring of that domain in particular ways (Becher, 1989).

Given the difficulty of a satisfactory and full-proof definition, Lindholm-Romantschuk's (1998) definition of the term "discipline", which is based largely on the ideas of Becher (1989), and Becher and Trowler (2001), is chosen:

> An academic discipline is a delimited cultural domain, a socially and culturally defined organizational arrangement that focuses on knowledge production and growth. An academic discipline can be characterized as an epistemic community whose members have a special frame of reference oriented toward specific objects of investigation….Academic or intellectual disciplines, as they are structured today, should be understood as but one of the possible social representations of the constantly evolving search for knowledge that is the basic tenet of science and scholarship. (Lindholm-Romantschuk, 1998: 23, 32)

The term "disciplinary community" is used interchangeably with "discourse community" in this study (for a full discussion of "discourse community", see Section 2.1.3). A disciplinary community is taken here to refer to a discipline-specific discourse community, that is, a community of writers sharing a set of goals, genres, rhetoric, and specific lexis by virtue of affiliation to a particular disciplinary culture (see Jones *et al.,* 1997). In other words, the concept of disciplinary community is closely connected to discourse community insofar as a disciplinary community use discourse to communicate. Moreover, these acts of communication are both community-generated and community-maintained. Consequently, the three selected disciplines (English, Sociology, and Zoology) in the present study are interchangeably referred to as different disciplinary communities, courses, subjects, and only departments when the sense of an administrative unit is foregrounded.

As is evident, rather than one "discourse community" or "disciplinary community" in academia, it is common to talk of several communities, leading me to the notion of "disciplinary variation". This notion of disciplinary variation arises partly as a result of the rejection of the traditional view of academic writing as monolithic,

predictable, and invariant (Coles & Wall, 1987; Dillon, 1991; Zamel, 1998). Further, it is important to note that the notion of disciplinary variation has long existed though, according to Bazerman and Russell (1994). But it is only in the past two decades that it has engendered considerable excitement among theoreticians, practitioners, and researchers in sociology of knowledge and language studies.

As a concept in applied linguistics, disciplinary variation owes its popularity to commonplace metaphors of different disciplines such as "neighbourhoods" (Polanyi, 1958) or "islands in an archipelago" (Berger, 1972). Additionally, Becher's (1989) twin metaphors, "tribes" and "territories", are best known in popularizing the notion of disciplinary variation, with his insightful expose on the groupings in academia. In a further explication of universities as a collection of academic tribes and territories, Becher draws on Evelyn Waugh's description of the English aristocracy: "a complex of tribes, each with its chief and elders and witch-doctors and braes, each with its own dialect and deity, each strongly xenophobic" (Becher, 1989:22). Dillon (1991) in turn argues that it is the nature of academic discourse to be diverse, competitive, and contentious. Other practitioners such as Bloor and Bloor (1986), Swales (1990a), and Johns and Dudley-Evans (1991) similarly recognize different audiences and purposes for academic writing, rejecting the "common core" approach as unsuitable, for many students, in particular, postgraduates and professionals in many situations. Others like Craswell (1994) even consider the monolithic notion of academic discourse as a luxury which cannot be afforded in a post-modern era. The pertinent question then is: what is the nature of disciplinary variation?

An important but common way of answering the question has been to start with the differentiation of academic disciplines into three major groupings, viz., the Sciences, Social Sciences, and the Humanities (Maimon *et al.,* 1981; Becher, 1989; MacDonald, 1994). MacDonald's (1994) exposition on the nature of disciplinary variation is by far the most succinct and enlightening. 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. What we have instead is a cline, as shown in Figure 2.1.

Science   Social Sciences   Arts/Humanities

$\longleftrightarrow$

Figure 2.1 The Academic Knowledge Continuum
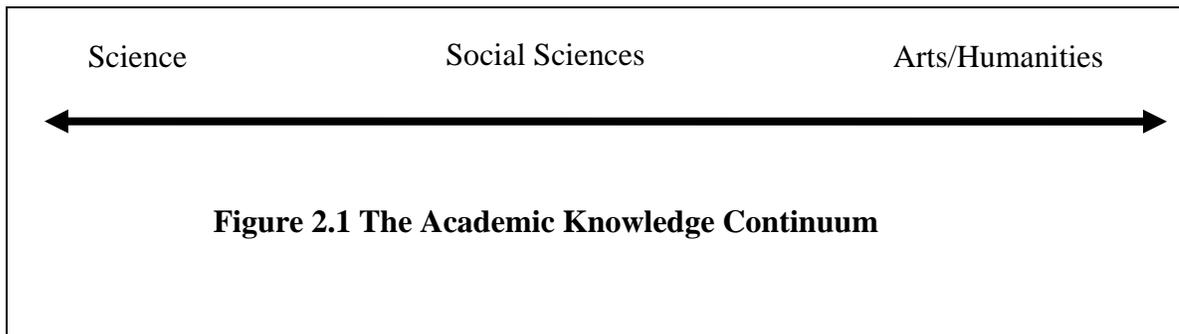
Discussing disciplinary variation in terms of this cline, MacDonald argues that the Sciences at one end are empirically based; that is, new knowledge is accepted on the basis of often objective, quantifiable, and verifiable proof. The Humanities disciplines at the other end of the cline, in turn, depend on well-advanced arguments rooted in logical reasoning, rather than quantitative methods, to make their knowledge acceptable. Between the two knowledge domains are the Social Sciences that adapt much of the scientific method to their less predictable data. MacDonald (1994), furthermore, contends that four patterns of disciplinary variation are demonstrable through the construction and transmission of epistemology on a cline: (a) variation from compactness to diffuseness; (b) variation in explanation and interpretative goals; (c) variation from conceptually

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driven relationship between generalization and particularization; and, (d) variation in the degree of epistemic self-consciousness. MacDonald's exposition of the nature of disciplinary variation is in congruence with my own view on account of its cautious steering of a balance between over-explicitness and over-generalization.

While the above classification suffices for the purpose of the present study, two important issues need to be acknowledged. The first is that earlier theorization on disciplinary variation has been largely concerned with research. Increasingly, our knowledge of disciplinary variation is being extended to include how it relates not only to research, as Becher (1989) admits, but to other pedagogical constructs such as teaching and learning as well as, lately, the use of digital information. Consequently, issues such as students' approaches and perceptions of learning environments (Entwistle & Tait, 1995), student and teachers' beliefs about the nature of epistemology and learning (Newton & Newton, 1998a, 1998b; Paulsen & Wells, 1998; Breen, 1999; Hofer, 2000; Palmer & Marra, 2004), teaching preferences and practices (Hativa, 1997; Ballantyne *et al.*, 1999; Neumann, 2001), and information technology (Selwyn, 1999; Jones *et al.*, 2004) have in recent times been considered against the backdrop of disciplinary variation. The second issue is the fluidity, malleability, and overlap of the epistemological boundaries between otherwise "traditional" disciplines (Becher, 1989; Lindholm-Romantschuk, 1998), giving rise to constructs such as multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity (Klein, 1990).

The discussion on disciplinary variation above suggests that each discipline is likely to have its own epistemological and rhetorical orientations. Given that the latter is relevant to this study, the next sub-section explores the notion of "rhetoric".

2.2.2   Rhetoric

Broadly speaking "rhetoric" conjures the configuration of purpose, audience, and context in the transmission of a message (Kinneavy, 1971). Thus, as long as a person's message is informed by this triad, it can be said that rhetoric is at work. This broad view of rhetoric underpins three specific perspectives, namely, the stylistic, the Aristotelian, and the communicative approaches. The rest of this section briefly sketches these three approaches. Next, I explain why the communicative approach is adopted as the more relevant approach for the present study. This is then followed by a brief vignette of the rhetorical features of English academic writing.

The first conception of rhetoric (stylistic) reduces it to techniques and ornamentation in language use as a way of achieving communicative goals. It thus makes forays into poetry and the novel through substantial use of major tropes such as metaphor, symbolism, metonymy, allusion, and repetition. The Aristotelian version of rhetoric in turn makes heavy use of personal appeals (ethos), emotional biases (pathos), and logical appeals (logos), giving rise to the kind of rhetoric often described as persuasive discourse or simply persuasion. Unfortunately, it is this kind of rhetoric which is seen as being manipulative and insincere, especially in politics, the media, and advertising (Covino, 2001). Given that the first two perspectives of rhetoric do not speak directly to the present thesis, I now turn to the last, communicative approach.

The communicative approach takes as its starting point the view of "rhetoric" as an almost everyday activity in that each time one communicates, a conscious and careful selection and ordering of words and their associated symbols are made in order to achieve a specific goal (Mauranen, 1993). In other words, as long as humans use language to

communicate, rhetoric is present. As Burke (1969: 43) puts it: "rhetoric is rooted in an essential function of language itself… the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing co-operation in beings that by nature responds to symbols".

This communicative view of rhetoric values the rhetorical situation, which according to Hauser (1986), consists of three elements: an exigence, an audience, and constraints. Bitzer (1981) claims that an exigence is the imperfection in the environment that calls rhetoric into being. Audience, in turn consists of not only those who are capable of being influenced, but also those who have an interest in an exigence and its resolution, as they possess requisite factual knowledge, experiential knowledge, and a sense of responsibility. The last factor, "constraints", evokes both limitations and opportunities presented in a situation that could impact what may or may not be said to the audience about the imperfection they are being asked to redress. In the present research, the exigence is perceived to be the examination situation which calls for the written text; the audience, the marker, rater, or teacher; and, the constraints the specific institutional and disciplinary regulations such as rubrics and prompts that impinge on the successful writing of examination essays.

In the present study, I use "rhetoric" narrowly to underscore the generic structure or what Matsuda (2003: 20) calls "organizational structure" of language use beyond the sentence, taking into account the triad (purpose, context, and audience) often alluded to in rhetorical studies. This narrow definition steers away from both the manipulative (negative) and flowery (positive) ramifications of the word "rhetoric". Neutral as the definition of rhetoric in the present research is, it still captures the element of persuasion: "the role of discourse toward some end" (Hyland, 2002c: 208) or the "choice of linguistic

and structural aspects of a discourse chosen to produce an effect on an audience" (Purves, 1988: 9).

I now turn to English rhetoric. (English rhetoric is used here in the sense of the rhetorical characteristics of English academic writing.) Influenced by earlier Greek and Roman thinkers (Kaplan, 1966), English rhetoric has three major features. The first salient point about English is the way it relates to the reader, being writer-responsible (Noor, 2001). In exhibiting a writer-responsible rhetoric, writers of English discourse are enjoined to make their discourse explicit to their readers (Clyne, 1987; Hinds, 1987, 1990; Zellermayer, 1988). This implies that English rhetoric must necessarily be rendered readable and easily processible, partly achievable through, what Noor (2001: 263) calls, "decontextualization cues" such as transition statements, cohesion markers, and information ordering. Thus, by showing sensitivity towards readers or being writer-responsible, English rhetoric keeps academic discourse "clear, honest and intellectually persuasive" (Henderson & Dudley-Evans, 1990: 4).

Second, English rhetoric is fundamentally described as linear, in the sense that a paragraph, an important organizational unit of the English essay, often begins with a topic statement and is supported by examples and illustrations and also contains a number of ideas all related to a central idea. When a paragraph begins with a topic sentence, that is, front-loaded (Ostler, 1987, 1990), it is considered deductive, making the meaning of a paragraph clear from the onset. As Ravelli (2004) suggests, this is the point where links within paragraphs are foregrounded. An English paragraph can also be inductive, when it starts with a series of examples leading to a topic statement at the end of the paragraph. This inductive arrangement of organizing paragraphs has implications for sustaining

interest in the reader. A third position for the topic sentence is the middle of a paragraph together with its supporting sentences, which is uncommon in English rhetoric.

The third characteristic of English discourse is its logical nature, in terms of ordering ideas from the general to the specific, an organizational feature often considered to be an important source of coherence (Burtoff, 1983), although it must be acknowledged that logic is culturally conditioned (Sayed, 1997). Thus English rhetoric moves from the idea, to the word, to the meaningful sentence. Each idea, expressed in words and logically related to other ideas, constitutes the essence of the sentence. Ultimately, according to Sayed (1997: 56), it is "the purposeful organization of these sentences into paragraphs according to English thought patterns and methods of development" which constitutes "English rhetoric".

The above explication has suggested that "rhetoric" as a verbal construct depends on extralinguistic features such as context (specifically, context of culture and context of situation), purpose, and audience. An effective handling of rhetoric in English-based tertiary education involves mastery of academic genres. One vital curriculum genre which affords students the opportunity to demonstrate their gradual enculturation is the examination essay, which I turn to in the next sub-section.

2.2.3   The Examination Essay

The present study focuses on the examination essay because it is the most recognized and frequently used genre in tertiary literacy portfolios (Horowitz, 1986, 1989; Johns, 1997). Also, examination essays represent a key type of writing done in the selected disciplines (English, Sociology, and Zoology), providing examples of sustained continuous writing

in prose in terms of length (at least, 250 words) and discursive practices. Most importantly, being end-of-semester examination essays, they reflect students' internalized knowledge and use of rhetorical conventions in their disciplines.

In this study, the examination essay is defined as any planned continuous prose, written in disciplines under timed conditions, suggesting that it could feature on Gernsbacher and Givon's (1995) continuum of spontaneous text or an "impromptu essay test" (White, 1995). An encompassing view is adopted in the present study so as to include short-answer essays in sciences such as Chemistry and Biology, in contrast to Drury (2001), who considers short essays as a separate genre. Drury's labelling of short essays as a separate genre seems not helpful, since there is lack of sufficient theorization to warrant it. For the purpose of the present research, a piece of writing was considered an examination essay when it provided evidence of a sustained development of a thesis or argument and well organized in response to an examination prompt, a feature obviously lacking in a one-sentence answer, multiple choice, or short notes.

Considering examination essays as a genre (Swales & Horowitz, 1988; Lukmani, 1994; Pace, 2000) implies that it makes special demands on students (Haines, 2004). These demands include, first, that students demonstrate knowledge of the information they have assimilated and its significance (Horowitz, 1991; Leki, 1995) although, as pointed out by Lukmani (1994), this is not the usual information-gap situation. The information asked for is supposedly known by the questioner, the course instructor. Indeed, the examination situation assumes that the reader/assessor (audience) is well-versed in a topic and conversant with all associated technicalities. In this sense, the examination essay genre obliges the reader/assessor to expect an answer consistent with

the demands of relevance, conciseness, clarity, correctness, accuracy, fullness, along with linguistic control (Lukmani, 1994; Gong & Dragga, 1995). Another demand of the examination essay is to determine a student's understanding of and competence in appropriating the terminology, concepts, theories, and methodologies, which have been introduced in a course. These demands are difficult enough for native speakers and are likely to be formidable for non-native learners of English.

In the last two decades there has been ongoing debate about the continuing relevance and use of examination essays in higher education. Calls discrediting examination essays – especially in-class examination essays – have been loud in tertiary educational institutions in the USA on three counts. The first point against utilizing examination essays is that examinees have very little opportunity to revise their writing or consider issues of style, memory, and delivery (Gong & Dragga, 1995). Second, examinees are subjected to considerable anxiety as a night of study may leave them physically enervated and psychologically agitated. That the examination essay is acknowledged to be the basis of testing other so-called "skills and abilities" such as time management and stress tolerance, as claimed by Haines (2004), raises questions about the validity of examination essays in testing students' writing ability. Third, it is commonly reported that examinations tend to encourage regurgitation, knowledge-telling or display, that is, a lower level of intellectual development, professorial dictatorship, exorcism of error, and elitism among students (Baudelot, 1994), making them an unreliable means of assessment (O'Brien, 1995), and unnatural (Kroll, 1990).

Consequently, assessment specialists and, more recently, composition theorists (Belanoff & Dickson, 1991; Smith & Murphy, 1992; Hamp-Lyons & Condon, 2000)

have found the portfolio mode of assessment, which thrives on effective collection, selection, and reflection of student writing, a more credible alternative to examination essays. The common arguments advanced in favour of portfolio are its fairness, reliability, meaningfulness, process-orientedness, and learner-centredness. However, proponents of the portfolio approach, including Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000), have adopted a cautionary stance, warning that it might be questioned just as multiple choice tests and essay examinations have been.

The apparent popularity of the portfolio approach in American universities notwithstanding, examination essays still remain an important part of the formal writing assessment procedure in many English-medium universities world-wide (Hamp-Lyons & Mathias, 1994), where criticisms against examination essays have been scathing. It is even acknowledged that timed-writing tests will continue to be used for many years to come (Polio & Glew, 1996). This suggests that the current study is worthwhile undertaking. In Ghana, the portfolio approach is yet to be practised on such a wide scale as it is being done in American universities. Although, it is gradually being implemented in a few courses in UCC, its implementation is fraught with difficulties such as administrative and logistical bottlenecks. The complex nature of the writing portfolio as an assessment mode as admitted by scholars such as Belanoff and Dickson (1991) Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000) and the fact that it is not yet developed in the research site thus made it impossible to be adopted for the present study.

There are two salient reasons why examination essays will continue to remain relevant in tertiary education. First, examination essays, together with coursework essays, are more likely to promote deep approaches to learning when compared with fact-

oriented multiple choice texts (Thomas & Bain, 1984; Entwistle, 1995; Scouller, 1998) in that examination essays require students to actively engage with materials, to examine ideas in depth, to integrate and critically evaluate what they read, and to state their understanding further (Applebe, 1984; Hounsell, 1997). A less plausible reason, perhaps, is that writing essays for particular disciplines can be seen as a way in which students gain access to academic discourses of disciplines (Prosser & Webb, 1994), although this is also true of take-home essays or coursework essays.

In light of the above discussion on examination essays *vis a vis* portfolio as assessment modes, the former was chosen as the primary data in the present study for two reasons. First, the examination essay represents the more established mode of assessment in the research site, for which reason the data could be considered as a reliable and valid expression of students' epistemological and rhetorical knowledge of their respective disciplines. Secondly, it was felt that with examination essays always kept as a "security material" in most universities, they could be accessed more easily than coursework essays. (For an account of the difficulty in obtaining the examination essays, however, see Section 5.5.3).

2.3   Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has laid out the conceptual framework for the present study clarifying the use of key terms and concepts underpinning this study. In the process, a general overview of the three traditions of genre theory in applied linguistics, namely the American, Sydney, and ESP schools, was presented. Swales' (1981a, 1990a) move analytic approach was deemed as appropriate to lay down an epistemological orientation of the

findings in this study. The choice of Swales' rhetorical approach meant elaborating on contested and related terms such as "communicative purpose", "discourse community", "genre", "register", and "text". Such an epistemological underpinning left in its trail other equally salient terms and concepts whose meanings had to be clarified. These include the three key terms, explicitly or implicitly in the thesis title: "rhetoric", "disciplinary variation", and "examination essay". The review of empirical studies involving disciplinary variation and rhetorical features is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW II: EMPIRICAL STUDIES

3.0   Introduction

This chapter comprises three sections. Section 3.1 relates the present study to the existing empirical literature on disciplinary variation. Section 3.2 in turn examines studies on rhetorical features, organized geographically so as to highlight the lack of research on student writing in the African context, which leads to the justification for the present study in Section 3.3.

3.1   Studies on Disciplinary Variation

Despite the considerable number of studies on disciplinary variation, very little attention has been paid to rhetoric within disciplinary variation in student academic writing in sub-Sahara Africa. The review of these studies in this research goes beyond undergraduate writing and examination essay answers, embracing other genres of graduate students and published writing.

A search for the literature on studies on disciplinary variation led to four major ways in which these studies can be examined: in terms of a) focus on intradisciplinary variation as opposed to interdisciplinary variation; b) synchronic and diachronic approach; c) written *vs.* spoken mode of discourse; and, d) linguistic features investigated.

3.1.1   Nature of Disciplinarity

First, it is important to establish the nature of disciplinarity embedded in the various studies as they evoke two key constructs, intra-disciplinarity and cross-disciplinarity: the former denotes a focus on one discipline, while the latter compares two or more disciplines. Both, however, share the common goal of characterizing as well as explicating the norms and values of disciplines.

Studies with an intradisciplinary focus include Myers (1990), Love (1993), Bloor (1996), O'Halloran (1998), Kelly *et al.,* (2002), and Thompson (2003). Myers, for instance, examines the presentation of knowledge in Biology through linguistic and other semiotic devices, which distinguish Biology from some sciences and, of course, the non-science disciplines. Similarly, the edited collection of papers by Dudley-Evans and Henderson (1990a) and Henderson, Dudley-Evans, & Backhouse (1993) as well as Channell's (1990) are a few of the studies that have been instrumental in explicating the lexico-grammatical and rhetorical features of Economics as a distinct discipline. Coffin's (1997, 2000, 2002, 2004) general interest in turn lies in making the epistemology and rhetoric of History explicit to learners and literacy specialists, while Young and Leinhardt (1998) investigates the way in which five students attained academic literacy (in terms of organization, document use, and citation language) in History. Further, Kelly *et al.* (2002) examine the epistemological framing (production and representation) of an introductory science course, Oceanography. Other disciplines whose epistemology and rhetorical patterns have been examined include Geography (Hewings, 1999, 2002a) and Philosophy (Geisler, 1994). A slightly different form of intra-disciplinary studies is exemplified by North (2005a, 2005b), which reports on the features that mark the writing

of undergraduates from two different disciplinary backgrounds (Arts and Science) offering the same course, History of Science.

While intra-disciplinary studies such as those outlined above have continued to enjoy support from applied linguists and literacy specialists, it is the cross disciplinary studies that have proliferated at an exponential rate in the last decade. This considerable interest in highlighting disciplinary variation has taken two directions. Over the last decade the more common group of cross-disciplinary studies has been concerned with exploring disciplinary variation in two or more disciplines with respect to one or more language features. The disciplines involved are often conventional and well established in academia. In particular, Hyland's (2000) collection, which is prototypical of this earlier line of research in the comparative vein, examines genres such as abstracts and scientific letters with their rhetorical features such as metadiscourse and citation across eight disciplines, pointing out the sources of their differences. Other cross-disciplinary studies but carried out on a smaller scale include Lewis & Starks (1997), Allori (2001), Bunton (2002), and Samraj (2002a, 2004).

A more recent line of enquiry within the cross-disciplinary vein is ostensibly a response to calls by Herrington (1985), Holmes (1997, 2001) and Samraj (2000) to shift attention to more complex ways of dealing with disciplinary variation in order to capture the subtlety and complexity in discursive disciplinary practices. Such studies generally combine disciplinary variation with other sources of variation (Shaw, 2001; Varttala, 2001; Hewings, 2002b; Hewings & Hewings, 2001a, 2001b; 2002, 2004; North, 2003; Cortes, 2004; Varghese & Abraham, 2004; Samraj, 2005a). For instance, studies by Shaw (2001), Hewings & Hewings (2002b, 2004), and North (2003) focus on variation from

the viewpoints of "experts" and "novices", investigating to what extent novice writing matches or differs from expert writing in selected disciplines. Moving from the novice/expert focus in disciplinary variation, Varghese and Abraham (2004) explore variability across three disciplines (Linguistics, Psychology, and Sociobiology), and three genres (book length scholarly essays, short popularizations, and research articles), using textual data and personal commentary from the writer-researchers in an interesting but more complex study. In a recent study, Samraj (2005a) has explored the relationship between two related genres (research article introductions and abstracts) in two related fields, Conservation Biology and Wildlife Behaviour, arguing that disciplinary variation is manifested not only in generic structure but also in the relationship among genres.

Still, other studies (Golebiowski, 1997, 1998; Liddicoat, 1997; Melander *et al,* 1997; Martin-Martin, 2003; and Martin-Martin & Burgess, 2004) combine disciplinary variation with cultural variation. In particular, Liddicoat (1997) studied literary studies and biology research papers written in French and Spanish. A very recent study is Dahl's (2004) exploration of cultural variation and disciplinary variation, with the mediating linguistic variable being textual metadiscourse. Busch-Lauer (2000) in turn investigates the titles of English and German research papers in Medicine and Linguistics, drawing attention to differences in their text length, structure, and communicative effectiveness. A variation of this concern, combining cultural variation and disciplinary variation, is found in the studies of Melander *et al.* (1997), who examine the linguistic and rhetorical features of Biology, Medicine, and Linguistics abstracts produced by Swedes writing in English and Swedish and Americans writing in English.

Although the attempt at characterizing disciplinary variation writing from a comparative perspective, that is, studies involving two or more disciplines, seems to be popular, studies that focus on one discipline cannot be totally ignored. Both strands of studies continue to explicate disciplinary norms and practices, with reputable journals such as *English for Specific Purposes*, *Written Communication*, *Applied Linguistics*, *Studies in Higher Education* and *Across the Disciplines* providing a valuable platform for researchers and scholars to share and exchange ideas on current research and pedagogy in discipline-specific writing.

3.1.2   Diachronic and Synchronic Perspectives

A second way of categorizing the work on disciplinary variation is in terms of the studies' diachronic and synchronic leanings.

The objective of studies on disciplinary variation with diachronic leanings is often to illustrate and describe the changes that have occurred within a particular discipline over time. This group of studies is relatively small, with the ones often cited being Bazerman (1984), Dudley-Evans & Henderson (1990b), Atkinson (1992), Salager-Meyer (1999) and Vande Kopple (2002). Bazerman (1984), for example, investigates the distribution of particular lexico-grammatical features as well as the occurrence and relative length of rhetorical text sections in representative articles from *Physics Review*, one of the most important journals in Physics today, from the period 1893 to 1980. His findings reveal that certain features have become more pronounced as the research community, linked by a shared theory, grows. Similarly, Atkinson's (1992) investigation into medical research writing, register analysis and rhetorical text analysis, shows that

medical research writing has become more informationally explicit, less narrative, and less writer-centred over a 250-year span.

While most studies in disciplinary variation from the diachronic perspective have tended to focus on published writing, studies on disciplinary variation in the synchronic vein (e.g. Connor, 1996; Love 1999; Gledhill 2000) cover both published and student writing. The essence of such studies is to show differences in disciplines at the present moment. The studies that best exemplify the synchronic vein include Samraj (1995, 2000), Hewings (1999), and Hyland (2000), focusing on graduate writing, undergraduate writing, and published writing, respectively. Samraj's focus on disciplinary variation in graduate writing has resulted in a profusion of studies (1995, 2000, 2002a, 2004, 2005b). In contrast to Samraj, Hewings (1999, 2002a, 2004) has tended to focus on undergraduate writing, although in recent times, her work includes studies on published writing alongside student writing (Hewings, 2002b; Hewings & Hewings, 2001b, 2002b, 2004). Hyland (2000) also explores the use and distribution of questions in RAs, textbooks and L2 student writing in eight disciplines. Apart from this prototypical collection of studies on disciplinary variation, Hyland has authored a large number of studies, the most recent being acknowledgements in dissertations/theses (Hyland, 2004).

Apart from these three scholars who have consistently investigated disciplinary variation from a synchronic standpoint, there are a considerable number of studies which take a similar approach (e.g. Lovejoy, 1991; Flowerdew, 1992; Haas, 1994; Stockton, 1994, 1995; Baynham, 1995; Baka, 1996; Henderson, 2000; Allori, 2001; Breivega, 2001; Shaw, 2001; Haggan, 2004; Kwan, 2006; Pecorari, 2006; Charles, 2006). As can be seen, it is common for such studies in the synchronic vein to be either cross-

disciplinary or intra-disciplinary as well. Altogether, these studies have drawn attention to disciplinary norms and practices in both well-known disciplines such as Biology, History, Civil Engineering, Economics, Education, Literature, Linguistics, Sociology, Psychology and hitherto less explored disciplines such as Nursing, Politics/International Relations, and Material Sciences.

3.1.3   Mode of Discourse

On a cline of medium of discourse, variationist studies of academic discourse can be characterized as those concerned with spoken or written modes.

Most of these studies emphasize disciplinary variation in the written mode. But, there are notable studies that also consider disciplinary variation in spoken academic discourse (e.g. Dubois, 1980; MacDonald, 1990; Flowerdew, 1992; Shalom, 1993; Weissberg, 1993; Dudley-Evans, 1994; Thompson, 1994, 1997; Young, 1994; Baka, 1996; Fortanet, 2004; Crawford, 2005; Recksi, 2005), all ultimately geared towards clarifying the norms, conventions, rhetorical orientations, and practices that distinguish various disciplines. The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) project at the University of Michigan has been instrumental in the increasing interest being shown to spoken discourse as far as research, practice, and pedagogy of academic discourse are concerned. (For an insightful exposition on disciplinary variation in lectures, see Bhatia (2004).)

The focus in the present study, however, is with written academic discourse. Indeed, studies on tertiary literacy such as the ones by Ballard & Clanchy (1988), Baldauf (1997), Baskin & Barker (1997), Lea & Street (1998), and Plum & Candlin (2002),

clearly point to writing occupying a pivotal place in various disciplinary communities and the enculturation of students. Most studies on disciplinary variation in academic writing have often focused on published writing, especially RAs (e.g. Skelton, 1988; Santos, 1996; Thompson & Yiyun, 1996; Holmes, 1997; Martinez, 2001). The immense attention that has been given to the RA is understandable on two counts. First, RAs occupy an almost indisputable position as the quintessential channel of scientific and scholarly communication (Swales, 1990a; Holmes, 1997). Secondly, there is a strong pedagogical motivation to make these various disciplinary practices explicit so as to enable novices, emerging scholars, and experts to engage more effectively in knowledge construction, sharing, and transmission. Other knowledge-making genres that have received attention include the abstract (e.g. Stotesbury, 2003; Martin-Martin & Burgess, 2004) and scholarly essay (Varghese & Abraham, 2004).

Although, there is a considerable number of studies in disciplinary variation that focus on published writing, in the last decade, increasing attention is being paid to student writing, notably, dissertation/thesis (e.g. Dudley-Evans, 1986; Shaw, 1992; Dong, 1996; Bunton, 1999, 2002; Parry, 1998; Thompson, 2001; Kwan, 2006). Indeed, scholars interested in exploring disciplinary variation are more likely to study texts that are exemplars than school genres, but studying disciplinary variation within the context of student writing such as dissertation/thesis or research proposals (Cadman, 2002; Allison, 2003) can be both an exciting and useful undertaking. In this regard, variationist studies of student writing are likely to reveal the extent to which novices are appropriating disciplinary discourse. Besides, as Hewings (2002a:138) points out, academic writing "encompasses the work of students embarking on tertiary level study right through to the

work of Nobel laureates" – this should provide a rationale to extend variationist studies to student writing.

Also worth mentioning is the textbook genre, which is beginning to be studied in various disciplinary contexts (e.g. Tadros, 1989; Love, 1991, 1993; Stockton, 1992; Bloor, 1996; Hyland, 2000; Moore, 2002). One of the earliest studies on disciplinarity in textbooks, Tadros' (1989) study underscores the use of rhetorical structures such as reporting question, advance labelling, enumeration, recapitulation, and hypotheticality in Economics. Also, Hyland's (2000) study on the use of metadiscourse in textbooks across eight disciplines is particularly insightful as it shows a higher use of interpersonal metadiscourse forms than the textual metadiscourse in the soft disciplines (e.g. Philosophy). More recently, the rhetorical features of textbooks in law, business and management have also been elaborated by Bhatia (2004). Together, these studies are instructive in sensitizing the academic community, in general, and prospective textbook writers, in particular, towards the norms and values that underpin textbook writing in specific disciplinary communities.

3.1.4 Linguistic Features

The final issue in this brief sketch of studies on disciplinary variation concerns the linguistic features that have often been investigated. These understandably have been varied, and revealing, touching on several aspects, from the lexico-grammatical to discourse/rhetorical features.

Notable linguistic features that have been examined in the studies using a lexico-grammatical approach are verb forms (Hanania & Akhtar, 1985), modals (Butler, 1990),

sentence subjects (MacDonald, 1994; Samraj, 2000), reporting verbs (Thomas & Hawes, 1994), lexis (Bloor, 1996), imperatives (Swales *et al.*, 1998), collocation (Gledhill, 2000), epistemic modality (Breivega, 2001), nouns (Charles, 2003), theme (Martinez, 2003), and personal pronoun "we" (Fortanet, 2004). Although this group of studies is of less relevance to the present study, it is important to note how promising it can be in contributing to our understanding of disciplinary practices. In particular, following from MacDonald's (1994) earlier work, Samraj's (2000) study of sentence subjects among three courses – Wildlife Behaviour, Conservation Biology, and Resource Policy – provides us understanding of how these three disciplinary communities understand the worlds in which they operate. Moving from essentially the nominal element of a sentence, Butler (1990) in turn investigates modals in RAs and textbooks of three subject areas, Physics, Botany, and Animal Physiology. One key finding in Butler's study was the higher incidence of modals in Physics than the Biology texts. A similar study conducted by Hanania and Akhtar (1985) showed that the proportion of modals to total finite verbs was almost twice as high in Physics theses as in either Biology or Chemistry theses. Other studies that have concentrated on verbal elements include Shaw (1992) and Thomas & Hawes (1994).

Moving to studies focusing on rhetorical features, we find explorations of dissertation/thesis titles (Dudley-Evans, 1984; Afful, 2004), research article titles (Buxton & Meadows, 1977; Lewison & Hartley, 2005), explanation (Love, 1996), higher level metatext (Bunton, 1999, 2002), conclusions of RAs (Yang & Allison, 2003) and doctoral theses (Bunton, 2005), citation practices (Iya, 1996; Sakri, 1997; Thompson, 2001; Charles, 2006), definition strategies (Swales, 1981b), hedging (Bloor & Bloor, 1993;

Hyland, 1998; Varttala, 2001), the structure of entire texts such as master' theses (Samraj, 2005b) and doctoral theses (Thompson, 2001; Johns & Swales, 2002), and discursive practices in textbooks (Bhatia, 2004). This latter group of studies, on rhetorical/discoursal features, is of direct relevance here as the present study seeks to examine two key rhetorical features in undergraduate writing within the ambience of disciplinary variation.

From the previous paragraph, it would appear that among the various studies on discoursal features of academic writing, it is the ones by Kusel (1992), Parry (1998), Bunton (1999, 2002, 2005), Thompson (2001), Yang & Allison (2003), and Samraj (2005b) that are close to the present study, given that they specifically relate to the organization of content. Of special mention is Kusel (1992), which focuses on undergraduate writing (for a detailed account of this study, see Section 3.2.2). Bunton, Parry, and Thompson similarly argue for the influence of disciplinary contexts on the structuring of doctoral theses. Samraj's (2005b) most recent study in turn focuses on master's theses across three disciplines, Philosophy, Linguistics, and Biology, highlighting key differences in the move structure of master's thesis introductions.

Altogether, the present study relates to the studies on disciplinary variation outlined in this section in four distinct ways. First, it deals with the written aspect, and, more specifically, junior undergraduate writing. Secondly, it takes a synchronic, rather than a diachronic or longitudinal, perspective. Thirdly, the present study focuses on the rhetorical aspect, in particular, the introductions and conclusions of examination essays. Finally, the present study shares a common ground with the comparative stance in

variationist studies in anticipating the possibility of variation in the use of rhetorical features across the disciplines of English, Sociology, and Zoology.

From the broader plane of studies on disciplinary variation, I now take a step closer towards the purpose of the study, by surveying studies on the rhetorical aspect of academic writing in the next section.

3.2   Studies on Rhetorical Features

In this section, a critical review of relevant studies from fields such as Applied Linguistics, in general, and Composition, Discourse Analysis, EAP, and ESP, specifically is presented. Presented on both regional and thematic lines, this review focuses on undergraduate writing in both native and non-native contexts, while embracing writing by post-graduate students to a small extent, where relevant. As well, this review is not intended to be exhaustive, but representative of such studies in the English-speaking world. Most importantly, through this critical review, it is argued that despite the considerable number of studies on rhetorical features, very little attention has been paid to rhetorical features distinguishing various disciplines at the undergraduate level in Africa.

3. 2.1   *Studies Conducted in the United States of America*

Given that the majority of studies on both native and non-native university student writing have been conducted in the United States of America, eight principal studies (Scarcella, 1984; Hult, 1986; Kroll, 1990; Swales, 1990b; Benson *et al.*, 1992; Gupta, 1995; Tedick & Mathison, 1995; Kelly *et al.*, 2002), which explore rhetorical features,

among others, are reviewed. The range of rhetorical features, kinds of students whose examination essays are studied, and findings of these central studies are not only of direct relevance to this study but also anticipate trends in studies in the other regions covered in this section.

Studies by Scarcella (1984), Hult (1986), and Benson *et al.* (1992), and Tedick & Mathison (1995) appear to be similar in the sense that they concentrate mainly on EAP writing, while differing in the scope, categories of students involved, and nature of the research design. The earliest of all the studies in this sub-section, Scarcella (1984) compares the ways in which native and non-native university students orient their readers. Specifically, Scarcella (1984) explores the length of the orientation, the types of attention-getting devices used, and how students established the theme of the text. Scarcella's analysis further shows that the non-native students in her study preferred repetition and paraphrase to announce the theme of the essay, making less use of metatextual deixis, whereas the native students preferred either an explicit statement of the theme or a pre-sequence to indicate that the subsequent sentence will contain the theme. Although the present study is concerned with the way students announce their theme, it focuses on the moves inherent in this orientation rather than attention-getting devices.

The studies of Hult (1986), Benson *et al.* (1992), and Tedick and Mathison (1995) seem to have a wider scope than Scarcella's (1984) study. Both Tedick and Mathison (1995) and Hult (1986) relate their examination of rhetorical features to rating. The former, in particular, examines the relationship between holistic scoring, on the one hand, and the rhetorical features-framing and task compliance, on the other hand, in pairs of

essays by 25 international ESL students in a large state institution in the Midwest on two topics, one, discipline-specific and the other, general. Working within the theoretical framework set forth by Hoey (1983) and Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983), Tedick and Mathison (1995) argued that the introductory paragraph plays a critical role in the way raters scored the essays. When students framed their essays well, they received higher holistic scores, regardless of prompt type. Tedick and Mathison also observed that more students were successful in writing introductory paragraphs in discipline-specific essays rather than in general domain essays.

Similarly, Hult (1986) reports on the ways in which frame developments correlate with holistic grades assigned by trained readers to 60 expository essays written for an examination at the University of Michigan. Her findings point to differences between the mid-score and high-score essays in three important ways. First, high-score essays used repetition more effectively as an organizational device; second, they showed greater skill in indicating their organizational frame for the reader; and, third, their essays were longer, although mere length was not the only factor that distinguished the two groups. Benson *et al.* (1992) in turn focused on more extensive organizing features in a sample of 112 students comprising native speakers (basic writers) and non-native speakers including Africans from Eriteria, Ethiopia, Morocco, and Nigeria. The closest organizational aspect relevant to the present study is topic development on an assigned topic.

Kroll's (1990) study differs from the studies reviewed thus far in one major respect: it is comparative in that it deals with two genres, homework essays and examination essays, anticipating studies in other English-speaking regions by O'Brien,

(1995) and Teng (1998), for example. Specifically, using 100 scripts produced by 25 advanced ESL students under pressure of time *vs.* at home, Kroll examined, among other issues, whether time has any influence on the improvement in students' rhetorical competency. While the findings suggest that time seems to affect the rhetorical competency of students in that home assignments were better in their rhetorical orientation, Kroll adds that it does not completely suggest that time in itself leads sufficiently to improved rhetorical performance. Be that as it may, Kroll's (1990) finding runs counter to Jordan (1988) and O'Brien (1995), but receives support from the finding in Teng's (1998) study (see Section 3.2.4).

Turning to the studies by Swales (1990b) and Gupta (1995) involving graduate students, these are relevant to the present study in that they focus on introductions as a rhetorical device which has the potential of improving students' writing. Both studies are conducted in EAP-related courses though, while differing in terms of the genre investigated. Swales (1990b) conducts his study among a group of non-native graduate students who had been requested to take writing class as a result of an English test. The study emphasizes the relevance of the introduction in achieving global coherence in a research paper. Further, Swales' (1990b) study is couched more in terms of error analysis, as he mainly points at defects in the students' research paper introductions: omission of one or two moves, problem in the opening sentence, resulting in the author "shooting himself in the foot", "the introduction nonetheless remaining somewhat flat in the second half", and "off-registral elements" (p.100).

Following Swales (1990b), Gupta (1995) attempts to identify the problems that graduate students from three disciplines, namely, Latin American Studies, Political

Science, and Organic Chemistry in an American university face in writing introductions in an ESL writing course. However, unlike Swales, Gupta utilizes Polanyi's (1985) Linguistic Discourse Model, which emphasizes global coherence as an interaction of both hierarchical and linear order of both semantic and structural elements. Three major problems relating to the choice and wording of the macrotheme, the vacillation between levels of information, and the utilization of over-specific facts are identified. Additionally, though not a major finding, Gupta observes an unsuccessful attempt on the part of one of the subjects to use Swales' 3-move pattern, but questions whether Swales' model for writing RAs is adequate for term papers. Specifically, Gupta's study offers the present study the opportunity to ascertain the usefulness of Swales' rhetorical approach in studying introductions in undergraduate writing.

While Swales (1990b) and Gupta (1995) focus on the introduction, Kelly *et al.* (2002*)* report on the rhetorical features of argumentation course papers written by 18 students in an introductory oceanography course across more organizational units namely, introduction, methodology, discussion, and conclusion. In particular, the finding concerning the introduction and conclusion is of interest here. In their study, not surprisingly, the introductions and conclusions showed the greatest levels of generality in an epistemic sense. There were, however, multiple cohesive links across all the sections, especially the introduction and conclusion, which often included key conceptual terms.

To summarize, what all of the studies reviewed in this sub-section have in common is their focus on graduate or undergraduate students, native and non-native students, and one or two particular genres at a time. Moreover, most of the contexts

tended to be non-disciplinary, and engage with attempts by students to organize information in their writing.

3.2.2   Studies conducted in the United Kingdom

A number of studies have been conducted in the United Kingdom on the use of rhetorical features by both undergraduates and graduate students. The principal studies reviewed here include Jordan (1988), Wall *et al*. (1988), Kusel (1992), O'Brien (1995), and North (2003) with varied degrees of relevance, as discussed below.

Kusel's (1992) work is by far the most relevant and prominent of the five studies being reviewed here. Using a rhetorical-functional approach, Kusel analyzes the structuring of introductions and conclusions in 50 essays written by final-year English native 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 these sections of the essays is dictated greatly by the conventions adopted by each department.

Kusel's (1992) study differs from the present study on three fronts while maintaining an affinity with the present study in two respects. The first difference relates to the background of the students chosen for the present study – they are non-native speakers. Second, in terms of the number and nature of subject departments, the present study looks only at three departments, namely, English, Sociology, and Zoology. Finally, the curriculum genre chosen for the present study is the examination essay, rather than the coursework essay in Kusel's study. These differences, notwithstanding, the present

study is similar to Kusel's study in that, first, it examines the relationship between disciplinary variation and the same rhetorical features (introduction and conclusion); and second, it uses an adapted form of Swales' (1990a) move analysis model.

Next in order of relevance and importance in the five sets of studies in this sub-section are Jordan (1988) and O'Brien (1995), which compare the rhetorical performance of undergraduates in two school genres, coursework essays and examination essays, at the University of Manchester. Jordan's data set is the more extensive, consisting of 137 answers to examination questions, 11 course work essays, and 20 answers to a practice examination question in a postgraduate course (Economic Development), whereas O'Brien's is a case-study of one undergraduate course (Social Psychology). Further, whereas O'Brien utilizes rhetorical structure theory as conceived by Mann and Thompson (1986, 1988) to examine the writing of a native speaker of English, Jordan shows no such leaning, employing textual analysis in light of the ideal obtained from faculty interview in order to see how far the writing of introductions by non-native students match faculty expectations.

The findings of both these studies – Jordan and O'Brien – contrast with Kroll (1990) and Teng's (1998) findings. The main finding in both studies constitutes an element of surprise as performance in introductions of examination essays is noted to be better than that in the coursework essays. Specifically, O'Brien (1995) notes a contrast between a recognizable structure in the examination essay and a weak structure in the coursework essays, fraught with many deficiencies. According to him, the introductory paragraph in the examination essay, although lacking in data-content, manifested awareness of the audience by providing a background and/or summary/evaluation and a

clear purpose. In contrast, the undergraduate's introductory paragraph in the coursework essays is labelled weak due to lack of any form of advance labelling and sense of purpose. Besides, she neither heralds the structure of the entire essay nor demonstrates a strong grasp of the background information. The element of "surprise" in Jordan's (1988) study lies in the fact that it was the examination essays that indicated the structure of the answer (20%) and the content (40%), while none of the students indicated the content or structure of the coursework essay.

One more study which exploits another form of comparison is that by Wall *et al.* (1988), which examines the two rhetorical features – introduction and conclusion – in a student's essay in Development Finance at the University of Birmingham. It is worth noting the nature of comparison in the three previously mentioned studies (Jordan, 1988; Kusel, 1992; O'Brien, 1995): O'Brien and Jordan compare two curriculum genres within one discipline, whereas Kusel's compares five disciplines in respect of the use of introduction and conclusion in one genre. Wall *et al*'s study is unique in the sense that two sources of data, text produced by the student and comments written by the discipline-specific teacher and three writing teachers, enable readers to understand the student's use of rhetorical features. Although all four teachers provided their comments independently of one another, Wall notes their consensus on the importance of organization and logical flow of ideas as well as language. This study is also valuable because it shows that teachers from writing as well as discipline-specific subjects are sensitive to the rhetorical demands of writing, be it in relation to coursework essays or examination essays.

In a more recent study, North (2003) examines theme in undergraduate writing produced in an interdisciplinary course, History of Science. In this regard, her study

recalls Kelly *et al.'s* (2002), work which has been reviewed in Section 3.2.1. Working within the systemic functional grammatical approach, North (*ibid*) takes theme as the initial ideational element as suggested by Halliday (1985) to include elements up to and including the grammatical subject. This enables North to consider theme in three respects: method of theme development, thematic progression, and theme as a discourse organizer. Most importantly, North takes theme as rhetorical rather than grammatical, and shows through careful examination of writing produced by two groups of students – Arts and Science – how they used themes in orienting their readers. Some of her findings regarding the way Arts students orient their readers in their choice of theme – manifest intertextuality, voice, longer text – anticipate my own findings in relation to the three groups of students in the present study.

The above review shows that the studies in the United States reviewed here have tended to be in non-disciplinary contexts whereas those conducted in the United Kingdom have concentrated on disciplinary contexts. Together, studies in these two regions provide trends for comparison with studies conducted in other regions, such as Australia, Asia, the Middle-East, and Africa, as discussed in the ensuing sub-sections.

3.2.3   Studies conducted in Australia

Four major studies from Australia are reviewed here, namely, Drury & Webb (1991), Townsend *et al*. (1993), Lawe-Davies (1998), and Drury (2001). These are primarily examined on account of the interest they show in various facets of disciplinary rhetoric, such as the introduction and conclusion. As expected, these studies share a number of similarities as well as differences.

Two studies – Lawe-Davies (1998) and Drury (2001) – are the most pertinent to this study in that they investigate written essays in the life sciences (Dentistry and Biology) at the undergraduate level with specific, but by no means exclusive, interest in the introduction and the conclusion. The difference between the two studies lies in the theoretical framework used, the curriculum genre investigated, and the amount of data analyzed. In particular, Lawe-Davies (1998) utilizes a reader-based approach within the eclectic framework of Carrell's (1983) schema theory, Gernsbacher's (1990) structure building theory, and Givon's (1995) functional grammar to examine 164 examination essays produced by native, non-native, and international students in Australia. In contrast, Drury (2001) utilizes systemic functional grammar to compare the macro features of what she calls "comparative-short answer" produced by three undergraduates in a first-year Biology course and a model answer to the same prompt. Thus, their theoretical approaches differ from the genre analysis approach, which I use in the present study.

Despite this fundamental difference, the findings from Lawe-Davies and Drury's studies anticipate findings in my study. For instance, the finding that only one text out of the three texts in Drury's study explicitly stated a thesis/purpose statement as done in the model answer and the lack of conclusion in both texts (model answer and students' texts) reflects a similar finding in the Zoology examination answers of my data set (see Section 6.3 of the present work). Secondly, in Lawe-Davies' (1998) study, the presence of introduction and conclusion was a differentiating factor between high-rated, mid-rated, and low-rated essays. Thus, for instance, a high-rated essay tended to have a conclusion, mid-rated essays were less likely to have a conclusion, and low-rated essays were least likely to have a conclusion. Unfortunately, in order to keep the scope of the present

research fairly manageable, this research is unable to investigate a correlation between the moves in the introduction and conclusion and the grade received by the examination essay.

The next set of studies – Townsend *et al.* (1993) and Drury and Webb (1991) – relate to the present study in that they touch on either both rhetorical features (introduction and conclusion) or one. Beyond this similarity is a key difference which relates specifically to the purpose of each study. The focus of Townsend *et al.* (1993) in turn is the psychology of the raters of the introductory and concluding paragraphs of the essays produced by students in a first-year course in Educational Psychology. Using two conclusions written by students to the same prompt, Drury and Webb (1991) focus on the conclusion, arguing that using appropriate lexico-grammatical features is necessary for students to demonstrate academic literacy in their sub-disciplinary communities. More importantly, their claim that an effective conclusion entails a summary of points that have already been discussed, while a less effective one deals with issues not directly discussed in the body such as making recommendations offers a challenge to the findings in the present research (see Section 8.2-8.6).

3.2.4   Studies conducted in Asia

Given the fact that English users in the Expanding and Outer Circles (Kachru, 1997), especially those in Asia, outnumber users in the Inner Circle (e.g. Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America), it is not surprising that more studies are reviewed in this section than in the previous three regions. These

studies of texts written by Asian students differ in terms of specific contexts, kinds of rhetorical features investigated, and key findings.

In terms of the context, most of the studies reviewed here involve Chinese, Japanese, and Indian students in a variety of contexts. The Chinese learners of English are from China (Qi, 1999; Hamp-Lyons & Zhang, 2001), Hong Kong (Allison & Cheung, 1991; Allison, 1992), and Singapore (Sumathi, 1993; Tan, 1993; Chan, 1994; Wu, 1997; Teng, 1998). Cornwall & McKay (2004) focus on Japanese students, while Lukmani (1994) deals with Indian students. Given the population distribution in Asia, the dominance of studies that concern Chinese learners of English is not surprising. However, the fact that only one study involving Indian students is represented in the review is surprising, given the demography of India and its status as a former British colony.

The specific rhetorical features investigated vary greatly from one study to another as a result of the different purposes of the researchers. The studies mentioned above either focus on both rhetorical features selected in the present study – introduction and conclusion – e.g. Allison & Cheung, 1991; Allison, 1992; Sumathi, 1993; Lukmani, 1994; Hamp-Lyons & Zhang, 2001; and Cornwall & McKay, 2004; or the introduction (Chan, 1994; Wu, 1997). Interestingly, there is no study that focuses on just the conclusion. Within these two broad categories of studies – those that focus on both the introduction and the conclusion and those that focus on the introduction – there are differing foci, as they all investigate these rhetorical units from different perspectives. In particular, Allison and Cheung's (1991) study occurs in the context of test validation, while Allison's (1992) next study lies within the domain of assessment. Allison's earlier

work, however, is similar to Teng's (1998) work insofar as they both identify features related to good and poor writing. Other studies such as Sumathi (1993), Tan (1993), Lukmani (1994), and Qi (1999) are highly descriptive in unearthing the rhetorical competence of the students involved. Wu (1997) and Cornwall & McKay (2004) on the other hand are pedagogically motivated, identifying rhetorical defects in students' texts as Swales (1990b) and Gupta (1995), reviewed in Section 3.2.1. Wu (1997), following Gupta (*ibid.*), explores the notion of disjointedness in a student's introduction, while Cornwall & McKay (2004) identify students' rhetorical incompetence as the inability to combine rhetorical patterns in order to cover topics adequately.

Turning to Teng (1998) and Hamp-Lyons & Zhang (2001), these studies differ from the other selected studies conducted among Asian students, although they have parallels to studies in other regions (see Sections 3.2.1, 3.2.2, and 3.2.3). Teng's (1998) study, similar to studies by Kroll (1990) and O'Brien (1995), examines whether students' rhetorical competence is a function of time, that is, whether examination essays or non-examination essays show better organizational features. Hamp-Lyons & Zhang (2001) in turn explore Chinese undergraduates' rhetorical competence (including introduction and conclusion) in relation to how they are perceived by raters of native and non-native background.

Findings from all these studies go in different directions ostensibly because of the different purposes driving them. Nonetheless, they individually and collectively anticipate possible findings in the present study. Five key findings are presented here:

1. Different rhetorical patterns are employed by American and Chinese learners of English, although the difference is not statistically salient (Qi, 1999).

2. Better rhetorical representations are found in non-stress essays (Teng, 1998).

3. Conclusions are absent in essays (Sumathi, 1993; Lukmani, 1994).

4. Explicit reader-awareness strategies are demonstrated in good essays (Allison, 1992; Chan, 1994).

5. Good essays evince an effective interaction of macro theme (introduction), hyper-theme (topic sentence), and clause themes (Teng, 1998).

3.2.5   *Studies conducted in the Middle East*

Textlinguistics and discourse analysis, far from being limited to research in America, Europe, Australia, and Asia, has over the past two decades gradually engaged the active interest of ESL/EFL researchers in the Middle East, leading to three lines of enquiry.

The first set of studies reviewed here consists of early ones in which Dudley-Evans and Swales (1980), Thompson-Panos and Thomas-Ruzic (1983), and Holes (1984) employ error analysis as a dominant approach in investigating student writing. The second set of studies, Al-Jubori (1984) and Johnstone (1991), essentially discusses repetition as a rhetorical device that contributes to the distinctiveness of texts written by Arab ESL students. A third group of studies (e.g. Doushaq, 1986; Khalil, 1989; Jafarpur, 1991; Sayed, 1997; and Halimah, 2001) attempts to break away from the second by extending the examination of rhetoric to other organizational features like introductions and conclusions, as done in the present study. While this emerging trend is welcome, most of these studies have been limited to EAP and similar programmes. Moreover, these

studies have often interpreted their findings through the lens of contrastive rhetoric. Given that the present study is not conducted within contrastive rhetoric, the studies by Doushaq (1986) and Sayed (1997) are not helpful. Neither are the studies by Khalil (1989) and Jafarpur (1991), which draw on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesive theory and Grice's (1975) maxims of relevance, quantity, and manner, respectively.

Halimah's (2001) study, however, is pertinent to the present research. In order to ascertain whether Kuwaiti students with eight and more years of English language instruction are still unable to write a coherent text, Halimah examines the texts of 100 native Arab speakers' in Writing for Science and Technology at a tertiary educational institution. The results showed that the students' writing samples were awkward when manipulating the rhetorical features of Writing for Science and Technology, thus confirming Halimah's fears. One notable finding relates to the use of a "considerable amount of flowery introductory information" (*ibid*.p.125). It remains to be seen whether Ghanaian undergraduates encounter similar difficulties when manipulating the rhetorical devices related to introductions in their disciplinary writing, as highlighted in Halimah's study. Having examined studies in the non-African context, I now turn to those studies involving students from Africa and more importantly Ghana.

3.2.6   Studies conducted in Africa

This review of relevant studies conducted in Africa consists of two parts: those in parts of Africa, excluding Ghana, and those in Ghana. The former studies on undergraduate writing are found in both the Outer and Expanding Circles (Kachru, 1997), with the former concentrating on students from Zimbabwe (Love, 1999), Botswana (Chimbganda,

2000), and South Africa (Starfield, 2004); and, the latter, on students from Tunisia (Ghrib, 2001), Senegal (Connor, 2003), and the Ivory Coast (Buell, 2004). The remainder of this sub-section is devoted to studies of undergraduate writing in Ghana, the research site of the present study.

Studies of the writing of African undergraduates have tended to move in three different directions, namely, contrastive rhetoric, description of student writing, and disciplinarity. The first set of studies includes Connor (2003) and Buell (2004), although it largely depends on contrastive rhetoric to explain the rhetorical practices of learners of English from Franco-phone West African countries. Located in ESL courses in universities in the United States, these two studies examine the introductions in student written assignments. But, Connor (2003) goes further to consider the conclusion segment as well. Moreover, she considers a greater number of students (22), whereas Buell deals with only one student, using a case study method. Among several findings, there is one particular finding common to the two studies of interest to the present study. Both studies suggest the influence of the students' indigenous languages (Ivorian and Senegalese), French, and their interlanguage of English on their writing in English. Not surprisingly, the rhetoric demonstrated in their introductory paragraphs deviates from the linear, logical, and writer-responsible type expected of English academic writing (for an exposition of English rhetoric, see Section 2.2.2).

The second group of studies (Love, 1999; Ghrib, 2001) is purely descriptive, relying solely on evidence from the empirical data, students' texts. In particular, Love's (1999) study conducted among first-year Sociology and Psychology Majors in a CS course at the University of Zimbabwe, focuses on reader orientation, examining lexico-

grammatical features such as sentence-initial prepositional phrases, adjuncts, and conjuncts. In this respect, Love (1999) shares some affinity with the study of initial clausal contextualizing elements considered as rhetorical elements in Hewings (1999) and North (2003). Ghrib's (2001) study differs from Love's (1999) study, by focusing on organizational features in 25 examination essays of third-year English majors who speak Tunisian Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, and French as well. Apart from suggesting that their poor writing results from poor logical reasoning and that bad textual organization placed second in order of the kind of the problems students faced, Ghrib (2001:256) comments that "some essays were so badly organized that they did not have any introduction, conclusion or clear-cut parts; others did not look like essays at all."

From the above discussion of the two lines of research on undergraduate writing, it appears that much attention has been paid to EAP-related writing, the exceptions being Chimbganda (2000) and Starfield (2004), who focus on Biology and Sociology respectively. Indeed, Chimbganda' study has a close affinity to the present study in terms of the genre (examination essays) and discipline (Biology) investigated. Specifically, Chimbganda examines the communication strategies of 40 ESL first-year BSc students of the University of Botswana in examination essays, recognizing the importance of coherence in a successful examination answer. However, as Chimbganda himself admits, the rhetorical features are only partially explored, given that more attention is paid to psycholinguistic processes seen as "risk–taking" strategies (macro structures such as restructuring the answer, organizing ideas, and recasting in a logical manner). Thus, the opportunity to compare findings of the present study with those in Chimbganda, also conducted in an English-medium university in Africa, is limited.

Drawing on an ethnographic study originally involving eleven students in a first-year Sociology course in an urban South African university, Starfield (2004) in turn reports on one student's coursework essay which is considered a "success". It is the comment on the introduction (which is the sole textual data located in the appendix) of this student as well as the fact that it deals with a disciplinary context that are of relevance to the present study. Starfield seems to agree with the marker of the Sociology student's work that the deployment of lexico-grammatical features such as complex nominalization, metatextual elements, impersonal tone, and the exclusion of first or second personal pronouns have contributed to its success. The challenge that this observation presents to the present work is the extent to which the Sociology introductions in the present research conform to this successful student's introduction.

With the review of studies in other African students done, I now turn to those empirical studies of undergraduate writing in the Ghana. Here, three key features can be noted. The first is that most of these textual studies have shown an overwhelming interest in sentence-level issues (e.g. Tandoh, 1987; Yankson, 1989). As far as I am aware, Tandoh's (1987) work constitutes the earliest major and systematic study into surface-level writing problems among undergraduates, using mainly essay-type assignments of first-year and final-year students of the University of Ghana. Tandoh concludes that the level of language skills among first-year undergraduates remained unchanged even after they had progressed to the final year; and, that if any improvement did occur at all it was only minimal, and not in any systematic manner. Despite Tandoh's preoccupation with local linguistic issues, her study is nonetheless valuable, documenting the written English of Ghanaian undergraduates.

This concern with sentence-level writing problems among undergraduates has also been at the core of more recent studies of undergraduate writing in disciplinary contexts such as, Classics, and Literary Studies, Phonology (Hyde, 1991; Dako, 1997; Anyidoho, 2002) as well as those conducted in a EAP-related context (Owusu-Ansah, 1992; Gogovi, 2001). Dako's (1997) main aim of examining "linguistic versatility" (that is, language competence at syntactic and lexical levels) in the examination essays of final-year undergraduate Literature students in the University of Ghana stops short of further exploring lexical repetition as a rhetorical device which could enhance the writing skills of students, given the purpose of her study.

The second line of investigation into Ghanaian undergraduate writing parallels studies by Ivanic (1998) and Cherry (1988) in which the writer's identity is examined through exploration of perspectives such as the autobiographical self, discoursal self, self as author, and possibilities of selfhood. This approach to investigating student writing in Ghana, though less popular, is highlighted in studies by Adika (1998) and Thompson (2003). Adika's (1998) study provides evidence through questionnaire and textual data on some Ghanaian undergraduates' uncritical voice, arguing that this could be attributed to a "do-not-question-authority" attitude. In contrast to this study is Thompson's (2003), which reports of a Ghanaian post-graduate student in an Australian university, who had drawn on the autobiographical, discoursal, and author selves to construct a highly sophisticated critical discourse.

The third line of enquiry into Ghanaian students' writing, as unpopular as the second one, is ironically the most relevant to the present study, focusing on global textual issues such as rhetorical organization, paragraphing, topic development, and information

structuring. Two pertinent studies are discussed: Adika (1999) and Appiah (2002). Using an integrative analytical framework based on problem-solution schema, theme-rheme structure, cohesion, and prediction, Adika (1999) identifies areas of rhetorical infelicity. For instance, concentrating on introductions, he observes weak handling of introductions, thematic progression, anaphoric reference, conjunctive relations and advance labelling. In a more recent study Appiah (2002), influenced by Adika's work, examines paragraph development in first-year university students' 1999/2000 CS essays in UCC, using an integrative framework consisting of unity, coherence, and discourse strategies. Appiah observes these discourse level problems: intrusion of ideas not identified in topic sentence, topic shift, infelicitous conclusions, and paragraph fragments. In particular, the observation that infelicitous conclusions result from completely new information, inability to use appropriate words to signal the beginning of closure, and confusion as to what should go into the content of conclusion may anticipate some of the findings in the present study.

To recap, the major studies into undergraduate writing in both Ghana and other parts of Africa have tended to focus on non-disciplinary contexts. Although studies have been conducted in disciplines such as Biology, History, English, and Philosophy, and Phonology, they have not been particularly interested in describing the distinctiveness of these disciplines, that is, their epistemological dispositions. Moreover, studies in Ghana have often been limited to sentence-level features.

3.3   Justification for Present Study

Weaving the two strands of studies in rhetorical features and disciplinary variation together, the present study is distinct in three important ways: the choice of students, the focus on rhetoric in undergraduate writing across three disciplines, and the distinctive analytical framework applied (see Section 2.1).

First, this study isolates examination writing by Ghanaian undergraduates as the object of investigation. Although numerous studies on rhetorical competence have studied ESL students, variously labelled as international students (Lawe-Davies, 1998) and EFL students (Sasaki, 2000; Kiany & Nejad, 2001), few studies have made particular reference to students from Ghana. The notable exceptions are Adika (1998), Appiah (2002), and Thompson (2003) which deal with rhetorical features in Ghanaian student writing, paying cursory attention to the two selected rhetorical features in the present study. The dearth of studies on the rhetorical features of Ghanaian undergraduate writing is considered as a serious and inadvertent omission in light of the importance of English in the educational, political, and economic life of Ghana.

Second, this study sets out to examine two rhetorical features in examination essays across three disciplines, namely English, Sociology, and Zoology. The numerous studies in disciplinary variation (e.g. Jolliffe & Brier, 1988; Shaw, 1992; and Hyland, 2001b, 2002b) have paid little attention to these two rhetorical units (the introduction and conclusion), although rhetoric is recognized by all as an important ingredient in effective academic writing. Few studies have systematically examined both rhetorical features together – introduction and conclusion – in undergraduate writing. Kusel (1992) is a notable exception. While Kusel's study examines introductions and conclusions in

academic essays across five subject departments, it is not situated in the examination essay genre as the present study is.

Finally, this study employs the Swalesian (1990a) rhetorical move analysis in academic writing. Interestingly, it has often been used in studies involving published writing; hardly has it been used to investigate examination essays at undergraduate level. (For a full discussion on justification for its use, see Section 2.1)

3.4   Chapter Conclusion

In Chapter Three, I reviewed relevant studies in disciplinary variation and rhetorical features, the two key variables in the present study, to establish the place of the present study within the existing literature. From the review of the literature, it would seem that both African and non-African scholars have paid minimal attention to rhetorical features in the writing of undergraduates in Africa in inter-disciplinary contexts. Specifically, very little is known about the introduction and the conclusion as utilized by Ghanaian undergraduates in their examination essays. Consequently, the case for the present study is explicitly stated on the basis of the distinctiveness of the rhetorical features studied, the analytical framework chosen, the participants involved, and the cross-disciplinary nature of the study. In the next chapter, I set the scene for the present study in terms of the national, institutional and disciplinary context.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

4.0   Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the studies on disciplinary variation and rhetorical features relevant to this study, making connections between past research and the goals of the present study. This chapter describes the context of this study, starting with the educational and language context (Section 4.1), before moving to the institutional context at the research site (Section 4.2), and even more specifically, the context of the three disciplines investigated in this study (Section 4.3).

4.1   Education and Language in Ghana

This section explores the educational terrain in Ghana (see map of Ghana in Appendix 8), focusing on the use of language, since this is the aspect of the cultural context which is most germane to this study. The motivation for such delineation is in tandem with current studies on student writing which seek to relate linguistic features to specific contextual variables (e.g. Johns, 1997; Samraj, 1994, 2002b).

A multilingual country (Boahene-Agbo, 1985), Ghana is surrounded by neighbouring Francophone West African countries, and has two main language groups: indigenous languages and other foreign languages such as English, Arabic, Hausa, and French (Bodomo, 1996; Obeng, 1997). English is of particular significance in the present study, given my focus on English rhetoric in university disciplinary communities. English

remains understandably unique among the other exoglossic languages (Arabic, Hausa, and French) in terms of its pervasive influence over the Ghanaian people, both historically and pragmatically. Historically, the English language in Ghana has been closely associated with the British colonial administration and missionary educators (Boadi, 1971; Spencer, 1971). Pragmatically, English has, also since colonial times, maintained its dominance in official domains, and education, in particular, (Dseagu, 1996; Sackey, 1997) to serve the practical needs of the country, both internally as a lingua franca for interethnic communication and externally as a language for international affairs.

With respect to the use of English in multilingual Ghana, two key linguistic outcomes need to be mentioned: English-Ghanaian language bilingualism (Anglo-vernacular) and Pidgin English. The former is a resultant description of the contact between one or two indigenous languages in Ghana and English. Owusu-Ansah (1992) has drawn attention to another incipient form of bilingualism, *viz.*, Ghanaian language-Ghanaian language bilingualism. In general, the English-vernacular form of bilingualism in Ghana is often identified with code-mixing (Forson, 1988; Tortor, 2000), a widespread linguistic behaviour among educated Ghanaians.

The second feature of the contact of languages in Ghana, Pidgin English, is widely used in the armed forces, the police and educational institutions throughout the country (Amoako, 1992; Huber, 1995), though it is denigrated and held accountable for the perceived falling standards in English in educational institutions (Owusu-Ansah, 1992). Moreover, given its wide-spread use as a solidarity marker among Ghanaian students, especially, in secondary schools (Forson, 1996) and tertiary institutions

(Tawiah, 1998), the notion of Pidgin English as a handicap variety (Bruthiaux, 1996) and a trade language (Romaine, 1988) seems not only implausible but also anachronistic.

Despite the existence of indigenous and other foreign languages together with Pidgins, English remains a towering official language over all the others, including indigenous languages. This linguistic context in Ghana thus 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. In no aspect of the national life of Ghana is the dominance of English more significant than in education as outlined in the national language policy (Apronti, 1974a, 1974b; Sackey, 1997; Owusu-Ansah, 1998). This is reflected in three key practical and varied ways.

Firstly, English is the medium of instruction at all levels of education – primary, secondary, and tertiary – although French is increasingly being given a place in the curriculum, starting from primary school. (The importance being given to French stems from the fact that Ghana is surrounded by French-speaking countries.) Moreover, in pre-school education (Ghanaian kindergartens) teachers routinely conduct their classes in English, though in the view of Matiki (2001), the role of pre-schools is basically to encourage young children to develop their psycho-motor skills and social behaviour. Many parents in Ghana send their children to English-medium kindergartens in order to give children ostensibly a head-start in English (Sackey, 1997; Owusu-Ansah, 1998).

Secondly, the influence of English on the educational system in Ghana is reflected in its being a school subject. From primary school to junior and secondary school, English is taught as a core subject. This is meant to assist students in studying other subjects which are taught using the English language. The English language (called

CS in the university) remains a compulsory subject for all first-year undergraduates in Ghanaian universities and other tertiary institutions. Students may also study English as an elective in secondary schools or universities either as a requirement, out of interest or because of the positive impact it may have on their career objective.

Finally, the hold of English on the Ghanaian school system is evidenced in national examinations. Ghana has two national public examinations – one at the end of junior secondary school and another at the other end of senior secondary school – as shown in Fig 4.1. A new proposed structure of education for Ghana, as embodied in a government White paper, is to commence in 2007. Both national examinations require that a candidate pass English. Moreover, English together with Maths and Science must be one of the subjects passed for a candidate to qualify for a certificate and advance to the next level of education. In other words, students who excel in all other subjects but fail the English paper are deemed to have failed, and cannot obtain a certificate. Also, Ghanaian universities insist on a student passing CS, or similar subjects, before being awarded a degree, as in many English-medium universities world-wide.

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   │Entry at 6   │ ───► │Entry at 15  │ ───► │Entry at 18  │
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   │terminal and │      │terminal     │      │above        │
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   │             │      │SCHOOL       │      │             │
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Number of Years = 9
Primary = 6
Junior Secondary = 3

Number of years = 3

Post-secondary institutions: technical vocational

Total number of Years = 3 or 4

National examination (BECE) by WAEC

National Examination (SSCE) by WAEC

End-of-Semester examination

Figure 4.1: Structure of Ghana's Educational System

BECE: Basic Education Certificate Examination
SSCE: Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination
WAEC: West African Examinations Council

4.2   Institutional Context

The delineation of the institutional context in this section takes into account three factors: the choice of UCC, its mission, organizational/social units, and an institutional requirement which relates to writing in the university.

The choice of UCC as the institutional context for the present study is underpinned by two reasons. First, UCC has not benefited from any major research activities into the written products of its undergraduates and graduate students, the exceptions being Yankson (1989), Gogovi (2001), and Appiah (2002). Thus, the choice of UCC attempts to fill a gap, and to subsequently widen the coverage of studies on undergraduate writing in Ghanaian universities. The second reason is that with my status as a member of this community, I could draw on the benefits of being an "insider" in accessing vital documents which are likely to be kept from "outsiders". It is worth noting that located in Cape Coast, a former capital town of Ghana during British rule, UCC is one of the five public universities that Ghanaian students from senior secondary schools aspire to enter. Until recently, UCC used to be the only public university that trained teachers for the country's secondary and training colleges; it now shares that responsibility with the University of Education of Winneba. To gain admission into UCC, prospective students have to meet the entry requirements of, at least, passes in Mathematics, Science, and English.

Consistent with the overall framework for this study which is basically derived from social constructionism, UCC is considered primarily as a social unit, revolving around academic matters or rather tertiary literacy. Academic activities – teaching, learning, and research – take place in five broad administrative units, or, faculties:

Education, Arts, Social Science, Science, and Agriculture. These activities revolve around two important groups, students and faculty, who feature in the present study. Based on *Basic Statistics* (2003a), a small handbook that contains the statistics on both students and faculty, Table 4.1 displays the distribution of these two distinct groups from whom my primary and secondary data are obtained.

Table 4.1 Distribution of Undergraduates and Lecturers

Faculty	Gender	Undergraduates	Lecturers
Agriculture	Male	747	34
	Female	104	3
	Total	851	37
Arts	Male	343	53
	Female	325	3
	Total	668	56
Education	Male	3391	70
	Female	1712	14
	Total	5103	84
Science	Male	948	54
	Female	333	3
	Total	1281	57
Social Sciences	Male	1989	53
	Female	784	7
	Total	2773	60
Total	Male	7418	264
	Female	3258	30
	Total	10676	294

Source: (*Basic Statistics* 2003)

As shown in Table 4.1, the Faculty of Education has the greatest number of undergraduates (5103), followed by the Faculty of Social Sciences (2773). The Faculty of Arts has the smallest number of students (668). With respect to the teaching staff, similarly, the Faculty of Education has the greatest number (84) out of a teaching staff of 294 at UCC, with the smallest number of lecturers present in the Faculty of Agriculture

(34). The huge numbers of both students and lecturers in the Faculty of Education can be attributed to a national policy which makes UCC partially responsible for the training of teachers for the nation's junior and senior secondary schools as well as training colleges.

The five faculties have departments, administrative units, through which various undergraduate and graduate programmes are offered. These programmes involve various disciplines, three of which (English, Sociology, and Zoology) are contextualized in Section 4.3 to reflect the traditional broad disciplinary divisions, namely, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Science. The choice of faculties was not influenced by the number of students or faculty or by the popularity of a faculty, but by the research questions of the present study.

At this point, the CS course need to be described, given that it is an institutional requirement as well as its potential relationship with writing in other disciplines. Communicative Skills in UCC is three-dimensional, emphasizing remediation, study skills and writing skills, as I learnt from the course coordinator (Gogovi, 2003). These aspects largely dictate the curriculum, as briefly outlined below:

- Note-taking and note-making (from lectures, textbooks; outlining)
- Reading (skimming, scanning, summarizing, etc.)
- Conventions of usage (spelling, grammar, punctuation, documentation, etc)
- Writing (sentence patterns, clause patterns, paragraphs, types of essays, introduction, body, and conclusion).

Related to the curriculum of CS are issues such as the teaching staff, allocation of credit hours and writing guides. At UCC, CS is taught over two semesters as a three-credit hour course by faculty, especially those with a flair for language; in other words,

the teaching of CS is not restricted to the English department lecturers or those with a Linguistics background. While the first semester is devoted to the micro-aspects of writing and study skills, the second semester engages with the macro-aspects of writing and more practice exercises. Teaching and learning is facilitated by handouts produced by the Course Coordinator's office as well as writing guides, the most popular with students being Opoku Agyeman's (1998) *A Handbook for Writing Skills.*

4.3   Disciplinary Context

Each discipline chosen for this study – English, Sociology, and Zoology – has a distinctive epistemological disposition and rhetoric. In order to understand how students master the rhetoric appropriate to their disciplines, there is the need to provide vignettes of these disciplinary contexts along four parameters: mission of the department, course content, method of learning and teaching, and the role of writing.

4.3.1   English: Introduction to Literature (IL)

The objective of the Department of English at UCC is to provide a broad-based education in language and literature in order to equip graduates to use the English Language competently and to develop an informed approach to analyzing discourse, texts. Within this broad objective, the department is guided by a long term vision of producing graduates (a) who will be adequately prepared to face the challenges of the modern workplace (b) who will be sought by graduate schools, both internally and externally and (c) who can fill positions in academic departments in universities and colleges at home and abroad (*English Courses,* a handbook for the department).

In furtherance of this mission, the Department of English also offers Proficiency English Certificate which is targeted at students with different linguistic backgrounds from the surrounding francophone countries in the sub-region, who require English in order to commence various academic programmes at UCC. A number of courses, both core and elective, are mounted for undergraduates. These include *The Use of English (Eng 101), The Language of Drama (Eng 211), English in Multilingual Contexts (Eng 303),* and *History of English (Eng 404).* After their undergraduate course, the B.A (Honours) students are encouraged to pursue the MPhil course, with a specialization in either Linguistics or Literature.

One of the courses in the second year – *Introduction to Literature* (*Eng 211A*) – was selected for the present study. As I learnt from the handouts obtained from the department and interactions with students and faculty, this course seeks to introduce students to the fundamental literary tools in poetry to enable them to respond personally to poetic texts. Important aspects of this course include various forms of poetry; how to identify the theme/themes in a poem; aspects of language in poetry such as irony, metaphor, personification, allusion, and other tropes; point of view; tone; mood; and form. Students are shown how these literary devices can be applied to specific poems selected from Africa, Europe, the United States of America, and Commonwealth countries.

The predominant mode of teaching in *Introduction to Literature (IL)*, as I found out from students and lecturers and my observation of a few teaching sessions, is lecturing, although attention is also paid to discussion and peer activity in tutorial sessions. The tutorial system is utilized by the subject teachers to reinforce what has been

taught in a lecture. Evaluation of student writing is based upon the critical appreciation of literary texts, that is, assessment of students' private act of reading a literary text through their ability to recast it in writing, interpreting, and reflecting on it.

Thus, through the method of delivery adopted in the *IL* course, students not only acquire the concepts and skills of literary criticism, but in consonance with studies on the teaching and learning of Literary Studies (Herrington, 1988; Wilder, 2002) as well as the use of Literature in an ESL classroom (Kim, 2004), the onus is on students to offer a personal response, interpretation of meaning and technique, general evaluation of the text under consideration, and a comment on the critical approach. As done elsewhere, undergraduates in the Department of English in UCC learn a characteristic mode of thinking about literature as they read: literary response is supposed to begin in an inherently personal act; but at the same time it must stimulate the development of thought about the literary text/s.

One salient way by which students demonstrate understanding of the Literature course is through writing. Writing in the undergraduate Literature class in UCC is closely tied to the analytic mode of learning and, following Britton (1978), tends to have expressive, transactional, and poetic functions. Elbow (1981) advocates that the expressive function be mediated through the use of journals as this has the potential, as a useful pre-writing activity and an instructional tool, to develop what might be termed analytical thought. But this expressive function is not often exploited in the *IL* course in UCC, as I learnt from both students and their subject teachers. As the expressive function demands a closer and one-on-one relationship between a student and the lecturer, it was not found to be practicable, given the teaching load of lecturers.

In engaging in analytical writing, Literature students are obliged to maintain the integrity of their response against the demands of communication with an audience, either other students in a tutorial or the teacher. Clearly, this aspect of writing grows out of both a breadth of acquaintance with literature and an understanding of the creative process of writing poetry. The transactional value of the writing in the *IL* curriculum further recognizes the salience of writing and thinking as basic intellectual activities. In support of the major insistence of the transactional function in Literature classes is a wider study conducted in the UK (Lea & Street, 1999), which also notes the primary responsibility of the Department of English as the facilitation and development of students' critical, conceptual, and organizational abilities. However, the poetic aspect which enjoins second-year undergraduates to explore Literature through creation of literary discourse is not vigorously pursued in the Department of English at UCC.

As a corollary of the above, writing essays tends to be an essential aspect of the assessment of students' understanding of the Literature course. In both take-home and examination assignments, essays of at least two pages (A 4) are expected from students in order to demonstrate understanding of the literary tools they have been exposed to as well as writing skills.

4.3.2   Sociology: Family and Socialization (FS)

The second department to be described is Sociology. In general, the curriculum of Sociology is built around a series of highly structured and specialized courses, which go beyond mere sociological content. At UCC, apart from students in the Department of Sociology offering a major in Sociology, students not in the Social Sciences can also take

a minor in applied Sociology to enhance knowledge of their own field and to ostensibly improve their employability on graduation.

The variety of compartments of knowledge and the sub-fields of Sociology are actualized in the different courses taught at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. These generally offer differing theoretical perspectives, which arise out of different assumptions about social processes. Some of the courses offered at the undergraduate level include *Introduction to Sociology (Soc 101)*, *Social Statistics (Soc 211)*, *Sociology of Development (Soc 303)*, and *Sociology of Religion (Soc 418).* Graduate courses with an increased specialization in some aspects of the undergraduate courses, depending on availability of expertise, are also offered.

As in *IL,* with the help of faculty, an introductory course – *Family and Socialization (FS)* – was selected from the list of second-year undergraduate courses on two grounds. First, it was a core course. Second, it required students to write essays, a point that needed to be taken into account, given this study's focus on writing. Proceeding from the viewpoint that the family is one of the oldest social institutions, this course aims at familiarizing undergraduates with the meaning of a family from the traditional and the modern or rather postmodern perspectives, and the implications each definition has for the individual members, the family, the community, and the nation at large. A second line of approach which this course takes is the concept of marriage as an agent of socialization. Issues such as pre-marriage stages such as puberty, friendship, and courtship for both sexes are explored. The consummation of marriage, types of marriage, the role of the husband and wife and children especially in postmodern Ghana, and problems in and out of marriage are also explored.

Like their counterparts in *IL,* teachers of *FS,* as I learnt from the Head of Department and lecturers in informal interactions, mainly utilize the traditional lecture as their mode of teaching. Depending on the personal pedagogical orientation of the teacher, varied methods of teaching that emphasize the role of collaborative work or peer work, discussion, the library and internet are also used. In addition, teachers of *FS* initially spend a lot of time espousing a matrix of theories, concepts and empirical studies to junior undergraduates.

For their part, students have the onerous task of mastering the content and working with it. Studying *FS* involves internalizing concepts as well as adopting a disciplinary ethos necessary for effective understanding of the content. Working with the content of sociological knowledge is often challenging as students in the Department of Sociology in UCC are expected to go beyond their egocentric perspectives and take a new perspective, that is, adopt a new view of reality. This is where analysis of sociological knowledge becomes crucial. In a way, Sociology is similar to Zoology (refer to its characterization in Section 4.3.3) as it has a laboratory component where students are assisted to make a shift from the personal to the sociological perspective, guided in learning the nature of analysis and helped to see the direct application of their learning (Williamson, 1988). *Family and Socialization* also involves students making extensive use of observation of various aspects of the socialization process and, in some cases, drawing on personal experiences, either of the students themselves or those observed to generate explanations of why something happened.

The function of writing in *FS* then is more like that of *IL* than *Cell and Tissue Organization* (*CTO*), as I gathered from the students and their subject teachers. This is

manifest in varied ways. Writing in the Sociology curriculum is meant to facilitate intellectual growth, in general. To demonstrate that a student has moved from a personalized perspective to a sociological perspective as demanded by the discipline, a student employs extended writing. However, the specific function of writing differs from one course lecturer to another. While one lecturer may assist students in acquiring the complex perspective of Sociology by using journal writing, which is expressive, another might emphasize the use of field notes; and yet, others may encourage the use of analytical thinking through case studies. In general, insofar as both English and Sociology encourage standing away from the body of facts learnt and taking a "hard look" and evaluating them, they could be said to converge.

Like the English students, students in *FS* are often called upon to write essays under the stress of timed conditions and less stressful circumstances as homework. As part of the assessment procedure at the beginning of the semester, students are sometimes asked to demonstrate their understanding of basic sociological terms and key authorities in the form of short notes, which the Literature students are rarely asked to.

4.3.3   Zoology: Cell and Tissue Organization (CTO)

The third department in this study is Zoology, one of five (the other sciences in this faculty include Botany, Chemistry, Physics, and Mathematics) in the Faculty of Science. Over the years, the Department of Zoology has aimed at providing the Zoology component of the training of (a) graduate teachers for secondary schools and (b) biologists for industry, research institutions and academia. Currently, the Department of Zoology has the enviable record of having produced all the full-time academic staff in the

department. Its vision is to grow into a School of Biological Sciences by merging with the department of Botany to become a centre of excellence to produce human and material resources in Biology for the education sector, industry, research institutions and the universities (*Vice-Chancellor's Annual Report*, 2003).

The departmental activities, as in any university, include mainly teaching and research. Teaching is done at both undergraduate and post-graduate levels, while staff research covers supervision of students' research work as well as individual/group research. Among some of the courses taught at the undergraduate level are *Genetics and Evolution (Bio 103), General Entomology (Zoo 204), Aquatic Ecology (Zoo 302), and Wildlife Management and Conservation (Zoo 408).* A number of postgraduate courses are also offered.

Among the second-year courses, *Cell Tissue Organization* (*CTO*) was selected on account of the claim by both students and lecturers that much writing is required in this course, relative to other Zoology courses. The teaching and learning of this Zoology course involves lecturing, the making of class notes, and the use of textbooks. Both lecturers and students in the Zoology department indicated the centrality of lecturing in facilitating learning, although there are differences in lecturing style. There is no question about the teacher's role in fostering the use of the spoken language through discussion of matters arising in the textbooks. Also important, as in most courses in UCC, were tutorials, which were seen as a way of reinforcing content, rather than introducing new concepts, as in English and Sociology.

For their part, students are expected to make their own notes with the help of lecture notes and references. This is important for the undergraduate of *CTO,* who must

acquire analytic skills in dealing with a body of facts concerning organelles, etc., and be able to memorize facts that have been accumulated by the discipline over the years. Apart from mastering facts in Zoology, the second type of learning identified by the lecturers interviewed is the laboratory experience, or the hands-on approach. Laboratory work is intended to teach students specific information and to offer students the opportunity to practice as zoologists. It is in the laboratories that undergraduates are given a graphic demonstration of biological concepts as they come face-to-face with live organisms and their visual representations.

Generally, the zoologists interviewed in this study do not see knowledge of Zoology and laboratory skills as separable from students' ability to write. But, as I observed, *CTO* writing seems to have a reporting function for junior undergraduates in that they have to follow a predetermined form to report the results of their work to the lecturer. Such a report is expected to demonstrate strong laboratory technique, logical reasoning, and mastery of the material. As novices, Zoology undergraduates are expected to show through their writing that they are on the way to demonstrating the rhetorical features typical of writing in the department. Students' mastery of both content and rhetoric is tested by objective means – a hands-on approach in the laboratory as well as writing with examination questions mainly consisting of short notes, fill-in, multiple choice, and sometimes essays – at the junior undergraduate level, given the class size.

The above characterization of the three disciplines, specifically, the three courses – *Introduction to Literature, Family and Socialization,* and *Cells and Tissue Organization* – evince both similarities and differences. While the similarities in the way teachers present content and use tutorials to supplement lectures would appear to be

obvious and in line with tertiary literacy practices elsewhere, the differences are apparent in terms of departmental objectives, lecturing styles, the extent of the use of writing tasks, the kind of written assignments set, and modes of assessment noted by Neumann (2001). This is as revealing as it is preparatory for the subject matter of the next chapter.

4.4   Chapter Conclusion

In Chapter Four, I discussed a key aspect of the research: the setting. This chapter has set the scene for the conduct of the entire study by describing the national, institutional, and disciplinary setting in order to draw attention to the distinctiveness of the study, since most of the major studies conducted on disciplinary variation by discourse analysts and applied linguists have ignored second language users of English in this part of the English-speaking world. The next chapter lays out the methodological procedures adopted for the entire research.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.0   Introduction

Given the descriptive and exploratory nature of this study, aimed at investigating the interface between disciplinary variation and rhetorical features, a qualitative research design was deemed pertinent. An interpretive research paradigm not only permits isolation and description of the rhetorical features exploited by the second-year undergraduates in the three disciplines, but it also enables this research to benefit from the views obtained from interviews and questionnaire administered to faculty and students at the research site. Three stages were mapped out for the entire study: pre-field work (see Section 5.1), data collection (Section 5.2), and post-collection (Section 5.3). The most salient part of this chapter, however, is Section 5.4, which outlines the steps taken towards labelling the moves in the introduction and the conclusion of the students' examination essays.

5.1   Pre-field Work

The pre-field work covered two main activities: a preliminary survey of the research site and the construction of the secondary research instruments, *viz.* the interview with faculty and students and questionnaire for faculty.

A close survey of three departments – English, Sociology, and Zoology – by interacting with their members (students, lecturers, and non-teaching staff) was undertaken and samples of written assignments collected. The second essential activity

prior to the fieldwork was the construction of research instruments, the interview schedules and questionnaire, which were challenging since I had not designed anything similar before. In respect of the questionnaire, insights from De Vaus (2002) were found useful. Specifically, De Vaus' (*ibid*) suggestion of six logical steps in constructing questionnaires, namely, taking note of the research questions, the wording, selection of question types, evaluating the questions, considering the layout, and setting it up for coding, was considered and applied.

These two key activities – preliminary survey and the construction of the research instruments – enabled me to be intellectually prepared to undertake the field work. In particular, the initial survey of the research site afforded me the opportunity to learn more about the hierarchical structures in the three sub-disciplinary communities, and to identify prospective research assistants. It became evident to me that undertaking research in a site that I was already familiar with could nevertheless offer formidable challenges in terms of gaining entry into departments (Sociology and Zoology) where I was likely to be considered an outsider.

5.2   Field Work

Three issues were pivotal in the field work: sampling of participants and texts, doing a pilot study, and collecting the actual data.

5.2.1   *Sampling of Participants and Texts*

The participants in this study include second-year undergraduates and lecturers at UCC from the faculties of Arts, Social Sciences, and Science, including heads of department

and deans respectively. According to *Basic Statistics* (2003a), a handy document that gives quick statistical information about members of the university, the undergraduate population was 10,676 strong with a male: female ratio of 7:3. The total academic staff population was 294 with a male: female ratio of 9:1, an even more disproportionate gender ratio than the undergraduate population. (This broad ratio, however, differs from one faculty to another.) From this population, 45 students and 34 lecturers were selected as research participants for the main study.

Three main sampling methods – purposive (non-probability), stratified, and random sampling – were employed at different stages of the study to obtain the required data. Through purposive sampling three faculties – Arts/Humanities, Social Sciences, and Science from a total of five faculties – were selected. (The two non-participating faculties were Education and Agriculture.) Utilizing this sampling procedure enabled quick access to the research participants as there was a time constraint of the entire research for data collection. A second reason for the choice of purposive sampling was its potential in achieving the research purpose; random sampling might have resulted in settling on faculties that would not have helped in dealing with the specific research questions explored in this study (see Section 1.3 for the statement of the research questions driving this study).

Thereafter to select the specific number of examination scripts, students, and lecturers for the study, the stratified sampling method was used. Both sampling modes – purposive and stratified – were crucial in ensuring that the questions for which the study sought answers were adequately answered by the targeted respondents. However, since the choice of stratified quota sampling tends to deny a study of its representativeness,

gender as a variable was factored into the selection of students. Given, for instance, the relatively fewer number of female students at UCC, a conscious attempt was made to obtain roughly equal gender representation in the sample.

To select prospective interviewees among the population of undergraduates, with the permission of the course lecturers, willing second-year undergraduates in the three selected departments were requested to put down their names on sheets of paper provided during lectures. Two lists, one for female students and one for male students, were drawn for each selected department. Every nth student was selected from each list, depending on the total number of students who had expressed willingness to participate in the study. Going by these lists, 8 male students and 7 female students were selected to form a sample of 15 students for each of the three departments. Insofar as the present study represents a descriptive and exploratory study, this self-selecting sample of three groups of students were both deemed to be appropriate in providing data that could be pursued in future studies and in line with the need for research participants' consent in research.

Unlike the selection of student interviewees, that of lecturers was done according to the quota (22) decided on as appropriate for the administering of the questionnaire and availability of the lecturers at the time of the research. It was difficult to hold gender as a constant variable for the selection of questionnaire respondents among lecturers in the three departments. For instance, in the population as a whole, the Department of English and Department of Zoology had only one female lecturer each, and the Department of Sociology had only two female lecturers. Apart from the students and lecturers, the main participants in the study, the departmental administrative clerks and research assistants also played crucial roles. The administrative clerks in the three departments were very

helpful during the pilot and main studies, as they facilitated my access to both research participants and the examination scripts, while the research assistants' input was invaluable during the post-collection activity.

The same purposive sampling method was adopted in selecting examination scripts to gain quick access to the texts and the promise they held for answering the specific research questions investigated in this study. The examination scripts were obtained, revealing the following distribution: *Introduction to Literature (IL)*: 125; *Family and Socialization (FS)*: 145; and *Cell and Tissue Organization (CTO)*: 83. As there were no compulsory essay examination questions and students had answered different questions, I had to go through all the scripts to discover which essay questions students had answered. As a fairly reasonable sample for analysis, sixty scripts from each of the three courses were selected. Thus, given the difficulty with which the essays were selected, the selection was influenced by the number agreed to be sufficient for the analysis as well as the extent to which they matched with the definition of an essay.

5.2.2   Collection of Data

The second major stage of the study was the actual data collection during the pilot and main studies. The pilot study commenced on 6 January 2003 and ended on 8 March 2003. The research site – UCC – was on recess during the aforementioned period. So, the period was used to make initial contacts, identify the departmental administrative clerks, book appointments, and send reminders. Two of the three research instruments – interview, and questionnaire – were piloted; and a preliminary analysis of a sample of 60 examination essays from the English, Sociology, and Zoology departments was

conducted. Questionnaires were administered to 10 lecturers and interviews conducted with 5 lecturers and 15 students from all three faculties.

Piloting the two secondary research instruments – interview and questionnaire – and conducting a preliminary analysis of a sample of the textual data was useful to varying degrees. For the textual analysis, it was clear that assistance for coding and identifying moves in the rhetorical features needed to be sought in the main study. The interview schedule also provided information on the effectiveness of the language and the substance of the questions I had used, the overall duration of the interview, how the introduction to the study worked, participants' responses to the style I adopted, and the management of the recording equipment and material recorded. Further, piloting the questionnaire items revealed the strengths and weaknesses of some of the items, leading to deletion, addition, and reformulation of some items.

The data collection for the main study commenced on 9 March 2003 and ended on 25 May 2003. The main instrument, the written examination essays, was collected, while the secondary instruments, interviews and questionnaires, were administered. I also observed five teaching and learning sessions each in the three courses and obtained ancillary written materials such as course handouts, lecture notes, and course descriptions in order to obtain first-hand experience of their respective disciplinarization and to characterize the three disciplinary contexts as outlined in Sections 4.3.1- 4.3.3.

This section focuses on the textual data for the main study. The textual data for the main study are of two kinds: primary and secondary. The former comprised 180 examination answer scripts and the latter, six examination prompts (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Distribution of Essays According to Disciplines and Examination Prompts

Examination Prompts	English Essays	Sociology Essays	Zoology Essays	Total
Prompt 1	30	30	30	90
Prompt 2	30	30	30	90
Total	60	60	60	180

In general, the primary texts shared two features. First, they were selected from the 2001/2002 academic year at Level 200, second-year undergraduates. Second, the texts were examination essays in a two-hour paper, though it was not certain whether students accorded each answer the same amount of time as there was no instruction to that effect. Two essays were required to be written in each paper, although the total number of examination prompts set was different in each paper. The *IL* paper had four essay questions, *FS* 5, and *CTO a* compulsory section of 20 multiple-choice and one-sentence answers, and a second section with two essay questions, only one of which was to be selected. Moreover, no compulsory questions were set in either *IL* or *FS*.

The examination prompts shown in Figure 5.1 represent those answered by the majority of students.

Disciplines	Examination Prompts	Wording
English	EEP 1	Identify and explain the significance of any three literary devices used in Jared Angira's 'No Coffin No Grave'
	EEP2	With reference to any two sonnets comment on the significance and structure of the sonnet
Sociology	SEP 1	Examine some of the circumstances that normally give rise to marital violence.
	SEP 2	Examine any five sexual paraphelia (abnormalities) and show how these impact negatively on marriage
Zoology	ZEP 1	Discuss the structure and functions of bone
	ZEP 2	Distinguish between the processes of diffusion and osmosis

Figure 5.1 Essay Prompts in the Disciplinary Texts

Besides the textual data (examination prompts and essay scripts), a self-designed questionnaire was constructed to elicit lecturers' insights on undergraduate writing. (See Appendix 6 for the questionnaire comprising 24 items, divided into three sections: background information of respondent, the respondent's linguistic awareness, and the lecturer's response to students' writing). The questionnaire items comprised 21 multiple-choice questions and 3 open-ended questions. The inclusion of the open-response category was to enable respondents to express themselves without the constraint of predetermined answers. The main drawback, however, in incorporating open responses, as Churton (2000) states, is that the questionnaire becomes harder to analyze, especially with the computer. Fortunately, since the open-answer categories were few, they were not expected to be problematic.

Three issues need to be emphasized at this point, the first of which also holds true for the interviews. First, the questionnaire data, as hinted earlier, were only meant to be supplementary, providing background information usefully related to the results of the textual analysis (Chapters 6-8). Second, the questionnaire, rather than the interview, was

designed for the lecturers in the three selected departments on account of my earlier experience during the pilot study where lecturers were simply not available for interview, even when appointments had been booked. So, questionnaires enclosed in self-addressed envelopes were distributed on a one-on-one basis to all the participating lecturers to facilitate their easy return. Frequent visits to faculty paid off in some cases as I had the opportunity to clarify some issues, replace misplaced questionnaires, and personally collect the completed questionnaires, thus increasing the response rate. For the response rate of and demographic data of questionnaire respondents, see Appendices 2.1 and 2.2 respectively.

The semi-structured interview (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Gray, 2004) was utilized in this study as it allowed flexibility and a sense of direction for research. (See Appendices 5.1-5.3 for interview schedules). It was structured to the extent that all the two groups of interviewees – deans, heads of department, and course lecturers as well as second-year undergraduates – were given questions in the same order, and under the same conditions; it was unstructured to the extent that I was free to probe and explore in depth the participants' responses to each of the questions. Thus, the unstructured component of the interview in this study permitted the use of open-ended prompts related to research objectives and follow-up probes to interesting preliminary observations, providing, as Hyland (2000: 138) puts it, "an understanding of how insiders view their literacy practices and how they see their participation in their disciplines".

Interviewees for this study comprised three main groups: 45 second-year undergraduates (15 from each of the three selected departments); six faculty members who were both administrators and lecturers (two from each faculty – that is, the head of

department, and the dean) and six other faculty members (two subject teachers from each of the three selected departments who were the course lecturers for *IL*, *FS*, and *CTO* respectively). For the profile of the three groups of interviewees, see tables in Appendices 2.3-2.6. Given that the deans and head of departments had oversight of the faculties, they were expected to have information that would enrich the information provided by their colleagues who are closer to the undergraduates. The second-year undergraduates were likewise expected to provide information from their perspective and thereby either corroborate or disconfirm the response from their lecturers and deans. Since random sampling could not be used, the selection of interviewees was to have taken age and gender into account. But it was not possible always to have a female participant for each group of interviewees, especially among faculty, given the gender disparity in the population at large, as indicated in Table 4.1.

Because different groups of interviewees were involved, different sets of questions were designed. The interview schedule for the heads of department and deans of faculty focused on students' writing in the departments/faculties and, more specifically, their observations on the quality of students' examination essays, evaluation, and expectations of the students. In contrast, the substance of the interview with the course teachers (who were also the examination setters for *IL*, *FS*, and *CTO*) dwelt on the nature of the course from which the scripts for the eventual textual analysis were selected; the teaching and learning of this particular course; the importance of writing in the course; and an idea of the teacher's expectations of the answers to the examination prompts. Interviews with students in turn focused on their use of language in their

discipline, the teaching and learning on the courses in question, their awareness of disciplinary differentiation, and their perceptions of the quality of their writing.

Apart from the question types, the interviewer plays an integral role in administering the interviews, given that the disposition of the interviewer can affect the kind of responses given, as argued by Arksey & Knight (1999) and Gray (2004). The suggestion of Bouma & Ling (2004) to display a judicious blend of detachment and interest was applied in the study, therefore. Throughout the interviews, which was administered single handedly, I cast myself in the role of detached listener, as suggested in the literature (e.g. Gersona & Horowitz, 2002) by not giving evidence that I had been affected by the responses of the interviewees. But, as an interested listener (Gray, 2004), I also attempted to demonstrate the capacity to empathize with statements made in the interview.

Administering the actual interview took account of the venue, duration of the interview, and taping of the interview sessions. In general, taking cognizance of the interviewees' feelings and private schedules, I interviewed the second-year undergraduates in a colleague's vacant office (as the colleague was on sabbatical leave), while interviews with faculty took place in their offices. The interview with each student lasted 25 minutes on average and that with faculty, an average of 40 minutes. All interviews were taped with the participants' knowledge using a Sony Walkman recorder so that the actual language used and the degree of conviction expressed through intonation could be checked.

In addition to the interview and questionnaire, the third research tool used in the present study was observation (participatory and non-participatory) of classroom

interaction in the various content areas. Such a tool required a systematic process of observation with the help of an observation checklist and field notes. The observation proved useful as it potentially suggests probes (Erlandson *et al.,* 1993) for the interview. The observation of the three courses was done before the administering of interview and questionnaire in this study.

All in all, the various stages of data collection with respect to the three instruments were painstakingly followed through and a follow-up mechanism instituted to obtain optimum results.

5.3   Post-field Activities

Two key activities constituted the post-data collection stage: orientation sessions for the research assistants and the analysis of the collected data. For practical reasons, the orientation sessions were undertaken at different times in Ghana and Singapore.

5.3.1   Orientation of Research Assistants in Ghana

The first orientation conducted in Ghana on 10 and 11 March 2003 involved two research assistants, who had completed their MPhil in English at UCC and were teaching CS. The choice of research assistants took into account their competence, interest, and availability. Fortunately, they shared a common office and had similar schedules. And, as inclusion in the research team did not have any substantial financial reward attached to it, it was important that the research assistants demonstrated commitment.

This first orientation session had three purposes: (a) to orientate the research assistants to the background of the research, (b) to outline the main task for the research –

identifying the rhetorical units (introduction and conclusion), and (c) to train the research assistants in identifying the introductions and conclusions and coding the essays for the T-units. The first session on the first day lasted an hour and a half and dealt with the first two aspects outlined above. The first day's session, which consisted of drawing the attention of the research assistants to the identification of introductions and conclusions, segmenting texts into paragraphs, and recording total word count in terms of both the entire text and the two organizational units, required the correct use of a descriptive matrix, appropriate coding, and consistency.

The second day was devoted to working through 12 examination essays (four from each of the courses selected for the study). Xeroxed copies of the examination essays were provided for the training session during which the research assistants and I engaged in hands-on analysis; this was to build the confidence of the research assistants in the assigned tasks mentioned in the previous paragraph. Difficulties such as the determination of introductions and conclusions as well as the accurate identification of paragraphs, given the lack of visual cues in some of the examination essays, were discussed and resolved. (For the criteria used to identify the introductions and the conclusions of essays, see Section 5.4.)

In general, the attempt by the research team (the researcher and the two research assistants) to iron out differences in the meaning and identification of the introductions and conclusions led to an appreciable level of inter-rater reliability, as shown in Tables 5.2.

Table 5.2 Inter-rater Reliability Score for Identification of Introductions and Conclusions of Essays

Discipline	Inter-rater reliability score
English	
Introduction (n=56)	94%
Conclusion (n=40)	93%
Sociology	
Introduction (n=60)	92%
Conclusion (n=46)	94%
Zoology	
Introduction (n=5)	60%
Conclusion (n=0)	

As shown in Table 5.2 the inter-rater reliability percentages for identifying both rhetorical units in the sample scripts were in the nineties, except for Zoology. The obvious reason for the high inter-rater reliability scores stemmed from the placement of the introduction and the conclusion as the initial and final paragraphs respectively, which made them easier to be identified.

However, in the identification of introductions, there was one notable example of difficulty which had to be resolved through discussion among the research team (that is, author, and two research assistants). This involved EST 47 in which two introductions were apparently given to an exam prompt:

5.1   In sonnet 18, which talks about how beauty can be made permanent by poets writing about it, the poet uses the structure to convey his message to his readers very clearly. (Intended as an introduction)

In sonnet 12, which talks about how time ticks by and how things in nature will die especially beauty if we don't reproduce for our off springs to sustain posterity. The poet uses the structure of the poem to bring out his message more clearly. (Intended as an introduction)
(EST 47)

The essay had two parts, with the second separated from the first by space; each part had an "introduction". Given that students were expected to offer one introduction to the essay, EST 47 was discarded.

Similarly, there was difficulty in identifying the conclusions in EST 47 and EST 57:

5.2   In conclusion, the poem is made up of three quatrains and a couplet of abab, cdcd, efef, gg and each division has its own message in the poem, in addition to the rhyming scheme and type of meter. (Intended as a conclusion)

In conclusion, the poem is made up of three quatrains and a couplet of abab, cdcd, efef, gg and each division has a message, and this is in addition to the rhyme scheme and meter brings out the message. (Intended as a conclusion)
(EST 47)

5.3   In sum, it can be concluded that sonnet is one of the most important types of poems we have and without the aforementioned structure, it cannot be read and enjoyed. The intelligence of a poet can be seen in how he presents his poem and his ability to maintain a particular type of rhyme. I think the aforementioned structure should be adopted by all poets to help maintain the beauty of poetry. (intended as actual conclusion)
Lest I forget, the full stops are used to mark the end of a sentence. This makes the poem easily readable. The punctuation marks are all used for a purpose for which it aids in reading. (a conclusion?)
(EST 57)

While the former had two "conclusions", the latter had the "actual" conclusion positioned as the penultimate paragraph. With respect to EST 47, two parts of the essay separated by space had their own "conclusions", instead of one conclusion, as expected. It was, therefore, discarded. In the case of EST 57, the "conclusion" in question was positioned inappropriately. In other words, because both EST 57 and EST 47 failed to satisfy the two criteria – structure and function – adopted in identifying the introduction and the conclusions (for a discussion of these criteria, see Section 5.4), they were excluded from the analysis.

The second major task that engaged the research team was segmenting the disciplinary texts into T-units followed by identifying the text length (of the entire essays, on the one hand, and the introductions and the conclusions, on the other hand). Given that the present study is concerned with the discoursal (here, rhetorical) practices of undergraduates, it was felt that using T-unit, usually considered as the shortest discourse unit which includes independent clauses and related subordinate clauses was appropriate. This ensured that fragment sentences were not included. In this way, the choice of the T-unit, the unit for analysis, had an advantage over the use of raw count of words in dealing with actual discoursal practices of students. The raw count of words is, however, used to complement the use of T-units in line with the literature (Henry & Roseberry, 1997; Jones, 2003; Neuner, 2003), especially where textual space is concerned.

Of the 180 essays which were coded for T-units by the research team, an overall inter-rater agreement of 86% was achieved before discussion. Table 5.3 shows the inter-rater reliability scores for each of the three disciplines in the coding for T-units.

Table 5.3 Inter-rater Reliability Score for Segmentation of Texts into T-units

Disciplines	Inter-rater reliability score
English (n=60)	90%
Sociology (n=60)	87%
Zoology (n=60)	80%
Total Number 180	86%

There were two sources of difficulties in the segmenting of scripts into T-units. The first kind of difficulty concerned the Zoology scripts as they had a hybrid of writing forms such as dashes, listing, enumeration, tables, headings, and spacing in place of

indentation. The difference in inter-rater reliability scores in segmenting the texts into T-units could be that given their English backgrounds, the coders might have found it easier handling the English essays, and to some extent the Sociology essays. In short, the lower inter-rater reliability score for the Zoology essays might have emanated from the raters' unfamiliarity with discourse in the sciences. One way of countering this would have been to secure the participation of specialists (one for Zoology and the other for Sociology), but this was not possible in practical terms.

The second source of difficulty concerned what constituted a T-unit, especially when the grammatical structure produced by the examinees was found to be flawed. These occurred in both the Sociology and English texts. When a sentence was perceived to be grammatically flawed only as a result of misspelling, the omission of an item, often a word or a punctuation, it was considered acceptable as a T-unit as in the below unedited examples:

5.4   In Jared Angira's 'No Coffin No Grave', he made use of a lot of literary devices *(missing punctuation)* however three of the literary devices would be identified and explained. (Introduction EST 17)

5.5   This confusion arouse through the follow *(misspelling)* circumstances. (Introduction SST 15)

5.6   It *(missing word)* really a good work of art. (Conclusion EST 21)

5.7   In short, pre-mature marriage, lack of communication, extra marital adventure, external pressures, unfulfilled dreams, and sexual problems *(missing word)* some of the circumstances when not checked properly may lead to marital violence. (Conclusion SST 14)

However, where there was a fragment sentence as in the examples below, no T-unit was counted:

5.8   The Shakespearean sonnet with three quatrains and a couplet. (Introduction, EST 50)

5.9   Sonnet 3 and Sonnet 12, both taken from Shakespeare's 'The Tempest' a Shakespearean sonnet. (Introduction EST 34)

5.10   It being the macho influence on man, the environment the child grew up in, financial problems, alcoholism, external pressure (stress) or hard drugs usage. (Conclusion SST 54)

Once the introductions and conclusions had been segmented into paragraphs and T-units, with all the attendant difficulties dealt with, the next stage of the analysis, which involved the moves was performed, as the next section shows.

5.3.2   Orientation of Research Assistants in Singapore

After the fieldwork in Ghana, the research site, a second orientation was conducted on 15 and 16 June 2003 for two research assistants, postgraduate (PhD) students in the Department of English Language and Literature at the National University of Singapore (NUS) at the time. As with the previous research orientation, this one had three purposes: (a) to orientate the research assistants to the background of the research, (b) to outline the main task for the research, identifying the moves in the introduction and conclusion, and (c) to train the research assistants in coding the moves in the introductions and conclusions. The first day's session lasted 60 minutes; the second day's session 75 minutes.

Informed by Crookes, (1986), Kusel (1992), and Lewin and Fine (1996), the basic rhetorical units of analysis of the primary texts in this study were the moves in the introductions and conclusions. The orientation thus focused on identifying the moves and reporting the procedure that was undertaken to arrive at the raw scores for the frequency

of moves, textual space allocated to each move, and sequencing of moves in the introductions and the conclusions in the textual data. The definition of a "move" (see Section 5.4) guided the identification of moves. Each member of the research team (that is, the researcher and the other two research assistants) provided independent identification in the moves, after which disagreements and questions were discussed. Since the study hinged on accurate identification of moves, any doubts we had about labelling a T-unit as part of one move rather than another was highlighted and discussed with a view to arriving at a solution.

In practical terms, the semantic-functional approach was found to be the most helpful, given that a move is defined as "a functional semantic unit whose length depends on writer purpose" (Dubois, 1997:6). The choice of this approach was pertinent in determining the boundaries of a specific move, that is, where one ends and another begins, especially where the introduction comprised just one paragraph. To illustrate the usefulness of the above approach, I offer the following examples, showing the different moves in bold font:

5.11 **Sonnets are poems that consist of fourteen lines.** <u>They normally have nice rhyming pattern at the end of their lines. This nice rhyming pattern most at times is made up of three quatrains and a couplet. The quatrains contain the message or argument or advice of the poet and the couplet either sums up the whole poem or answers questions asked in the quatrains. The rhyming pattern in most cases is ab, ab, cd cd, ef ef, gg.</u> *For the purpose of this essay, I would talk about two Shakespearean sonnets namely 12 and 18. The former is 'When I do count the clock that says the time" and the latter is "Shall I compare thee with summer's day".* (Introduction EST 45)

5.12 **Marriage is a socially and culturally sanctioned union between two people usually a male and a female who perform certain social functions and satisfy certain biological impulses.** It is characterized by common residence, economic co-operation, reproduction, child rearing and exclusive sex. After the first few month after marriage, the couple live as if all the joy in this world have been granted them. They do not see any mistake or fault with each other person. It is 'honey moon all through out *but after sometime, this illusionment, that is, the love blindness all fades away and that is where they begin to ace problem of all sorts. It ranges from the bedroom to the kitchen (*Introduction SST 6)

With respect to the two examples above, using the functional-semantic approach enables us to see the text in bold as a generalized statement, followed by a closer engagement with the examination prompts (EEP 2 and SEP 1 respectively) as shown by the underlined text, and then an idea of how the candidate intends to deal specifically with the prompt (shown in italics).

Similarly, adopting the same functional-semantic approach, we notice that in their conclusions students adopt specific moves. As indicated below, the English candidate (EST 16) summarizes what has been presented (see the bolded text below) and then steps out of the essay to make a suggestion to a group of people, while the Sociology student (SST 13) on the other hand offers a suggestion (see underlined texts below):

5.13 **Through these literary devices, we are able to understand the poem very well**. All honourable people like politicians must make time to read this poem (Conclusion EST 16)

5.14 In the nutshell, just as sex is important in marriage, it must be practiced in a proper way as prescribed by nature.
(Conclusion SST 13)

A problematic issue in the identification of moves concerned the reoccurrence of a move. For instance, if an introduction began with Move 1 (contextualizing, hereafter) and was then followed by Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)), a return to Move 1 (contextualizing) and finally Move 3 (previewing, hereafter), it was coded as employing

three moves although there had been four move units in order to avoid counting twice when considering frequency of occurrence in an essay. Apart from this example of the reoccurrence of a move, there were only two other examples in the entire data. Hence, the decision not to count the repetitive move unit is not envisaged to affect the reported results.

It is necessary to point out that identifying moves was applicable only to essays which had been clearly identified as having introductions and conclusions. Against the background provided above, the inter-rater reliability scores attained in the identification of moves in the two rhetorical units – introduction and conclusion – investigated are now considered (see Tables 5.4 and 5.5).

Table 5.4 Inter-rater Reliability Score for Identification of Moves in Introductions of Essays

Disciplines	Inter-rater reliability score
English (n=56)	
Move 1 (n=30)	83.3%
Move 2 (n=44)	88.6%
Move 3 (n=43)	88.4%
Sociology (n=60)	
Move 1 (n=51)	86.3%
Move 2 (n=50)	84.0%
Move 3 (n=57)	87.7%
Zoology (n=5)	
Move 1 (n=0)	
Move 2 (n=5)	100%
Move 3 (n=1)	100%

Table 5.5 Inter-rater Reliability Score for Identification of Moves in Conclusions of Essays

Disciplines	Inter-rater reliability score
English (n=40)	
Move 1 (n=28)	82.1%
Move 2 (n=11)	72.7%
Sociology (n=46)	
Move 1 (n=41)	78.0%
Move 2 (n=19)	84.2%

* Note: There are no figures for Zoology since there were no conclusions

Arriving at the inter-rater reliability scores for the research team, which involved a careful examination of the score sheets of all three members, was obtained by dividing the number of agreement of identified moves by the respective total number of moves multiplied by hundred. Where the raters agreed on the identification of the rhetorical unit, that is, introduction and conclusion, they were recognized and coded as such. Where there were differences in the same task with respect to identification of a rhetorical unit in the same examination essay answer, they were put aside as discrepant cases. It was these discrepant cases that became the basis for discussion by the research team in the attempt to resolve the difficulty.

On the whole, both orientation sessions together with the training sessions were beneficial on two counts. First, the training session brought to light certain acts of omission and misinterpretation. Second, there were a few definitional problems related to key concepts such as "move" and "introduction", and these were promptly addressed.

5.4   Labelling the Moves

This section highlights the processes underlying the orientation sessions in both Ghana and Singapore, especially the labelling of moves. This, of course, first, involved a

selection of the qualitative research design as well as conceptualizing the introduction and conclusion.

The first issue concerns the analytical procedure adopted in this study. Given that the study involves mainly textual analysis, a qualitative analytical framework was chosen, in line with the research design adopted. To this end, samples of students' writing are offered unedited together with quotes and paraphrased comments from the interview data as well as the survey data. However, since such qualitative research often has quantitative outcomes, descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and means are used, where relevant. The descriptive statistics are utilized mainly to help determine trends and patterns in the frequency of moves, the textual space allocated to each move, and the sequencing of moves in the selected rhetorical features.

The second key issue in evolving an analytical framework for the study was operationalizing the two key variables in the study: the "introduction" and "conclusion", on the one hand, and "move" on the other hand. The "introduction" was considered as a text opener with cataphoric signification, that is, the segment of an essay that provides information pointing forward to its full development in the body (Lawe-Davies, 1998). Readers are, therefore, placed in a state of anticipation to reconcile this preparatory textual segment with what is actually provided in the "body" of the essay. As a kind of front device, the introduction presents readers with their first real contact with a text and first impressions of what is to come. In contrast, the "conclusion" considered as the recognizable part of a text (also made up of, at least, a sentence) that has a broad anaphoric orientation and signals closure. Unlike the introduction, the conclusion represents a segment in an essay that generally points backwards to the body, which has

been fully developed, although, as Hyland notes, it could also have a "prospective focus" (1990: 74) in highlighting an action to be taken in future. In short, the basic function of a conclusion is two-fold: a) to signal for the reader a sense of closure, after having led the reader through one or more arguments and b) to make one last effort to convince the reader.

In order to identify the introductions and the conclusions in the 180 examination essays analyzed, two criteria, namely structure and function, were used. Specifically, in terms of structure, the introduction was identified as the first out of a number of paragraphs, while the conclusion was identified as the final paragraph in an essay. Functionally, the introduction was seen as expressing a unified meaning in terms of orienting the reader towards the "body" of the essay. Similarly, in terms of function, the conclusion was regarded as the paragraph expressing closure of text. To qualify as an introduction or conclusion, a cluster of sentences needed to satisfy both criterial features (structure and function). In general, the attempt to iron out differences in the meaning and identification of the introduction and conclusion led to inter-rater reliability scores generally above 0.8, as shown in Table 5.2.

Having recognized the introduction and conclusion as rhetorical units, the next crucial step was to look for functional categories, following the Swalesian tradition of genre analysis. Based on a preliminary analysis, "move" was selected as the basic unit for the analysis of introductions and conclusions of essays across the three disciplines because it potentially stood the chance of answering my research questions (see Section 1.3). A move was reckoned as a sub-communicative functional unit used for an identifiable purpose which contributes to the overall communicative purpose of a text.

Moves can vary in size, but must contain at least one proposition (Connor, 2000). Besides, a move is not coterminous with structural units such as a sentence or paragraph, as noted by Bhatia (1993), Kong (1998), and Al-Ali (2004).

To identify the moves in the introductions and conclusions, an *a posteriori* approach was adopted. The preliminary and main investigations led to clear moves in the introduction and conclusion, shown in Figures 5.2 and 5.4. Following Swales, the moves are labelled, using present participial phrases, that is, v-ing, instead of noun phrases, to emphasize that the focus of analysis is on what the examinees might be trying to do in their texts.

Rhetorical Unit	Swales (1990a)	Afful (2005)
Move 1	Establishing a territory	Contextualizing issue(s) highlighted in exam prompt
Move 2	Establishing a niche	Engaging closely with issue(s)
Move 3	Occupying a niche	Previewing structure of entire essay/stating purpose

Figure 5.2 Comparison of the Framework of Analysis of Moves in Introductions in the Present Study and that of the Previous Study

Move 1 (contextualizing) in the introduction contextualizes the essay by providing background on one or more issues in the examination prompt. This is exemplified through general commentary, generalized definitions and explanations of key terms or concepts that draw from scholars in the field or general knowledge (see Fig 5.3 for exemplar). Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) in the introduction expresses more commitment to dealing with the issue or issues raised in the examination prompt.

Move 3 (previewing) is a statement of the aim, or general objective, of the structure of the essay. At a general level, Move 3 explains what the essay intends to do.

Although the number of moves in the present study is the same as Swales' (1990a) revised CARS model, there are two fundamental differences. These generally relate, first, to the absence of steps within each of the moves in the present study. The second concerns the nature of the three moves. In particular, Swales' (1990a) Move 1 draws heavily on the existing literature to state the importance of the present research, whereas Move 1 (contextualizing) in the present study simply backgrounds or contextualizes the issue(s) in the exam prompt. Also, Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) in my study differs from Swales' Move 2 because the purpose of exam essays is different from the purpose of RAs. Move 3 (previewing) in this study is similar to Swales' Move 3, given that it previews an essay. Ultimately, it can be said that the difference is due to the different genres involved.

An illustration of all three moves is shown in Fig. 5.3 below from an English introduction:

(Move 1)	Fitting burial is the earnest desire of every person who dies. However, it would be very disgusting and unbearable when, if possible, the dead realizes that he or she was not given what he wanted/This is very
(Move 2)	true in this beautiful run-on-line poem 'No Coffin No Grave' by Jared Angira.)
(Move 3)	He used significant literary devices to achieve this wonderful poem. Among these devices are sound effects, institutional irony and imagery. EST 16

Figure 5.3 A Sample Move Analysis of Introduction

As shown in Fig 5.3, a generalization about burial is given in Move 1 (contextualizing): "Fitting burial is the earnest desire of every person who dies…." This generalization is then related specifically as a theme highlighted in Jared Angira's poem in Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)). In Move 3 (previewing), the examinee suggests that this theme is illustrated in the text through particular devices, namely sound effects, institutional irony, and imagery. At the same time, in this last move the examinee indirectly states the purpose of the essay, heralding the structure of the essay in the process. In short, the sample above shows purposeful activity going on in distinct but related stages.

Similarly, the preliminary and main analyses of the English and Sociology conclusions showed a two-move pattern, which interestingly can be compared with Hewings' (1993) functional categories of the conclusion, as indicated in Figure 5.4.

Rhetorical Unit	Hewings (1993)	Afful (2005)
Move 1	Summarizing	Summarizing through listing or/and evaluating
Move 2	Evaluating	Expanding summarized points through recommending action /highlighting significance of issue(s) in prompt
Move 3	Recommending	-

Figure 5.4 Comparison of the Framework of Analysis of Moves in Conclusions in the Present Study and that of the Previous Study

As shown in Figure 5.4, Move 1 (summarizing) sums up the points that have been offered in response to the prompt. To reaffirm the central idea, this move often manifests as listing of points, revolving around the key terms in the prompts, or evaluating the issue

raised in the prompt. Move 2 is characterized by expanding issues summarized either by making recommendation/s or highlighting significance of an issue raised in the prompt. In this case, Move 2 in my paradigm corresponds to Move 2 in Henry and Roseberry's (1997) study, which deals with a data set not only from academic essays but also newspapers, travel books, and textbooks.

As in the framework for the introduction, there are similarities and differences between my framework and Hewings' (1993). The similarity lies in the use of summarizing as an important rhetorical device in clinching the points already discussed and to ensure that readers have followed the exposition in the essay. The difference occurs in the number and the nature of the specific moves. First, I observed a two-move pattern in the data set as compared to Hewings' (1993) three-move pattern. Concerning the nature of specific moves, for instance, while Move 1 (summarizing) in this study allows listing of items at either word or sentential levels, summarizing is permissible in Hewings' framework only at the sentential level, given the length of text as well as the genre concerned. Again, although evaluating is utilized in this study, it is usually embedded in the first move (summarizing), thus making it inappropriate to consider it as a separate move. As well, there is a difference between recommending in Move 2 in this study and that of Hewings', as the latter is less concerned with further research. In other words, Hewings' recommendation highlights the need for further research, given the findings and limitations of a present study. This move is understandably absent in an examination essay, since the examination essay is basically not a research genre.

An illustration (Figure 5.5) of the moves in a Sociology conclusion appears in Fig 5.5 below:

(Move 1)	From the foregoing analysis made so far, premature marriage, influence from parents and friends, financial problems, unfulfilled dreams, boredom, and monotony, sexual problems, communication gap, arrival of children and incompatibility of the couples involved in the marriage can or normally give rise to violence in marriage. These problems, if not solved can lead to severe repercussions like divorce, partner battery or beating or even result in the death of a partner or the partner becoming insane. These
(Move 2)	problems mentioned can be easily solved when experts are consulted leading to the smooth running of the marriage and the partners fully enjoying their union. SST 30

Figure 5.5 A Sample Move Analysis of Conclusion

As shown in Fig 5.5, a recap of the points – "premature marriage, influence from parents and friends, financial problems, unfulfilled dreams, boredom, and monotony…" – discussed in the essay is offered in Move 1 (summarizing). These consequences lead the examinee to evaluate these points in negative terms, arguing that they are "problems" which have the potential for "severe repercussions". The Sociology candidate then offers a suggestion in Move 2, by indicating that these problems are resolvable if experts are consulted. In short, similar to the sample in Figure 5.3, the sample above exemplifies purposeful activity going on in distinct but related stages.

Once issues related to conceptualization concerning the introduction and conclusion as well as the moves had been dealt with, the third key activity was the designing of coding schemes for the three sets of data (textual materials, interview transcripts, and questionnaire). This called for three salient procedures: establishing a

category system for the three sources of data, assigning the category system to the data, and finally checking for relevance, accuracy, and completion. (For the coding categories of examination answers and the examination prompts, see Appendices 1, 2.3-2.6, and 3 respectively.)

5.5 Key Methodological Issues

Of considerable importance in the carrying out of all the three key stages – pre-data collection, collection, and post-collection – of the research were the key issues of reliability and validity, on the one hand, and ethics, on the other hand.

5.5.1 *Reliability and Validity*

Reliability and validity are often perceived to be fundamental criteria in both qualitative and quantitative research (Creswell, 1990; Erlandson *et al.*, 1993; Churton, 2000). While validity signifies that a piece of research and its claims are in consonance with a community's theoretical structures, assumptions, and paradigms (Lauer & Sullivan, 1993), reliability suggests that claims about patterns, and structures of experience can only be made within a discourse community with the active connivance of multiple observers, observations, or points of view (*ibid.*). Based on Whittemore *et al.*'s (2001) suggestion, four steps were taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the data and analysis in this research.

First, to ensure triangulation, which Churton (2000:272) refers to as "methodological pluralism" and Layder (1993) as "multi-strategy research", multiple sources of data and multiple methods such as the "eclectic" mix of the main tool, written

textual data, and corroborating data from questionnaires, interviews, and observation as well as multiple perspectives from faculty and students were utilized. This step enabled the interview and questionnaire data to be compared with linguistic/rhetorical patterns observed in the textual analysis.

The second step towards establishing the credibility of the present research was offering a "thick description" of the research site (Geertz, 1973). Although utilizing thick description tends to be the norm in sociolinguistic or ethnographic studies, it was useful in the present study for two important reasons: first, to provide a clear and accurate picture of the setting of the study; and, second, to provide a solid basis for comparison for others doing similar research, as argued by Merriam (2001). The third step to enhance the credibility of the present study involved the assistance sought from varied people at different stages of the research. This became necessary especially as the research tools were mainly self-designed. In this process of consultation, other lecturers were instrumental in shaping the research tools that were produced. My colleagues and prospective respondents in the research site provided invaluable input to the designing of the various research tools even before they were pre-tested. Thus, this three-way interaction among the "facilitators" (researcher, colleagues and research assistants, and persons for whom the tools were meant) contributed immensely to enhancing the workability and reliability of the tools.

Finally, care was taken with regard to the selection of the texts for analysis. Given that three departments were involved in this study, it was important to ensure that certain variables were held constant, namely, the same genre (examination essay), the same number of examination prompts (two common questions selected from each discipline

against the total number of questions answered), and, the same exigence (a two-hour examination).

5.5.2   Ethical Considerations

The second overarching consideration in the data collection process was ethics (Homan, 1991; Jackson, 2003). Obtaining voluntary participation from all prospective participants, either directly or indirectly involved, was considered crucial to the success of this research: informed consent was important in this regard. Documentation from the NUS authorities, confirming their support of the present research as well as the formal consent of the administration and research participants in the research site was obtained (see Appendices 7.1-7.3 for a sample of letters of consent). Participants were given information to assist them in making an informed decision about whether or not they wished to participate in the study, and to opt out of the research, if they decided later not to participate. Once the principle of informed consent had been obtained, I remained committed to the principles of anonymity and confidentiality, among others, in the particular uses of the data.

5.5.3   Problems Encountered during Data Collection and Analysis

Notwithstanding the precautions that were undertaken, there were two main types of problems that needed to be considered: those encountered during data collection and those encountered during analysis.

The former concerned gaining access to examination scripts, keeping track of the questionnaire respondents and interviewees, and the sampling of examination scripts.

Gaining access to the examination scripts proved to be the first important task because, as in other universities, examination scripts are often regarded as "security materials". The difficulty and frustration in getting access to the scripts in one faculty dragged on for some time until an intervention from an official of UCC ensured maximum co-operation from all three departments. As well, keeping track of the prospective interviewees and questionnaire respondents posed some initial problems. Administering questionnaires and interviews in both the pilot study and main study proved rather exacting, as lecturers were using the recess for marking, computation and recording of scores and were, therefore, difficult to meet, while others were involved in supervising student teachers on teaching practice in and around Cape Coast. Still, others were engaged in national and departmental assignments which had taken them away from their offices. The frustration students face when registering their courses on resumption of a new semester had not been anticipated, thus affecting the availability of students. The concerted effort of the administrative clerks and the Senior Administrative Officer and lecturers of the second-year undergraduates of each of the selected departments helped to bring this problem under control. Meeting faculty for the completed questionnaires and interviews in the main study required patience and persistence in sending them reminders and following up. Finally, there was difficulty with the sampling of scripts from the three departments. I had anticipated obtaining sixty examination scripts on one question, assuming quite incorrectly, as I later discovered, that there would be compulsory questions in all the examinations (for the sampling of examination scripts, see Section 5.2.1).

The second set of problems concerned the analysis, an essential part of which was the labelling of moves (For a full discussion of these problems, see Section 5.5.3.). At

this point though, it is important to highlight that, in general, genre analysts admit the inherent difficulty in labelling moves (Crookes, 1986; Holmes, 2001). This is bound to be the case in view of the semantic-functional approach often adopted in the absence of a better alternative. In fact, elaborating the possible problems that genre analysts may encounter, Bhatia (1993:92-93), a renowned genre analyst, argues:

> …it is not always easy to separate moves clearly because of a lack of form-function correlation….Moreover, there can still be cases which will pose problems and escape identification or clear discrimination, however fine a net one may use.

In the present study, the element of subjectivity in this approach is deemed to have been reduced, though possibly not absolutely eliminated through the assistance sought from two research assistants.

Beyond the two above-mentioned sets of difficulties was my role as an outsider in respect of two disciplines, Zoology and Sociology. Given that I had chosen to study disciplinarity in this research, this problem was unavoidable, as evidenced in similar studies (e.g. Delamont *et al*., 2000; Heen, 2000; Prior, 1998). The extent to which a researcher becomes involved in a study concerned with disciplinarity such as the present one recalls the notions of "proximity" and "remoteness" (Bourdieu, 1988: 1, cited in Delamont *et al*., 2000:18). Besides the obvious problem of negotiating access to the two other disciplines (Sociology and Zoology), the more challenging task involved understanding and interpreting their norms and practices. A major way of dealing with this could have been to ascertain and cross-check with students and faculty in the two disciplines, but the time constraints I faced while on my data collection trip made this impossible, in practical terms.

5.6   Chapter Conclusion

Chapter 5 has focused on the qualitative research design for the present study. This research paradigm was chosen (with occasional and supporting quantitative data) as the appropriate methodological framework for this study because of its potency in unearthing rich data about the rhetorical behaviour of undergraduates. Accordingly, it informed the three stages of the data collection: pre-field work, data collection and post-field work (Section 5.1-5.3). The steps taken in labelling the moves of the introductions and the conclusions were elaborated (Section 5.4), leading to the discussion on issues related to the methodological procedure such as reliability, validity and ethics as well as practical problems encountered during data collection and their resolution (Section 5.5). In general, the entire research design with its combination of qualitative and quantitative features ensures three major benefits, which are triangulatory, facilitative and complementary. The next chapter presents a preliminary analysis of the examination prompts as a preparatory step towards discussing the results to the two research questions, in Chapters Seven and Eight.

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

6. 0   Introduction

In the previous chapter, I outlined the methodological procedures used in the present study, highlighting the steps taken in the data collection and creation of the analytical framework as well as the ethical issues and the practical problems encountered, and how these were resolved. The main purpose of the present chapter is to present a preliminary analysis of the examination prompts as well as the rhetorical units being investigated, *viz.* the introduction and conclusion, in order to provide relevant background to the main task of the present study.

6.1   Analysis of the Examination Prompts

For the purpose of this analysis, six examination prompts and code categories (EEP 1 and 2, SEP 1 and 2, and ZEP 1 and 2) are re-presented here to facilitate discussion of the findings relating to the main research questions (see Figure 6.1). The English examination prompts (EEP) appear first, followed by those from Sociology (SEP) and Zoology (ZEP).

- 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)

- Discuss the structure and functions of bone. (ZEP 1)
- Distinguish between the processes of diffusion and osmosis. (ZEP 2)

Figure 6.1 The Examination Prompts

The rationale for the present analysis is that examination answers (here, examination essays) arise as responses to particular examination prompts. In consonance with the view expressed elsewhere (Hamp-Lyons, 1988; Reynolds, 1996; Lawe-Davies, 1998), the examination prompt could have predictive value in terms of the anticipated discourse structure. In this regard, pedagogical materials and various empirical studies have contributed to our understanding of the role of examination prompts in student writing and how they can be used to sharpen the exam-taking skills of both native and non-native students (Swales, 1982; Williams, 1982; Howe, 1983; Horowitz, 1986b, 1989; Leong, 1992; Currie, 1993; Lewis & Starks, 1997).

Earlier understanding of examination prompts seemed to have been explicitly acknowledged in two textbooks, Williams' (1982) *Panorama* and Howe's (1983) *Writing Examination Answers*. These textbooks highlight the importance of rhetorical verbs in eliciting particular discourse structures in examination essay answers. The danger, however, in these pedagogic texts, is that by adopting a univariant approach, they prescribe discourse structures that ignore disciplinary contexts.

It is to avoid such a generalist approach in the study of rhetorical verbs that studies by Swales' (1982), Dudley-Evans (1988), and Leong (1992) examine the rhetorical verbs in disciplinary contexts. Focusing on Science, Swales' (1982) study shows different frequency levels for rhetorical verbs such as "describe", "explain", "discuss", "compare", "define", and "list", while Leong's (1992) study of undergraduate writing suggests that the Economics and English prompts differ in terms of the range and quantity of rhetorical verbs used, 41 and 26, respectively. On the other hand, Dudley-Evans (1988) study points to the danger of overprivileging the role of rhetorical verbs in examination prompts in predicting the discourse structure of examination essay answers. Examining three "discuss-questions" in MSc papers set in the Department of Plant Biology, Dudley-Evans draws attention to the possible range of different meanings attached to the rhetorical verb, "discuss": argumentation, description, and a third which, "lies between the two" (Dudley-Evans, 1988:49).

Horowitz (1989) takes the argument further, suggesting that a more useful taxonomy of the relationship between the examination prompt and expected discourse structure in examination answers is obtainable when attention is paid to both rhetorical verbs and other lexical signals across various disciplines. Horowitz's typology is based on 284 prompts from fifteen departments at Western Illinois University. Of these departments, Sociology and Zoology are explicitly mentioned in Horowitz's taxonomy. But, it can be argued that the third department in the present study, English, is also represented in Horowitz's work, as Anthropology and History which share affinity with English as Humanities disciplines are represented.

In general, I find Horowitz's (1986b, 1989) taxonomy helpful in my analysis of examination prompts as it avoids an undue dependence on rhetorical verbs, combining the examination of rhetorical verbs with other lexical items to predict the expected discourse structure of examination essay answer. These rhetorical verbs include "Discuss", "Explain", and "Define". The lexical items include fronted expressions such as "What is…?" and "Why is…?", "Is it probable…?" in order to determine a particular pattern of discourse structure. Based on a combination of rhetorical verbs and other lexical signals, therefore, Horowitz provides a typology of four categories of discourse structures that an essay prompt requires of a student:

- Familiarity with a concept

- Familiarity with relation between/among concepts

- Familiarity with a process

- Familiarity with argumentation

(Horowitz, 1986b:110)

Applying Horowitz's taxonomy of examination prompts to the examination prompts in the present research, we can argue that the English and Sociology prompts are alike in demanding the same rhetorical pattern for their respective questions, namely, argumentation and relation respectively, as shown in examination prompts, EEP 1, EEP 2, SEP 1, and SEP 2 (see Figure 6.1). Whereas the English examination prompts require providing evidence in support of a view point or stance, the Sociology examination prompts require establishing relationship based on cause and effect. That the English prompts elicit the discourse structure of argumentation is not surprising, given the tendency of English to fall in the interpretive mode (Becher, 1989). On the other hand,

the Sociology examination prompts' elicitation of the causation mode seems to be in line with Becher's (1989) claim that Sociology generally deals with cause and effect in socialization processes in community.

In contrast, the Zoology prompts require two different rhetorical patterns: description and concept. However, it is also possible to consider ZEP 2 as demanding relation, similar to the rhetorical requirement of the Sociology prompts, as the examinees are expected to explore a relationship of contrast. In addition, how Zoology presents a "distinguish-examination prompt" is a matter of interest in this study as previous studies (Drury, 2001) have suggested that the "distinguish-examination prompts" or "compare prompts" often feature at the undergraduate level in science. Swales (1982), for instance, highlights that 50% of his data set of prompts fall into the "describe" and "explain" categories, 15-20% of definitions, 10% into "discuss" and "compare" question types, and 10% into "discuss"

The use of "discuss" in the second Zoology prompt (ZEP 2) invites further comment here. "Discuss" in ZEP 2 corresponds to the second of the three meanings imputed to its use in Dudley-Evans's (1988) study of "discuss questions" in Plant Biology MSc examinations at the University of Birmingham, involving the rhetorical verbs "describe" or "explain". But why the examiners in the present study prefer "discuss" to "describe" is not clear to me. (See also Lawe-Davies' (1998) work in which "discuss" is used to mean "describe" in the examination prompts of Dentistry examinations at the University of Western Australia.) Unfortunately, the present study missed the opportunity to ascertain from the Zoology participants why this situation is so,

as the analysis of the examination prompts was done after the interview with faculty in Ghana and faculty could not be contacted for follow-up questions.

Thus, from this brief analysis of examination prompts from the three disciplines, two major conclusions can be reached. First, the discipline-specific influence on the structure and content of examination prompts cannot be conclusive, given that only two prompts each have been analyzed. What is clear, however, is that if we consider Horowitz's (1989) rhetorical labels as reflecting a cline from conceptualization to argumentation, then it can be argued that the Sociology examination prompts in this study predict rhetorical structures which are nearer those expected of the English examination prompts than the Zoology examination prompts.

Initially, introductions and conclusions in the examination answers were expected to be provided by all three groups of students. In particular, English students were expected to introduce and conclude their essays, based on the fact that English students are explicitly taught the rhetorical aspect of communication such as the writing of introductions and conclusions, even at the secondary level in the Ghanaian educational system. With the possibility of disciplinary influence on the expected discourse structure of examination essays being inconclusive, as suggested in the brief analysis above, it remains to be seen if these apparent disciplinary differences are also reflected in the actual examination answers.

6.2   Preliminary Analysis of the Texts

In my informal interaction with lecturers in the departments of English, Sociology, and Zoology, I had been assured of the use of extended writing in the courses selected, in

which students presumably needed to write introductions and conclusions to their essays. Nonetheless, there was the need to find out empirically whether their students introduced and concluded their examination essays. Two questions are addressed in this preliminary analysis:

1. Do students in English, Sociology, and Zoology utilize introductions and conclusions in their examination essays?

2. If so, how much textual space is given to the introduction and the conclusion relative to the essay as a whole?

I propose to address both questions by first providing quantitative data in Section 6.3. I then offer corroborating data from the faculty interviews (Section 6.4.2) and student interviews (Section 6.4.3) collected in Ghana. Based on both sources of evidence, I attempt to interpret my findings, relating them to existing studies in the wider field of rhetorical analysis of undergraduate writing in Section 6.5.

6.3   Results of Textual Analysis

In response to the question above (1), results of the textual analysis indicate that all three groups of students introduced their essays, albeit to different extents. In contrast, only two out of the three groups of students (English and Sociology) explicitly concluded their essays. Details of these findings are shown in Table 6.1

Table 6.1 Occurrence of Introductions and Conclusions in Disciplinary Texts

	English (n=60)	Sociology (n=60)	Zoology (n=60)	Total (n=180)
Introduction				
Present	56 (93%)	60 (100%)	5 (8%)	121 (67%)
Absent	4 (7%)	-	55 (92%)	59 (33%)
Conclusion				
Present	40 (67%)	46 (77%)	-	86 (48%)
Absent	20 (33%)	14 (23%)	60 (100%)	94 (52%)

Looking at all three disciplines together, the number of examinees who introduced their essays (67%) outnumber those who did not (33%) by two to one. In contrast, the number of students who concluded their essays (48%) is marginally lower than those who did not (52%). The results also show that all 60 Sociology students composed introductions to their essays, as did 56 (93%) out of 60 of the English examinees. In contrast, only 5 (8%) Zoology students produced introductions. Similarly, 46 (77%) Sociology examinees and 40 (67%) English examinees wrote conclusions, whereas no Zoology essays contained a conclusion.

The second preliminary question focuses on the total space occupied by the introductions and the conclusions relative to the essay as a whole, in the three disciplines. The results to the second preliminary question are shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Relative Lengths of Introductions and Conclusions

	English (n=60)	Sociology (n=60)	Zoology (n=60)	Total (n=180)
Total Text (Tunits)				
Overall	2144 (100%)	2842 (100%)	813 (100%)	5799 (100%)
Mean	35.7	47.4	13.5	32.2
Introduction				
Overall	284 (13.2%)	404 (14.2%)	7 (0.9%)	695 (11.9%)
Mean	4.7	6.7	0.1	5.7
Conclusion				
Overall	82 (3.8%)	115 (4.0%)	-	197 (4%)
Mean	2.0	2.5	-	2.3
Total No of Words Introduction				
Overall	4286	6603	86	10975
Mean	76.5	110.0	1.2	90.7
Total No of Words Conclusions				
Overall	1695	2205	-	3900
Mean	42.4	47.9		45.3

Table 6.2 shows that Sociology essays tended to be the longest, with a mean of 47 T-units, with Zoology texts being the shortest, with a mean of about 14 T-units. In terms of the relative space given to the introductions, the percentage for English and Sociology is about the same, at 13% and 14% respectively. In contrast, the relative space given to the introductions in the 60 Zoology essays represents only a meager 0.9%, as only five essays out of the 60 had introductions. Similarly, in terms of the textual space given to the conclusions, the percentage for English and Sociology essays is the same, at roughly 4%. In contrast, the relative space given to the Zoology conclusions is 0, given that none of the 60 Zoology essays had a conclusion.

The difference in rhetorical behaviour of the examinees in the three disciplines, as shown in the quantitative section, requires explanation and interpretation. But before I do that, I report the interview and questionnaire data, as they are potentially capable of

explaining the difference and similarity in rhetorical behaviour of examinees indicated in Tables 6.1 and 6.2.

6.4   Results from Corroborating Data

This section reports the relevant corroborating questionnaire and interview data for two main reasons. First, they provide insight into the academic literacy of each sub-disciplinary community in the interpretation of the quantitative results. Second, they enable us to understand the background from which these undergraduates utilize their rhetorical skills in their use or non-use of introductions and conclusions in their essays.

6.4.1   Synopsis of Questionnaire Data

The questionnaire survey was limited to 22 faculty members: eight each from English and Sociology, and seven from the Zoology department. Two principal issues – the department lecturers' reasons for giving assignments and lecturers' ranking of what students value in teacher commentary on their relevant writing – are outlined here to provide background to students' use of introductions and conclusions in their examination essays. 4 points are assigned for the choice of "most important", 3 to "important", 2 to "quite important", and 1 to "not important/not sure". Therefore, for "Writing in the Disciplines" for English, we can have the following:

	Raw score	Weighted score	Mean score
Most important	1	1x4 = 4	(4+3+10+1)÷8
Important	1	1x 3 =3	=18÷8
Quite important	5	5 x 2 =10	2.25
Not important/not sure	1	1 x1=1	

Lecturers' reasons for setting written assignments, including examination essays, are reported in Table 6.3. The raw scores are provided; as well, the mean scores are provided in the table to allow for easy comparison between different features and different disciplines.

Table 6.3 Lecturer's Reasons for Giving Written Assignments

Features	English(n=8) RS / MS	Sociology (n=7) RS / MS	Zoology (n=7) RS /MS
Writing in the Disciplines			
Most important	1	-	-
Important	1	1	1
Quite important	5 (2.25)	3	3
Not important/not sure	1	3 (1.3)	3 (1.3)
Critical Thinking			
Most important	3	3	5 (3.7)
Important	2 (2.9)	3 (3.1)	2
Quite important	2	-	-
Not important/not sure	1	1	-
Control of Content			
Most important	4	3	1
Important	1 (3.1)	2 (2.6)	2
Quite important	1	1	3 (2.4)
Not important/not sure	1	2	1
General Writing Skills			
Most important	-	-	-
Important	2	1	1
Quite important	4 (2)	2 (1.6)	1
Not important/not sure	2	4	5 (1.4)
Assessing Students			
Most important	-	2	1
Important	2	-	1
Quite important	- (1.6)	2 (2.1)	1 (1.9)
Not important/not sure	5	3	4

Key: RS – raw score; MS – mean score

As indicated in the table, two out of the five reasons receive considerable attention from lecturers in all three departments, although with differing emphasis.

Across all three disciplines, critical thinking and demonstration of control of content were ranked "most important" or "important" as opposed to writing in the disciplines, or assigning writing to assess students, or general writing skills, all of which were ranked less important.

Table 6.4 provides findings on the relative importance that students in the different disciplines attach to these aspects, from the perspective of their lecturers.

Table 6.4 Lecturers' Ranking of Expectations of Students in Regard to Teacher Commentary

Features	English (n=8) RS /MS	Sociology (n=7) RS / MS	Zoology (n=7) RS /MS
Clarity of thought			
Most important	1	-	-
Important	3	1	3
Quite important	1 (2.25)	5 (2)	2 (2)
Not important/not sure	3	1	2
Clear argumentation			
Most important	1	1	-
Important	3	2	4 (2.6)
Quite important	1 (2.25)	1 (2.)	3
Not important/not sure	3	3	-
Content of ideas			
Most important	5 (3.5)	6 (3.9)	6 (3.7)
Important	2	1	-
Quite important	1	-	1
Not important/not sure	-	-	-
Appropriate terminology	-	-	-
Most important	4	5 (2.6)	4 (2.6)
Important	3 (2.4)	1	3
Quite important	1	1	-
Not important/not sure			
Use of language			
Most important	-	-	-
Important	2	1	2
Quite important	4 (2)	4 (1.9)	1 (1.7)
Not important/not sure	2	2	4
Textual coherence			
Most important	-	-	1
Important	1	3	1 (3.1)
Quite important	5 (1.9)	2 (2.1)	4
Not important/not sure	2	2	1
Correctness			
Most important	1	-	-
Important	1	-	-
Quite important	1 (1.8)	2	-
Not important/not sure	5	5 (1.3)	7 (1)

Key: RS – raw score; MS – mean score

According to Table 6.4, from the perspective of faculty across three disciplines students were most likely to consider comments on content as "most important" and clarity of thought and use of language as "quite important". On the other hand, while lecturers in the English department were of the view that students would value comments on correctness as "quite important", their counterparts from the Sociology and Zoology departments felt that their students will consider comments on correctness as "unimportant".

These observations from lecturers in the three disciplines provided impetus to follow-up on some issues such as determinants of good writing and disciplinary variation in the interviews with deans and heads of department as well as students, which I now report in the next two sections, 6.4.2 and 6.4.3.

6.4.2   Faculty Interview Data

The interview data obtained from the deans are offered first, followed by the data obtained from the course lecturers in three departments in Section 6.4.3.

With regard to the interview with deans and heads of department, a key issue discussed was: What constitutes good writing in student examination essays? For faculty in the Humanities and Social Sciences, the answer seemed to lie in the active and judicious interaction of content, language, and organization, while the Science faculty spoke of "thoroughly written", "appropriate use of key terms", and "ingenuous writing" as key ingredients. The Humanities faculty's use of expressions such as "a persuasive paper" and "rich content" also underscores the rhetorical aspect of effective writing in

comparison to the Social Sciences faculty's insistence on a "reasonable balance between content, language, and structure".

Interviews with course lecturers focused on the following questions: (a) What constitutes good writing in an examination essay in your department? and (b) What answers did you expect from students in the paper you set last year? In response to the first question, in general, all the course lecturers agreed on "structure", "content", and "correctness" as necessary ingredients of writing in their departments. Moreover, the English and Sociology lecturers were unanimous in asserting that both the introduction and the conclusion were central to the structure of an answer. In addition, lecturers in each department mentioned other aspects that represented their disciplinary perspective on good writing. For instance, the two English course lecturers (ELI 1 and 2) mentioned "relevant quotations"; the two Sociology lecturers (SLI 1 and 2) mentioned "clear argumentation" and "appropriate terminology". One Zoology lecturer (ZLI 1), reflecting the view of the other colleague, opined: "The emphasis is on accurate and scientific facts, but if presentation is defective, it has a negative effect on the answer". Clearly, these answers show that good writing in specific disciplinary communities has general as well as context-dependent criteria such as quotations, tables, or figures.

In response to the second question – what answers did you expect from students in the paper you set last year? – course lecturers in general expected students to offer answers according to schemes demonstrated in revision sessions based on the effective answering of past examination questions. Such answers emphasized disciplinary expectations for the three disciplines. Besides, like the deans and heads of department, the English and Sociology lecturers seemed to be alike in their concern for content over

expression, while the Zoology lecturers focused on accuracy of information. Nonetheless, all three groups of course lecturers were unanimous in stating the relevance of answers provided by the examinees.

Specifically, very little was said about the organizational features of examination answers as seen in answers provided by lecturers of the three disciplines on their expectations. The first English course lecturer (ELI 1), for example, expected students to demonstrate a "clear understanding of the sonnet", and "how that knowledge relates to two particular sonnets" while "quoting relevant parts of the poem". On the same prompt, the second English course lecturer (ELI 2) expressed the need for examinees to show how the theme is effectively conveyed in sonnet form, making specific references to rhyme, stanzaic division, metric patterns, among others: "My concern was to get students to apply the various tools such as sound effects, structure, and other literary devices to specific poems to demonstrate their ability to engage in literary analysis". Commenting on the second English prompt (see SEP 2 in Fig. 6.1), the second English course lecturer (ELI 2) said that he looked forward to a clear mention of three literary devices (e.g. repetition, metaphor, simile, symbolism, and irony) and explanation of how they are effectively used.

On their part, both Sociology lecturers said that they expected clear understanding of the main issues through adequate engagement with the "causes of marital violence". They also anticipated discussion of solutions, although both were quick to add that the solutions did not need to be given ample treatment in view of the wording of the question (see SEP 1 in Figure 6.1). Further, SLI 1 expected candidates to "display logical thinking". Given that the second prompt for Sociology students (SEP 2) used the same

rhetorical verb – "examine" – as the first prompt, calling for the rhetorical mode of "relation" in Horowitz's (1989) schema, Sociology course lecturers understandably gave similar answers: that is, students were to articulate in convincing terms the repercussions of the five sexual paraphelia. They were emphatic on seeing five, neither more nor fewer, sexual paraphelia, identified and fully developed for students to gain full marks.

In terms of the two Zoology faculty who set the examination paper, one Zoology lecturer (ZLI 1) indicated that students were expected to "describe" structures and functions and be "logical in presentation". In the words of ZLI 1,

> As far as I am concerned, <u>students can write in verse or prose</u> . . . . <u>Accurate facts</u> presented in the form of <u>tables, diagrams, and use of points</u> are perfectly okay if the student is seen using them effectively. I don't think the use of these calls for under marking. Rather, this shows that an examinee is focused.

He continued,

> <u>Zoology students</u> <u>are not expected to engage in padding as the Arts students do in their introduction</u>, if I may say so; in fact, there is <u>no need for such long convoluted introductions</u> in my course; <u>such introductions make it difficult for me to locate students' points.</u> As future veterinarians and doctors, our students are being trained in quick diagnosis of problems and offering of solutions.

While the earlier section of the comment of ZL1 1 summed up his expectation in positive terms (accurate facts and tables, diagrams, and use of points), the second part is expressed in negative terms, taking issues with "padding" and "convoluted introductions". The silence on what constitutes an introduction leaves us with the possible view that faculty may not after all value it. This may explain the lack of introductions in the Zoology essays.

On his part, ZLI 2 said,

Effective communication, accurate facts and logical presentation are essential in answering both examination questions. To show precision in their facts, students are required to be accurate in their spellings. They cannot afford to be careless with the names of concepts, diseases, and parts of the organisms they are studying. These are fundamental to the course.

As can be seen, ZL1 2's comment is similar to that of ZL1 1. It is interesting to note that both Zoology faculty were unanimous in alluding to "accurate facts" as an essential quality of disciplinary writing. This is not relatable to only the names of concepts, organisms, processes but also language features such as spelling and, to a minimal extent, organizational features such as the introduction. The comments of the Zoology faculty also suggest the importance of other semiotic representations such as tables, diagrams, and numerical figures. The point to note is that while faculty do appreciate the role of language in their students' writing, it is only explicitly emphasized in spelling, while the introduction and conclusion seem to be downplayed.

Clearly, the faculty data suggest differences as well as similarities in the way faculty perceive rhetoric and epistemology in very broad terms. The next section, which reports on student views on various aspects of writing, represents a means of ascertaining the extent to which students perception of writing converge with or diverge from their lectures' perception.

6.4.3   Student Interview Data

Since the present study deals with texts produced by students, the views of 15 students each from the three departments were of crucial importance to the study. Attention is given here to the students' responses to four key questions:

1. What constitutes good writing in your department?

2. Out of three criteria, namely, content, language, and organization, which is considered important in writing in your department?

3. Which of the three criteria – content, language, and organization – would you prefer lecturers to comment on most extensively in your examination essays?

4. Are you aware of disciplinary variation in the subjects you are offering at university?

In response to the first question, the Sociology and English students were noticeably closer in their answers. Specifically, most students from the Department of English mentioned content (13/15), language (11/15), organization (8/15), and correctness of language and content (7/15) and disciplinary ethos (2/15), in order of importance, as criteria of good writing in examination essays. Similarly, most Sociology students mentioned content (12/15), language (9/15), organization (8/15), and disciplinary ethos (4/15) in order of importance as indicators of good writing. In addition, Sociology students contended that good writing depends on the extent to which a student is able to satisfy an examiner's mark scheme and to use quotations from authorities in the discipline. The Zoology students in turn mentioned "accurate facts" and the use of "scientific terms together with diagrams" as key disciplinary requirements of good writing. Interestingly, issues such as linguistic accuracy and coherence (organization), which the Sociology students had indicated, rarely surfaced in the answers of the Zoology students.

With respect to the second question, Zoology and Sociology students shared similar positions in their answers. Nine of the 15 Zoology students and eight of the 15

Sociology students indicated that content was the most important criterion of good writing in their departments. Not surprisingly, the English students (10/15) differed from the other two groups in mentioning "expression" as the most important criterion. Five Sociology students remarked that all three criteria – content, language, and organization – were valued in their disciplines, claiming that they (three criteria) interacted in complex ways to produce the desired writing

In their response to the third question, 8 out of the 15 English students interviewed identified "expression" as the criterion they would prefer their lecturers to comment on, similar to the earlier answer. In contrast, 10 out of the 15 Zoology students and 9 of the 15 Sociology students preferred that content be commented on. Interestingly, "organization" did not feature in the answers of any student from all three disciplines. The fact that the English students' overall response was consistent with their answer to the third question is not surprising, as students feel they are expected to show mastery in language use. Perhaps, by mentioning "expression" in their answers to the third and fourth questions, English students meant "expression" to be inclusive of rhetorical organization as well.

The final question in the interview required students to verbalize their awareness of disciplinary variation. They commented that they found this segment of the interview was interesting, conceding that they had never considered disciplinary variation in a systematic way. Observing that the interview enabled them to reflect on the nature and forms of their writing in various disciplines, the majority of the students interviewed in English (9), Sociology (10), and Zoology (9) said they had come to this realization of disciplinary variation by themselves, with no overt instruction from their course lecturers.

Only a marginal number of students – 3, 2, and 3 students from English, Sociology, and Zoology, respectively – said that knowledge of disciplinary variation had come through the combined effort of their course lecturers and themselves.

The following quotes are presented to give a flavour of students' perceptions of disciplinary differences:

English

> English develops essays with thesis statements. We are often told by our lecturers to start our essays with the thesis statement in order to provide a sort of direction to the essay. But I don't see this insisted in Philosophy. And, I suppose the organizational pattern we adopt in the French department is like the one used in English (ESI 4).

> Sociology students are required to deal with organization and content because of the vast amount of information we handle and read. But English students concentrate on expression more. They have to pay attention to sentence structure and variety of vocabulary. History too pays attention to expression; anyway, I'm not too sure about History (ESI 8).

Sociology

> Sociology requires a well-organized essay with introduction, body, and conclusion. But Economics requires formula work and diagrams… and so an introduction will not be necessary. Social Science Research demands calculations and very little continuous writing (SSI 3).

> Of the three, Sociology involves more writing. So students are to express caution in organizing their essay. Geography, on the other hand, requires less writing; writing is supposed to be brief and precise with a bit of technical words. Social Science Research focuses on reasoning and calculations of mode, mean and stuff like that. Yeah, I think so (SSI 11).

Zoology

> Zoology requires a lot of comparisons, a lot of writing and definitions. And if you get any spelling wrong, you're heavily penalized. But in the case of Chemistry, all these are absent and writing is much more straightforward. Since Education too demands much writing, I can say it is quite similar to Zoology (ZSI 1).

> All three, Psychology of Education, Physics, and Zoology, demand organized format. Physics requires values, plotting and description of graphs. But in Zoology, we are asked to write more and do little calculation - let's say eighty percent of writing and twenty percent calculation. Psychology demands a little more writing like in the Humanities (ZSI 5).

As can be seen from the above quotes, the students' comments covered length of writing demanded, linguistic and other semiotic features associated with various disciplines. In some instances (see ZSI 1 and ZSI 5), students also established points of commonality among the various disciplines. All this indicates the possibility of observable differences and similarities in the rhetorical behaviour of the three groups of students in the present study.

6.5   Discussion of Findings

Two sets of analysis – examination prompts as well as introductions and conclusions of student examination essays – have been presented in the previous sections (6.3 and 6.4). However, given that the textual analysis of the latter is more pertinent to the two major research questions driving this research, this section focuses on the findings of the latter, using the interview data as supporting evidence, where needed.

Initially, it was expected that since all first-year undergraduates at UCC are taught CS, all examinees would provide introductions and conclusions to their examination essays. However, this position had to be revised based on the analysis of the examination prompts and existing literature; difference in terms of the occurrence or otherwise in the introductions and conclusions were expected. In response to the first preliminary question

(Do students in English, Sociology, and Zoology utilize introductions and conclusions in their examination essays?), one major finding emerged from the analysis of the examination essays:

- Most, if not all, English and Sociology examinees used both rhetorical features, whereas only 8% of Zoology examinees used introductions and none used conclusions.

This finding suggests that the introduction and conclusion may be deemed rhetorically important by two (English and Sociology) of the three disciplines in the present study, given that most of the students in these two departments used them. Whether or not introductions and conclusions are important in Zoology remains to be seen, given the fact that hardly any of the essays contained either. The above finding needs explaining.

While there have been similar studies on the rhetoric of undergraduate writing, the literature does not help untangle this finding. Indeed, studies such as those by Kusel (1992), Leki (1995), Lawe-Davies (1998), Adika (1999), Drury (2001) provide varying levels of support for the finding in the present study that science students do not write introductions and conclusions. This is understandable, given that different sites and different students are involved in each of the studies mentioned above. Specifically, Kusel's (1992) study, which is the closest to the present study, deals with five different departments, namely, Teacher Education, English Literature, History, Geography, and Language Teaching (TEFL). His study showed a relatively higher proportion of students who introduced their essays (88%), compared to 67% in my study (see Table 6.1).

It is more difficult to compare the findings in this study with those in Drury (2001) and Lawe-Davies' (1998), as the latter were conducted in a single-discipline

context, (Biology and Dentistry, respectively). Although the Zoology course lecturers who were interviewed had insisted that they expected essays, Drury's (2001) study, which investigated writing by junior undergraduate Biology students at Sydney University, may suggest that the answers produced by the Zoology students in my study may not in fact be "essays", but "short answers". Another way of explaining this difference will be to say that there are differences in the way different institutions perceive "examination essays" in the Life Sciences.

In Lawe-Davies' (1998) study, the participants whose examination essays were analyzed were in the first and second year of the Dentistry course at the University of Western Australia and were between 18 and 34 years old, just like the students in the present study. The majority of the Dentistry students in Lawe-Davies' study were found to introduce their essays, in contrast to only five out of 60 Zoology students in this study. Given that Dentistry students had to answer an examination prompt utilizing similar rhetorical verbs ("discuss"), this contrast is interesting. One possible way to understand this dissimilarity is to reckon the fact that Dentistry is perhaps much more human-centered than Zoology and so more likely to involve interpretive elements. This might lead to rhetorical practices that take due cognizance of the reader/audience.

Since the main finding of the preliminary analysis does not have strong support from previous studies, it appears appropriate to look at other plausible reasons as to why the Zoology candidates hardly utilize introductions and conclusions. The first reason may be found in the interview data of both the faculty and the examinees. By their implicit as well as overt articulation of disciplinary norms, including features such as rhetoric, argumentation, and structuring (see Section 6.4.2), faculty prescribe the kind of writing to

be produced by undergraduates, who are just beginning to acquire the discourse in the respective disciplines. In particular, while the Humanities and Social Sciences faculty expected students to write well-structured essays containing introductions and conclusions, the Science faculty seemed less interested in these features. According to them, the presence/absence of the introductions and conclusions would depend on the kind of questions set, the objective of the course, and the level of the students. This view clearly finds support in the writing programme of the School of Biological Sciences in Sydney University, for junior undergraduate Biology students, as reported by Drury (2001).

Student interview data in turn show that students' views of disciplinary variation as it relates not only to rhetoric but also other aspects of academic literacy largely concurred with their lecturers' views. The general claim of all three groups of students in this study that they were aware of disciplinary variation (see Section 6.4.3), though not explicitly taught them by their lecturers, provides a possible explanation for the differences found between the English and Sociology texts as opposed to the Zoology texts.

In particular, the few introductions in Zoology could be explained by the kind of socialization that students might have gone through in their previous education and its possible continuation at the junior undergraduate level. If during the pre-university stage of their education, the Zoology (or Biology) students were least disposed to writing introductions and conclusions in their examination essays, chances are that having internalized this for at least three years in the secondary school, they will exhibit such tendency. This possible explanation of the Zoology students' lack of introductions and

conclusions is given a boost in the interview data, where they together with the other groups of students do not mention "organization" as a feature they require their subject teachers to comment on. The notion of the Zoology students' earlier socialization in explaining their relative non-use of introductions and conclusions sounds plausible.

The students' rhetorical behaviour in the present study also finds general support in theorization on disciplinary variation, as espoused by Bazerman (1981), Becher (1989), and MacDonald (1994), and as explored in other recent studies (Parry, 1998; Shahn & Costello, 2000). In particular, consistent with the findings of these studies on disciplinary differentiation, Zoology is noted to be farther away from English and Sociology in terms of discursiveness (see Section 2.2.1 for a detailed account of disciplinary variation). 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 and conclusions.

The rhetorical behaviour of the students in this study also accords with the notion of developmental writing in science, discussed in Drury (2001) and Shahn & Costello (2000); that is, the writing tasks and related conceptual demands made on students increase as they move from one lower to higher levels of education. The use of writing in science, in particular, first consists in getting students to recall facts, name concepts and processes, and summarize points, before moving on to the more complex conceptual task of establishing relationships. Thus, beginning students (like the Zoology students in this study) may be at the developmental stage where they think that science deals with identification of facts or quantitative problem-solving (Shahn & Costello, 2000), rather than explanations (Love, 1996). It is only in the later stages perhaps that students realize

that it is in the nature of science, and for that matter Zoology, to explain (Nagel, 1961; Ziman, 1984), embracing description and definition (Swales, 1982) as key ingredients of science rhetoric. Such a developmental view, rather than discounting the earlier explanation for disciplinary differences espoused by Becher (1989) and Bazerman (1981) tacitly recognizes that the interpretive nature of writing in the sciences occurs at a later stage of enculturation than it does for their counterparts in the Humanities and Social Sciences.

In contrast to the reasons above, the least likely reason for my preliminary finding could be the structure and content of the examination papers in the three disciplines in the present study. For instance, the Zoology paper comprised two sections, one containing a combination of 20 multiple-choice questions and 10 short (one-sentence) answers and the other containing the essay prompts. The English and Sociology examination papers in turn comprised 5 and 6 examination prompts respectively, with students asked to answer two. The scenario presented by the assessment practice in Zoology (the mixture of multiple-choice questions, one-sentence answers, and one essay answer) may be seen as a compromise between disciplinary behaviour and tertiary literacy, if the latter is viewed in a generalist sense.

In response to the second preliminary question (If so, how much textual space is given to the introduction and the conclusion relative to the essay as a whole?), two findings emerged from the analysis of examination essays:

- English and Sociology students allocated almost the same proportion of textual space to their introductions, 13% and 14% respectively, whereas the Zoology students devote only about 1%

- English and Sociology students allocated almost the same proportion of space to conclusions, 4%, while no textual space was allocated to conclusions by Zoology students.

These findings need explaining in order to relate them to the existing literature and the corroborating data. If we assume that both frequency of occurrence and textual space given to the two rhetorical units indicate their relative importance to the students, then we may conclude that introductions are deemed more rhetorically important than conclusions. This conclusion is not terribly surprising given several earlier studies' (e.g. Allison, 1992; Townsend *et al.,* 1993; Lukmani, 1994; Lawe-Davies, 1998) report that students do hardly conclude their examination essays.

What is surprising is the wide difference between the space given to the introductions and conclusions in the statistical data, showing that in terms of textual space conclusions in English and Sociology examination essays are given about 10% less space than introductions. Consequently, I decided to find out whether there was any published advice on the textual space to be given to introductions and conclusions. Instead of concentrating on earlier writing guides that focus on writing in such contexts as EAP and CS, I looked at more recent writing guides that incorporate the notion of disciplinary variation (e.g. Weissberg & Buker, 1990; Swales & Feak, 1994; Cooley & Lewkowicz, 2003; Ng, 2004; Oliver, 2004). Sadly, the search yielded no fruitful result. Although writing guides and manuals are silent on how much textual space to give to conclusions, either in relation to the whole text or to introductions, the minimal textual space given to conclusions may indicate an area that requires further pedagogical attention.

6.6   Chapter Conclusion

Chapter Six has provided a preliminary analysis of the examination prompts and the introductions and conclusions of the examination essays from the three disciplines investigated in this study. The first sought to find out to what extent the examination prompts could predict the expected rhetorical structure whereas the analysis of examination essays explored the possibility of disciplinary influence on the use of introductions and conclusions. While disciplinary context did not seem to offer a strong reason for possible differences in the expected rhetorical pattern of the answers based on the prompts, whether students introduced or concluded their essays did show disciplinary variation. Whereas English and Sociology essays tended to contain introductions and conclusions, only 8% of Zoology essays had introductions and none had conclusions. Secondly, English and Sociology students tended to allocate more space to introductions than conclusions, suggesting the relative importance of the former. In the next chapter, I examine the first research question with the view to showing the similarities and differences in the use of the two rhetorical features across the three disciplines from a Swalesian rhetorical approach.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION I

7. 0   Introduction

This chapter reports the results and interpretation of the findings related to the first research question, and comprises four main parts. Part One (Section 7.1) introduces the research question. Part Two (Sections 7.2-7.4) discusses the generic structure of the introductions in all three disciplines, while Part Three (Sections 7.5) focuses on the linguistic realization of the moves in these introductions. The final part of the chapter (Section 7.6) discusses findings on the moves and their linguistic realizations.

7.1   Research Question One: Introductions

The first research question is recapitulated here for ease of reference:

- What similarities and differences are evident in the introductions of student examination essays in English, Sociology, and Zoology?

This research question derives from the notion of writing as a socio-cultural activity (see Section 1.4). A modified version of Swales' (1990a) "rhetorical move" analysis is adopted in order to delineate the similarities and differences in introductions across the three disciplines (English, Sociology, and Zoology) in terms of the frequency of occurrence of each move, the textual space occupied by each move, and the sequencing of moves. The linguistic realization (corroborated by quantitative data) of the moves is also discussed to ascertain further similarities and differences.

The key findings of the above research question were as follows:

- Concerning the use of moves, similarity among all three groups of examinees (English, Sociology, and Zoology) was noted in the use of textual space, with Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) occupying the greatest space.

- The three disciplines differed in respect of the move-sequence, with English (45%) preferring a two-move-sequence, Sociology (67%) preferring a three-move sequence, and Zoology (80%), a one-move pattern.

- As well, the difference among the three groups of students occurred with respect to the frequency of moves, where Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) occurred most frequently in English and Zoology introductions (79% and 100% respectively), whereas Move 3 (previewing) occurred most frequently in Sociology introductions (95%).

- With respect to the use of linguistic features, the most striking finding relates to the use of personal pronouns, verbal processes, and metatextual expressions in Move 3 (previewing) of the English introductions as compared to the non-use of these same linguistic features in introductions of the other two disciplines, thus clearly setting the English introductions apart from the Sociology and Zoology introductions.

7.2   Frequency of Occurrence of Moves in the Introductions

This section provides a quantitative analysis of the occurrence of each of the moves. This is followed by a discussion that illustrates the moves. As outlined in Section 5.4, the introduction comprises three moves: Move 1 (contextualizing), Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)), and Move 3 (previewing).

In terms of frequency of occurrence, all three moves were expected to be present in students' examination essays across all three disciplines (English, Sociology, and Zoology), although my feeling was that Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) would be the most frequent move, as it represents the clearest opportunity for examinees to show their understanding of the examination prompt. Table 7.1 displays the frequency of occurrence of each of the three moves in the introductions.

Table 7.1 Frequency of Occurrence of Moves in the Introductions

Rhetorical Unit	English (n=56) Frequency	Sociology (n=60) Frequency	Zoology (n=5) Frequency
Move 1	30/56 (54%)	51/60 (85%)	
Move 2	44/56 (79%)	50/60 (83%)	5/5 (100%)
Move 3	43/56 (77%)	57/60 (95%)	1/5 (20%)

As shown in the table, both English and Sociology students employed all three moves, while Zoology students employed only Moves 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) and 3 (previewing). Secondly, Sociology candidates used all three moves much more consistently; English candidates used Moves 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) and 3 (previewing) more than Move 1, while Zoology candidates used Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) far more than Move 3 (previewing).

Given my expectation that Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) would be the most frequent, I found the Sociology students' preference for Move 3 (previewing) surprising. The Sociology students seem to have been more concerned with previewing the essay, while the English and Zoology students' frequent use of Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) tallied with my expectation.

A pertinent issue that needs to be addressed before explaining the above results on the frequency of occurrence of moves concerns the three functional categories themselves: contextualizing information/issues from the prompt, engaging closely with specific or key issues highlighted by the prompt, and previewing the structure of the entire essay. The functional categories of the introductions in my research do not tally with those in Kusel's (1992) study, as Kusel uses categories such as claiming centrality, previous research, and indicating gap (see Swales' 1990a CARS model). Obviously, the difference lies in the curriculum genres involved.

The difference in the frequency of moves, as noted earlier, is interesting for a number of reasons. First, for English, which constantly requires that students provide a thesis/purpose statement, it is surprising to note that it was Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) that appeared most frequently, although as indicated in Table 7.1 the difference in frequency of Moves 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) and 3 (previewing) is negligible. The second interesting issue is the similarity of English and Zoology introductions in respect of the frequency of occurrence of moves, given that both disciplines use Move 2 more frequently than the other moves. It is difficult to hazard any possible interpretation for this similarity, except to say that both disciplines value

conciseness highly, which might be taken by students to mean engaging specifically with the issues in the prompt rather than some contextualization devices.

7.3   Textual Space Occupied by the Moves in the Introductions

Based on my teaching experience with undergraduates in my own, and other, departments, and my interaction with faculty and students during discussion sessions, I expected that examinees across the three disciplines would allocate more textual space to Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)). It was expected that the frequency of occurrence together with the textual space allocated to a move could determine the relative importance that students attach to a particular move.

As explained in Section 5.4, Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) indicates the students' commitment to answering the question prompt set in the examination. Table 7.2 captures the textual space given to each of the three moves in the introduction by the three groups of students.

Table 7.2 Textual Space Allocated to Moves in the Introductions

Rhetorical Unit	English (T-units=284)	Sociology (T-units=404)	Zoology (T-units=6)
Move 1			
Number of words	801	1952	-
T-units	70 (25%)	130 (32%)	-
Mean T-units	2.3	2.5	-
Move 2			
Number of words	2275	2516	81
T-units	131 (46%)	167 (41%)	5 (83%)
Mean T-units	2.9	3.3	1
Move 3			
Number of words	1210	2135	5
T-units	83 (29%)	107 (27%)	1 (17%)
Mean T-units	1.9	1.8	1

As can be seen from Table 7.2, in terms of percentages, 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%). Zoology students used only two moves (Moves 2 and 3), with more space allocated to Move 2 (83%) than to Move 3 (17%). So, in terms of the textual space allocated to each move, we can conclude that Move 2 is more important than Moves 1 and 3 to the examinees in all three disciplines; in other words, in respect of textual space, Move 2 could be said to be the core move in all three disciplines

Essentially, the aim of the ensuing sub-section is to corroborate the quantitative data by offering examples that exemplify this preference as well as those that depart from it. Examples in English are offered, followed by those in Sociology and Zoology. Below are unedited samples of English introductions in response to EEP 1 which allocated the greatest space to Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)). This distribution of moves allows examinees to commit themselves more engagingly with the issue under discussion while indicating how they intend to answer the questions in the rest of the essays. (The different moves are highlighted in different ways: Move 1 is in bold; Move 2 is underlined; and Move 3 is italicized).

7.1 **'He was buried without a coffin, without a grave'. This forwarding line of Jared Angira's 'No Coffin No Grave' relates directly to the title itself**. (**Move 1**) <u>The poem is about a politician who has been murdered and has been buried in contrast to how he wished to be buried .The narrator points out that the politician who represents the rich or the 'big' men in society lived a good life and he wished that the sort of life to be part of his death one day; 'he wished to be buried in a gold-laden coffin, like a VIP …beside his palace… much bee at the funeral party'</u>. (**Move 2**) *The poem uses several devices such as metaphor, personification, oxymoron, simile, allusion, alliteration, repetition, and symbol but for the purpose of this essay we shall look at personification, symbol and oxymoron.* (**Move 3**) (EST 8)

7.2   **Sonnets are fourteen- line poems usually written by great poets**. (**Move 1**)
      They normally have nice rhyming pattern at the end of their lines. This nice
      rhyming pattern most at times is made up of three quatrains and a couplet. The
      quatrains contain the message or argument or advice of the poet and the couplet
      either sums up the whole poem or answers questions asked in the quatrains. The
      rhyming pattern in most cases is ab, ab, cd, cd, ef, ef, gg. (**Move 2**) *For the*
      purpose of this essay, I would talk about two Shakespearean sonnets namely 12
      and 18. The former is 'When I do count the clock that says the time" and the
      latter is "Shall I compare thee with summer's day". (**Move 3**)
      (EST 45)

Sometimes Move 2 in English introductions, occupying the greatest space as indicated in

Table 7.2, tended to use a string of subordinate clauses, making the introduction long, as

in the following:

7.3   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)

There were also three instances out of 56 introductions where Move 2 was far

longer than the mean of 2.9 T-units for the English introductions, as indicated in Table

7.2. In Example 7.4, as illustrated below, Move 2 is spread over 7 T-units. As is evident,

the length could be attributed to the candidate's attempt at narrating the story in the

poem.

7.4   **"No Coffin No Grave" is a poem which theme is based on dictatorship.**
      (**Move 1**). The poem talks about a man who was a politician and lived as he
      pleased under the influence of his money. Not even the "the Lord of the bar", that
      is the judges, could control him. He was buried without a coffin or a grave but he
      had wished to be buried like a VIP in a golden coffin under a jacaranda tree
      beside his palace" Scavengers performed the post-mortem in front of a night club
      where he was left to rot. Basically we realize that his bad deeds created a lot of
      enemies for him that was the reason why he was left there to rot and vultures to
      eat him up. It really served as a lesson for people who think they can use their
      money to rule the world. (**Move 2**) *Many dominant literary devices were*
      employed in Jared Angira's "No Coffin No Grave". Some of these literary
      devices are personification, imagery, irony, symbolism, simile among others. All

the above mentioned devices are significant but only three which are personification, imagery and irony are going to be discussed in this essay. (**Move 3)**
(EST 14)

There were 5 English introductions that showed either Move 1 (contextualizing) or Move 3 (previewing) occupying the greatest space. Example 7.5, for example, shows Move 3 occupying much space in terms of the number of T-units.

7.5 **"No Coffin No Grave" written by Jared Angira is a poem about dictatorship**. (**Move 1**) It is about a politician who thought he was an important person in the society and wished to be buried in a golden coffin or have a state burial. The irony of this whole issue is seen when he is buried without a coffin and without a grave. (**Move 2**) *There are a lot of literary devices used. Some of these are onomatopoeia, personification, simile, symbolism, imagery, irony and many others. I would, therefore, like to talk about the most dominant literary devices used. These are personification, symbolism and irony.* (**Move 3**)
(EST 3)

To recap, as far as textual space given to each move is concerned, clearly, Move 2 occupies the greatest space, and can be subsequently described as the typical rhetorical behaviour of the English examinees, although a few overdid it, taking into consideration the total length of their essays.

I now offer examples of Sociology introductions. In general, Sociology examinees allocated textual space to the three moves, contextualizing, engaging closely with issues(s), and previewing, in much the same way as the English students did, although the absolute textual space in terms of T-units tended to be greater than those in the other two disciplines. Examples 7.6 and 7.7 illustrate the default distribution of moves:

7.6 **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**) <u>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.</u> (**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)

7.7 **Sex is the stimulation of the sexual organ by the male and female organ to reach a point of orgasm and ecstasy.** (**Move 1**) <u>Sex is a very important in marriage and it is done between a man and a woman. Without sex, there will be no procreation (reproduction) and without procreation there will be no body on this earth. Sex is therefore very important to continue generations to generations. Sex amongst married couples should be something that is done for the enjoyment of the couple and to satisfy the sexual desires and most importantly to procreate.</u> (**Move 2**) *There are however certain sexual paraphelia (abnormalities) which cause so much harm and negative impact on most people's marriages. Some of the common sexual paraphelia are homosexuality, auto-eroticism, narcissism, corprophelia, zoophelia, urophelia, necrophilia, voyeurism, exhibitionism, frotterism, and paedophelia.* (**Move 3**)
(SST 31)

Seven out of 60 Sociology examinees tended to show more commitment to Move 2 by allocating far more space than the mean T-units (3.3) indicated in Table 7.2, as shown by Example 7.8:

7.8   **Sigmund Freud and his psycho-analysis theory introduced sex in sociology. According to Freud, sex is very important and it involves almost every human activities. He grouped sex under conscious and unconscious. Sociologists define sex as the stimulation of the sexual organs involving the individuals to the point of orgasm and ejaculation usually expressed in ecstasy and sublime passion**. (**Move 1**) But sometimes we have people who are also not married engaging in sex. This depends on the socio-cultural practices pertaining in such societies. For instance, among the Arabs and Indians, it is a taboo to engage in pre-marital sex. People found in such situations are either stoned to death or given severe lashes. And this is found among most Moslem communities. But among some societies such as the Naya in the South Pacific, premarital sex is despised. In such societies, when the young girls get pregnant and they deliver, the family takes care of the children. Among other societies too when a young man gets to the age of adolescent, he has sex. (**Move 2**) *Sexual paraphelia arises when people, thus either man or woman does not have sex the normal way. This indicates that some people have so many ways of satisfying themselves sexually. Some of the sexual paraphelia include homosexuality, auto-eroticism, paedophelia, and zoophelia. They have many negative effects on marriage.* (**Move 3**)
(SST 50)

Five Sociology introductions did not conform to the preferred textual allocation of moves as more textual space was given to Move 3 (previewing).   Also, a few Sociology introductions either had space equally allocated to Move 3 and Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)), or in rare cases, Move 3 occupied more space in terms of T-units than either Move 2 or Move 1. For instance, in Example 7.9, Move 3 occupies more space (3 T-units) than the other moves, while in Example 7.10, Moves 2 and 3 are given equal space in terms of number of T-units:

7.9   **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)

7.10   **Marriage, according to Randall Collins is "the socially and culturally approved and sanctioned union of men and women who are to perform certain social functions and also satisfied certain biological impulse.** (**Move 1**) This marriage relationship involves love, exclusive cohabitation, child bearing and reproduction. When people get marriage, they normally go for a honeymoon. This is a western culture that has been adopted by many nations such as Ghana. During this honeymoon interaction period people get to know themselves better. If the couples have not involved themselves intimately. (**Move 2**) *Following the honeymoon interaction is disillusionment. This is the period the couples especially the woman begin to say certain things about the man like is that how you are. This disillusionment is followed by marital conflict or violence. This essay is intended to demonstrate some of the circumstances that will give rise to this marital violence.* (**Move 3**)
(SST 3)

Turning to the Zoology introductions in the samples below, apart from Example 7.11, each of the remaining Zoology introductions utilizes only one T-unit for Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) which manifests in defining the concepts "diffusion" and "osmosis" as a way of showing commitment to answering the two examination prompts (ZEP 1 and ZEP 2).

7.11   Bone is one of the two main components of the skeletal system or tissue. The other one is the cartilage. (ZST 17)

7.12   Bone is skeletal connective tissue that is associated with support and movement in vertebrates. (ZST 28)

7.13   Diffusion and osmosis are processes by which molecules or substances move in a cell or across a cell. (ZST 44)

7.14   Diffusion and osmosis are among the process that substance cross the plasma membrane of cells. (ZST 49).

The examples presented so far allow us to see the similarity of the three disciplines, English, Sociology, and Zoology, as more space is allocated to Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) than the remaining two moves in all examples, except Examples 7.5, 7.9, and 7.10.

One explanation for this general trend may be the written task which the students are engaged in. Since it is Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) which offers examinees the opportunity right from the beginning to evince understanding and to make a lasting impression on readers, it is not surprising that all groups of students preferred this move. Students deepen specificity in their answers through references to names of, for instance, devices, places, organisms, and authorities in their respective disciplines. Students are aware of the need to show more commitment to answering the examination prompts, and ultimately display their grasp of the conceptual terrain laid out in their various courses or disciplines. Hence, they take pains to define key terms and use lexical reiteration in order to show their understanding of the exam prompt.

The next move after Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) which occupies a relatively large space tended to be Move 3 (previewing) for English and Zoology introductions and Move 1 (contextualizing) for Sociology students. In respect of this observation, a case can be made for the influence of disciplinary ethos, the views of faculty and students as well as student preference. Students and lecturers in the Department of Sociology concede the diverse and expansive terrain of Sociology and the need to effectively structure or organize essays for the benefit of the reader. The Humanities faculty's insistence on an introduction being "concise" and "straightforward" may imply reference to acceptable use of textual space and, by inference, effective use of moves in their introduction. Equally so is a course instructor's (ZLI 1) perception that "padding" in introductions is superfluous in Zoology as mentioned earlier (see Section 6.4.2).

While it may be difficult to accept the Zoology course lecturer's equating backgrounding (or contextualization) with padding, it is understandable why no background is offered in the few Zoology introductions in my data set, which seems to concur with the answers in Biology as found in Drury' s (2001) work. The question remains whether backgrounding ought to be labelled as "padding", a feature Becher (1989) seems to identify with softer disciplines, including, ostensibly, Sociology. Based on evidence from the textual data, it would appear that when backgrounding is overdone, then padding sets in. Moreover, the issue of whether backgrounding is overdone or not will depend on the whole texts as well as the judgment of the disciplinary specialists.

Nonetheless, it is worth considering Scarcella's (1984) view on backgrounding. First, Scarcella explains the differences in orientation (introduction) in terms of the profile of students (native and non-native students) in her study. More importantly, Scarcella argues that non-native students tend to include a lot of backgrounding in their essays while native students include just what is necessary as background information. In contrast to Scarcella's explanation, I argue that backgrounding and other contextualization elements in the introduction may be influenced by disciplinary norms.

The use of Move 3 (previewing) as the next move that occupies a relatively large space in the English and Sociology introductions can be understood from the comment of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts:

> How would I know clearly the thrust of your argument if you don't articulate it from the beginning? I expect that students would orient me towards their own stance taken in an argument. I mean their thesis statement. In other words, I expect students to start carefully with a background and then gradually lead to their thesis statement.
>
> (DAI)

On his part, one course lecturer in the English Department (ELI 1) indicated the need for a "concise introduction", without any further elaboration. Although such comments from the Humanities faculty do not explicitly relate to moves, and, in particular, Move 3 (previewing), they do show a concern with maximizing the impact of the introduction, in general, and the implied relevance of textual space, in particular.

Apart from faculty's implicit views on the relative textual space given to the various moves in the introductions, most English and Sociology students interviewed recognized the need for introductions but declined to make further comments on the nature of introductory paragraphs, perhaps because they do not possess the metacognitive knowledge to talk about such moves, just like the faculty members in their departments. The majority of Zoology students interviewed did not mention introductions as important elements in their essays, although 3 out of 15 students said that an examination essay has to be well-organized. Those who did mention organization felt that an introduction needs to be "straightforward" (ZSI 2), "straight to the point" (ZSI 6), and "brief" (ZSI 9). Pressed to clarify these terms, they often explained them in terms of length – "it should not be long as if you are writing a History paper" (ZSI 6).

From the above discussion, it is clear that the textual space given to particular moves could represent an important aspect of student writing of introductions. The overall picture of Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) occupying the largest textual space in the three disciplines notwithstanding, there are also noticeable differences in the comments of students and faculty on textual space, based on both the textual and interview data from both students and faculty. Granted, the interview data provide very little specific information about the relative textual space of each move, but overt

references to conciseness and straightforwardness of introduction, thesis/purpose statement, and padding as shown in the discussion above, suggest the importance of textual space in the introductions of students' essays.

7.4   Sequencing of Moves in the Introductions

In terms of the sequencing of moves, my expectation was that a three-move pattern that systematically proceeds from contextualizing to previewing would be required for an effective essay across the three participating disciplines in this study. Moreover, the CS programme, which all the examinees had taken, explicitly taught them a similar (general to a specific) pattern. Table 7.3 below shows the actual sequence of moves in the present study.

Table 7.3 Sequence of Moves in the Introductions

Pattern	English (n=56)	Sociology (n=60)	Zoology (n=5)
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 (20%)**
1>2	8 (32%)	2 (12%)	-
1>3	4 (16%)	8 (47%)	-
2>1	-	1 (6%)	-
2>3	13 (52%)	6 (35%)	1 (100%)
1 Move	**11 (20%)**	**3 (5%)**	**4 (80%)**
1	-	3 (100%)	-
2	5 (46%)	-	4 (100%)
3	6 (55%)	-	-

Regarding sequence of moves in both English and Sociology introductions, two key findings can be noted. First, it was observed that most of the examination essays had a clear linear Move 1 > 2 > 3 pattern. Second, the three disciplines had different preferences in respect of the kind of move-sequence, with English (45%) preferring a two-move-sequence, Sociology (67%) preferring a three-move sequence, and Zoology (80%), a one-move pattern. The one move-pattern of both English and Sociology was far less frequent than their two-move and three-move patterns, which were also more varied.

I now illustrate the sequence of moves across all three disciplines, starting with the English introductions. Where all three moves are used, as Table 7.3 shows, the English students tended to start with Move 1 (contextualizing), followed by Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)), then Move 3 (previewing), as shown in Examples 7.15 and 7.16 below:

7.15 **Jared Angira's "No Coffin, No Grave" is quite an interesting poem**. (**Move 1**) The poem talks about a very important personality, more precisely a politician who enriched himself with the state wealth at the expense of the masses. As if that is not enough, this politician wanted to be given a fitting burial. (**Move 2**) *The poet's use of three main literary devices to bring out his message. They are irony, diction, and imagery.* (**Move 3**)
(EST 11)

7.16 **Structure is of great significance when it comes to poems especially sonnets. The arrangement of the ideas in sonnets is very important since it will enhance the smooth reading of it and its clearer understanding to the reader.** (**Move 1**) The structure of sonnets can be in various forms. We can have an octave and a sestet, three quatrains, and a couplet and other forms which is not important due to the demand of this question. (**Move 2**) *The structure of two sonnets studied in class has the same structure which is three quatrains and a couplet for each. Shakespeare's sonnets 3 and 12 have three quatrains each. The quatrains raise and discuss the issues and the couplet concludes or give suggestions to the issues raised and discussed in the quatrains.* (**Move 3**)
(EST 34)

Moving to the Sociology introductions, we see that almost twice the number of Sociology students as English students as shown in Table 7.3 employed the three-move sequence. Examples 7.17 and 7.18 illustrate this pattern.

7.17   **Marriage as defined by Randall Collins is socially and culturally approved or union between a man and woman to perform certain biological and social functions. That is, marriage can be defined as a personal relationship between two people involving love, sex, and child-rearing.** (**Move 1**) <u>Every society recognizes its importance, hence the rules and regulations regarding it. These rules ensure that the rights and privileges in marriage are mutually shared by the man and woman</u> (**Move 2**) *Unfortunately, there are some circumstances that sometimes give rise to marital violence are first sexual problems, second, finance, third, unfulfilled dreams, fourth, extra-marital affairs and arrival of children in the marriage.* (**Move 3**)
(SST 23)

7.18   **Sex is defined as the stimulation of the sexual organs involving two people, usually a male and a female, to the point orgasm and ejaculation expressed in ecstasy and sublime passion.** (**Move 1**) <u>To me, sex is very important in one's live because without it man becomes extinct.</u> (**Move 2**) *But we should also note that anything good has its relative problems or disadvantages. Sex as we see it can make and unmake a marriage and one of the major factors associated with sex that can unmake marriage is sexual paraphelia (abnormalities). They are abnormalities because they go too much beyond what a normal human should do.* (**Move 3**)
(SST 34)

The examples above illustrate what the Sociology students typically did, that is, they proceed from contextualizing through to previewing, anytime the three-move sequence was resorted to. Only in a few instances did Sociology examinees use other patterns as in Example 7.19, where the pattern was contextualizing > engaging closely with issue(s) > contextualizing > previewing.

7.19   **Marriage is socially and culturally approved and sanctioned union of man and woman to perform social functions and to satisfy biological impulses.** (**Move 1**) Marital violence is the disagreement between married couples, that is, the husband and the wife in marriage. (**Move 2**) **There are certain reasons why people marry which include sex, procreation, economic reasons, prestige, and other reasons which make marriage an institution.** (**Move 1**) *Marriage as an institution has its own problems such as lack of finances, extra marital affairs, bearing of children, sexual problems, lack of communication, pressure from in-laws and many others.* (**Move 3**)
(SST 28)

From the three-move sequence, I now turn to the two-move sequence in the English introductions. From the two-sequence move of English introductions (see Table 7.3), it can be argued that contextualizing > previewing is the dominant pattern. That is, if an examinee starts the introduction with Move 1 (contextualizing), it is most probable that s/he will continue with either Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) or Move 3 (previewing). This means also that often if a candidate starts the introduction with Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)), the next most probable move is Move 3 (previewing), and not Move 1 (contextualizing). Examples 7.20 and 7.21 illustrate this point:

7.20   Jared Angira's "No Coffin No Grave" is a very powerful poem written to criticize those who take themselves to be "very important personalities" in society. It could be given the theme "social criticism". (**Move 2**) *It has been strengthened with a lot of literary devices. But the three I am going to talk about are personification, imagery and oxymoron.* (**Move 3**)
(EST 4)

7.21   **Structure in poetry can be defined as the poet's division of the poem into various stanzas, the idea conveyed in each stanza, rhyming scheme and its importance to the overall poem.** (**Move 1**) *Sonnet is a poem of fourteen lines and it seems all the sonnets treated had similar forms and it is in one stanza.* (**Move 2**)
(EST 47)

Similar to the three-move sequence utilized by the English students, a minimal number of English students (4) preferred an atypical sequence, as shown in Examples

7.22 and 7.23 with Move 3 (previewing) preceding Move 2 (engaging closely with

issue(s)):

7.22   *In Jared Angira's "No Coffin No Grave" the poet uses several literary devices. Some of these devices are metaphors, repetitions and narration. All these play very important roles in the poem. The poet in addition to other things uses these devices to come out with his theme.* (**Move 3**) <u>In this poem the poet talks about a politician who after enjoying all the power and wealth he could at the expense of the ordinary citizen died a nasty death and had a burial which is unbefitting to his position in society.</u> (**Move 2**)
(EST 24)

7.23   *Making reference to sonnets 18 and 12, I would comment on the structure of the sonnets, written by Shakespeare.* (**Move 3**) <u>Generally, these sonnets talk about time as their subject matter. They are also in three (3) quatrains and a couplet. Couplets usually conclude argue or give solutions to the quatrains.</u> (**Move 2**)
(EST 48)

As indicated in Table 7.3, the Sociology students also typically ended their two-

move introduction with Move 3 (previewing), as illustrated below in Examples 7.24 and

7.25:

7.24   <u>When two people are married, it is expected that the state of intoxicated (euphoria) love would never stop.</u> (**Move 2**) *As human institution where the two people interact socially there is bound to be violence or conflict which is concomitant of social interaction by Professor Ali Mazuri. The factors or circumstances that give rise to marital conflict are many, but the most prominent among them are the following.* (**Move 3**)
(SST 14)

7.25   <u>A sexual abnormality is any deviation from the normal or the accepted way that sex is supposed to be practiced in your society.</u> (**Move 2**) *Some of the sexual abnormalities are paedophelia, homosexuality, and lesbianism, urophelia, croprophelia, and voyeurism.* (**Move 3**)
(SST 36)

Not all the two-move Sociology introductions followed this pattern, however.

Three Sociology introductions start immediately with the issue as laid out in the prompt

(Move 2) and only after that do they attempt to offer Move 1 (contextualizing), as

illustrated in Example 7.26.

7.26   Sexual abnormalities are occurrences which have got negative effects on marriages. (**Move 2**) **Sex is an intensive ritual, (because it brings to fore, the innermost feelings between the male and female normally. It is a face-to-face interaction between the opposite sexes. Sex is the stimulation of the sexual organ to achieve orgasm and ejaculation in ecstasy and sublimeness.** (**Move 1**)
(SST 54)

Finally, moving to the Zoology introductions, I found that the only Zoology examinee who composed a two-move introduction used Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) and Move 3 (previewing) in that order. Move 2 consisted of a definition, followed by Move 3 which gives hints of the structure of the entire essay, as shown in Example 7.27.

7.27   Diffusion and osmosis are processes by which molecules or substances move in a cell or across a cell. (**Move 2**) *The differences are listed below* (**Move 3**)
(ZST 44)

While Examples 7.15 to 7.26 reflect the typical and atypical move-sequence in the English and Sociology introductions, no Zoology introductions illustrated the atypical move-sequences demonstrated in the other two disciplines.

It is worth reiterating at this stage that roughly 20% and 5% of the English and Sociology introductions, respectively, utilized only one move. Only the English introductions manifested a one-move pattern comprising Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)). That all the three one-move Sociology introductions preferred Move 1, contextualizing, might suggest that for these Sociology students contextualizing is important in answering the examination prompt. But since these one-move introductions do not technically represent a move sequence, no examples are offered here. Moreover, the fact that only few English and Sociology students utilized a one-move introduction

seems to suggest their being atypical and that possibly their use may be a pragmatic device.

An equally important observation in the introductions produced by the three groups of students concerns the use of a core move. Whether a move is core or not depends on both its frequency and the textual space allocated to it, a particularly complex issue to decide in this study when we consider it both across the three disciplines and within each of the three disciplines. Across the disciplines, Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) is seen to be the core move in terms of textual space, although the same cannot be said when considered from the perspective of frequency of occurrence. English and Zoology are alike, because from both the perspectives of frequency of move and textual space, Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) is found to be the core move. On the other hand, the core move of Sociology introductions differs in respect of frequency of occurrence and textual space, being Move 3 (previewing) and Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) respectively.

That students from the three disciplines, in general, preferred the Move 1 > 2 > 3 pattern in the sequencing of moves may be attributable to two main reasons. The first point relates to a "cultural explanation" (Kelly *et al.,* 2000), that is, the institutional demand that exposes students to English rhetorical convention (see Section 2.2.2) as taught in CS. My awareness of the nature and teaching and learning of CS is based on my experience as an instructor of CS for five years prior to the commencement of the present study and an informal interview with the CS Programme Coordinator, a colleague and also a member of the Department of English. Students' preference of the Move 1 > 2 > 3 pattern can very likely be attributed to the influence of the teaching of CS, which

explicitly instructs students to include contextualization information and thesis statements/preview in their essays. From the faculty interview data, it can be argued that English and Sociology course lecturers reinforce writing instructions given in the writing programme; they insist on effective structuring of an essay as potentially valuable in distinguishing between essays with almost the same content. This could mean examinees appropriate an effective rhetorical pattern in framing the introduction.

A second explanatory factor for the similarity in the Move 1 > 2 > 3 pattern could be the medium of instruction: English. When it comes to the use of English in academic writing, Ghana represents a unique site, where, for most children in urban areas, literacy in English starts earlier than that in the indigenous languages. Owusu-Ansah (1998:78), for instance, observes that "reading and writing are virtually restricted to the English language". By the time a student from an urban Ghanaian community goes to university, s/he will have had English language education for 14 years. (See Ghana's educational system in Fig. 4.1.) Thus, most Ghanaian undergraduates acquire competency in handling rhetorical conventions in English earlier than in their local languages. Consequently, the similarity in the use of the prototypical move 1 > 2 > 3 sequence in the introduction across all three disciplines in the present research may derive from this socio-linguistic context, however remote or speculative this explanation may be.

7.5   Linguistic Realization of Moves in the Introductions

The aim of a genre analyst is not only to identify and describe the main rhetorical moves but also to describe the linguistic features (Bhatia, 1993; Connor 2000) instantiating the moves. To describe these linguistic features identifiable in the moves, this section is

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organized in two parts. The first part displays the distribution of the key linguistic features across all three moves in the selected disciplines; the second part illustrates the quantitative data, showing specifically the linguistic features that help to realize the three moves.

At the outset, it is worthwhile noting three points. The first is that the linguistic features that were found to be important discursive practices of the introductions included the verb category, personal pronoun, listing, evaluative terms, and metatextual elements. Whether they were actually used depended on the rhetorical functions of the specific moves. The second point concerns the meaning that is imputed to these linguistic features. The verb category includes voice, tense, and process types; with respect to the latter, Halliday's functional grammar provides terms such as verbal, mental, material, and relational processes. The discussion on tense is limited to the finite verb form while the pronouns that are of interest in this study are the discursive type such as "I", "we" and "you". Based on the preliminary analysis, two types of listing were noted: direct, where the candidate itemizes either activities or entities; and indirect, where the candidate alludes indirectly to a list such as "aforementioned points". Evaluative terms refer to expressions that allow examinees to reflect their attitude or judgment towards specific issue(s) expected to be addressed in the exam prompt. Thus, in the present work, any expression of attitude that had no bearing on the prompt was not considered. Metatextual elements in the introductions of the present work were restricted to linguistic features that indicate the previewing or outlining of an essay; these were typically purpose expressions such as "will focus on" and "intends to discuss".

7.5.1   Quantitative Data on Linguistic Features

This section provides a quantitative analysis of the key linguistic features found to be

pertinent to the instantiation of specific moves, starting with Move 1, and then Move 2,

and finally Move 3. The significance of the quantitative data in Tables 7.4-7.6 is then

discussed in Section 7.6.

Table 7.4 Distribution of Linguistic Features in Move 1

Linguistic Features	English Freq/total T-unit (%)	Sociology Freq/total T-unit (%)
Voice of Verb		
Active	62/70 (88.6)	98/130 (75.4)
Passive	8/70 (11.4)	32/130 (24.6)
Process Types		
Relational	52/70 (74.3)	80/130 (61.5)
Material	18/70 (25.7)	30/130 (23.1)
Verbal	0/70 (0)	19/130 (14.6)
Mental	0/70 (0)	1/130 (0.8)
Verb Tense		
Present	65/70 (92.9)	116/130 (89.2)
Past	5/70 (7.1)	14/130 (10.8)
Personal Pronoun		
We	1/70 (1.4)	1/130 (0.8)
Evaluative Term		
Adjective	4/70 (5.7)	-

Table 7.4 displays the distribution of the main discursive features: verb process

types/tense/voice, personal pronouns, and evaluative terms. As can be seen from Table

7.4, there are both similarities and differences in the distribution of the various linguistic

features. In general, both English and Sociology have much more in common when

considering voice, verb processes, and verb tenses: the active, relational and material

process types, and present tense are used in greater proportion by both groups of students.

A closer look reveals that in the specific use of the past tense and verbal processes,

Sociology students tended to record slightly higher percentages, 10.8% and 14%, when compared with the 7.1% and 0% of the English students. Another difference also concerns the English candidates' use of evaluative terms, though only four instances were observed in Move 1.

Next, Table 7.5 displays the distribution of the linguistic instantiations of Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) across all three disciplines (English, Sociology, and Zoology). Zoology students, as may be noted, did include Move 2 in their essay answers.

Table 7.5 Distribution of Linguistic Features in Move 2

Linguistic Features	English Freq/T-unit (%)	Sociology Freq/T-unit (%)	Zoology Freq/T-unit (%)
Voice of Verb			
Active	101/131 (77)	120/167 (71.9)	5/5 (100)
Passive	30/131 (23)	47/167 (28.1)	0/5 (0)
Verb Types			
Relational	57/131 (43.5)	83/167 (49.7)	5/5 (100)
Material	47/131 (35.9)	60/167 (35.9)	0/5 (0)
Verbal	22/131 (16.8)	8/167 (4.8)	0/5 (0)
Mental	5/131 (3.8)	16/167 (9.6)	0/5 (0)
Verb Tense			
Present	109/131 (83.2)	158/167 (94.6)	5/5/100
Past	22/131 (16.8)	9/167 (5.4)	0/5 (0)
Personal Pronoun			
We	6/131 (4.6)	0/167 (0)	0/5 (0)
You	3/131 (2.3)	0/167 (0)	0/5 (0)
Evaluative Term			
Adjective	4/131 (3)	5/167 (2.9)	0/5 (0)
Noun	2/131 (1.5)	0/167 (0)	0/5 (0)
Adverb	2/131 (1.5)	0/167 (0)	0/5 (0)
Listing			
Direct	0/131 (0)	4/167 (2.4)	0/5 (0)
Indirect	4/131 (3)	4/167 (2.4)	0/5 (0)

According to Table 7.5, there are clear similarities and differences in the linguistic features that instantiate the moves across the three disciplines. Concerning the verb

category, the active, relational process types, and the present tense remain greatly used by examinees in both disciplines, with Sociology recording slightly higher percentages; the exception concerns the past tense where the English students (16.8%) tended to record a slightly higher usage than the Sociology students (5.4%). A further striking point of difference to note from Table 7.5 is the English students' use of the personal pronouns (6.9%) as well as evaluative terms (6%) as compared to the Sociology students' use of the same linguistic features, 0% and 2.9% respectively.

The last table (Table 7.6) shows the distribution of key linguistic features instantiations of Move 3 (previewing) across all three disciplines (English, Sociology, and Zoology).

Table 7.6 Distribution of Linguistic Features in Move 3

Linguistic features	English Freq/T-unit (%)	Sociology Freq/T-unit (%)	Zoology Freq/T-unit (%)
Voice of Verb			
Active	76/83 (91.6)	94/107 (87.9)	0/1 (0)
Passive	7/83 (8.4)	13/107 (12.1)	1/1 (100)
Verb Types			
Relational	30/83 (36.1)	62/107 (57.9)	0/1 (0)
Material	39/83 (47)	40/107 (37.4)	1/1 (100)
Verbal	13/83 (15.7)	3/107 (2.8)	0/1 (0)
Mental	1/83 (1.2)	2/107 (1.9)	0/1 (0)
Verb Tense			
Present	70/83 (84.3)	107/107 (100)	1/1 (100)
Past	13/83 (15.7)	0/107 (0)	0/1 (0)
Personal Pronoun			
I	12/83 (14.5)	0/107 (0)	0/1 (0)
We	3/83 (3.6)	2/107 (1.8)	0/1 (0)
Evaluative Terms			
Adjective	11/83 (13.3)	2/107 (1.9)	0/1 (0)
Noun	2/83 (2.4)	0/107 (0)	0/1 (0)
Adverb	0/83 (0)	3/107 (2.8)	0/1 (0)
Listing			
Direct	22/83 (26.5)	17/107 (15.9)	0/1 (0)
Indirect	7/83 (8.4)	3/107 (4.7)	0/1 (0)
Metatextual elements	25/83/30	5/107/4.7	0/1/0

Table 7.6 indicates that English, Sociology, and Zoology are alike in terms of the frequency of use of verb tense, with percentage scores of 84.3, 100, and 100 respectively. There are obvious differences, though. For instance, both English and Sociology students tended to use evaluative terms, metatextual terms, and listing, with the percentage scores for English in respect of these three features being higher than those for Sociology. Additionally, Sociology (100%) and Zoology (100%) introductions also showed higher percentage scores over the English introductions (84.3%) with respect to the use of the present tense. Further, in the use of personal pronouns, the percentage score for the

English students (18.1%) was far more than that of the Sociology students (1.8%). No personal pronouns were used by the Zoology students.

7.5 .2   Illustrations of Linguistic Realizations in English Introductions

The linguistic forms used in Move 1 (contextualizing), Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) and Move 3 (previewing) are illustrated in turn in order to show to what extent each move is typified by specific linguistic features.

With respect to Move 1 (contextualizing) in introductions answering the first examination prompt (EEP 1), English examinees contextualized their information by repeating key terms indicated in the prompts. As expected, the terms that occupy the grammatical subject position differ from one answer to the other. Even in essay answers to the same prompt, the grammatical subjects differ as indeed can be found in Examples 7.28-7.30 below. The repetition of different key terms – "No Coffin No Grave", "Jared Angira", "Literary devices", and "Fitting burial" – may reflect differences in individual style.

7.28   'No Coffin No Grave' is a poem written by Jared Angira, a poet from East Africa, precisely from Kenya. (EST 9)

7.29   Fitting burial is the earnest desire of every person who dies. However, it would be very disgusting and unbearable when, if possible, the dead realizes that he or she was not given what he wanted. (EST 16)

7.30   Literary devices are used to make poems beautiful, rich, and interesting. (EST 20)

Also recognizable in Examples 7.29-7.30 is the use of evaluative terms. It is important, however, to establish the fact that the main object that is expected to warrant evaluation is the literary text, 'No Coffin No Grave'. As can be seen from Examples

7.29-7.30, the evaluative terms tended to be adjectives. The use of evaluative terms such as "beautiful", "rich", and "interesting" in Example 7.30 attests to this. The use of "disgusting" and "unbearable" in Example 7.29 were not considered as they do not directly relate to the literary text.

The next examples of English introductions, a response to EEP 2, provide orientation for the reader by not only repeating the key terms in the examination prompt – "structure" and "sonnet" – but also by defining them. Similar to the repetition of key terms in Examples 7.28-7.30, different words derived from the examination prompt (EEP 2) such as "structure" and "sonnet" are repeated in Examples 7.31-7.33. Additionally, a key difference between the two sets of examples (7.28-7.30 and 7.31-7.33) is the occurrence of definitions: they are absent in the first examples, but present in the examples below. Moreover, the examinees in Example 7.31-7.32 offer no evaluative terms with regard to the two selected poems as was done in the previous examples, 7.29-7.30.

7.31   Structure in poetry can be defined as the poet's division of the poem into various stanzas, the idea conveyed in each stanza, rhyming scheme, and it's (sic) importance to the overall poem. (EST 47)

7.32   A sonnet is a poem that contains basically fourteen lines (EST 51)

7.33   Sonnet is a poem of fourteen lines (EST 59)

In both sets of examples (Example 7.28-7.29 and 7.32-7.33), we see two key linguistic expressions – the relational process type and active voice. Given that Move 1 (contextualizing) attempts to provide background information and other forms of contextualization such as generalization and definition, this is not surprising. Often the relational process is an important linguistic feature that enables generalization and

definition to be made, as observed in Examples 7.28-7.29 and 7.32-7.33. Where the relational process is not used as in Example 7.31, the verbal process, "defined" is used. According to Table 7.4, the two sets of English examples (7.28-7.29 and 7.32-7.33) show the dominant use of the active voice.

Turning to Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)), we notice the following associated key linguistic features: verb categories, semantic relations, and lexical reiteration. Through these features, students engage more fully with pertinent issues highlighted in the examination prompt, without necessarily showing the direction the essay will take. Move 2 of the first three English introductions answering EEP 1 as seen in Examples 7.34-7.36 employs lexical repetition of the following: "Jared Angira", "No Coffin No Grave" and "literary devices". Examinees also use verbal processes such as "disputing", "uses", "put across", and "talks". Moreover, a wider range of process types is used: relational, material, and verbal. Again, of note is the dominance of the present tense as found in Examples 7.34 and 7.35, while Example 7.36 indicates a mixture of both the present tense and the past tense, the latter probably motivated by the candidate's wish to recount the story in the text, which is a narrative poem. In using these varied linguistic expressions, as can be seen in Example 7.34-7.36, the examinees engage closely with the prompt by focusing on key terms in the prompt:

7.34   There is no point <u>disputing</u> the fact that Jared Angira <u>uses</u> appropriate literary devices to make effective the message he wants to <u>put across</u> and also to arouse the interest of the reader and enhance the meaning of the poem to the reader. (EST 10)

7.35   Jared Angira's No Coffin No Grave <u>talks</u> about a politician who after his death wanted to be buried 'like a VIP' but had the direct opposite of what he wished. (EST 13)

7.36   In Jared Angira's 'No Coffin No Grave' he <u>talks</u> about a politician who was murdered in a night club and who had many dreams to accomplish during his reign and even wished to be buried under a tree in his palace.
        (EST 15)

        In response to EEP 2, examinees (see Examples 7.37-7.39) similarly move from a level of generality to specificity as seen in the lexis related to the key terms in the prompt. Technical terms related to the task on hand such as "sestet", "octave", "quatrain", "Shakespeare", "Donne", and "Death be not proud" are used in Examples 7.37-7.39. Other linguistic features include the combination of material, verbal, and relational processes. Additionally, these verbs, as shown in the examples below, are in the present tense – "are divided", "is represented", "are raised", "is given", "are being asked", "is", and "are" – making the issues being addressed acquire a semblance of timelessness, a norm in academic writing. Unlike the first set of examples, there is a high occurrence of the passive, especially in Examples 7.37 and 7.39. While Example 7.38 exemplifies the use of the active voice, another linguistic feature of interest is the personal pronoun "we", which has implication for the agency in the essay.

7.37   The lines <u>are divided</u> into two, <u>octave</u> and <u>sestet.</u> As such, the idea <u>is represented</u> in the <u>octave</u> and there <u>is</u> resolution in the <u>sestet.</u> However, there <u>is</u> a further division of the <u>sonnet</u> into quatrain. In each <u>quatrain</u>, the poet discusses his ideas.
        (EST 46)

7.38   <u>We have</u> the Shakespearean sonnets and the Petrarchan sonnets. Examples of each <u>are</u> Sonnet 3, 'Look into the Glass and Tell the face' by W. Shakespeare and 'Death be not proud' by Donne John. (EST 51)

7.39   The structure of the sonnet <u>is</u> three quatrains and a couplet. Normally arguments <u>are raised</u> in the quatrains and a solution <u>is given</u> in the couplet; at times the couplet <u>sums up</u> the whole idea in the three quatrains. There are times that advise or questions <u>are being asked</u> in the quatrains and a solution <u>is given</u> in the quatrain. (EST 52)

With respect to Move 3 (previewing), a key discoursal feature, namely listing, is utilized together with linguistic elements such as metatextual elements and personal pronouns. The English examinees in Examples 7.40 and 7.41 respond to EEP 1 in Move 3 (previewing) by both announcing their intention through purpose expressions such as "would…like to…" and "am going to…" Moreover, in these two examples, listing is directly used whereas the examinee in Example 7.42 resorts to it indirectly, using the phrase "among which are these three". The effect of the latter may be strategic as it sets up some level of expectation and interest in the reader. Also, the visible presence of the writer is evinced in the use of personal pronoun "I" in Examples 7.40 and 7.41. Clearly, in Examples 7.40-7.42, the present tense, the active voice as well as the material and verbal process types dominate.

7.40 There are a lot of literary devices used. Some of these are <u>onomatopoeia, personification, simile, symbolism, imagery, irony, and many others</u>. <u>I</u> <u>would</u> therefore <u>like to</u> talk about the most dominant literary devices used. These are <u>personification, symbolism and irony</u>. (EST 3)

7.41 <u>I</u> <u>am going to</u> write about the use of <u>personification, symbolism, and simile</u> in the poem. (EST 25)

7.42 To bring out his theme of injustice, the poet makes use of a number of literary devices <u>among which are these three</u>. (EST 30)

As in Move 3 of the previous examples (7.40-7.42), Move 3 of the English introductions responding to EEP 2 in Examples 7.43-7.45 deploys similar linguistic features: process types, metatextual elements, and personal pronouns However, there are three sources of difference, which may be interpreted as a matter of style. First, the agency in Example 7.45 is shifted from the examinee and placed on the genre, "essay", thereby introducing an impersonal tone. Second, while the examinee in Example 7.43 marries both the demands for a personal voice and formality by using "I" and "would

like", Example 7.44 strikes a note of informality through the use of a contracted form. The third point relates to the dominant use of verbal process; this is perhaps understandable as the examinee is obliged to indicate what s/he has to be doing in the essay: either to "refer" or to "comment".

7.43   I would like to refer to the Shakespearean sonnets 3 and 12 for my comment on the significance of the structure of the sonnet. (EST 33)

7.44   With reference to the sonnet three and eighteen, I'm going to comment on the significance of the structure of the sonnets. (EST 35)

7.45   This essay will focus on the significance of the structure of sonnets three and eighteen. (EST 38)

From the discussion above of the English introductions, we can see that certain linguistic expressions are associated with the three moves. In particular, we observe that relational process type, present tense, the active, and lexical repetition occur in Moves 1 (contextualizing) and 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)). Further, personal pronouns, metatextual expressions, and verbal processes tend to mark Move 3 (previewing). Whether these observations on the linguistic realizations of the moves in the English introductions are applicable to the Sociology introductions is discussed next.

7.5.3   Illustrations of Linguistic Realizations of Moves in Sociology Introductions

As in Section 7.5.2, the linguistic forms used in Move 1 (contextualizing), Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) and Move 3 (previewing) in the Sociology introductions are illustrated in turn in order to show to what extent each move is typified by specific linguistic features.

Move 1 (contextualizing) is realized in the Sociology introductions (see Examples 7.46-7.48) responding to SEP 1 through repetition of key terms such as "marriage" and

"any social relationship". Besides, Examples 7.46 and 7.48 offer some form of definition. The definition or explication in Example 7.47, however, seems to be conveyed as either personal or socially-derived in contrast to the English introductions, which are exclusively personal. In addition, both the lexical repetition and definitions are in the present tense, indicating the contemporaneous nature of the issues being discussed. Students define the key terms with the help of either the verbal process, "defined" (e.g. Example 7.46) or relational process type, "is" (e.g. Examples 7.48).

7.46   Marriage is defined by Randal Collins as a culturally approved and sanctioned relationship between a man and a woman to perform certain functions as well as satisfy certain biological impulses. (SST 8)

7.47   Any social relationship that is entered into by people is bound to have some element leading into conflict. (SST 12)

7.48   Marriage, as one puts it, is a socially and culturally approved and sanctioned union of a man and woman in order to fulfill certain societal obligations and biological functions, that is, it is the personal relationship between two individuals that involves exclusive sex, love, cohabitation, reproduction and child rearing (SST 29)

The first move (contextualizing) in the introduction of SEP 2 in Examples 7.49-7.51 follows the pattern in Examples 7.46-7.48. In Example 7.51, sex is defined from a purely personal perspective, whereas the other two examples quote scholars, ostensibly to display acquaintanceship with the authorities in the discipline. Whereas the definition is mediated through the verbal process in Example 7.49 ("defines" and "defined"), the same communicative function is achieved through the relational process ("is) in Example 7.50. And, of course, these attempts at definition are expressed in the present tense. Further, the first two examples (7.49 and 7.50), responding to examination prompt SEP 2, view sex as a normative social behavior, thus setting up a possible deviation from what the society upholds as standard sexual behaviour. Nevertheless, both approaches do give an

impression of understanding of the question because, at least, they focus on key words of

the examination prompt or related words such as "sex" and "sexual".

7.49   Sex <u>can be defined</u> as higher intensive ritual between male and female. In other words each person has the innermost feeling of the other. Randall Collins <u>defines</u> sex as the stimulation of the sexual organ by two individuals through the point of orgasm and ejaculation through ecstasy and sublime passion. (SST 47)

7.50   <u>Sex</u>, according to sexual therapists and sociologists, <u>is</u> the stimulation of the sexual organ involving two individuals to arrive at orgasm and ejaculation. It <u>is</u> usually expressed in ecstasy and sublime passion. (SST 32)

7.51   First and foremost, <u>sex</u> <u>is</u> the only way human beings are unceasingly produced in this world. In fact, in the normal circumstance, it <u>is</u> the male and the female having <u>sex </u>together in a marriage. (SST 56)

In the Sociology examples that follow (7.52-7.54), examinees employ similar

linguistic features in response to the examination prompt SEP 1. In addition, although the

lexical items point to the same semantic field (marriage), they are more varied in type.

Again, the process types deployed are mainly material, rather than relational, mental or

verbal, as the issues being addressed relate to everyday life mediated through observation

and perhaps experience of the candidates. A story-like schema is also adopted through the

use of adverbials such as "when", "during", and "before" in, for instance, Example 7.52.

7.52   <u>When</u> two people <u>get</u> marriage, they normally <u>go</u> for a honeymoon. This is a western culture that <u>has been adopted</u> by many nations such as Ghana. <u>During </u>the honeymoon interaction period people <u>get to know</u> themselves better. If the couples have not <u>involved </u>themselves in any sexual relation <u>before</u> they <u>get</u> marriage, it is there that they are able to know themselves intimately. (SST 3)

7.53   In marriage especially with newly weded couples, there is always a high rate of euphoria among them. The face to face interaction <u>increases</u>. The fresh interaction <u>brings about</u> too much excitement. This <u>is</u> normally <u>followed </u>by honeymoon where the two stay coolly to enjoy themselves. (SST 13)

7.54   Marriage <u>brings</u> joy and great intoxication especially <u>during</u> the first three months of the marriage and most especially during and immediately <u>after</u> honeymoon. This <u>is</u> because of the euphoria that <u>is</u> associated with a dream come true. <u>After the first three months,</u> <u>when</u> either partner <u>begins to request</u> for commitment, the marriage <u>begins to face</u> problems. (SST 21)

As can be seen, the linguistic expressions used in Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) of Examples 7.52-7.54 share a similarity with those in Examples 7.55-7.57, given the use of lexical reiteration, material processes, and the present tense. In the latter examples (7.55-7.57) examinees repeat lexical items related to the main issue – "sexual abnormalities", resulting in words such as "taboo", "negative", and "offence". They also deploy semantic relations such as general-specific: "some societies" – "Indians", "the Trobrians". Also, material verbs such as "allowed to involve", "get", and "bring" are common in Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)), with the present tense ("is", "are", "get", and "wants to indulge" generally preferred. The past tense "was designed" in Example 7.57 highlights sex and for that matter marriage as an old social institution or practice.

7.55   In some societies, sex <u>is</u> seen as a <u>taboo</u> for those who are not married to even talk about it let alone practice it. Among the <u>Indians</u>, it <u>is</u> a serious <u>offence</u> to indulge in sex before marriage but among the <u>Trobrians</u>, it <u>is</u> allowed to involve in sex anytime one <u>wants to indulge</u> in it. (SST 39)

7.56   Sexual abnormalities <u>are</u> occurrences which <u>get</u> negative effects on marriage. (SST 54)

7.57   Sex <u>was designed</u> to bring the two couples together and to make them happy. (SST 58)

In Move 3 (previewing) of Examples 7.58-7.60, which respond to SEP 1, the Sociology examinees employ two approaches to preview the structure of the essay: direct and indirect listing. This tendency to opt for either a direct or indirect listing is not surprising, given the prompt (see SEP 1 in Section 6.1). For instance, Example 7.58 lists

directly, stating all the points to be discussed while Examples 7.59 and 7.60 make

implicit references such as "following circumstances" and "circumstances that give rise

to marital violence".

7.58   There are several circumstances that give rise to conflict in marriage. Some are
        from <u>social pressure, unfulfilled dreams, sexual problems, external influence that
        is from the parents of the couple and from friends, arrival of children, premature
        marriage, monotony, boredom, and finance</u>. (SST 6)

7.59   This confusion arises through <u>the following circumstances</u>. (SST 15)

7.60   After the euphoria, the couple is left to face the reality of the world and this is the
        period which gives rise to <u>circumstances that give rise to marital violence</u>. (SST
        21)

        The third move in response to SEP 2 in Example 7.61-7.63 shows similarities and

differences in comparison with Examples 7.58-7.60. Not surprisingly, the point of

commonality is the direct or indirect use of listing, given the nature of the exam prompt

(see SEP 2 in Section 6.1). But, unlike the moves in the previous Sociology examples

(7.58-7.60), Examples 7.61-7.63 tend to use technical terms such as "urophelia",

"zoophelia", "paraphelia", and "autoeroticism". Against this backdrop, it is not clear

what the motivation of the use of parentheses in Example 7.62 could be. Like the

previous example, Example 7.63 employs the indirect listing, "as follows".

7.61   Some of the sexual abnormalities are <u>homosexuality, corprophelia, pedophilia,
        europhelia, and zoophelia</u>. (SST 35)

7.62   But as with any other human biological functioning, there are some abnormalities
        in this behavior. One can find <u>sexual paraphelia</u> (<u>abnormalities</u>) such as,
        <u>homosexualism, masturbation (autoeroticism), zoophelia, narccisism, urophelia</u>.
        (SST 42)

7.63   However, in many cases sexual <u>paraphelias</u> exist. In fact, highly abnormal
        practices exist. Among some of which are <u>as follows</u>. (SST 43)

Clearly, from the above discussion of the Sociology introductions, specific linguistic expressions are associated with the three moves. In particular, Move 1 (contextualizing) was realized through lexical reiteration, present tense of verb forms, and definitions. Also, a wider range of process types seems to be associated with Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)). Additionally, the use of adverbials in creating a story-like schema, especially in introductions responding to SEP 1 marks Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)). Further, an increasing use of technical words conveyed through listing, either direct or indirect, was associated with Move 3 (previewing) as well as the present tense.

7.5.4   Linguistic Realizations of Moves in Zoology Introductions

As in Sections 7.5.2 and 7.5.3, this section illustrates the linguistic features used in the various moves in Zoology in order to show to what extent each move is typified by specific linguistic features.

As mentioned earlier, the few Zoology introductions in my data set begin with Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) in contrast with the Sociology and English introductions, which largely begin with Move 1, followed by Move 2, then Move 3 (previewing). Also, relevant to the respective examination prompts, ZEP 1 and ZEP 2, the key terms, "bone", "diffusion", and "osmosis" are repeated and defined, as shown in Examples 7.64-7.67 below. Both moves are instantiated by the use of the relational process type "to be" as well as related technical words such as "skeletal system", "tissue", "cartilage", "connective tissue", "vertebrates", "diffusion", "osmosis", "molecules", "cell", and "plasma membrane".

7.64   Bone is one of the two main components of the skeletal system or tissue. The other one is the cartilage. (ZST 17)

7.65   Bone is skeletal connective tissue that is associated with support and movement in vertebrates. (ZST 28)

7.66   Diffusion and osmosis are processes by which molecules or substances move in a cell or across a cell. (ZST 44)

7.67   Diffusion and osmosis are among the process that substance cross the plasma membrane of cells. (ZST 49)

The only Zoology introduction (see Example 7.68) that utilizes Move 3 (previewing) not surprisingly employs passivization. Additionally, this move overtly signals the use of listing, although no specific mention is made of the number of differences or what these differences are.

7.68   The differences are listed below. (ZST 44)

Unfortunately, the discussion on the linguistic features in the moves of Zoology introductions provides very little information to allow meaningful characterization and description, given the limited number of Zoology introductions. One point though is that the Zoology candidates seem to depend on the relational process types, present tense, lexical repetition, and definition to introduce their essays.

7.6   Discussion of Findings

This section attempts to draw attention to the similarities and differences of introductions written by undergraduates by discussing the various linguistic realizations found in each move across the three disciplines, starting from Move 1. In the process, their significance to earlier research and pedagogy in second language writing, in general, and disciplinary writing, in particular, will be addressed.

7.6.1   Move 1 in the Introductions

The dominant linguistic expressions in Move 1 (contextualizing) appear to be definitions with/without attributions, present tense, relational process type, and repetition of key terms across English and Sociology introductions; Zoology introductions are not featured here as they did not contain Move 1 (contextualizing).

The point of commonality in the predominant use of lexical repetition of key terms is that both groups of students draw on the respective examination prompt; that is, these repetitions were largely prompt-driven. At this initial stage, students used these lexical reiterations to contextualize their essay rather than to support their points, as suggested in other studies (Hult, 1986; Reynolds, 1996). A second point of similarity in the use of lexical repetition is that it operates at the word or phrasal level, given the nature of the examination prompts. For example, words such as "No Coffin No Grave", "sonnet", "structure", on the one hand, and "marriage" and "sex", on the other hand, tended to be repeated in the English and Sociology introductions respectively. Interestingly, this contrasts with Reynold's (1996) work on lexical repetition as a rhetorical device in which he argues that lexical repetitions at the sentential level are likely to be the default form in an argumentative discourse structure requiring a proposition to be debated (for an elaborate exploration of this, refer to Reynolds, 1996).

But, as expected, because of the different epistemological orientation of the two disciplines (English and Sociology) and, of course, the different examination prompts, the exact form of semantic relations differ. For instance, lexicalization in the English introductions yields key expressions such as "theme", "politicians or political figure or political leader", "Jared Angira", "literary devices", "burial" , "death" in EEP 1 as well as

"sonnet" , "Shakespearean", "Petrarchan", "sestet", "quatrain", "couplet", "structure", "rhyme pattern" in introductions responding to examination prompt, EEP 2. Similarly, the Sociology introductions evince similar linguistic behaviour in terms of the repetition of key terms or words relating to the examination prompts (SEP 1) such as "sublime passion", "marriage", "sex", "male and female", "sexual abnormalities", and "sexual relations".

Furthermore, these key words are not only repeated but also thematized. Indeed, some scholars have suggested that thematization of key terms has a rhetorical dimension (MacDonald, 1994; Samraj, 1995; North, 2003). It is worth pointing out that there is a difference in the way theme is treated by MacDonald, Samraj, and North: whereas MacDonald and Samraj consider theme from the viewpoint of grammatical subject, North takes theme from the Hallidayan framework as the initial clausal element but extends it to the grammatical subject. Despite this difference, all three scholars argue that thematization may differ from one disciplinary community to another. It is MacDonald's sense of theme that is used here, given its ease in being applied to my data set.

Thus, the difference in thematization in the three disciplines can be attributed to both the nature of the courses selected for the study and differences in examinees' preferences. The fact is that Sociology, and in particular the course that was selected for the study here – *Family and Socialization* – focuses on social issues, unlike English, and in particular, *Introduction to Literature*, which focuses on aspects related to literary studies. Therefore, while the English introductions often have thematization revolving around "the poet", "the poem", "Shakespeare", "sonnet", and "structure", in response to examination prompts (EEP 1 and 2), the thematization in Sociology introductions

revolves around the terms "marriage", "sex", "sexual abnormalities", and "marital violence" in response to examination prompts (EEP 1 and 2). As was pointed out in Sections 7.5.1 and 7.5.2, even when different examinees answered the same examination prompt there were differences in the key terms that were thematized, indicating individual student preference.

Such key terms, otherwise described as dominant by Markels (1981), are continually and repeatedly present in the English and Sociology introductions, either directly (by reiteration) or inferentially (as collocations, superordinates, and pronominal references). As argued elsewhere (e.g. Hult, 1986), the tendency for examinees to either repeat these key terms or their variants across the three moves of the introduction in the present study achieves two things: maintenance and development of thematic saliency as expressed in the examination prompts.

The second dominant linguistic pattern in Move 1 (contextualizing) across the English and Sociology introductions involves definitions. A common feature of the definitions used by both English and Sociology students is that they follow the category Flowerdew (1992) and Temmerman (1999:172) label as "formal", that is, the definitions of the form "X is Y for which Z holds", where Y is the higher category to which X belongs and Z gives the specific characteristics that distinguish X from the other members of category Y. As well, the use of definitions as a contextualization device in the disciplinary rhetoric of student academic writing is in harmony with other studies (e.g. Wall *et al*, 1988; Lawe-Davies, 1998), although Adika (1999) observes its ineffective use in some undergraduate writing in a Ghanaian university.

Indeed, as argued by scholars such as Lambrou (1979), Swales (1981b) Trimble (1985), and Flowerdew (1992), definitions can be context-dependent. Not surprisingly, in this study, Sociology students attribute their definitions to two sources – the literature, or, theorized knowledge and experience – similar to Baynham's (1999) work among first-year nursing students. For instance, the definition of marriage in the Sociology introductions is often given by quoting or paraphrasing one notable scholar, Randall Collins, or by simply making reference to "sociologists" and "sexual therapists", while the use of experience as an authoritative source is lexicalized as "it can be defined". In contrast, English and Zoology students do not explicitly lexicalize their sources, giving the impression that they are either originators of the definitions or repeating what is generally accepted and known in the disciplinary community.

As a corollary of the reason above for the different types of definitions in the English and Sociology introductions, three further inter-related factors of their use can be teased out. The first relates to the different ways in which course lecturers of these two disciplines possibly treat attribution of definitions in an examination essay genre. Thus, an ability to either quote directly or paraphrase the views of authorities, together with the name of the authority may be valued in Sociology, while it may be less so in the other two disciplines, at least, at the undergraduate level. Moreover, it may well be that the type of writing task as well as genre that students are engaged in determines to a large extent whether they need to indicate the source of their definition or not. Consequently, the different nature of definitions and the accompanying use or non-use of attribution in the data set may be a function of the complex interaction of disciplinarity, writing tasks, course lecturer preference, and genre.

Of all the possible linguistic expressions in Move 1 (contextualizing) across the English and Sociology essays, the least striking is the verb form and consequently tense and process types, though this is not to say that they are unimportant. In general, both disciplines employ the present tense. This is important because it shows the currency of the issues being discussed. Moreover for the two disciplines, the relational process "to be" dominates. This is not particularly surprising as both disciplinary texts focus on defining key terms in Move 1 (contextualizing) and definitions are typically expressed through relational process, that is, "X is Y". However, there is a slight difference in that the English introductions, especially those responding to examination prompt, EEP 2, often utilize relational process, whereas the Sociology introductions additionally deploy verbal processes such as "can be defined" and "defined" or sometimes "defines" as in "Marriage is defined by Randal Collins as a culturally approved and sanctioned relationship between a man and a woman…." (Example 7.46) and "Sex can be defined as higher intensive ritual between male and female" (Example 7.49).

The final linguistic feature that needs to be mentioned in Move 1 (contextualizing) is the use of evaluative terms, though as indicated in Table 7.4, their frequency of occurrence is limited. Nonetheless, the occurrence of evaluative terms shows both influences from the examination prompt, the disciplines involved, and perhaps examinee preferences. As expected, English students were to evaluate the literary texts in EEP 1 and 2. Surprisingly, answers to EEP 2 hardly produced any evaluative terms such as the adjectives (e.g. "interesting', "rich", and "beautiful"), which were produced in response to EEP 1. While it is difficult to explain the lack of evaluative terms in answers to EEP 2, Sociology introductions produced evaluative terms in Move 2. The

difference in the evaluative terms offered by the Sociology students is that they included nominals such as "problems", "offence", and "taboo" as well as adjectives such as "negative". Thus, there is limited use of evaluative terms in Move 1 (contextualizing) by English and Sociology examinees. The extent to which evaluative terms are used in an introduction could be influenced by the discourse structure of a text (that is, argumentative, narrative, expository, descriptive, or comparative) in addition to the examination prompt and the discipline.

7.6.2   Move 2 in the Introductions

Turning to the linguistic realization in Move 2, the English, Sociology, and Zoology introductions offer no marked difference from the linguistic features of Move 1. In general, they include the use of various forms of lexical reiteration, attributions, and verb categories such as tense. Because these have already been discussed (see Section 7.6.1), those especially related to the English and Sociology introductions will not be repeated. Instead, attention is focused here on linguistic features accompanying Move 2 in the Zoology introductions. Further linguistic features such as verbal processes and a story-like schema are then discussed.

The first point to note is that definitions and repetition of key terms occur only in Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) of the Zoology introductions. The presence of definitions in Move 2 of the Zoology introductions seems to indicate the examinees' immediate concern with issues in the examination prompt, rather than the need to contextualize their discussion. Moreover, the definitions of Zoology candidates are similar to their counterparts from the English and Sociology departments insofar as they

were mediated through relational processes. In addition, like those offered by the English and Sociology candidates, definitions of the Zoology students followed the formal mode as suggested by Flowerdew (1992) and Temmerman (1999:172). Unlike the Sociology students who normally attributed their definitions, the Zoology students, like the English students, did not do so. Thus, it seems the definitions that the Zoology students offered to "osmosis" and "diffusion" and "bone" (for Zoology) have acquired standardized, homogeneous, or communal character, thereby becoming the property of the sub-disciplinary community.

With respect to semantic relations, unlike the English and Sociology introductions that attempt to freely exploit various forms of lexical reiteration such as synonymy and hyponymy, the Zoology introductions utilize mainly lexical repetition. One reason for this might be the small amount of textual space given to the introduction itself, which in turn makes the range of lexical reiteration in Zoology introductions limited. A more plausible reason could be the nature of Zoology; that is, Zoology stresses on accuracy of facts, at least, at the undergraduate level, thereby making examinees unwilling to take the risk of using other terms apart from what they have been introduced to in class. This contrasts with English and, to some extent, Sociology students who attempt to use other terms of similar significations conveyed in key terms in the examination prompts.

The use of process types in Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) represents a further source of difference across all three disciplines. Verbal processes represent a particularly interesting issue for discussion. Often used by the English examinees rather than the other groups of examinees, these verbal processes basically allow the candidates to report on what the poet or author is purported to be doing in a literary work. (A second

category of verbal process is later discussed in Section 7.6.3). They include expressions such as "wants to put across", "talks about", "arguments are raised", "discusses", and "are being asked". That the other two groups of students never used them could point to disciplinary variation, at least, at the junior undergraduate level.

A noticeable feature in Move 2 once candidates attempt to engage in explication is the use of a narrative-like discourse. This appears to be limited to the English introductions responding to examination prompt EEP 1, and the Sociology introductions responding to the examination prompt SEP 1. In English, it manifests in Example 7.35 ("Jared Angira's 'No Coffin No Grave' talks about a politician who after his death wanted to be buried like a VIP' but had the direct opposite of what he wished") and Example 7.36 ("In Jared Angira's 'No Coffin No Grave' he talks about a politician who was murdered in a night club and who had many dreams to accomplish during his reign and even wished to be buried under a tree in his palace"). In Sociology introductions, this narrative-like schema occurs in Example 7.53 ("In marriage especially with newly wedded couples, there is always a high rate of euphoria among them. The face-to-face interaction increases. The fresh interaction brings about too much excitement. This is normally followed by honeymoon where the two stay coolly to enjoy themselves….") and Example 7.54 ("Marriage brings joy and great intoxication especially during the first three months of the marriage and most especially during and immediately after honeymoon. This is because of the euphoria that is associated with a dream come true. After the first three months when either partner begins to request for commitment, the marriage begins to face problems").

The use of this "story-like" feature and the past tense in both the English (especially, those answering EEP 1) and Sociology (those answering SEP 1) introductions are easily explainable. One way of attempting to explain the use of the past tense in the English introduction is to say that students might be providing summaries of plots in the poems or the literary texts they are commenting on. Besides, the use of the present tense as in Examples 7.53 and 7.54 is expected to capture generalization. On the other hand, the story-like elements in the Sociology introductions appear to reflect general "procedures", that is, "what normally happens in a marriage".

Thus, through the discussed linguistic features, the distinction between Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) and Move 1 (contextualizing) is reinforced. It may, however, be difficult to argue for the story-like feature in this move, with regard to English and Sociology, as a source of difference across all three disciplines, given that it appears to be prompt-driven and a mark of individual student differences. What is clear is that within the broad generalization of the use of verb categories and lexical repetition in Move 2 across all three disciplines, we notice subtle differences in their exact realization.

7.6.3   Move 3 in the Introductions

Move 3 offers very interesting insights into the character of the different disciplines in respect of linguistic forms such as listing, personal pronouns, metatextual deixis, and verbal processes. This section argues that the linguistic realization in Move 3 (previewing) provides the strongest evidence of differences in all three disciplines.

Both English and Sociology introductions are particularly similar in the way listing is used. Obviously, this is prompt-driven, as both disciplines require explicitly that

they discuss either a specific number of issues or more than one factor. Specifically, while the English examination prompt, EPP 1, demands "three literary devices" and the Sociology examination prompts, SEP 1 and SEP 2, expect "some of the circumstances" and "five sexual paraphelia" respectively, there is no such expectation from the Zoology students (see Fig 6.1 for examination prompts). What is more insightful about listing as a linguistic (or rather discoursal feature) device lies in its use across two disciplines, English and Sociology. Both disciplines employ listing on the word level instead of the phrasal or sentential level. We see this in "…These are personification, symbolism and irony", "the use of personification, symbolism, and simile in the poem" (see Examples 7.40 and 7.41 in Section 7.5.1) and "…Some are from social pressure, unfulfilled dreams, sexual problems, external influence that is from the parents of the couple and from friends …." and "Some of the sexual abnormalities are homosexuality, corprophelia, paedophelia, urophelia, and zoophelia" (see Examples 7.58 and 7.61 in Section 7.5.2).

As highlighted in the previous paragraph, there is some flexibility in the form of listing employed by the Sociology students as their nominal phrases in which listing is presented could be more than one word. Besides, listing could be either direct or indirect. Direct listing has been already mentioned in the previous paragraph. Indirect listing in turn involves the use of expressions such as "…a number of literary devices among which are these three" (Examples 7.41, English), "…the following circumstances", "….Among some of which are as follows" (Example 7.59 and 7.63, Sociology), and "The differences are listed below" (Example 7.68, Zoology). These instances of indirect listing suggest a level of anticipation, which is fulfilled as the reader continues reading. It seems reasonable to argue then that if interest is a crucial element in academic writing, then this

kind of listing (indirect) in the introduction might be encouraged among students, although most students across all three disciplines in this study preferred direct listing in their introductions.

Further, English introductions tended to deploy metatextual elements realized as futuristic/purpose expressions to declare the intention of structuring the essay while Sociology and Zoology introductions either minimally did or did not at all. As seen in the previous paragraphs, English examinees use futuristic/purpose expressions such as "am going to", "would…like to" and "'m going to", and "will focus" (see Examples 7.41, 7.43, 7.44, and 7.45, respectively, in Section 7.5.1). While metatextual elements in introductions are an essential part of academic writing as indicated in guides (Swales & Feak, 2000, Weissberg & Buker, 1990) and observed in several empirical studies of both expert writing (Hyland, 1998) and graduate writing (Bunton, 1999, 2002), their use in only the English introductions need explanation. One possible explanation will be to argue that the writing assignment could have called for such differences. But a more tenable argument will be to say that the English students are socialized into the use of metatextual elements in their introduction earlier than their Sociology and Zoology counterparts.

As well as the use of metatextual elements, it is necessary to consider the use of some verbal processes which tended to accompany the metatextual elements. Although we have seen this feature in Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) in relation to the English introductions, its use here is fundamentally different from that in Move 2. In Move 3 (previewing), the semantic signification is not in terms of what the writer of a text is seen to be doing in a text but rather what the examinee is seen to be doing in

relation to the text. The verbal processes that tend to be used are "talk about", "bring out", "refer to", and "focus on". This is not surprising, given that the first two verbal processes (that is, "refer" and "comment") are used in the examination prompt, EEP 1. They are often modalized as in "would like to refer" and "will focus". Because these verbal processes are hardly found in the other two disciplinary texts, we can say that they tend to distinguish the English introductions. As can be noted, these verbal processes were in the active voice, thus clearly indicating the tendency of the English students to assume responsibility for the views being expressed.

A related issue of verb usage in all three disciplines is the dominant use of the present tense, which is of course not restricted to the third move but found in all three moves. This is not particularly surprising as the undergraduate students in this study are engaged in academic writing, one salient feature of which is the use of the present tense highlighted in Halliday and Martin (1993). The overall higher use of the present tense in introductions confirms findings of other studies in disciplinary contexts (e.g. Kusel, 1992; Lukmani, 1994; Starfield, 2004). Indeed, the use of the present tense together with the avoidance of material process and the favouring of the relational and verbal processes indicates that the undergraduates are on their way to being socialized in their various disciplinary communities.

With respect to the use of personal pronouns, the dominant form was the first person pronoun, "I". Through this linguistic feature, we see a clear distinction between English introductions on the one hand and Sociology and Zoology introductions on the other hand as presented in the quantitative data in Tables 7.4-7.6. In particular, the personal pronoun is dominant in the English introductions but sparse in the Sociology

ones. The lack of personal pronouns concurs with the Sociology introduction in Starfield's (2004) study. The only Zoology introductions that used Move 3 (previewing) masked agency in order to depict "disinterested, inductive, democratic and goal-directed activity", as Hyland (2000:8) posits.

Two main reasons can equally be advanced for the difference in use of personal stance or rather agency: expectation of faculty and disciplinary differences. This finding is consistent with the corroborating data, especially with regard to the Humanities lecturers, who expect their students to let their voice be heard through some linguistic features, one of which is the personal pronoun. The Humanities faculty in the present research repeatedly mentioned the use of personal pronouns in the introductions of students, probably the most visible way to denote one's personal stance at the undergraduate level.

Moreover, the use of the personal pronoun as a dominant linguistic feature in Move 3 (previewing) of the Humanities texts is consistent with the literature (e.g. Ivanic 1994, 1995; Tang & John 1999; Hyland, 2002b). Specifically, it accords with Hyland's (2002b) argument that in the hands of neophyte writers the personal pronoun is likely to be used as an organizing device in the introduction, as acknowledged in Tang and John's (1999) study. Tang and John's (1999) had expressed surprise at its relatively less frequent use, designated through an architectural analogy in their study; they use the architectural analogy to foreground the task of the writer in organizing, structuring, and outlining his/her material in an essay. Further, although personal stance can be expressed through other linguistic features as shown in the literature (Elbow, 1994; Ivanic 1995, 1998; Ivanic & Camps, 2001; Prior, 2001), it is now widely accepted that the use of personal

pronoun in its various linguistic, pragmatic and rhetorical ramifications is context-dependent (e.g. Elbow, 1981; Chang & Swales, 1999; Hyland, 2002b).

From the above discussion, the use of personal pronouns, verbal processes, and metatextual deixis expressed through purpose/futuristic elements in Move 3 (previewing) provides a strong argument for differences in the introductions across all three disciplines. Specifically, English introductions tend to use the above-mentioned linguistic features in greater proportion (see Tables 7.4-7.6), while the Sociology and Zoology introductions rarely used them. The features that seem to be common to all three disciplines are verb categories (present tense, relational processes, and active voice) as well as the discoursal feature, listing.

7.7   Chapter Conclusion

Chapter Seven reported and discussed the results of the first research question *vis a vis* the introduction. The results show that there is a difference across the three disciplines in respect of the frequency of occurrence of the three moves (contextualizing, engaging closely with issue(s), and previewing) and the specific sequence patterns. In contrast, there was in general terms similarity across all three disciplines with respect to the textual space given to moves. There were also differences in the linguistic realizations in the moves across all three disciplines, especially in the use of evaluative terms and attribution in Move 1 (contextualizing) and verbal processes, personal pronouns, and metatextual expressions in Move 3 (previewing) as discussed in Sections 7.6.1-7.6.3.

There is a complex interaction of factors that may be adduced to explain these findings. While these differences mainly point to the different disciplinary contexts, the

different examination prompts and different student preferences may be considered as possible factors, although it can be argued that the latter factors derive from the former. Essentially, the demand of tertiary literacy (the university's mandatory writing programme) at junior undergraduate level seems to be a key possible factor in explaining the similarities. Just as this chapter focused on unravelling the similarities and differences in the use of introduction, the next chapter discusses the results of the second research question, which relates to the similarities and differences in conclusions across the three disciplines.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION II

8. 0   Introduction

This chapter reports the results and interpretation of the findings related to the second research question comprises four main parts. Part One (Section 8.1) introduces the research question. Part Two (Sections 8.2-8.4) discusses the generic structure of the conclusions in two of the three disciplines, while Part Three (Section 8.5) focuses on the linguistic realization of the moves in the conclusions. The final part (Section 8.6) discusses findings on the moves and their linguistic realizations.

8.1   Research Question Two: Conclusion

The second research question is recapitulated here for ease of reference.

- What similarities and dissimilarities are noticeable in the conclusions of student examination essays in English, Sociology, and Zoology?

It was important to answer the above question because the way writers negotiate exit from a text is as important as the way they negotiate entry. The key findings that emerged as a response to the above research question were as follows:

- With respect to the use of moves, both English and Sociology examinees adopted a two-move structure in their conclusions, allocating greater textual space to Move 1 (summarizing), using Move 1 more frequently than Move 2 (expanding), and preferring a one-move pattern.

- The English and Sociology students differed in their use of Move 2 (expanding), given that the former highlighted significance of a text or literary device, while the latter made recommendations.

- In terms of the use of linguistic features, the most striking finding relates to the use of personal pronouns in the English conclusions across both moves, while not surprisingly the Sociology conclusions had relatively less of the same feature across both moves.

- As well, the material processes in Move 2 (expanding) of the Sociology students tended to be not surprisingly modalized while this was generally absent in the English conclusions.

The results of the move analysis are the major focus of the next three sections (8.2-8.4), as I provide a quantitative analysis of the frequency of occurrence of each of the moves, the textual space allocated to each of the moves, and the sequencing of the moves. The quantitative data on the linguistic realizations are presented in sub-section 8.5.1, followed by a discussion of actual examples to illustrate the data in sub-sections 8.5.2 and 8.5.3.

8.2   Frequency of Occurrence of Moves in the Conclusions

As outlined in Section 5.4, the conclusion consists of two moves. Move 1 (summarizing) involves recapitulating earlier points or issues discussed in the body of the essays, while Move 2 (expanding) enables examinees to either suggest steps or actions regarding issues raised in the body of the essay or to highlight the significance of issue(s).

In terms of the frequency of occurrence of moves, the first move was expected to be present in students' conclusions across both disciplines (English and Sociology), given that summarizing is less mentally taxing than other cognitive skills (Rosenwasser & Stephen (1997) such as, in terms of the present study, making recommendations or highlighting the significance of an issue or other cognitive skills. Table 8.1 displays the frequency of occurrence of each of the two moves across the English and Sociology conclusions. (Zoology does not appear in the entire chapter because none of the Zoology examination essays had conclusions.)

Table 8.1 Frequency of Occurrence of Moves in the Conclusions

Rhetorical Unit	English (n=40) Frequency	Sociology (n=46) Frequency
Move 1	28/40 (70.0%)	41/46 (89.1%)
Move 2	11/40 (27.5%)	19/46 (41.3%)

Three key results emerge from the data. First, as can be seen from Table 8.1, both English and Sociology candidates utilized all two moves. Second, in both English and Sociology conclusions, Move 1 (summarizing) occurred more frequently. The dominance of Move 1 in both disciplines was somewhat surprising, given the interview data in which faculty in both departments expressed the need for students to go beyond mere summarising. Third, although Table 8.1 suggests similarity in terms of frequency of moves, especially with regard to Move 1, the frequency of occurrence of Move 2 in the Sociology (41.3%) conclusions was higher than that in the English (27.5%) ones.

There is a need to explain both the similarities and differences observed. One way of explaining the similarity in regard to the more frequent use of Move 1 (summarizing)

is to consider the interview data obtained from faculty and students. To the extent that all four faculty members (the Dean, the Head of English Department, and two English course lecturers) observed the tendency of students in the Humanities to offer a catalogue of points, short of any other device, their comments seem insightful and converge with this finding. In particular, both the Head of the English Department (HED1) and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts (DAI) highlighted the tendency of undergraduates to list points as a form of conclusion, arguing though that summary in the conclusion is insufficient in a good paper in the Humanities.

On her part, the Head of English Department (HEDI) remarked, "I don't take summarizing as conclusion in my class; it's simply not enough". Also talking about the nature of the conclusions, one of the English course lecturers (ELI 2) stated that:

> Students in this course have been exposed to the tools in literary appreciation. In this question, they <u>should be able to state clearly how successful or unsuccessful the writer has been in conveying his or her theme in the conclusion.</u>

The other English course lecturer interviewed (ELI 1) echoed these concerns about the students' conclusions even more tellingly:

> The conclusion is the stage at where I expect students to tell me, of course, based on their analysis of the three devices, that they view the writer's message as appropriately articulated or otherwise. An <u>effective summary should lead the student to come up with a personal stance. I can't take summary as sufficient in an excellent paper.</u>

The views of the English faculty, while touching on the nature of summarizing as an important aspect of concluding an essay, clearly indicate that summary alone is inadequate.

The Social Sciences faculty similarly highlighted the importance of conclusions in examination essays. The Dean of Social Sciences (DSSI), with a specialization in Geography, observed that:

> Structure is as crucial as content; the student must produce an essay that has a body well developed and concise introductions and conclusions… For me, this provides a sense of unity and facilitates my understanding of student essays.

Obviously, this suggests a concern with the nature and quality of the communicative units that comprise a conclusion. Affirming the Dean of Social Sciences' position, the Head of Department of Sociology said:

> What else can you do but provide a fitting but concise conclusion after all your effort to convince me that you've actually understood and answered the question. It is the last chance a student has in asserting control over the material he or she has. This of course has to be in line with the demands of the question said. (HSDI)

In her view, a "concise" conclusion is important on account of the vast information that Sociology commands; a further recount of points would be irritating.

As can be seen from the above discussion, the comments by the English and Sociology lecturers suggest that they expected the frequent use of Move 1 (summarizing) in conclusions of essays. One key point, though, will be to argue that perhaps the examination prompts (EEP 1 and 2 for the English candidates, and SEP 1 and 2 for the Sociology candidates) made it possible for both the English and Sociology students to allocate more space to Move 1 (summarizing). In general, the dissatisfaction of faculty with students providing only Move 1 in their conclusion is confirmed largely by the evidence provided by the conclusions studied.

Similar to the discussion on Move 1, where faculty of the two disciplines were vocal, Move 2 (expanding) provided a different situation as faculty in Sociology were

more explicit than their English counterparts. For instance the Sociology course lecturers commented:

> You see, I tend to be conservative and therefore interested in language matters as students provide answers in my courses. I tell them content, form, and language are important to me… Yes, these questions are on <u>social problems that are encountered as part of the socialization process. So a good answer will have to end by suggesting solutions</u>. (SLI 1)

> Sure, a good essay should have effectively discussed the issue of marital violence in such a way that <u>the follow-up to such a discussion would be the suggestions as to how to deal with such a social problem</u>. So for me, some <u>attention to recommendations in the conclusions is fine as far as responding to EEP 1 is concerned</u>. (SLI 2)

These comments clearly indicate the course lecturers' expectation with respect to the exam prompt. And students were expected, through practice exercises, as I learnt from informal interaction with the course lecturers, to have known this in order to ensure "good" marks.

Indeed, Sociology students seemed to be aware of the need for recommendation, given their comments in the interviews. One Sociology student (SST 4), for instance, said:

> I know from previous discussions of similar examination questions with some seniors that both questions require that <u>I offer some recommendations to deal with the problem. But my problem is always how much attention I have to pay to it. Instead, I just end with a kind of summary.</u>

While the Sociology students seemed to have been aware of the need to offer recommendations to SEP 1 and 2, the English students had no idea what sort of recommendations, if any, they were supposed to give in their answers. In fact, some English students, especially EST 5, 8, 9, and 12, when asked to elaborate further on exactly how they frame their conclusion or whether they follow any guidelines, indicated

that summarizing was all that was needed. This is in contrast to another English student who indicated:

> Yeah, Mr. Y would always tell us that <u>if we simply list all the points already discussed in the body of our essays, that will be boring</u>. He, for instance, will insist that <u>we either state the significance of the devices in terms of our own understanding or to life in general, since most literature texts arise out of a writer's observation of the world</u>. But it is difficult to do this. I always don't have time to do this. (EST 2)

This apparent difference in the English students' response to the use of a possible sub-communicative unit in the conclusion may reflect the inability of faculty to make clear their expectations when it comes to their disciplinary rhetoric. But both English course lecturers shared similar views expressed by the English student (EST 2). In particular, ECL 2 indicated:

> <u>I feel helpless when students give back the same points that have been presented in the body of the essay</u>. Then I ask myself, so what? It's like there is something missing in the whole essay. I've often told them over and over again to neatly round up their literary appreciation <u>by talking about some sort of significance. That's being creative. An above-average student will do this.</u>

Quite apart from the exasperation of the lecturer, what comes out clearly in the quote above is the expectation of another move. Both the student and faculty member simply refer to this as "significance".

Apart from the interview data, the literature offers attempt to explain the frequency of occurrence of moves. Sociology and other disciplines tend to deal with problems of a varied nature. For example, Sociology deals with problems in society that arise as a result of social processes and attendant changes (Becher, 1989), while Conservation Biology pays attention to problems that negatively impact on the environment (Samraj, 1994, 2004). Recommendations are, therefore, an important aspect of such disciplines, which require a problem-solution discourse structure. While the

recommendations in Sociology conclusions were expected, the few English conclusions which attempted to offer recommendations were surprising as neither of the examination prompts (EEP 1 and 2) had any disposition towards such a move. The English examinees generally highlighted the significance of the literary devices discussed, sometimes appearing didactic or rather moralistic.

8.3   Textual Space Occupied by the Moves in the Conclusions

With respect to textual space allocated to the two moves, based on my assumption that the occurrence and textual space of a move would signal its importance, I expected that in both English and Sociology conclusions, Move 1 (summarizing) would occupy the greatest textual space. The results are displayed in Table 8.2

Table 8.2 Textual Space Allocated to Moves in the Conclusions

Rhetorical Unit	English (T-units=82)	Sociology (T-units=115)
Move 1		
Number of words	954	1207
T-units	58 (70.3%)	74 (64.3%)
Mean T-units	1.4	1.6
Move 2		
Number of words	741	998
T-units	24 (29.3%)	41 (35.7%)
Mean T-units	. 6	9

As shown in Table 8.2, in terms of absolute numbers of T-units, both English (70%) and Sociology (64.3%) students gave the most space to Move 1. The only difference between the two disciplines lay in the fact that the English students allocated far less space to Move 2 (29.3%) than Move 1 (70.3%), whereas the Sociology students

allocated a slightly higher textual space to Move 2 (35.7%), slightly more than half of the space allocated to Move 1 (64.3%). Thus, in terms of textual space, the English conclusions were skewed towards Move 1.

I now give examples of the allocation of space to the moves across both English and Sociology conclusions, starting with English and showing how they conform to this preference, that is, the allocation of greater space to Move 1 (summarizing). As in Section 7.3, two points need to be noted. First, the examples offered here are unedited. Second, the different moves are highlighted as follows: Move 1 in bold and Move 2 underlined. Examples 8.1-8.3 illustrate the greater space allocated to Move 1 in the English conclusions:

8.1 **The poet made use of literary devices to make us see and understand the message he was putting across more vividly. He even made use of certain devices which appeals to our sense of hearing and sight to make his readers understand and create a picture of what he's saying**. (**Move 1**)
(EST 5)

8.2 **To draw my conclusion the use of these literary devices are of great significance to the study and appreciation of the poem. I have really enjoyed the poem because of the devices, moral lesson that are good for our generation has been drawn.** (**Move 1**) <u>In other words, the fate of every dictator is the same and their wishes will never materialize</u>. (**Move 2)**
(EST 9)

8.3 **All in all, the structure of sonnet enables the poet to convey his or her message in an orderly manner which enables the student or the reader to make meaning out of it to ensure proper communication** (**Move 1**)
(EST 55)

Similar to the English conclusions, Sociology conclusions generally allocated the greatest textual space to Move 1 (summarizing) in terms of the number of T-units, as shown in Examples 8.4 and 8.5:

8.4   **These acts are abnormal and may put the other partner off his/her hates it. It may also create health problems for the couples. It is also worldly and socially bad.** (**Move 1**)
(SST 57)

8.5   <u>To conclude, I think that people with these sexual paraphelia should consult sex therapist to help them come out of these myths, since it would not in any way help them.</u> (**Move 2**) **Rather, it would bring disgrace, humiliation and breakage of marriage. The society at large would also not benefit anything good from this** (**Move 1**)
(SST 34)

Sometimes where Move 1 (summarizing) was used together with Move 2 (expanding), it

occupied the same amount of textual space, as shown in Examples 8.6-8.7 below:

8.6   **In a nutshell, sex is important in marriage**. (**Move 1**) <u>But it must be practiced in a proper way as prescribed by nature</u>. (**Move 2**)
(SST 43)

8.7   **In conclusion, marital conflict and violence are bound to occur in a marriage.** (**Move 1**) <u>And it is the duty of the marriage couples to control their temper to avoid it</u> (**Move 2**)
(SST 19)

It is worth noting that responding to the question on their expectations from

students, especially with regard to the possible space that might be given to the sub-

communicative units in the conclusions, faculty did not provide any helpful comments.

The Humanities faculty, like their Social Sciences counterparts, had nothing to say about

the proportion of space must be given to Move 2 (expanding). Similarly, the English and

Sociology students did not offer any comments on the space required for the various

moves.

8.4   Sequencing of Moves in the Conclusions

In terms of the sequence of moves, based on both the English and Sociology examination

prompts, interviews with their teachers, and the nature of the writing programme at UCC,

English and Sociology students were expected to favour a two-move sequence (Move 1 >

Move 2) in order to gain good examination scores.

Table 8.3 Sequence of Moves in the Conclusions

Pattern	English (n=40) Frequency	Sociology (n=46) Frequency
2-Move Sequence	*8 (20%)*	**16 (34.8%)**
1 >2	5 (62.5%)	12 (75%)
2 >1	3 (37.5%)	4 (25%)
1-Move	**32 (80%)**	**30 (65.2%)**
1	28 (87.5%)	26 (86.7%)
2	4 (12.5%)	4 (13.3%)

Table 8.3 presents findings in terms of sequence of moves. English candidates

preferred the one-move pattern (80%) over a two-move pattern (20%). Similarly, the

Sociology candidates preferred a one-move pattern (65.2%) over a two-move pattern

(34.8%). We can, therefore, conclude that the one-move pattern was the preferred

sequence for both groups of candidates. Also, where more than one move was used, the

usual sequence for both disciplines was Move 1 followed by Move 2.

I now illustrate the sequence of moves in both disciplines, starting with English.

8.8   **Through these literary devices, we are able to understand the poem very
        well.** (**Move 1**) All honorable people like politicians must make time to read this
        poem. (**Move 2**)
       (EST 16)

8.9   **All in all, with reference to sonnet 3 and 12 of Shakespeare, one can see
        clearly that the understanding and sustenance of every sonnet depends on the
        structure. If a poem or sonnet has no good structure, it becomes difficult for
        the reader to enjoy the poem.** (**Move 1**) One should not forget the fact that
        poems are read to be understood and enjoyed. And for this basic aim to be
        achieved then, the structure must be called to work. Without the sonnet having
        structure there will be no sonnet. In short, no structure, no sonnet. Structure is the
        backbone of poems, especially sonnet. (**Move 2**)
       (EST 54)

Despite the preferred pattern in the sequencing of moves in the conclusions (Move 1> Move 2) as shown in the examples of English conclusions, there were a few (37.5%) that used Move 2 > Move 1, as shown in Example 8.10:

8.10   **In conclusion, we can say that the structure of the sonnet is very significant to the message. It (sonnet) seeks to offer. In other words, the division of the poem into three quatrains and a couplet, an octave and sestet or two sestets and a couplet are very important to the message put across by the poem.** (**Move 2**) Thus, if the quatrains or the octave or the sestets make a proposition or analogy, the couplet provides a suggestion, if they raise questions, the couplet provides an answer. And if an argument, the couplet provides a conclusion. (**Move 1**)
(EST 53)

Turning to the Sociology conclusions, we notice that the Sociology examinees were similar to their English counterparts in the sequencing of moves in their conclusions. Examples 8.11 and 8.12 below illustrate the typical pattern, Move 1 > Move 2:

8.11   **Looking at the aforementioned abnormalities one can say that any marriage which is faced with even one of them is likely to collapse and we know whenever a marriage collapses its negative effects do not remain on the people involve alone, but also the general social landscape.** (**Move 1**) It will therefore be wise for any would-be-couples to examine each other in these aspects or sexual abnormalities first before finally tightening the knot. (**Move 2**)
(SST 48)

8.12   **To conclude, I would say that we know that once we are humans, there are bound to be conflicts**. (**Move 1**) But it is now our responsibility to see to it that these conflicts do not go so far to affect our marriage negatively. We should rather look at ways of solving these problems. (**Move 2**)
(SST 49)

Similar to a few English conclusions which differed from the typical move-sequence, a few Sociology examinees chose Move 2 > Move 1, as shown in Example 8.13:

8.13   <u>In conclusion, marital violence cannot be done away with in marriages but, like every problem, there should be a solution to it. It is females who normally find themselves at the receiving end. Steps should be taken to stop its risky nature</u>. (**Move 2**) **Again, marital violence can arise from premature marriage, different religious faith, financial problems, arrival of children, alcoholism, family disapproval, incompatibility or disharmony, mistrust and extra marital activity.** (**Move 1**)
(SST 22)

At this point we need to explain the above general move-sequence for both disciplinary texts, relating the finding to the corroborating data and existing research. A key reason for the similarity in how students in the present research come to use the two sub-rhetorical units in the same sequence of moves may point to a "cultural explanation", as Kelly *et al.* (2002) prefer to put it, suggesting that such rhetorical knowledge is part of the specific instructions given to all students on their campus. The plausibility of this explanation is strengthened by my experience teaching CS. In particular, the handouts and assignments given in CS classes require that students end their essays by going beyond mere summary to take a reflective position on the issues addressed in their essay. With the generic structure of the conclusions in both disciplines discussed, we now examine their linguistic instantiation.

8.5   Linguistic Realization of Moves in the Conclusions

As pointed out in Section 7.5, the aim of a genre analyst is not only to identify and describe the main rhetorical moves but also to describe the linguistic features (Bhatia, 1993, 2004; Connor 2000) instantiating the moves. To this end, this section is organized in two parts: the first part displays quantitative data of the key linguistic features across both moves in the English and Sociology conclusions, while the second part offers

illustrations of the quantitative data, showing specifically the linguistic features that help to realize the two moves of the introductions.

At the outset, it is worthwhile noting three points. Based on the preliminary analysis, the linguistic features that were found to be central in the conclusions included the verb category, personal pronoun, listing, evaluative terms, and conclusion signals. The second point concerns the meaning imputed to these linguistic features. Their meanings in this study remain the same as delineated in Section 7.5. In addition, we notice the obvious use of conclusion signals in the examination essays; these conclusion signals, that is, linguistic features that alert the reader to the closure of an essay, included typical expressions such as "to conclude", "in conclusion" and "all in all".

8.5.1 *Quantitative Data on Linguistic Features*

This section provides a quantitative analysis of the key linguistic features found to be pertinent to the instantiation of specific moves in the conclusion, starting with Move 1. The significance of the quantitative data in Tables 8.4-8.6 is then discussed in Section 8.6. Table 8.4 displays the distribution of the main discursive features – verb process types/tense/voice, personal pronouns, listing, and evaluative terms – in the two disciplines (English and Sociology).

Table 8.4 Distribution of Linguistic Features Used to Instantiate Move 1

Linguistic Feature	English Freq/Total T-units (%)	Sociology Freq/Total T-units (%)
Voice		
Active	56/58 (95.6)	62/74 (83.8)
Passive	2/58 (3.4)	12/74 (16.2)
Process Types		
Relational	17/58 (29.3)	26/74 (35.1)
Material	29/58 (50)	31/74 (41.9)
Verbal	6/58 (10.3)	10/74 (13.5)
Mental	6/58 (10.3)	7/74 (9.5)
Verb Tense		
Present	52/58 (89.7)	63/74 (85.1)
Past	6/58 (10.3)	11/74 (14.9)
Evaluative Terms		
Adjective	14/58 (24.1)	5/74 (6.8)
Verb	7/58 (12.0)	1/74 (1.4)
Noun	3/58 (5.2)	6/74 (8.1)
Adverb	2/58 (3.4)	3/74 (4.0)
Listing		
Direct	5/58 (8.6)	5/74 (6.8)
Indirect	16/58 (27.6)	22/74 (29.8)
Pronoun		
We	6/58 (10.3)	5/74 (6.8)
1	4/58 (6.9)	3/74 (4.0)
One	3/58 (5.2)	2/74 (2.7)
Conclusion Signals		
Finally	5/58 (8.6)	2/74 (2.7)
In sum	3/58 (5.2)	4/74 (5.4)
To conclude	3/58 (5.2)	3/74 (4.0)
In conclusion	9/58 (15.5)	8/74 (10.8)
All in all	4/58 (6.9)	-
Thus	2/58 (3.4)	3/74 (4.0)
To draw my conclusion	1/58 (1.7)	-
To end	1/58 (1.7)	2/74 (2.7)
In short	2/58 (3.4)	2/74 (2.7)
Lastly	1/58 (1.7)	-
In summary	-	2/74 (2.7)
In the nutshell	-	2/74 (2.7)

As can be seen from Table 8.4, there are key similarities and differences in the distribution of the various linguistic features. As in the previous chapter, there is much

more that both English and Sociology have in common with respect to the verb categories; that is, the active, relational and material process types, and the present tense are used in greater proportion by both groups of students. In addition, both English and Sociology students favoured the use of indirect listing and almost the same range of conclusion signals. However, concerning the use of the past tense in Move 1, Sociology students tended to record slightly higher percentages, 14.9%, when compared with the 10.3% of the English students. Also, pronominal usage was far higher for the English students (22.4%) when compared with that of the Sociology students (13.5%).

Table 8.5 shows the distribution of the linguistic instantiations of Move 2 (expanding) in the two disciplines, English and Sociology.

Table 8.5 Distribution of Linguistic Features Used to Instantiate Move 2

Linguistic Feature	English Freq/Total T-units (%)	Sociology Freq/Total T-units (%)
Voice		
Active	22/24 (91.7)	25/41 (61)
Passive	2/24 (8.3)	16/41 (39)
Process Types		
Relational	6/24 (25)	7/41 (17)
Material	15/24 (62.5)	24/41 (58.5)
Verbal	4/24 (16.7)	3/41 (7.3)
Mental	1/24 (4.2)	-
Verb Tense		
Present	23/24 (95.8)	34/41 (83)
Past	1/24 (4.2)	7/41 (17)
Evaluative Terms		
Adjective	2/24 (8.3)	2/41 (4.9)
Verb	1/24 (4.2)	3/41 (7.3)
Noun	-	4/41 (9.8)
Adverb	-	-
Listing		
Direct	-	2/41 (4.9)
Indirect	3/24 (12.5)	7/41 (17)
Pronoun		
We	3/24 (12.5)	5/41 (12.2)
1	1/24 (4.2)	1/41 (2.4)
One	-	1/41 (2.4)
Conclusion Signals		
Finally	-	-
In sum	1/24 (4.2)	-
To conclude	1/24 (4.2)	-
In conclusion	3/24 (12.5)	2/41 (4.9)
All in all	-	-
Thus	-	-
To draw my conclusion	-	-
To end	-	
In short	1/24 (4.2)	-
Lastly	-	-
To sum up	-	2/41 (4.9)
In nutshell	-	1/41 (2.4)

As in Table 8.4, Table 8.5 shows some similarities and differences in the linguistic features that instantiate the moves across the two disciplines. Both English and

Sociology students tended to use the active, material and relational processes, and the present tense far more frequently. A point to note is that there was a substantial increase in the percentage of passive (16.2%) in Move 1 to 39 % in Move 2 for Sociology students and an increase from 3.4% in Move 1 to 9.3% in Move 2 for the English students. In addition, both English (25.1%) and Sociology (12.2%) students tended to use fewer conclusion signals when ending with Move 2. The difference between the two disciplines in terms of the use of linguistic features concerns the evaluative terms and personal pronouns. The Sociology students not only used more evaluative terms (22%) than their English (12.5%) counterparts but also used more personal pronouns (17%) than the English students (16.7%), though the difference in the latter was minimal.

8.5 .2   *Illustrations of Linguistic Realizations in English Conclusions*

The linguistic forms used in Move 1 (summarizing) and Move 2 (expanding) are discussed in turn in order to show to what extent each move is typified by specific linguistic features. Move 1 (summarizing) is marked by three linguistic features: lexical repetition, two key semantic relations (general-specific and meronymy) and listing. These appear to be very much prompt-driven as well as dictated by the examination essay genre, which upholds relevance of the examination answer.

In particular, English examinees tended to repeat the key terms in the examination prompt: "devices" (Example 8.14) or sometimes the numeral, "three" (Example 8.15), making the term "literary devices" recoverable from the context, for EEP 1; and, "sonnet" and "structure" (Example 8.16) in response to EEP 2.

8.14 The writer <u>employed</u> the use of these <u>devices</u> such as <u>personification, symbolism, and irony</u> to convey his message. (EST 3)

8.15 These <u>three, imagery, personification and cacophony</u> <u>are </u>the leading members of this particular poem. (EST 14)

8.16 All the two <u>sonnets</u> <u>take </u>the same <u>structure </u>with the exception of their end-<u>lines</u> and run-on-<u>lines.</u> The two poems <u>have </u>the <u>rhyme</u> scheme of a b a b, c d c d, e f e f, g g which gives it a musical tone and repetition of sounds and <u>rhyme </u>which helps in memorization. (EST 50)

Apart from lexical repetition which is used extensively in Move 1 (summarizing), the next dominant semantic relation noted in Move 1 is the general-specific one as in, for example, "devices – personification, symbolism, and irony" (Example 8.14). Other semantic relationships such as meronymy "the writer" – "his message" (Example 8.14); "poem"-"sonnets", "structure", "rhyme scheme" (Example 8.16); and direct repetition of "lines" and "rhyme" (Example 8.16) feature in Move 1 to intensify the cohesive density, and ultimately clinch the points already discussed. A further linguistic feature of interest is listing (e.g. Examples 8.14-8.16), which operates on both the word and the sentential levels, i.e., spanning across sentences.

A third linguistic feature in Move 1 is evaluative terms in the English conclusions. First, the examinees focus on the positive effect that the various devices have on them as well as the general reader by utilizing expressions such as "helps us", "contribute greatly", "help in appealing" together with overt positive adjectives such as "orderly", "clear", and "interesting". The second linguistic feature is pronouns: the indefinite pronoun "one" (Example 8.17) and the first person plural in the objective case "us" (Examples 8.17) are used in the conclusion. And in Example 8.20, the examinee adopts an effaced author by referring to "the reader" and "the student", whereas no indication of the reader is offered in Example 8.19.

8.17 <u>In conclusion</u>, <u>one</u> can <u>say</u> that the devices used by the poet <u>helps us</u> a lot to understand the poem since they <u>help in appealing</u> to our senses of vision, hearing, touch, taste, and also <u>helps us</u> in getting the figurative imagery used in the poem goes on to give us the deeper meaning of the poem apart from the surface meaning. (EST 24)

8.18 <u>All in all</u>, the structure of sonnet '3' and '18' <u>contribute greatly</u> to the entire meaning and development of the poems. (EST 38)

8.19 <u>All in all</u>, the structure of sonnet <u>enables</u> the poet to convey his or her message in an <u>orderly</u> manner which enables the student or the reader to make meaning out of it to ensure <u>proper</u> communication. (EST 55)

The fourth interesting set of linguistic features was the conclusion signals. These included "in conclusion" (Example 8.17) and "all in all" (Example 8.18, 8.19). These conclusion signals, defied any particular location, as they could be found in either move. However, given that Move 1 appeared more frequently than Move 2, their occurrence in Move 1 was far greater than their occurrence in Move 2 (as will be noted soon). As shown in Table 8.5, the most frequently used conclusion signal tended to be "in conclusion". This is not surprising, given that it afforded the examinees to explicitly announce the closure of the text, apart from perhaps its earliest introduction to them in the secondary school.

Apart from the use of such conclusion signals, there were features which, when they occurred towards the end of the essay, though expressed as a form of listing, indicated the intention of the English examinees to close the text. These were indirect listing and direct listing. Example 8.20 illustrates indirect listing: "these three devices as expounded above".

8.20 Jared Angira's use of <u>these three devices as expounded above</u> <u>makes us get</u> a clear picture of what he is talking about which consequently makes for an interesting poem. (EST 11).

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The use of indirect listing may be considered a commonsensical approach, given time constraint; this strategy enables the examinee to recapitulate the points developed without going over all that has been said about those three devices. Not surprisingly, therefore, in Move 1 the occurrence of indirect listing was higher (27%) than the occurrence of direct listing (8.6%).

Considering the examples offered (Examples 8.14-8.20), verb category appears to be of primary importance. Similar to Table 7.5 on the distribution of linguistic features, the present tense had a high frequency of occurrence (89.7%) compared to the frequency of the past tense (10.3%). The only exception was Example 8.14, where the examinee seems to be interested in emphasizing the literary text being discussed as a historical document. In using the present tense in Move 1 (summarizing), the English students did not only exhibit the norms associated with academic writing but more importantly seemed to have established a vital and present relationship with their readers or while the few students who use the past tense seem to have distanced themselves from their readers. These examples also reflect the dominance of material processes (Examples 8.14, 8.16, 8.18, 8.19, 8.20) with the relational processes occurring in Example 8.15. Further, the examples clearly show the dominance of the active voice. Thus, the use of the verb category does not show any marked difference from those observed in Move 1 in the introductions.

Turning to Move 2 (expanding), we notice that almost all the points raised in relation to the linguistic features can be applied here. These comments concern especially the verb category. To further illustrate the use of linguistic features in Move 2, we draw on the following English examples (8.21-8.23). In Example 8.22, where the candidate

recommends an action to be taken, the generic "All honourable people like politicians" is used, while the inclusive "us" and "we" are used in Example 8.21 where a lesson is drawn from the narrative poem being discussed. Similarly, where Example 8.22 shuns the use of a personal pronoun, Example 8.23 uses an indefinite pronoun, "one", as shown below:

8.21   The poem is didactic and its main aim is to caution <u>us</u> to do good whiles on earth as <u>we </u>will reap what <u>we</u> sew. (EST 14)

8.22   <u>All honorable people like politicians</u> must make time to read this poem.
        (EST 16)

8.23   <u>One</u> should not forget the fact that poems are read to be enjoyed. And for this basic aim to be achieved then, the structure must be called to work. Without the sonnet having structure there will be no sonnet. In short, no structure, no sonnet. Structure is the backbone of poems especially sonnet. (EST 54).

        The final feature to consider is lexical reiteration, which was substantially reduced in Move 2. Unlike the linguistic instantiation in Move 1, which exhibited a lot of lexical reiteration, there was very little of this feature, as Examples 8.21 and 8.22 show. It is possible that the English candidates felt that having made their points already, there was no need for such repetition to achieve thematic saliency. Example 8.23 appears interesting in this sense as the terms "structure" and "sonnet" were repeatedly used.

8.5.3   Illustrations of Linguistic Realizations in Sociology Conclusions

Similar to the linguistic features of Move 1 (summarizing) in the English conclusions, there are three linguistic features worth highlighting in the Sociology conclusions: lexical repetition, two semantic relations (general-specific and meronymy), and listing. In general, the effect of these was to increase the thematic saliency of the conclusions with respect to the examination prompt, as illustrated in Examples 8.24-8.27:

8.24   Thus <u>circumstances</u> such as <u>premature marriage, having no better alternative than to marry, external pressures, physical disharmony, and the arrival of children into the family and extra marital adventures normally give rise to marital violence</u>. (SST 11)

8.25   To sum up, there are so many <u>circumstances</u> that can ignite into marital violence. Some of them are, <u>first, sexual problem of any of the couple, second, financial problem of any of the couple, third, unfulfilled dreams, fourthly, extra marital affairs and finally, the arrival of children</u>. These and so many other <u>circumstances</u> can give rise to marital violence. (SST 25)

8.26   In conclusion, <u>homosexual, lesbianism, auto-eroticism, paedophilia, zoophelia and necrophilia</u> are among the sexual abnormalities in our societies today. (SST 39)

8.27   The abnormalities include <u>narcissism, homosexuality, necrophilia, zoophelia, zoophelia and crophelia</u>. (SST 52)

The obvious semantic relations that dominate Move 1 (summarizing) are lexical repetition, e.g. "circumstance" and "marital violence" in Examples 8.24-8.295 and "sexual abnormalities" or "abnormalities", in Examples 8.26 and 8.27 respectively. To some extent, it can be argued that meronymy is utilized in Move 1 insofar as all the terms in the essays that respond to SEP 1 relate to marriage: "marriage" – "family", "children", "marital adventures" (Example 8.24 and 8.25). Similarly, meronymy is at work in the essays that responded to EEP 2, relating to sex or sexuality: "homosexual", "lesbianism", "auto-eroticism", "zoophelia", and "necrophilia" (Examples 8.26-8.27).

Related to the above examples (8.24-8.27) are listing and the process types. Listing appears to be prompt driven as both prompts required that examinees examine either "some of the circumstances. . ." (EEP 1) or "five sexual paraphelia" (EEP 2). Thus, for example, Example 8.24 lists the following: "premature marriage, having no better alternative than to marry, external pressures, physical disharmony, and the arrival of children into the family…." The list in Example 8.27 is rendered as "narcissism,

homosexuality, necrophilia, zoophelia, and crophelia". While the examination prompt, EEP 1 may have actuated a combination of noun phrases and clauses, EEP 1 seemed to have influenced examinees to utilize word lists. Of less interest but nevertheless worth noting is the positioning of the list: it could occur either in a predicative structure as in Examples 8.25 and 8.27, or in the subject of a sentence, as in Examples 8.24 and 8.26. This latter point may be explained as a matter of style. Whereas Examples 8.24-8.27 indicate the use of direct listing, not all Sociology conclusions utilized this feature. In fact, as shown in Table 8.4, most of the students favoured indirect listing such as "aforementioned facts" (Example 8.28) and "above-mentioned" (Examples 8.30). As stated in the previous sub-section, this preference could be as a result of time constraint rather than style.

Turning to the verb category, I consider process types, and in particular relational processes in Move 1 (summarizing), which are often used in listing. But given the observation that listing can occur in either a predicate or the subject element of a sentence, we notice that when it occurs in the predicate, the relational process "are" as in Example 8.25 and a variant such as "include" in Example 8.27 may very likely be used. A second aspect of the verb category concerns tense. The examples (8.24-8.27) clearly confirm the finding in Table 8.4 in which the present tense was observed to be far higher in frequency of occurrence than the use of the past tense. All the finite verbs in the examples indicate the use of the present tense: "give" (Example 8.24), "are" and "can" (Example 8.25), "are" (Example 8.26), and "include" (Example 8.27). The use of the present tense in this move is not surprising as at this point the candidates are expected to give their stance in respect of the issues addressed in the body. Moreover, as our

examples (8.24-8.27) indicate, the Sociology students preferred the active voice in Move 1.

Also, of interest in Move 1 are evaluative terms, given the nature of issues the examinees were supposed to address: marital conflict and sexual abnormalities. Evaluative terms are used in Move 1 (summarizing) of the Sociology conclusions, though as Table 8.4 indicates, they did not feature frequently. Examples 8.28-8.30 indicate that the evaluative terms in the Sociology conclusions tended to be generally negative in signification:

8.28   Marriage is said to be a good master when all goes right and a <u>bad</u> master when things begin to slide but with <u>the aforementioned facts</u> one can say that marriage is <u>not all that rosy</u>. (SST 18)

8.29   From the above explanation, it is so easy to understand that sexual abnormalities bring about marital <u>problems</u> or have <u>negative</u> impact on marriage. (SST 46)

8.30   Also, <u>the above-mentioned</u> are everyday threat to marriages worldwide.
        (SST 54)

Specifically, the evaluation of marriage or sex elicits such explicit negative terms as "bad" and "not all that rosy" (Example 8.28), "problems" and "negative" (Example 8.29), and "threat" (Example 8.30). These linguistic expressions show a combination of adjectives and nouns.

Turning to Move 2 (expanding), we notice that similar to the earlier discussion of Move 2 of the English conclusions (see Section 8.5.2) almost all the points raised in relation to the linguistic features remain valid here. These comments concern especially the verb category, conclusion signals, and listing. These need to be qualified, though. In terms of verb category, given that Sociology students tended to recommend steps to be taken to address the issues addressed in their essays, it was not surprising that there is a

higher frequency of material processes, which were modalized as in Examples 8.31-8.33.

Candidates recommended steps to be taken to stem the "anomalous" situation, that is, either sexual abnormalities or marital violence. Second, where a number of steps are suggested, as in Example 8.33, sequence items such as "first", "also" and "lastly" are used. Third, in Move 2 (expanding) of the Sociology conclusions there is a substantial decline in the use of technical terms, especially in response to SEP 2, as evidenced below:

8.31   These problems mentioned, some <u>can be solved</u> even the sexual problems when psychological, <u>can be easily solved</u> when <u>experts</u> are consulted leading to the smooth running of the marriage and the <u>partners</u> fully enjoying their union. (SST 30)

8.32   They cannot be stopped because that is where <u>someone</u> derives <u>his</u> or <u>her</u> satisfaction and <u>the society</u> has to accept them. (SST 32)

8.33   People who have these sexual paraphelia can be helped. <u>First</u>, they can see a <u>psychiatrist</u> or psycho analyst for <u>him</u> or <u>her</u> to be helped. <u>Also</u> if the individual is religiously inclined, he or she can seek help from <u>his or her pastor</u>. <u>Lastly</u>, people or <u>couples</u> should force themselves to have sexual gratification with their partners rather than go outside the marriage. <u>To sum up</u>, if couple make themselves available to their partners <u>these sexual abnormalities</u> in couples could be minimized. (SST 55)

Sometimes, the suggestions were not as directly expressed as in Examples 8.31-8.32.

Example 8.34, for instance, indirectly hints at what couples should do when confronted with a problem:

8.34   <u>In the light of all these circumstances</u>, there are some <u>couples</u> who have a violence-free stay as a result of consensus building and education. <u>Most people</u> who are educated have less cases of marital violence (SST 5)

The last set of linguistic features found in the Sociology conclusions involves the explicit signalling of conclusion and listing (direct and indirect). With respect to the former, Sociology conclusions, like the English conclusions, signal closure through

explicit linguistic markers such as "lastly" and "to sum up" (Example 8.33). It is difficult to explain the use of two conclusion signals in a paragraph except for emphasis as though the candidate is not sure that these perform the same communicative function as the more explicit signals such as "to conclude" and "in conclusion". In any case, the point also needs to be made about the limited range of conclusion signals in Move 2, similar to Move 2 in the English conclusions. Given the limited textual space given to Move 2 (see Table 8.2), it is not surprising that very few indirect listing (or what Lawe-Davies calls "metatextual deixis) was resorted to in this Move 2 such as "these sexual abnormalities" (Example 8.33) and "in the light of all these circumstances" (Example 8.34) and "aforementioned facts" (Example 8.30).

From the examples (8.31-8.34), we also notice the relative absence of first person pronouns. This did not, however, mean that pronouns were completely absent. Instead other pronouns such as "their" (Example 8.31), "his/her", "they", "someone" (Example 8.32), and "they", "him/her", "he/she" (Examples 8.33). Together with other references to "experts" and "partners" (Example 8.31) and "psychiatrist", "psycho-analyst", "pastor", "couples", "people", partner" (Examples 8.33-8.34) suggest their concern with a social problem which demands the involvement of all groups of people in the society.

8.6   Discussion of Findings

This section, similar to the previous chapter (See Section 7.6) highlights the similarities and differences in the English and Sociology conclusions, focusing on the various linguistic realizations in the moves. Their significance to earlier research and pedagogy in second language writing and disciplinary writing, in particular are addressed.

8.6.1   Move 1 in the Conclusions

In general, both English and Sociology examinees in their use of Move 1 (summarizing) exploit five main linguistic expressions: lexical repetition in listing, present tense and relational processes, evaluative terms, semantic relations such as general-specific and meronymy, and direct signalling of conclusion.

The first point to note is that when listing, both English and Sociology examinees repeated key terms in their examination prompts (EEP 1 and 2 and SEP 1 and 2). This may be interpreted as both strategic and commonsensical as repetition of the key terms gives an impression of maintaining relevance, in line with the demands of the examination prompt. It is likely that having written a series of examinations in their educational lives, candidates used lexical repetition as a way of achieving coherence and thematic saliency. In both English and Sociology conclusions, listing was used as a key discoursal device, especially in carrying the repeated key terms, as demanded by the examination prompts. Further, both English and Sociology conclusions offered listing in either the predicate or the subject element of a sentence, although students generally preferred listing in the predicate segment of the sentence. Both English and Sociology students may have favoured indirect listing not only in line with the demands of the exam prompt but as a commonsensical step in dealing with time constraint since fewer words are generally demanded.

Despite these three commonalities with respect to the use of listing, there was a distinct difference. Consistent with my observation of the use of listing in the introductions, there were also two types of listing – word and sentential – in the conclusions. The former recurred in English examination essays in response to

examination prompts EEP 1 and in the Sociology examination essays in response to SEP 2, while the latter occurred in English examination essays in response to EEP 2 and Sociology answers in response to SEP 1. Thus, the different use of these two forms of listing in Move 1 (summarizing) may indicate the influence of the different examination prompts, rather than the inherent nature of the disciplines. This difference in the use of listing, whether at the word/phrase or sentence level by both groups of students, was expected as students in examinations tend to tailor their answers to the demand of examination prompts.

Besides listing, the use of the verb category begs explanation. In particular, as pointed out in Sections 8.5.1 and 8.5.2, the material process type tended to be the dominant verb form used in Move 1 (summarizing) of both English conclusions (50%) and Sociology conclusions (41.9%), followed by the use of the relational processes. The use of relational processes was not surprising, given that listing in the predicate usually calls for the use of relational processes. On the other hand, the use of material processes in the Sociology conclusions may generally reflect the nature of the discipline, which deals with social processes and actions. In the case of English conclusions, the use of material processes might reflect the narrative nature of the literary texts being discussed in response to one of the exam prompts, EEP 1. Additionally, the present tense was preferred by both groups of students. Similar to the finding in Henry and Roseberry's (1997) study, the present tense was used to realize the strategies of evaluating, stating, presenting a problem, and listing. In addition, the use of the present tense is not surprising, as both groups of examinees were generally expected to address issues of contemporaneous relevance. Besides, the use of the present tense is an important feature

of academic writing; the fact that it was used in far more proportion than the past tense in both groups suggests the learners' preparedness to assume their "legitimate peripheral participation" (Lave and Wenger, 1991) in academia or their socialization.

Apart from lexical repetition and the accompanying listing as well as verb forms, two semantic relations, namely general-specific and meronymy were utilized by both English and Sociology students in Move 1 (summarizing). Two reasons may be adduced for the preference of these two semantic relations. First, by using these semantic relations, examinees clinch the points already discussed in their essays and affirm their staying in line with the demand of the examination prompts. Secondly, and although this view might be remote, both English and Sociology students possibly did not have time to exploit other semantic relations such as synonymy and antonymy at the end of their essay. That is, the two semantic relations, namely general-specific and meronymy, seemed to be natural in an examination situation at this point in the essay.

A key aspect of Move 1 (summarizing), evaluative terms were mainly expressed through adjectives and nouns, and to a lesser extent, verbs. These linguistic expressions were used by both categories of students in varying degrees. Clearly, there are different issues which are supposed to be the object of evaluation by the students. For instance, in EEP 1 and EEP 2, the objects involved are the selected literary texts, while in SEP 1 and SEP 2, the objects are social practices. The English examinees utilize expressions such as "contribute greatly", help in appealing", "orderly" and "interesting" while the evaluative terms in Sociology include "not all that rosy", marital problems", and "threat to marriages". Since it is not sufficient to ascribe this difference solely to disciplinary contexts as this may risk a charge of naivety, the writing task or examination prompts

themselves could help to explain differences in the use of these evaluative terms: it is possible, therefore, that the respective examination prompts impelled the English examinees to use commendatory terms in their evaluation, while the Sociology examinees expressed opprobrium (see the prompts in Section 6.1).

Obviously, in a contemporary society like Ghana, yet to be heavily affected by the influence of globalization on traditional social institutions and practices, students' assessment of social phenomena such as marital violence and sexual paraphelia are likely to be negative. Interestingly, the Sociology students offered relatively few negative evaluative comments, reflecting perhaps the view that the assessment of marital conflict and sexual paraphelia is "given". (See Section 9.2.1, where I raise a pedagogical issue relating to the use of evaluative terms.) Students of English on the other hand are free to make a negative judgement on the text analyzed, although the use of only positive comments appears to cast doubt on their criticality.

One possible explanatory reason for the English students using more evaluative terms than their Sociology counterparts (see Table 8.4) lies in an admixture of two factors. The first is the disciplinary ethos of the two disciplines. As in other studies involving Literary Studies (see, for instance, Bazerman, 1981; McCharthy, 1987; Herrington, 1988; Williamson, 1988; Kuriloff, 1996) and pedagogic materials (e.g. Jones *et al.,* 1997), students are required to offer their own interpretation and evaluative response to a literary text. This difference between English and Sociology would seem to account for the differing attitude that both groups of students adopt towards Move 1 (summarizing) as a distinct move in their conclusions. Given the assumption that second-year English students are equipped with analytical tools, they are expected not only to

analyze but also to evaluate the extent to which a writer (poet) has been able convey his/her message. Thus, the frequency, rather than mere occurrence, of evaluation in the concluding section of examination essays is consistent with the disciplinary practices of English.

Personal pronouns provide yet another interesting way of considering linguistic features used in Move 1 by the English and Sociology students. In general, personal pronouns were used in varying proportion in the English conclusions, while they were minimally used in the Sociology conclusions. English students can thus afford to use "us" in Examples 8.9 and 8.10 and indefinite pronoun in Example 8.10. The use of such personal pronouns may indicate the element of subjectivity which is a part of literary appreciation, if subjectivity is defined as the visible presence of an author; the absence of these in Sociology conclusions could indicate the relative impersonal nature of Sociology, although it deals with issues related to the society. But, as I would show presently in the use of Move 2 (expanding), the apparent lack of or minimal use of personal pronouns does not necessarily suggest Sociology's lack of interest in identifying with the society.

The final linguistic expression of interest in Move 1 (summarizing) which was common to both groups of students involves signalling the conclusion. Although, I discuss the signalling of conclusions as a linguistic feature associated with Move 1 (summarizing), at the risk of being repetitive, it is important to note that the explicit indication of the conclusion through such forms as "in conclusion', "to conclude", "to sum up", and "in summary" occurred in both moves, though the frequency of occurrence in Move 1 was higher than in Move 2 (see Tables 8.4 and 8.5). The point to consider is

whether these expressions had been over-used generally. There seems to be only one instance where a Sociology student used "lastly" and "to sum up" in the conclusion (Example 8.33). While it is not clear from the data whether these conclusion signals had been overused, the conflicting signals that are presented in writing guides may be worrying. For instance, while Gong and Dragga (1995) condemn their use as lacking in sophistication, others such as Ng (2004) support their use in student academic writing. What is lacking in this debate is a disciplinary perspective that will clearly point out the way for students when it comes to the use of these linguistic cueing of conclusions. Other studies by Lawe-Davies' (1998) and Drury and Webb (1991) study among Dentistry and Psychology students respectively show that students use these forms, just as the present study has shown.

8.6.2   *Move 2 in the Conclusions*

Move 2 (expanding) represents the final opportunity to examine the similarities and differences in the language used in both English and Sociology conclusions.

Turning first to the similarities in the use of linguistic features in Move 2, we notice the dominance of the present tense in both disciplines. There was a slight increase in the use of the present tense in the English conclusions in Move 2 but a minimal decline of the present tense in the Sociology conclusions in the same move. This usage of the present tense enables students to demonstrate the timelessness of either the suggestions being made or the significance of a literary devices being alluded to. But even more glaring is the fact that the use of the present tense places the examinees close to the issues being addressed.

The use of active voice clearly predominates in Move 1, and in fact still does in Move 2. This was expected in both disciplines as the Humanities and the "softer" Social Science disciplines stress agency by utilizing the active, while the passive form is used in the Sciences to mask the agent. However, the fact that in the Sociology conclusions there was an increase from 16.2% in Move 1 to 39% in Move 2 while the use of the passive remained a single digit for the English conclusions across both moves suggests the tendency of Sociology to tilt towards the sciences. In fact, the passive in Move 2 of the Sociology conclusions tended to be used while recommendations were being offered by examinees. Of course, this is not surprising, given the fact that Sociology tends to draw on both features of the Humanities and the Hard Sciences.

A further point of commonality across both disciplines is found in the substantial decline of lexical reiteration, evaluative terms, and conclusion signals. If, as observed by literacy specialists and other applied linguists (e.g. Lukmani, 1994; Leki, 1995; Townsend *et al*., 1993) students seem not to be interested in conclusions, then this could be the reason for such a situation. A plausible reason could also be the time constraint imposed by the examination essay genre, which makes it difficult for students to apportion time for writing their conclusions, and hence any other linguistic instantiations.

Aside from these similarities, there are two key differences in the linguistic expression used in Move 2 (expanding). The first concerns the way both English and Sociology candidates seek to show that the issues addressed in their answers are of relevance to the society. As has been already suggested (see Section 8.6.1), while the English students generally personalize this by using inclusive pronouns such as "us", "we" or the indefinite pronoun "one" or sometimes the generic such as "all honorable

people", Sociology texts often shunned the inclusive pronouns "we" and "us" , and instead used forms such as "some couple", "people", "the society" "experts" "psychiatrist", "psycho-analyst", "pastor", and "partner". We can invoke disciplinary difference to explain this differing use of nominals. Thus, Sociology examinees appear to adopt a rather impersonal tone as noted in Starfield (2004), whereas the English candidates adopt a personal stance.

The second difference that was noted to occur frequently in Move 2 (expanding) was process types that were modalized. This was more of a feature in Sociology conclusions than the English conclusions, given that the former tended to make recommendations while their English counterparts allude to an issue of significance. Thus, Sociology examinees in their use of process types, offered forms such as "can be solved", "cannot be stopped", "can seek help", and "could be minimized". Such modalized material processes evince the illocutionary force of advice, suggestions, admonition, and obligation being played out. This is not surprising, given the communicative purpose of Move 2.

In general, in both moves, it appears that it is the relational process type and evaluative terms in Move 1 (summarizing) which provide the strongest basis for distinguishing the two groups of conclusions. The use of modalized material processes and ways of engaging the reader in Move 2 could also account for the difference between the English and Sociology conclusions. The claim regarding especially evaluative terms, however, ought to be treated with caution, as there is a possible association with influence from examination prompts. The point of similarity concerns the use of verb

categories such as present tense and relational process types as well as expressions signaling the conclusion across all two moves in both English and Sociology conclusions.

8.8   Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has explored the similarities and differences in student examination essays from the perspective of move analysis. One clear similarity between the two disciplines in respect of the conclusion lies in the adoption of a two-move sequence, the allocation of the greatest textual space to Move 1 (summarizing) and the preference for a one-move conclusion. The difference in the exact nature of Move 2 (expanding) lay in the fact that English students preferred highlighting the significance of issues in the prompt while the Sociology students tended to make recommendations. Moreover, the moves seemed to have both similar and different linguistic realizations. In particular, various semantic relations, explicit cueing of conclusion and process types (relational and material) appeared to be common to the two disciplines whereas evaluative terms (especially in Move 1, summarizing) and personal pronouns appeared to distinguish the two disciplines. The disciplinary contexts in which students write may largely account for the difference observed in the use of these moves and their linguistic realizations. Other possible factors for such disciplinary differentiation in the English and Sociology conclusions may be attributed to the writing tasks or prompt, teacher expectation, and students' preferences. On the other hand, the similarity in other findings may suggest the demands tertiary literacy imposes on university students as well as the sociolinguistic landscape in which students operate. With the two main tasks of this study undertaken, the way is now paved for the conclusion, which is taken up in the next chapter.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

9.0   Introduction

The fundamental objective of this study was to explore disciplinary variation in the use of

two rhetorical features – introduction and conclusion – in the examination essays written

by second-year Ghanaian undergraduates in three disciplines, namely, English,

Sociology, and Zoology. The focus was on whether these rhetorical features, noted to be

crucial in written academic discourse, were used in the three disciplines, and what the

similarities and differences were in their use, with respect to the frequency of occurrence

of moves, the textual space allocated to each move relative to one another, sequencing of

moves, and the linguistic realization of each of the moves.

This chapter has a three-part structure. The first section briefly sketches an

overview of the findings of the present study (Section 9.1). The second section elaborates

the implications of the findings with respect to theory and pedagogy (Section 9.2). The

final section of this chapter, and for that matter this thesis, discusses limitations in

relation to the present study (Section 9.3) and suggests directions for future research

(Sections 9.4).

9.1   Summary of Findings

The summary of the findings is presented in the order of the two research questions,

Question 1 followed by Question 2. As with the results and discussion section of the

present study (see Chapters 6-8), this section commences with a brief summary of the preliminary findings.

9.1.1   Preliminary Findings

There were three preliminary findings. The first preliminary finding (see Section 6.5) was that most, if not all, English and Sociology examinees used both rhetorical features, whereas only 8% of Zoology examinees used introductions and none used conclusions. With respect to the second preliminary question, two findings emerged (see Section 6.5). The first finding was that English and Sociology students allocated almost the same proportion of space to their introductions, 13% and 14% respectively, whereas the Zoology students devoted only about 1%. The second finding indicated that English and Sociology students allocated almost the same proportion of space to conclusions, 4%, while no space was allocated to conclusions by Zoology students.

Taken together, the three findings point to two conclusions. The first indicates that both English and Sociology students were more likely to introduce and conclude their essays than their Zoology counterparts. Following from this first point, it can also be said that there is a disciplinary influence in the use of introductions and conclusions, given that the English and Sociology students showed a tendency to be alike. These preliminary findings provide a means of ascertaining the extent to which this disciplinary influence is shown in the main study.

9.1.2   Major Findings

With respect to the first research question (see Section 1.3), the results related to the moves employed in the introductions of the three selected disciplines and the linguistic expressions associated with each move provide an interesting but complex pattern. Concerning the use of moves, similarity among all three groups of examinees (English, Sociology, and Zoology) was noted in terms of two of the three parameters focused on, namely textual space allocated to each move relative to the others and sequencing of moves. In particular, all groups of students allocated greater space to Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)). Also, all three groups of examinees favoured the 1 > 2 > 3 move sequence and its variants such as 1 > 3 and 2 > 3. This similarity was not surprising, given reasons such as the institutional factor, the sociolinguistic situation in Ghana, and the requirement of the examination prompts, discussed in Section 6.1.

The difference among the three groups of students occurred with respect to the frequency of moves. Here, Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) occurred most frequently in English and Zoology introductions, whereas Move 3 (previewing) occurred most frequently in Sociology introductions, though it can be argued that this difference is a matter of degree rather than kind. This finding was surprising in relation to the English introductions, given that English students in Ghanaian educational institutions are often told to clearly indicate the structure of their essay right from the beginning. Although the Zoology introductions were few, the frequent occurrence of Move 3 (previewing) was not surprising. This is based on the fact that both students and faculty in Zoology did not place any value on contextualizing, which was perceived by some faculty as "padding" (see Section 6.4.2); instead, a straightforward engagement with the issue(s) raised in an

examination prompt was considered crucial. As far as the space allocated to moves and the sequencing of moves are concerned, all three groups tended to be alike.

The linguistic realization of moves appeared even more complex and interesting than the use of the moves, given the several linguistic expressions that were involved. The most striking finding relates to the use of personal pronouns, verbal processes, and metatextual expressions in Move 3 (previewing) of the English introductions, thus clearly setting the English introductions apart from the Sociology and Zoology introductions (see Section 7.6.3). As argued earlier, the combination of these linguistic features enable the English students to assert a stance or "voice", often alluded to in the literature (e.g. Elbow, 1981) and also confirmed in the interview data with faculty (see Section 7.3). A less striking finding concerns the use of definitions in Move 1 (contextualizing) by the English and Sociology students and in Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) by the Zoology students, lending credence to Bhatia's (1993) view that it is not always possible to find a one-to-one correlation between formal and functional aspects of language use. Further, in utilizing attribution with their definition, the Sociology examinees clearly distinguished themselves, since their English and Zoology counterparts hardly provided any attributions. Although this finding could not be followed up in interviews with both faculty and their students, the difference in the use of attribution in definitions at undergraduate level suggests disciplinary influence (see Section 7.6.1).

The last finding that suggests disciplinary variation concerns the use of verbal processes in Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) such as "wants to put across", "talks about", and "discuss" and in Move 3 (previewing) such as "focus", "refer to", or "comment". English students used these verbal processes whereas the Sociology and

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Zoology did not use them. This finding is not surprising, given the nature of the object of English literature that requires that students demonstrate their understanding of either what the author of a literary text is purportedly doing or what they themselves are doing with the text.

Despite these key differences in the way students presented the three moves in their introductions, there were broad similarities. These concerned the use of the present tense, relational process type, and the active voice, especially in Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)), and the repetition of key words in a form of listing in Move 1 (contextualizing) across the English, Sociology, and Zoology introductions. On the one hand, the use of the verb categories (relational process, present tense and the active) is in consonance with the general requirement of expert academic writing, and, therefore, suggests the attempt by learners to approximate this norm. On the other hand, the use of lexical repetition by all three groups of students may have been actuated by the need to achieve thematic saliency and relevance in keeping with genre demand

Turning to the second research question, similar results were obtained with respect to the moves and their linguistic realizations, with the latter presenting a more complex and interesting situation than the former. First, in terms of moves, the English and Sociology conclusions were similar in the adoption of a two-move pattern, the frequent use of Move 1, more allocation of textual space to Move 1, and the preference of a one-move pattern. The general adoption of the two-move structure for conclusions and the subsequent preference of a one-move pattern in the present study were not surprising. The use of the two-move structure is interesting on three counts. The first obvious point is that it contrasts with the three-move pattern in the introductions. A more interesting

issue is the possible effect of time-pressure, thus making students focus on what they perceive to be the most important – the body of the essay; those who made attempts to write conclusions were likely to do so briefly. Third, it may be that after all undergraduates generally do not find concluding essays rewarding, challenging, or even interesting, once the issues required to be discussed have been successfully dealt with, a view espoused in other studies such as Townsend *et al*. (1993), Leki (1995), Lukmani (1994), Samraj (1995), and Lawe-Davies (1998). The final point is that the one-move pattern, which was preferred in the conclusion, was shunned by interestingly the same two groups of students (English and Sociology) in their introduction, with only the Zoology students preferring the one-move pattern (see Section 7.4) in their introductions.

In terms of differences, Move 2 (expanding) provided an opportunity to see distinctions between the two disciplines. While the English examinees highlighted the significance of the issues raised in the prompt by sounding didactic, the Sociology examinees largely gave recommendations. Although these were in comparison with Move 1 (summarizing) minimally used, as shown in Sections 8.1 and 8.2, they confirmed the examinees' attempt at responding to their course lecturers' expectations and the exam prompt. A related issue that arises is that both the frequency and textual space given to a move can collectively indicate the rhetorical importance of a move. If this view, which is also noted in several studies that have employed move analysis (see Samraj, 1995, 2005b; Connor, 2000), is to be upheld, then we can argue that clearly the English and Sociology students valued Move 1 (summarizing) as rhetorically more important than Move 2 (expanding), contrary to faculty expectations.

With respect to the linguistic realizations of the moves, the most striking finding relates to Move 1 (summarizing) and to a smaller extent Move 2 (expanding). Specifically, whereas English students tended to use commendatory terms as part of their summarizing, Sociology students used negative terms (see Section 8.6.2). This finding was not surprising, given the examination prompts both groups of students were responding to (see Section 6.1). In the case of the Sociology students, it is likely that the examination prompts (SEP 1 and 2) required them to see the issues as problematic. In the case of the English students, though based on the faculty interview data and earlier studies, they were expected to exercise some level of criticality, it is possible that they considered criticality mainly in terms of expressing appreciation of the use of literary devices in a text.

Two other findings relate to the use of personal pronouns and material processes in Move 2 (expanding). Whereas the former was used in the English conclusions, the latter was associated more with the Sociology conclusions (see Section 8.3). In particular, the English students' use of personal pronouns in Move 2 (expanding) and sometimes in Move 1 (summarizing) is not surprising, given the propensity of literary studies to encourage authorial voice or personal visibility. Moreover, this finding is consistent with similar findings in the introductions (see Section 7.6.3), although the moves in which personal pronouns occur are different. Not surprisingly, the Sociology students, who utilized Move 2 (expanding), tended to use material processes to underscore their call on the society to take action in respect of the issues addressed. And such material processes were not surprisingly accompanied by modals such as "must", "should", and "have to ".

Clearly, it can be argued that the introductions and conclusions across the disciplines exemplify key similarities and dissimilarities from the standpoints of generic structure and language use. Being more rhetorically complex, the introductions offered greater opportunity to see these similarities and dissimilarities in respect of the moves and their linguistic realization across the three disciplines in the study, while the conclusions offered limited opportunity in terms of the same dimensions due to the smaller number of students who concluded their essays as well as the fact that Zoology did not produce conclusions at all.

9.2 Implications of the Study

Based on the findings of the study, the next section discusses two main sets of implications: theoretical and pedagogical.

9.2.1 Theoretical Implications

This sub-section focuses on the theoretical implications of the study, highlighting the significance of the theoretical framework used in the present study, the theorizing of the two rhetorical units (the introduction and conclusion) in academic writing, the description of novice writing, and two key binary relationships (students/experts and descriptivism/prescriptivism) in academic writing.

The first implication concerns the application of the theoretical framework used in this study. The utilization of Swales' (1981a, 1990a) move analysis as the key rhetorical approach in the present study confirms the position that language is adapted to the diverse contexts provided by disciplinary communities. Closely related to the above is the idea

that genre theory is worth utilizing in an investigation of undergraduate examination essays (for justification for its use, see Section 2.1.2), though genre theory has often been applied to expert academic and professional discourse (Bhatia, 2004). Evidence in the present study clearly indicates that students in all three disciplines are seen to be making definitive steps in orienting their readers, although they may not have metacognitive awareness of such moves.

The second theoretical implication relates to theorization on the two crucial rhetorical units addressed in this study: introduction and conclusion. With regard to the introductions, several empirical studies and writing guides seem to indicate a definable structure for introductions in academic writing. While it is almost acceptable in academia to construct expert introductions based on the Swalesian model with varying degrees of difference depending on the disciplines, the work by Bhatia (1997, 2004) on academic introductions has taken theorization on introductions further by alluding to subtle differences such as the extent of hybridization in the combined use of informational and promotional features. Scholars such as Hewings (1993), Yang and Allison (2003), and Bunton (2005) similarly have added to our understanding of the use of conclusions in academic writing (by experts and doctoral students) by highlighting their key generic and functional categories. The present work confirms the view that undergraduate examination essay introductions and conclusions differ from expert (and graduate student) introductions and conclusions on the basis of different genres being exploited. In addition, this present study adds to the existing move at theorizing rhetorical structures in student writing by arguing that in three disciplines such as English, Sociology, and Zoology, undergraduates employ basically the contextualizing-previewing pattern in

orienting their readers, albeit with some similarities and differences. In the case of the conclusion, the present study shows that while students seemed to use a two-move structure, they tended to prefer a one-move pattern, perhaps as a result of time constraint created by the examination situation.

The third theoretical implication relates more explicitly to the description of undergraduate writing. As shown in the literature review in Sections 3.2.1-3.2.6, most of the major studies on rhetorical features in novice writing have focused on native, EFL, and ESL users of English in the Middle East and Asia-Pacific regions. Those that have investigated Ghanaian undergraduate writing have thus far focused on surface-level features such as subject-verb agreement, tense, and lexical repetition, the exceptions being Adika (1999), Appiah (2002), and Thompson (2003). The significance of the present study lies in contributing to the description of undergraduate writing at the global level as well as disciplinary rhetoric, in general, and undergraduate writing in Ghana, specifically. Evidence from the textual data shows that definitions and generalizations are valorized as contextualizing devices in the in the written assignments given to undergraduates of the selected disciplinary communities. Also, a key distinguishing feature was the interpretive and personal nature of the English introductions, and much less the Sociology introductions in contrast to the matter-of-fact Zoology introductions and their total exclusion of contextualization of the issues to be addressed in their essays. With respect to conclusions, evidence from the textual data points to students' preference for a one-move pattern, the use of summarizing as a dominant rhetorical device, and the limited use of adjectives as an evaluative term to instantiate criticality.

A corollary of the above implication is the binary relationship between student writing and expert writing. Given the fact that expert writing is the exemplar of academic writing (Hyland, 2000), it might be argued that investigating student writing to ascertain disciplinary variation is unnecessary. Moreover, students are often given power-laden names such as learners, apprentices, novices, and novitiates and seen as having legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in disciplinary communities. However, if the enculturation or socialization of students into their various disciplinary communities is to be facilitated, then their writing practices (including examination essays) with their attendant problems need to be systematically studied. Indeed, North (2003) has pointedly suggested that student writing can be a "useful entry point for an investigation of emergent disciplinarity" (North, 2003: 7). Not surprisingly, in the last decade scholars have, therefore, been engaged in descriptive studies comparing student writing with professional writing ostensibly with a view not only to identify similarities and differences but also to ascertain areas in which students need disciplinarisation (Hewings, 2004).

Of course, the merit of studies such as the present one is predicated on the fact that faculty in various disciplinary communities will become self-conscious themselves about what Stockton (1994: 95) calls "the shape of their own knowledge and articulate that structure for those who wish to learn". The significance of this study, therefore, rather than being an end in itself, is in part meant to draw attention to the gap between disciplinary knowledge of the selected disciplines as much as it is designed to show how to forge a closer relationship between student writing and expert writing. This significance of this type of study has been amply recognized in a recent collection of

studies dedicated to mainly undergraduate writing in various disciplines (Ravelli & Ellis, 2004).

The second binary relationship that emerges from the study concerns descriptivism (evaluation) and prescriptivism, often found in research such as the present one. While it has been argued that the present study is principally descriptive, it cannot be denied that some aspects of the study contain some prescriptive elements such as the comments from faculty (see Section 6.4.2). This view of faculty with respect to the rhetorical units could have been followed up in an examination of the marks awarded to the scripts to ascertain whether there is any correlation between presence/absence of the introductions and conclusions, on the one hand, and the scores obtained but the scores were not indicated on the scripts; neither were the departments ready to assist in obtaining the scores (this is acknowledged as a weakness of the study in Section 9.3). In fact, while the study does not set out on an prescriptive endeavour, instances of students allocating too much space to some moves or even an entire introduction are too obvious to escape a pedagogical (if this is seen as a prescriptive) response, as noted in Section 9.2.2. In the end, however, the present study like several others such as Ravelli & Ellis (2004) seeks to be more towards the descriptive continuum than the prescriptive continuum. From the theoretical implications of the study, I now turn to the pedagogical implications.

9.2.2 *Pedagogical Implications*

Although my study has been limited to three disciplines, it does raise two key pedagogical issues, which these three departments at UCC and elsewhere might wish to

consider. These relate to the role of the university teacher in the discipline-specific classroom and the relationship between discipline-specific teachers and writing teachers regarding students' acquisition of the rhetoric in their respective disciplines.

At this point, it is important to recap the sort of problems students in the present study face in orienting their readers so that suggestions regarding the practical steps students themselves can take can be made. For instance, some English and Sociology students tended to allocate far more space to the contextualization of their essays in total disregard of the overall text length of the essay, thus recalling Scarcella's (1984) observation of unnecessary background information in non-native student introductions. Whether this is tantamount to flowery introductions, what Halimah (2001) was referring to in the term in her study (see Section 3.2.5), is uncertain. Additionally, some English and Sociology students tended to compose the introduction as though it was a section for merely defining key terms in a prompt without integrating them in such a way as to convince the reader that the question is being answered, as similarly noticed by Adika (1999). Further, only 8% of Zoology students introduced their essays, although other studies involving students in the life sciences (e.g. Lawe-Davies, 1998; Drury, 2001) show students introducing their essays.

Evidence from the conclusions written by the English and Sociology students suggests their overarching concern to summarize, confirming both what some Humanities faculty had indicated and the finding in earlier studies (Leki, 1990; Rosenwasser & Stephen, 1997; Appiah, 2002). Although some students embedded evaluation in the summaries of their conclusions, it was often limited to the use of adjectives, thus raising questions of critical awareness, and whether students are equipped with the linguistic

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resources peculiar to their respective disciplines in the management of evaluation. In addition, English and Sociology students tended to compose a one-move conclusion, which may hardly be expected of above-average students.

Awareness of the above findings in disciplinary writing leads us to the first major pedagogical implication in this study: the role of discipline-specific teachers at UCC specifically and other English-medium universities. While it is unarguable that the first-year undergraduates' initiation into their disciplinary communities is forged by the writing instructor, it does not mean that the success of undergraduates in exploiting the rhetorical patterns of the various curriculum genres depends on only the writing instructors. On the contrary, I believe, with others such as Johns (1992) and Zhu (2004), that the undergraduates' success in exploiting the rhetoric in their disciplinary communities rests more heavily with the discipline-specific teachers. Interestingly, in an earlier study conducted in a Ghanaian university, University of Ghana, Adika and Owusu-Sekyere (1997) suggested a greater role for the discipline-specific teacher in students' enculturation in a department-based writing programme, which was to replace a general academic writing programme.

As discourse analytical studies and psycholinguistics have underscored the role of text structure awareness in reading comprehension (Carrell, 1984, 1988) and writing (De Beaugrande, 1980; Swales, 1981a, 1990a; Weissberg & Buker, 1990), the proposed move patterns for both the introduction and conclusion (see Section 5.4) together with the linguistic features associated with each move in the three disciplines may present useful pedagogical tools for discipline-specific teachers as they attempt to help their students to improve on their disciplinary writing. This approach may in turn make students more

conscious of the stages required in fulfilling the communicative purposes of their introductions and conclusions.

Apart from the proposed three-move pattern for introductions, the two-move pattern for conclusions, and the accompanying linguistic features, the attempt by discipline-specific teachers to help their students could draw on insights from several studies that seek to help students to acquire the rhetoric in their disciplines (e.g. Horowitz, 1986, 1989; Kusel, 1992; Currie, 1993; Love, 1996; Shashn & Crostello, 2000; Zhu, 2004). Three major strands emerge from these studies:

- deconstruction of the examination prompt in a class discussion;

- discussion of the relationship between content and information structure with students; and

- practice and production of answers coupled with effective feedback, either from students or teacher.

Earlier studies such as Swales (1982), Dudley-Evans (1988), and Currie (1993) have shown that different disciplines interpret examination prompts differently, thereby placing different rhetorical demands on students. One helpful approach would be for subject teachers to actively engage their students in discussions on the relationship between the examination prompts and the rhetorical structure of expected examination essay answers, with emphasis on the introduction and conclusion.

The next point has to do with raising the consciousness of students about the relationship between the content of the examination answer (Johns, 1997), 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. On the basis of the weaknesses noted in students' writing across the three disciplines, such as mere summarizing, too much textual space given to certain moves, and a narrow range of linguistic resources to express evaluation, discipline-specific teachers can devise exercises and feedback sessions to improve students' use of moves in their introductions and conclusions and the accompanying linguistic features. Undergraduates in various disciplines can be encouraged to spend time revising their introductions (Elbow, 1981; Durkin, 1987; Despain, 1992) and conclusions with the support of peers, especially in take-home written assignments. Practising how to write introductions and conclusions in non-examination situations should in the long run help students to confidently transfer such skills into examination situations.

The second pedagogical implication of this study touches on a broader issue often found in student academic writing literature: the writing programme and its relationship with discipline-specific writing. Two related issues that have emerged as a result are (a) whether academic literacy should be viewed as a monolithic or multivariate construct (Boyle, 1993; Johns, 1997; Hansen, 2000; Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001; Turner, 2004) and (b) whether Composition or Rhetoric teachers should be made to teach writing in the disciplines or the subject teachers be charged with that responsibility (Spack, 1988; Swales 1990a; Johns, 1992; Belcher & Bain, 1995; Dudley-Evans, 1995; Leki & Carson, 1997; Riazi, 1997; Runciman, 1998; Zhu, 2004). While the former issue seems to have been settled among literacy specialists and applied linguists, the second remains far from being resolved.

Most universities, as indicated by Sutton (1997), have tended to regard the teaching of such courses as ancillary to academic writing and remedial, while a second

group considers it as foundational. Beyond subscribing to the latter position, I consider useful and pragmatic Carter's (1990) interactive approach that marries the generalist writing approach and the discipline-specific approach. This calls for CS instructors to draw on research on undergraduate writing in, for instance, Geography (Hewings, 2002b), Biology (Chimbganda, 2000; Drury, 2001), Philosophy (North, 1986; Geisler, 1994), Dentistry (Lawe-Davies, 1998), History (Coffin, 2002, 2004), and Sociology (Prior, 1994a, 1994b; Starfield, 2004), History of Science (North, 2003, 2005a, 2005b). While drawing on such recent research on discipline-specific writing may be helpful, I am convinced, like Johns (1992), that there is a limit to which the writing instructor can help students in their various disciplinary contexts.

A pertinent issue arising from the above discussion is how discipline-specific teachers in UCC perceive the writing programme, that is, CS, and the CS teachers. Indeed, evidence from the interview of faculty in this study attests to the positive role that the teaching of academic writing can play in improving the writing skills of undergraduates, although some faculty still expressed misgivings as to whether the CS programme has achieved the desired effect. Such reservation is not without basis because, as North (2003), for instance, argues, if disciplinary skills are learnt through participation in a situated activity within a disciplinary course, then it would appear to be difficult to see how CS and similar writing programmes can foster this. Perhaps, in the case of UCC, restructuring the CS programme which has not seen any major restructuring since its inception in 1985 (informal conversation with Gogovi, 2003) along the lines suggested by Linton *et al.* (1994) can be a useful starting measure and help to some extent.

Linton *et al.*'s (1994) proposal of incorporation of disciplinary variation on three counts (content, structure, and language) maintains the general academic writing programme, while emphasizing the new, which is the possible differences students may find in their discipline-specific writing. Introducing the notion of disciplinary variation in the general academic writing programme to first-year university students in English-medium universities such as UCC offers two main benefits. First, it reduces the amount of frustration and conflict that undergraduates face in tertiary writing. The frustration of the undergraduates emerges when in CS classes they are made to believe that all disciplines require the same writing skills but are soon confronted with situations in their respective disciplines requiring different sets of organizational features. Secondly, it facilitates a gradual and, not disruptive, transition from pre-university writing to university writing.

While a major change in the CS curriculum appears desirable, a collaborative exchange between the Department of English that now houses CS and the other faculty sounds interesting and plausible, but perhaps challenging. Given that the former possess, by their training, the metacognive knowledge of rhetoric in academic writing, such as moves, attribution, varied semantic relations, and process types, an interaction that calls for such exchange can help subject teachers in sensitizing their students to the general expectation of meeting readers' orientation in their introductions and conclusions. Dudley-Evans' (1995, 2001) work on team teaching between writing specialists and discipline specialists can be helpful in this regard. A similar approach has been adopted in some Australian universities (Jones, 2004), where the marginalized or servicing role of writing/learning centres is being replaced with a more empowered view of their role and

academic standing within the University of Sydney. These are clear ways of dealing with the issue of specificity in student writing called for by Hyland (2002a) and which has further received attention in a recent paper by Zhu (2004).

Thus, the above pedagogical implications arising from the present study suggest the need for a more collaborative and continuing interaction between students, writing (here CS) instructors, and discipline-specific teachers and the recognition of the part each has to play in facilitating undergraduates' acquisition of disciplinary rhetoric.

9.3   Limitations of the Study

This study recognizes its strengths and limitations. Its strengths are two: the approach adopted and the size of the textual data. First, the combination of textual and ethnographic approaches represents an effective way not only of describing the rhetorical skills demonstrated in undergraduate writing but also an attempt at understanding why this is so. Drawing on the views of specialists and learners in addition to the textual data ensures an effective contextualized discourse analytical study. Thus, a more holistic dimension is brought to bear on the description of undergraduate writing. The second strength stems from the number of scripts that constitute the data set for the study. Although not extraordinarily large data, the number of examination essays from each of the three disciplines is sufficient to enable a reasonable level of generalization, albeit within a particular university.

As with all research, the limitations of this study are acknowledged. First, the writing sample is restricted to one essay per student. Admittedly, this does not reveal students' full and active engagement in the writing process with multiple drafts or with

access to resources such as handbooks on writing and dictionaries. The use of one essay may not be considered a reflective measure of a student's overall writing ability since it is limited to one mode and one opportunity that may be marred by chance circumstances. Nonetheless, the texts in the present study contain enough representations of the examinees' abilities and thought processes that allow reliable inferences to be drawn about their disciplinary rhetoric.

The second limitation of this study concerns its inability to examine the correlation between students' use of introductions and conclusions, on the one hand, and their performance (as conveyed through their scores). Admittedly, this would have given a firmer basis for some of the comments made about the quality of these two rhetorical units. An attempt was made to incorporate this into the research but practical difficulties in obtaining the scores from faculty led me to drop this aspect from the present research. It was felt that this could be taken up in a future research (see Section 9.4).

The third limitation lies in missing the opportunity to hear from the writers of the texts themselves their explanation for their deployment of rhetorical features. This was not possible in practical terms. Nevertheless, the interview of a different set of second-year undergraduates has yielded useful information as they have been taught the same content by the same lecturers and they were expected to exhibit generally a level of understanding of their writing behaviour, similar to the students whose scripts have been analyzed here.

The last weakness in the study is the use of some expressions and terms in both the interview schedule and questionnaire. These included terms such as "critical thinking", "writing in the discipline", and "control of content" presented in Table 6.4 and

"correctness", "textual coherence", "appropriate use of language", and "clarity of argumentation" presented in Table 6.5. Frequent attempts were made in both the pilot and the main studies to explain these to research participants where possible and convenient. However, it is not clear whether research participants uniformly understood these terms.

9.4   Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the recognized limitations of the present study and the findings of the study, an agenda for further research is tentatively suggested.

The first line of further investigation would be to discover what impact introductions and conclusions have on the quality of writing in disciplinary communities. This is being suggested, given that the present study stopped short of any evaluation in order to keep the scope of this study coherent and feasible, given the time constraint. Moreover, there are conflicting results of various studies on a similar subject, cohesiveness, as a measure of the quality of student writing. None of the prominent studies on this subject has focused on the Ghanaian university student. A study in this direction will, therefore, prove insightful and add more excitement to the current debate on disciplinary rhetoric and its impact on quality of writing.

Second, because the examination prompts on which the examination essays for analysis in the present study were based were few (see Section 6.1), there is a limitation on the generalizability of the findings in this study, not only for a particular discipline but for all three disciplines. For meaningful generalizations to be made, it is suggested that more examination essays which have been produced in response to a wider range of examination prompts be analyzed. Other year groups at the undergraduate level can be

included in a future study, as in Hewings (2004) to determine the extent of acculturation in respect of specific rhetorical features. Besides, further studies could be conducted with a larger sample in the same departments, faculties, or university, or other English-medium universities elsewhere, for the purpose of verifying the results. For instance, it would be interesting to find out whether different sub-disciplines in the three disciplines in the present study manifest different rhetorical practices in terms of the generic structure and linguistic realizations in their introductions and conclusions.

The present study has focused on one aspect of rhetoric in academic writing: organizational units. Other rhetorical features such as voice, paragraphing, topic development, definition strategies, explanation, citation practices, hedging, and metadiscourse may be further investigated in relation with other variables such as different topics, types of tasks under different conditions, writing purposes, genres, and students of either different levels of proficiency or different geo-political settings (EFL and ESL) may be considered. As a way of illustrating this research possibility, the same task for a class can be offered to the students in varying conditions, one as a take-home assignment and the other as a sit-in assignment, while focusing on one rhetorical feature.

A third line of investigation could consider the research design, given that the present study adopted a textual analytic approach, complemented by survey and interview data. In line with a more social constructivist approach, while still adopting a cross-disciplinary approach, future research could adopt a phenomenographic paradigm, enabling focus and capturing of experience "between people and people, people and things, and people in events in context" (Wisker, 2001: 160) so that other influences and interpretations which affect disciplinary rhetoric can be obtained. The caution in adopting

this approach is making sure that the research participants have a clear understanding of the topic being investigated and acknowledging its highly subjective nature.

It is hoped that this study has contributed to genre studies and studies on disciplinary discourse, in general, and disciplinary writing, in particular. This study approached disciplinary writing by investigating the influence of three disciplinary communities on the use of rhetoric, especially the introduction and the conclusion, from the viewpoint of Swales' (1981a, 1990a) move analysis, suggesting that a modified Swales' genre analysis approach can be applied to the study of examination essays at the undergraduate level. Evidence adduced from the analysis clearly indicates that these rhetorical units, introduction and conclusion, are utilized in different ways by undergraduates in an English-medium university, although some similarities were also noted. This study, moreover, indicates the need to broaden current studies on disciplinary variation to cover other linguistic/rhetorical aspects of undergraduate writing in different contexts.

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APPENDIX 1

Coding of Data

1.1 Texts
EST1 – 60:   Texts of students in the Department of English
SST 1 – 60:   Texts of students in the Department of Sociology
ZST 1 – 60:   Texts of students in the Department of Zoology

1.2 Questionnaires
ELQ 1 – 8:   Questionnaire response of lecturers in the Department of English
SLQ 1 – 7:   Questionnaire response of lecturers in the Department of Sociology
ZLQ 1 – 7:   Questionnaire response of lecturers in the Department of Zoology

1.3 Interviews
ESI 1 – 15:   Students interviewed from the Department of English
SSI 1 – 15:   Students interviewed from the Department of Sociology
ZSI 1 – 15:   Students interviewed from the Department of Zoology

ELI 1 and 2:   Course lecturers interviewed from the Department of English
SLI 1 and 2:   Course lecturers interviewed from the Department of Sociology
ZLI 1 and 2:   Course lecturers interviewed from the Department of Zoology

HEDI 1:   Interviewee, Head of Department of English
HSDI 1:   Interviewee, Head of Department of Sociology
HZDI 1:   Interviewee, Head of Department of Zoology

DAI 1:   Interviewee, Dean of Faulty of Arts
DSSI 1:   Interviewee, Dean of Faulty of Social Sciences
DSI 1:   Interviewee, Dean of Faculty of Science

1.4 Three Selected Courses
IL: Introduction to Literature
FS: Family and Socialization
CTO: Cell and Tissue Organization

1.5 Examination Prompts
EEP: English Examination Prompts
SEP: Sociology Examination Prompt
ZEP: Zoology Examination Prompt

Questionnaire and Interview Data

2.1 Response Rate for Questionnaire Respondents

Disciplines	Questionnaire Returned	
	Total Number	**Percentage**
English	8/9	89
Sociology	7/8	88
Zoology	7/8	88
Total Number	22/25	88

2.2 Profile of Questionnaire Respondents

Variables	English (n=8) Frequency	Sociology (n=7) Frequency	Zoology (n=7) Frequency
Sex			
Male	7	5	6
Frequency	1	2	1
Age			
36-40	-	2	-
41-45	1	1	2
46-50	1	1	2
51-55	3	-	2
56-60	-	1	-
> 60	3	2	1
Professional Qualification			
Asst Lecturer	1	-	-
Lecturer	2	3	3
Senior Lecturer	2	2	2
Assoc Professor	2	1	2
Professor	1	1	-
Academic Qualification			
M.Ed	-	-	-
M.A.	2	-	-
M.Sc.	-	1	1
MPhil.	2	2	-
PhD.	4	4	6
Levels Taught			
100	6	7	5
200	5	7	6
300	7	7	5
400	7	7	7
500	7	5	4
600	-	1	1
Years of Teaching Experience			
0-3	1	2	-
4-7	-	1	-
8-11	1	-	2
12-15	-	-	2
16-19	2	1	2
20-23	1	1	-
24-27	1	-	-
>27	1	2	1

2.3 Profile of Interviewees: Deans

Characteristics	Arts (n=1)	Social Sciences (n=1)	Science (n=1

Gender
    Male
    Female
	✓	✓	✓

Academic Qualification
    MPhil/MSc
    PhD
	✓	✓	✓

Academic Ranks
    Associate Professor
    Professor
	✓	✓	✓

Discipline of Specialization
    French
    Geography
    Zoology
	✓	✓	✓

Years of Teaching Experience
    > 15
    16-20
    21-25
    <26
	✓	✓	✓

Levels of Teaching
    Undergraduate
    Postgraduate
	✓
	✓
		✓
		✓
			✓
			✓

Key: ✓ presence of feature

2.4 Profile of Interviewees: Heads of Departments

Characteristics	English (n=1)	Sociology (n=1)	Zoology (n=1
Gender			
Male			✓
Female	✓	✓	
Academic Qualification			
MPhil/MSc			
PhD	✓	✓	✓
Academic Ranks			
Associate Professor	✓	✓	✓
Professor			
Discipline of Specialization			
English	✓		
Sociology		✓	
Zoology			✓
Years of Teaching Experience			
> 15			
16-20	✓		✓
<21		✓	
Levels of Teaching			
Undergraduate	✓	✓	✓
Postgraduate	✓	✓	✓

Key: ✓ presence of feature

2.5 Profile of Interviewees: Course Lecturers

Characteristics	English (n=2)	Sociology (n=2)	Zoology (n=2)

Gender
    Male
    Female
	2	2	2

Academic Qualification
    MA/MPhil/Msc
    PhD
	2	1
		1
			2

Academic Rank
    Lecturer
    Senior Lecturer
    Assoc Professor
    Professor
	2	1
		1
			2

Years of Teaching Experiences
    > 5
    6-10
    11-15
    16-20
    < 21
	1
	
	1
		1
		
		1
			1
			
			1

Levels of Teaching
    Undergraduate
    Postgraduate
	2	2
		2
			2
			2

2.6 Profile of Interviewees: Students

Characteristics	English (n=15)	Sociology (n=15)	Zoology (n=15)
Gender			
Male	8	8	8
Female	7	7	7
Age			
> 20	2	3	1
21-25	8	10	5
26-30	4	2	7
< 31	1	2	2
Category			
Regular	12	14	9
Mature	3	1	6
Linguistic Background			
Ghanaian Language	15	15	14
English Language	15	15	15
Pidgin English	9	11	8
French	5	1	1
Jamaican Creole	-	1	-

APPENDIX 3

Distribution of Essays According to Disciplines and Examination Prompts

Examination Prompts	English Essays	Sociology Essays	Zoology Essays	Total
Prompt 1	30	30	30	90
Prompt 2	30	30	30	90
Total	60	60	60	180

Sample of Examination Essays

Sample essay examination answers (Section 4.1- 4.6) are presented here unedited. There are 6 essays, one example each from each discipline in response to two examination prompts in the present study, with both the introduction and conclusion italicized.

4.1 Sample English examination essay in response to EEP 1

"No Coffin No Grave" is a poem written by Jared Angira, a poet from East Africa, precisely from Kenya. The poet talks about a politician-dictator who has been assassinated in front of a night club. The poet has been able to develop the story as a result of the number of literary devices used, and three of these include personification, contrast and imageries and by this trend, the poet has drawn some significance to the poem

Personification, by definition, is the act whereby an inanimate object is given the qualities of animate, or it is a process whereby a non-human is granted the traits of a human being. Jared Angira in this poem used a lot of personifications in other to bring the poem to a desirable standard. For example, the car the politician was using before his death. Examples of such personifications are "the car knelt", "the red plate wept", "the diary revealed", "money speaks", to name but a few. By these Angira gives human traits to "the car", "the diary", and "the money"

The significance of these personifications are that it makes the poem more real, lively and also raises our emotions and calls for our sympathy for the politician and the people who are involved here. The "car knelt" meant the abrupt end of which the car stop and also it shows probably that the car was sorrowful because the master is dead. "The red plate wept" also adds to the fact that the car could not help at the scene but to weep which opens our sympathies to the dictator. "The diary revealed" also shows that his secrets that are hid were opened to the people. Therefore by this personification it looks as if the diary went round revealing the secrets of the man to the people. Another personification is "money speaks" shows how "big men" could manipulate jury or events with money.

Another device used by the poet is contrast. By contrast he meant the contradiction of ideas as presented in earlier stanza which is changed in another episode. Some of the contrasts used could be traced from the first stanza and the last stanza. In the first stanza he was buried without a coffin and without a grave, which is in contrast to the last stanza, where he wanted to be buried under a jacaranda tree near his palace and "much beer" for his funeral which ironically should be a party and not mourning.

The significance of these contrasts are that:

i) It shows how the politicians and men of substance wish for themselves at the expense of the poor and the tax-payers

ii) The contrasts again shows that these people (politicians and dictators) normally do not get proper burial or even more do not die natural deaths because of their extravagant life styles and their autocratic rules they are hated by the people who are oppressed.

iii)Also through the contrast we are able to see the final show of the politician, that he died openly, scavengers performed the mortuary rites in an open place, in fron of a public arena, creating the disgracefulness by which the once rich man died.

The last device used by Angira is the use of imageries. Jared employed the visual imagery and the color. Bu visual imagery, he meant the desire of the reader's eyes to have seen how the picture of the scene could have been or the visual imagery creates an imaginative picture of the scene in the minds of the reader, so as to appreciate the poem very well. For example, "the scavengers performed the open mortuary without sterilized knives . . . in front of the night club . . . . Another visual imagery is where "the car knelt" and the "red plate wept".

The use of colour imageries such as "black", "white", "red", "yellow" appeals to the senses what colours might reveal at the scenery. By the use of the colour imagery, Jared is creating symbolisms through the use of colour, which though adds beauty to the poem.

The significance of the imageries Jared Angira wittingly used includes:

i) to help the reader to follow the idea of the poem and also to create the kind of mental picture he (poet) is trying to paint to the reader.

ii) By the use of imageries the poet wants the reader to appeal to the senses so as to understand the poem very well.

iii) The colour imageries for instance carries symbolic meaning of dictatorship, the setting of the poem by the colour of the flag and the meanings of each colour of the flag and the yellow which shows like opposition from the ordinary men to the dictator. Example red means danger, black means night of oppression has fallen and white means the freedom from oppressive rule.

To draw my conclusion the use of these literal devices, that is, personification, contrast, imageries are of greater significance to the study and appreciation of the poem .I have really enjoyed the poem because of the devices, moral lesson that are good for our generation has been drawn. In other words, the fate of every dictator is the same and their wishes will never materialize. (EST 9)

4.2 Sample English examination essay in response to EEP 2

A sonnet can be described as a poem of fourteen lines. Though every sonnet is made up of the fourteen lines, an Italian sonnet can be distinguished from an English sonnet. While the former has an octet and a sestet with the octet introducing the problem or subject and the sestet concluding it, the latter has three quatrains (which contain the subject matter) and a couplet (which concludes or provides a solution. This essay will refer to sonnets 3 and 12 in commenting on the significance of the sonnet's structure.

Like all English sonnets, sonnet 3 has three quatrains and a couplet. This structure is given by the rhyme scheme: a b, a b for one quatrain; c d, c d for another; e f, e f for

the third quatrain and g g for the concluding couplet. All the three quatrains carry a part of the poet's message or argument. The poet uses the first quatrain to persuade his friend to look into a mirror and tell the image or reflection of himself that it is time he the person being addressed formed another of his kind. He should form another that would not be mere reflection but a true "repair" of himself. A true fresh "repair" in the sense that it would replace him when he is old and cannot renew himself. The second quatrain continues the argument by posing two rhetorical questions:

"For where is she so fair whose unearned womb
 Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
Or who is he so fond who will be the tomb
Of his self-love, to stop posterity?

He wants to know if there is any beautiful lady who has not given birth but would hate to give birth to an offspring which would replace her. He also wants to know if there is any man so foolish to let the offsprings that would make him proud ("self-love") die in him because he did not give birth. The third quatrain continues from the emphasis layed by the second one that we should give birth to sustain life. Shakespeare tells the friend through that quatrain that the mother looks at him as the image and becomes proud because she gets to know how she was in her youthful days. He further states that the friend would also see through "the windows", referring to the offspring he would give birth to who would in turn give birth for posterity to continue. The couplet concludes the argument that if the friend does not remember to give birth and dies single, he would die with his "image", that is, there would not be anyone to replace him, hence stopping posterity.

Also the sonnet 12 is divided into three quatrains and a couplet by the same rhyme scheme as in Sonnet 3.The first quatrain introduces the fact that there is the passage of time and that causes changes to take place. Changes like ". . . the brave lay sunk in hideous night". Colours (violet) are also fading. This argument is continued in the second quatrain where the poet cites more instances of the changes in nature due to the passage of time. The argument gets to a climax in the third quatrain where the friend's beauty (whether it will not also fade) since everything or even nature is fading with the passage of time. He even makes it clear that the friend would die just as things in nature are dying. He concludes the argument by making it clear that there is nothing anyone can do to stop time from making things fade or even killing and that the only solution or way to face time will be to "save breed", that is, to give birth. And he does this in the couplet.

In sum, the structure of the sonnet could be said to be significant in that it aids poets to present their arguments in an organized manner and readers of poetry to divide the poems into parts for better understanding as they can establish relationships in the poem. (EST 56)

4.3 Sample Sociology examination essay in response to SEP 1

Marriage can be defined as a durable union between a man and a woman or women who have agreed to stay as a husband and wife or wives, that is, accepted by the members of both families with the principles that surrounds that purpose. Randall Collins defined marriage as socially and culturally sanctioned union between a man and woman to perform certain societal functions as well as satisfy their biological impulses.

In marriage especially with newly wedded couples, there is always a high rate of euphoria among them. The face to face interaction increases. The fresh interactions brings about too much excitement. This is normally followed by honey moon where the two stay coolly to enjoy themselves. From this, they move to the period of disillusionment, where the realities of life begin. They begin to experience life from the real point, not ideally. To crown it over, comes the time of conflict or violence. The circumstances that lead to marital violence are many and varied.

In the first place, unpreparedness or early marriage can propel serious marital misunderstanding. Most people go into marriage without psychologically, physically and economically prepared. The cause of early marriage may be due to illiteracy, peer pressure and early pregnancy. With these couples having no adequate knowledge about marriage, there is the greater chance of violence to erupt. The wife may not understand how to cater for both the husband and the child or children. With these discomforts there is the likelihood of constant confusion.

Secondly, external pressure is another important vehicle to marital violence. Relatives, friends and other neighbours may infiltrate their way into decision making of the family. This may be on the use of property, distribution of wealth, attention to parents of either of the couples among others. It is noted to be commonly generated by the in-laws with special emphasis on the mother in-laws. They are often found dictating to their children at the other side on how to manage the family. Also, unwholesome welcome by either couple to their respective parents may result in misunderstanding among the couples.

Thirdly, financial inability mostly on the part of the husband often results in violence. Where the man fails to perform his obligation like provision of food, clothing of the wife and children, inability to perform or attend the funeral of the relative of the wife etc., the likelihood of misunderstanding becomes greater .Some women may even insult and threaten to divorce. In another way where the woman is capable, but naughty, she will often subject the husband into serious psychological torture.

More so, extra marital adventures can also bring violence in married homes. Where either of them happens to indulge in a sexual encounter outside their marriage, when noticed can cause serious conflict. In recent times infidelity has been the major cause of spousal killings in major cities in Ghana like Tema and Accra. But it must be clear that most extra marital affairs are common with the men, especially in the urban centres. What makes this is a crime can be attributed to tradition or religion and even the recent advent of sexual transmitted diseases.

Another cause of marital violence is alcoholism. Most men often returns home late, and even intoxicated with alcohol. With intoxication, there remains little sense of understanding. It can also be the woman. In cases with one of them did not support that, and then it becomes a problem. Even when both are of similar desire there can still be a problem. It must be noted with care that most often than not, some men use alcohol to serve as an outlet to their oppressed grief.

Apart from the above, the arrival of the child is also a factor to marital violence as soon as the child is born into the family. The division of attention between the child on one hand and the father on another or between the child and the mother. The man may feel dejected for the woman having much attention to the baby than him. Also the woman

may also feel lonely, should the man cast his attention on the child rather than the woman. This lays a very good foundation for marital violence.

In another development the absence of child also causes conflicts in married homes. After some time when the couples have not had their first issue, blames will begin to pour on each other. In Africa, the woman is mostly blamed so much. Still related, where the expected targets of the couples are not met, the chances of conflict/violence become great. Maybe in their premarital plans they had set targets to build a comfortable home, ride in the latest car among others. It therefore becomes disastrous when these dreams are thrown overboard.

Furthermore, social pressure is another route to marital violence. Instances where the couples belongs to different social groups like churches, sporting clubs these will be little attention for their marital development and this may result in violence. Some men may spend many hours at their jobs at the expense of their marital responsibilities.

Last but not the least is sexual incompatibility. Most men may not meet the sexual desires of their wives and vice versa. This may be due to physical disordered or psychological malfunctioning.

It is clear from the above discussion that marriage even though is an important aspect of society, yet there are a lot of misunderstandings in it. It is now left on to each individual to manage his/her marital affairs since these are part and parcel of human society. (EST 13)

4.4 Sample Sociology examination essay in response to SEP 2

Sex is the stimulation of the sex organs of two individuals up to the point of orgasm which is often expressed in ecstasy and sublime passion. Sex is an integral part of life without which there will have been extinction in some human and animal species. Sex is guided by societal principles. However, in many cases sexual paraphelia exist. In fact highly abnormal practices. Among some of which are as follows.

First are the homosexuals. It is the opposite of normal sex. Instead of female-male encounter, it is either female to female or male to male. The former is called lesbians and the latter is called gays. In recent times this sexual abnormality has gained normal standards. It is common to see such couples in churches or court rooms for wedding certification. This is common in Denmark, the United States of America and many other western nations. Recently some African leaders like President Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Sam Nujoma of Namibia vehemently fought against its incidence in Africa. To the fact, of the matter, it is anti-African.

Secondly, we have corprophelia. This is the practice where individuals get sexual gratification upon smelling the odour of faeces. This is seriously abnormal.

Thirdly, is the paedophelia. It is an act by which an individual hits his or her sexual orgasm by having sex with little children. This is common in most societies. One can even envisage that it is the major propellant of rape in many cases. Day in and out there are reports of seventy and above years old men having sex with three months old babies. This is common in South Africa. In Ghana, it is getting alarming. This has even prompted international and local organizations to channel their resources towards the fight of this paraphelia.

Another paraphelia is necrophilia. It is the circumstance under which one gets sexual gratification by having sex with dead bodies (corpse).Dead women often fall victims of this menace. It is a common practice with people working in mortuaries. Some analysts have it that medical doctors often practice it too. It must be stated clearly that only doctors who have societal deficiency in them. Rebels and soldiers at war can also form part of this abnormality.

The last but not least one is zoophelia. It is the practice by which people get sexually satisfied by having sex with animals. It can be sheep, goat, donkey, or a horse. Just last month, there was a report in a Ghanaian newspaper that a man raped a sheep. This is just a practical example or testimony of this phenomenon.

These paraphelia have negative impact on marriages, because it brings about so many consequences. It may lead to divorce. Where women happen to hear that the husband is a gay, it means he has no interest in a woman. Because he is not going to have anything to do with such a woman. It also leads to diseases. A man who happens to have sex with an animal or a dead body can contract a disease and transmit it to the actual wife. This will not augur well for the couples.

It does not allow procreation. This is because all the above mentioned problems are out ways to procreation. For this and many other reasons, the societal functions of marriage are not achieved. Sexual abnormalities often bring violence to married homes. A woman who discovers that the husband has defiled a young girl may pick a quarrel with such a man. Last but not the least, it causes breaks and suffering to children whom I might have fallen out for such parents. Should a man be imprisoned for six years for defilement the wife and the children are going to suffer.

In the nutshell, just as sex is important in marriage, it must be practiced in a proper way as prescribed by nature. (EST 43)

4.5 Sample Zoology examination essay in response to ZEP 1

Bone is a skeletal connective tissue that is associated with support and movement in vertebrates.

As a connective tissue, bone is made up of cells called osteocytes in almost solid matrix made pf collagen fibers and inorganic salts. It is the presence of these salts, such as calcium and magnesium that gives bone its kindness. Osteocytes are arranged in spaces in the matrix called lacunae. These lacunae are arranged in concentric circles around a central canal called the Haversian canal. Little channels called canaliculi interconnect the lacunae with the Haversian canal. It is through the Harvesian canal that blood vessels and nerves are connected to the bone.

The functional unit of the bone is the Harvesian system made up of the matrix, a central canal and osteocytes. Each bone is surrounded by a thick layer of connective tissue called the periosteum. Connective tissue also surrounds the bone marrow and it is called endosteum.The outside of the bone is connected to the inside by canals called Volkman's canals.

FUNCTIONS OF BONE

Bone forms the skeleton which provides support for the body. The various types of bone in the body have processes for attachment and articulation with muscles to aid

movement. Vital organs in the body are protected by bone. Bone marrow is a site for the production of red blood cells. (ZST 28)

4.6 Sample Zoology examination essay in response to ZEP 2

Diffusion and osmosis are among the process that substances cross the plasma membrane of cells.

Diffusion requires a concentration gradient in order for substances to cross the semi-permeable membrane. There are two types of diffusion namely simple diffusion and facilitated diffusion. Simple diffusion is the net movement of solute molecules from a region of higher concentration to a region of low concentration. Simple diffusion therefore exhibit non-saturation kinetics, graphically presented as (diagram)

Whilst facilitated diffusion is when solute molecules of high polarity or large molecular structure cannot cross the plasma membrane despite the existence of concentration gradient. However, a carrier is needed to facilitate the movement across the membrane. Hence facilitated diffusion exhibits saturation kinetics graphically shown as (diagram)

On the other hand, osmosis is the movement of water molecules across the semi-permeable membranes of a cell from a region of high concentration of water molecules to a region of low concentration of the same water molecules. A concentration gradient is therefore required. Hence, if an animal cell is placed in a hypotonic fluid or solution, the cell will absorb water by osmosis to increase in size and become turgid. If turgidity continues until turgor pressure is higher than wall pressure the cell will then burst to release its protoplasm. More so, if an animal cell is placed in a hypertonic solution, water will move from the cell into the environment. The cell will then shrivel and becomes plasmolysed.

If an animal cell is placed in an isotomic solution, the cell will remain the same size since there exist no concentration gradient. (ZST 49)

APPENDIX 5

Interview Questions

5.1 Heads of Department and Deans of Faculty

Below are the questions used in the semi-structured interview on faculty's view on student writing in the disciplines.

Section A: Student Writing Generally

1) What are your expectations for student writing in your department /faculty?
2) Could you tell me the kind of writing you assign in your courses?
3) Can you tell me how you have changed your assignments over time?
4) Are your expectations of students' in class-timed assignment and outside classroom assignments the same? Could you clarify your answer?
5) Can you describe for me the difference between an A paper and a C paper?
6) What is the central problem you see in undergraduate writing?
7) What can be done for students in terms of improving their writing skills?
8) Do you offer students the opportunity to rewrite their assignments?
9) Do you encourage or require students to make use of the Communicative Skills notes? Can you clarify your position?

Section B: Student Writing in the Disciplines

10) Are your expectations for students in your department /faculty and students who offer cognate disciplines in your department the same?
11) Do you actually see this distinction between the two categories reflected in student examination essay answers?
12) What are some of the discernible features expressed in the examination essays of these two groups of students?
13) Could you comment more specifically on the way students organize their written examination essays?
14) Please comment on how undergraduates achieve coherence?
15) Are you satisfied with how students structure their essays in the faculty?
16) As a dean of faculty or head of department are you aware of the possibility of different discourse types (e.g. lab reports, term papers, etc) in the various faculties? Could you clarify this?
17) Is there any way you have considered in helping both lecturers and students in addressing this issue, especially in writing assignments and essay examinations?
18) How would you in your present capacity help students in writing effectively across the curriculum?

5.2 Course Lecturers

Below are the questions used in the semi-structured interview on the view of subject teachers' on undergraduate writing in their courses.

Section A:
1) Could you describe the course …which you teach at Level 200?
2) How is this course different from courses at either Level 200 or other levels?
3) How do you teach this particular course?
4) What particular pedagogical orientation or philosophy influences your mode of delivery of the content of this course?
5) How do you expect the students you teach this course to learn it?
6) What logistics or materials are needed in the teaching and learning of this course? Do you have them?
7) Are there any factors that militate against the effective learning and teaching of this course?
8) What is the importance of writing in this particular course?
9) What specific reason do you have in giving written assignments? Exploring one's idea, demonstrating knowledge, proving a point about something, convincing someone, parroting back something.

Section B: Evaluation of Student Writing
10) Over the years that you have been teaching this course how would you assess the performance of students-stagnation, improvement, or deterioration?
11) What are your expectations of students in their essays?
12) Are your expectations for students' presentation of in-class assignment and outside classroom written assignment the same?
13) What are the strengths of students in their written examination essays?
14) Are there any major weaknesses you would like to comment on?
15) Let's be more specific, do you think the structuring of students essays have a part in their obtaining good marks?
16) Let's take for example the question, '…………………' how would you expect students to answer this question?
17) What will be the difference between an A paper and C paper on this question?
18) Do you expect any particular structuring of this paper?
19) How can we help students to produce very good examination answers?

5.3 Second-Year Undergraduates

RHETORICAL FEATURES IN THE EXAMINATION ESSAY ANSWERS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

This interview is designed as a guide in eliciting information on the above-mentioned topic. The interviewee is expected to be as frank as possible

Section A: Students' Personal Data

Sex: ………………………………………………………………………………..
Age:………………………………………………………………………………
Course and subject:………………………………………………………………..
Faculty: …………………………………………………………………………

Section B: Student's Use of English

1) What languages do you use in your interaction on campus?
2) Please comment on your use of English on campus. You may want to consider the aspects of life in which you use English.
3) What is the highest level at which you have studied English as a course or subject?
4) Has this course in any way benefited you in the particular discipline you are studying now in the university?

Section C: Student's View on Quality of Writing

5) If you were asked to choose between in class timed essay assignments and long essays/ projects, as a student which one would you prefer?
6) Do class timed essay assignments and term essays/projects feature prominently in the total number of assignments given for each of the course /discipline you take each semester?
7) I suppose you are taking courses from other faculty or departments. You must have noticed some differences in the various disciplines. Mention some of the noticeable differences.
8) Do these differences translate into the kind of writing you are called upon to write? Clarify your position.
9) Was your awareness of the various differences in the disciplines, whether in the claims they make, or the very nature of the disciplines and their methodological procedures, made known by your lecturers or did you have to find out these yourself?
10) Let's take one writing assignment you are constantly asked to write in this university – examination essays. What constitutes a good examination essay in each of the courses you are studying? Are the criteria for all the disciplines you are studying the same?
11) If you are given a set of scoring guide that requires that students pay attention to elements of writing such as clarity of thought, presentation of ideas or content, appropriate use of terminologies in the discipline, coherence (organization) and originality, which ones would you say apply most to the disciplines you are offering?

12) Supposing your lecturer is marking your class-timed or examination essay after which he/she would bring them to class to comment on, would you prefer that he/she comments on: your ideas or your expression or organization?
13) What do you think you need to do in order to write effectively in your respective courses?

Questionnaire for Lecturers

STUDENTS' USE OF RHETORICAL FEATURES IN ESSAY EXAMINATIONS
ACROSS DISCIPLINES

This questionnaire is part of a study designed to investigate the way undergraduates in the University of Cape Coast utilize rhetorical features in their examination essay answers. I would appreciate it if you would answer the following questions as candidly and objectively as possible. Your answers will be kept absolutely confidential. Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Section A: Background Information and Personal Data of Lecturers

Instruction: Please tick the appropriate space [/] provided or supply a brief answer in the blank space provided.

1. Sex:
☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Age:
☐ Below 30 years ☐ 41-45 years ☐ 56- 60 years
☐ 31-35 years ☐ 46-50 years ☐ above 60 years
☐ 36-40 years ☐ 51-55 years

3. Professional Qualification:
☐ Assistant Lecturer ☐ Lecturer ☐ Senior Lecturer

4. Academic Qualification:
☐ M.Ed ☐ M.Phil
☐ M.A ☐ PhD
☐ MSc. ☐ Others ………

5. Length of experience in teaching at the university
☐ 0-3 years ☐ 12-15 years ☐ 24-27 years
☐ 4-7 years ☐ 16-19 years ☐ Above 27 years
☐ 8-11 years ☐ 20-23 years

6. Department/Faculty where you teach
☐ English ☐ Sociology ☐ Zoology

7. List of courses you have taught in the University of Cape Coast
   a) …………………………………….   b) …………………………………….
   c)……………………………………..   d) …………………………………….
   e)………………………………………   f) ……………………………………..

8. Level/s at which you have taught in the university

☐ 100   ☐ 400   ☐ Post-diploma
☐ 200   ☐ 500   ☐ Others
☐ 300   ☐ 600

Section B: Linguistic Awareness

9. How many languages do you speak?
☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4
☐ 5   ☐ 6   ☐ Others

10. How many of these languages do you write in an educational setting?
☐ 2   ☐ 3   ☐ 4
☐ 5   ☐ 6   ☐ Others

11. Please list the languages you write in.
    a)…………………………………   b) ……………………………………..
    c) …………………………………….   d)…………………………………….

12. State the highest level to which you have studied English Language as a course
☐ Secondary   ☐ University   ☐ Other

13. Mention the course you took at this level
    ………………………………………

14. Do you recognize any distinctive difference in the way information is organized in, at least, two of the languages you write in?
☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Other

15. (Answer No 15 if you answered No 14 in the affirmative)
    Briefly state at least one difference
       …………………………………………………………………………………..
       …………………………………………………………………………………
       …………………………………………………………………………………..
       ………………………………………………………………………………….

Section C: Information on Lecturer's Response to Student's Writing
16. Write in the box provided the number which closely corresponds to the level of importance you attach to these modes of assessing students' writing, using 1 as the most important and 9 as the least important.

☐ Long essay/dissertation   ☐ Essay Examination   ☐ Lesson plan
☐ Term paper   ☐ Technical report   ☐ Creative writing
☐ Lab report   ☐ Journal   ☐ Others

17. How often do you set essay questions in your classes for students?
☐ Once in a year   ☐ Once in a semester
☐ Not at all   ☐ Others

18. List the kind of writing which is unique to the classes that you teach
   (You may refer to the list in No 16)
   a)…………………….   b)…………………
   c)…………………….   d)…………………

19. Write in the boxes provide below what you see as the top three reasons for having students engaged in varied forms, using 1 as the most important and 3 as the least important
☐ To teach students writing in   ☐ To enable students to   ☐ To enable students to
   the discipline   in writing skills   understand the subject
☐ To teach students the ability to   ☐ To enable students to
   think critically   be assessed

20. Give at least two reasons for classes in which you do not assign writing.
   a) …………………………………………………………………………..
   b) …………………………………………………………………………

21. Are your expectations of students writing the same for in class timed assignment or examination and outside classroom assignment?
☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Other

22. Place the following in order of relative importance, using 1 as the most important and 7 as the least important in the grading of student writing in your discipline.
☐ Clarity of thought   ☐ Appropriate use of language   ☐ Correctness
☐ Content or ideas   ☐ Textual coherence
☐ Terminology in discipline   ☐ Originality

23. Of the following 7 aspects of undergraduate writing which tend to be problematic for students in your discipline, using 1 as the most important and 7 as the least important?
☐ Clarity of thought   ☐ Appropriate use of language   ☐ Correctness
☐ Content or ideas   ☐ Textual coherence
☐ Terminology in discipline   ☐ Originality

24. Give at least two suggestions for the improvement in the quality of student essay examination answers in your discipline
   a) ………………………………………………………………………….
   b) . …………………………………………………………………………

APPENDIX 7

Letters of Consent

7.1 Lecturer-Interviewees

> Department of English Language
> Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
> National University of Singapore
> Block AS 5, 7 Arts Link
> Singapore 117570.

> 5th January, 2003.

………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………..
…………………………………………………….
…………………………………………………

Dear Sir/Madam,

INTERVIEW: REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

I am writing to request your assistance in a research project which is part of my doctoral studies in Applied Linguistics at the above-mentioned university.

I propose to investigate the possible influence of disciplinary variation on rhetorical features in undergraduate writing in an English-medium university in Ghana. The success of the study, in part, depends on your willingness and co-operation in agreeing to become an interviewee in an interview. Your assistance in offering candid responses to questions in a 30-minute interview will be very much appreciated.

I undertake to ensure that any information you give is held in strictest confidence. The information you provide is solely for academic purpose. Besides, I will be pleased to send you a summary of the result upon request.

Thank you for your co-operation.

> Yours faithfully,
> ……………………..
> J.B.A.AFFUL.

7.2 Student-Interviewees

Department of English Language and Literature
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
National University of Singapore
Block AS 5, 7 Arts Link
Singapore 117570.

5th January, 2003

…………………………………………………
…………………………………………………
…………………………………………………
…………………………………………………

Dear Student,

INTERVIEW: REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

1 write to request your assistance in a research project which is part of my doctoral studies in Applied Linguistics at the above-mentioned university.

I propose to investigate the possible influence of disciplinary variation on rhetorical features in undergraduate writing in an English-medium Ghanaian university, University of Cape Coast.

The success of this study, in part, depends on your willingness and co-operation in agreeing to become an interviewee in a 30-minute interview. Your assistance in offering candid and objective answers to questions in the interview will be very much appreciated.

I undertake to ensure that any information you give is held in strictest confidence. The information you provide is solely for academic purpose. Besides, anonymity will be ensured.

Thank you for you co-operation.

Yours sincerely,
………………..
J.B.A.AFFUL.

7.3 Survey Participants

Department of English Language & Literature
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
National University of Singapore
Block AS 5, 7 Arts Link
Singapore 117570.

14th March, 2003

………………………………………..
………………………………………
………………………………………
………………………………………..

Dear Sir/Madam,

QUESTIONNAIRE: REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE

I am writing to request your assistance in a research project which is part of my higher research studies in Applied Linguistics at the above-mentioned educational institution.

My research involves investigation of the possible influence of disciplinary variation on rhetorical features in undergraduate writing in an English-medium Ghanaian university, University of Cape Coast.

The success of the study depends on your willingness and co-operation in agreeing to become a respondent to a questionnaire I am administering. Your assistance in completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it in the self-addressed envelope will be very much appreciated.

I undertake to ensure that any information you give is held in strictest confidence. The information you provide is solely for academic purpose. Besides, I will be pleased to send you a summary of the results upon request.

Thank you for your co-operation and contribution.

Yours faithfully,

……… ………
J.B.A.AFFUL