Genre Analysis of Introductions of ELT Theses: Rhetorical Structures and Steps

Dr. Gopal Prasad Pandey
Reader in English Education, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal
gpandeytu@gmail.com

Abstract

The study of academic genres written by students has received considerable attention in ELT research in recent years. However, master's theses haven't garnered as much attention as Ph.D. dissertations have. This study examines the rhetorical structure of master's thesis *introductions* on ELT and applied linguistics at the Department of English education, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal. The analysis of the introductions is based on Swales's (1990) CARS (Create-A-Research-Space) model. Based on the model, ten thesis introductions were analyzed in terms of the move structures and linguistic features that signal the use of the move. The study indicated that ELT thesis introductions employed all three moves proposed by Swales (1990) in its modified form (Bunton, 2002) at the macro level. Adopting the modified CARS model proposed by Bunton (2002), ELT thesis introductions written by Nepalese students employed six out of sixteen steps. The move structures of master's thesis introductions were: move 1 (S1, S2 & S3), move 2 (S1 & S2), and move 3 (S1 & S7). This study will aid in the facilitation of academic writing instruction by providing the general framework of a good model of thesis introductory chapters.

Keywords: Move structures, ELT thesis, CARS model, thesis introduction

Introduction

Writing a thesis in English poses difficulties for non-native English-speaking students (Shaw 1991), and it is not an exception for the students of M.Ed. English majors at Tribhuvan university in Nepal. It is considered almost a solitary activity in many parts of the world. Writing a thesis is an academic project which provides writers with a new experience. Nepalese

students doing their masters in English have little or no formal instruction on how to write a thesis or an academic essay. These students go for the guidelines provided by the department, published books on thesis writing, or theses written by their seniors in their university or campus libraries and then format their theses. If they are lucky, sometimes some students will get a chance to work with good supervisors who help them from beginning to end. They get support to frame their theses at different phases of writing. The thesis writing guidelines in Nepal differ from university to university. The guidelines vary from department to department even within a university. However, the major components the universities adopt for thesis writing guidelines are the same.

A thesis has several components. One of the components of the thesis that has received a lot of attention is the 'introduction.' Introductions in theses are important because they play a pivotal role in showing the relevance of the research and setting up the context. The main of this component in thesis writing is to build territory for the research. After Swales's (1990) seminal work on the move structure of research article (RA) introductions, there has been considerable interest in applying the CARS (Create-A-Research-Space) model in examining texts written in different languages and cultures (GoIebiowski, 1999). Despite the growing interest in academic writing at the Faculty of Education at Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, the Department of English Education has produced quite a few researches on academic writing.

The thesis components, most of the universities use in Nepal are almost the same. At the Department of English Education, Tribhuvan University, some of the components are mandatory. Although the guidelines on thesis writing provided by different universities are worded slightly differently from each other, they all include almost identical required parts for each chapter of a thesis. For example, the *introduction* chapter of the thesis provided by the Department of English Education at Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal consists of the *background of the study*, *statement of the problem*, *rationale of the study, objectives of the study, research questions/hypotheses*, *delimitations of the study* and *operational definitions of the key terms.* However, Paltridge (2002) discovered that manuals and guidelines that concentrate on thesis writing do not sufficiently explain students' thesis possibilities or their justification for choosing them. The reason for this is that they must have a high degree of linguistic competence as well as textual, genre, and social understanding.

The terms "thesis" and "dissertation" can be used differently due to the distinction between US and UK conventions. For Thompson, (2013, p. 213) while, in the US, "the prolonged text made for the partial fulfillment of doctoral degree mostly named as a dissertation", "it is named as a thesis" within the United Kingdom. Moreover, "dissertation" within the United Kingdom refers to "the extended piece of write-up at the master's level". In Nepal, particularly at Tribhuvan university (TU), we tend to use the term 'thesis' for each type of research.

The main focus of this paper is on the introductory section or chapter (introduction) of the master's theses on English Language Teaching (ELT) and Applied linguistics at the Department of English Education, Tribhuvan, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Theoretical Framework

There is considerable interest in the rhetorical structure of thesis chapters these days. The rhetorical structure of thesis chapters has been an area of choice for English language teaching researchers (Bunton, 2002, 2005; Kamler & Thomson, 2014; Kwan, 2006; Ono, 2017; Paltridge, 2002; Samraj, 2008; Soler-Monreal, Carbonell-Olivares, & Gil-Salom, 2011; Thompson, 2009). However, to date, no studies have empirically examined the overall structure of master's thesis introductions in Nepal.

Creating a research space (CARS) model. In his Creating CARS model, Swales describes three "moves" that almost all research introductions entail.

Move 1: Establishing a territory. In this move, "the author sets the context for his or her research, providing necessary background on the topic" (Swales, 1990, p. 6). One or more of the following stages are included in this action:

Step 1: Claiming centrality. According to Swales (1990, p.6), while calming the centrality, the author invites "the discourse community (the audience for the publication) to accept that the study about to be published is part of a vibrant, substantial, or well-established research topic." The author can use the following sentences to assert centrality: "Recently there has been a surge of interest in..." The value of knowing X cannot be overstated. Although it is employed more frequently in the social sciences and humanities than in the physical sciences, this step is common across all academic fields.

Step 2: Making topic generalizations. In this stage, the author makes claims on the most recent developments, procedures, or occurrences in the area (Swales, 1990, p.6). For instance, "X's qualities 'X' is a typical observation in patients with..."The properties of X need to be better understood." 'X' is a typical observation in patients with...

Step 3: Reviewing Previous Items of Research. The author discusses what has been discovered about the subject and who has discovered it. Johnson and Morgan, for instance, both assert that "the biographical details have been misinterpreted."

Move 2: Establishing a niche. In this move, the author makes the case that there is an unfilled "niche" in the present research, one that needs to be filled by more investigation. One of four methods is available to authors for creating niches: Counter-claiming, indicating a gap, question raising and continuing tradition. In making a counter-claim, the author questions or disputes past research. For instance, "While Jones and Riley feel that X approach is accurate, a thorough study reveals that their method is defective."

Move 3: Occupying a niche. They then occupy the niche by saying they are going to put this right: (a) by outlining the purposes or stating the nature of the present research

(obligatory); (b) by listing research questions or hypotheses to be tested (optional); (c) by announcing the principal findings (optional)

Modified CARS model

Bunton (2002) researched to investigate the genre analysis of Ph.D. thesis Introductions. This study looked into the overall thesis structure of Ph.D. and M.Phil. theses. For the analysis, he employed Swales' CARS 1990 model to investigate the generic move structures and steps used in the introduction chapters across eight disciplines. He noted that all "Introductions" followed the three stages proposed by the CARS model namely "Establishing a Territory (T), Establishing a Niche (N), and Occupying the Niche".

Thesis writing in ELT and Applied Linguistics. At Tribhuvan University, writing a thesis is a key component of the M.Ed. program. The students receive first-hand training in thesis preparation in this entirely practice-driven course. The general goal of this course is to provide students with the information and abilities necessary to prepare a research proposal, conduct research, and write a thesis in a prescribed format. Academic writing (AW), proposal writing (PW), and thesis writing make up the three sections of thesis writing (TW). Academic writing introduces students to the fundamentals of writing in order to prepare a proposal and thesis, which will be delivered by the course instructor. Proposal writing explains the fundamentals of a research proposal and gets students ready to develop a proposal in the area of interest in their major subject.

Thesis writing requires students to actually write a thesis on the subject of their choice, typically on the subject previously decided upon for the proposal. Additionally, the course instructor will impart the skills and information essential for PW and TW. Each student must complete a thorough proposal and thesis under the supervision of the thesis supervisor, and then they must present both to the departmental research committee for review and approval.

The general objectives of this course as mentioned in the syllabus are

- To make the students conversant with basic concepts, processes, and techniques of academic writing, proposal writing, and thesis writing.
- To prepare the students to write and present a research proposal on a researchable problem.
- To enable the students to write a thesis in a standard format and present it to the departmental research committee.
- To develop students' ability to apply different approaches and methods of research in the course of writing a thesis.

As a requirement for the Master of Education in English, M.Ed. students majoring in English must submit a thesis to the Department of English Education. There are five chapters in the M.Ed. English thesis. The first chapter serves as an introduction. It comprises the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, and operational definition of the key terms.

Previous studies. Using 40 master's thesis introductions written by Iranian EFL students as her study subjects, Shirani-Chalak (2016) identified three moves for the introductory section: (a) Establishing a territory, (b) Establishing a niche, (c) Occupying the niche.

The theses employed moves in the introduction sections with a high degree of distribution. As a result, these three moves were classified as required moves in the introductions of master theses. The opening parts of the theses used moves with a high degree of dispersion. These three moves were therefore listed as necessary moves in the introductions of master theses.

These researchers frequently utilized the CARS (Creating-A-Research-Space) paradigm (Swales, 1990, 2004; Swales & Feak, 2012). They also adhered to the CARS Model in its modified form (Bunton, 2002). The CARS model was developed first to describe the rhetorical organization of research articles (RAs).

Thus, 'Establishing a territory' (Move 1) is the initial move in the CARS model and it entails a series of rhetorical activities, or stages, like outlining the bigger study settings and reviewing pertinent literature on the subjects the research would be looking at. 'Establishing a niche is the second move. Move 2 is accomplished by the authors through procedures like pointing out research gaps or deficiencies and/or outlining the specific areas of prior knowledge that need to be expanded. To conclude their introductions, writers often adopt the third strategy, known as "occupying the niche." Another way to describe it is that Move 2 might act as "the hinge that connects Move 1 (what has been done) to Move 3 (what the present research is about)" (Swales & Feak, 2012, p. 348).

Despite the fact that such a three-part structure "for English-language introductions in many leading journals is or has become prototypical" (Swales, 2004, p. 226), the CARS model also takes into account the possibility of "recycling Move 2s" (Swales & Feak, 2012, p. 352) or "the potential cycling, or iteration, of Move 1 and Move 2 sequences" (Swales, 2004, p.160). Swales (1990, pp. 158-159) observed that "the longer the introduction, the greater the possibility of cycling configuration" between Moves 1 and 2. Therefore, it can be noted that introductions using the CARS model often have a three-part structure (Move 1- Move 2- Move -3) or a two-part structure (Move 1/Move 2 cycles followed by Move 3).

Here, it is important to emphasize that the CARS model should not be considered a strict blueprint, as Paltridge and Starfield (2007) emphasized. The rhetorical structure of research article (RA) introductions is only partially represented by the CARS model, as Swales (1990, p. 58) pointed out. There have been a number of examples documented when RA introductions exhibit characteristics that are at odds with the CARS model (Lewin, Fine, & Young, 2001; Nwogu, 1997; Samraj, 2002).

Bunton (2002) examined 45 Ph.D. thesis introductions from writers of varied disciples in the social sciences and humanities as well as science and technology using the CARS model (Swales, 1990). The authors were both native English speakers and non-native English speakers. Bunton discovered that thesis introductions contain the three moves from the CARS model. They also contained a number of multiple steps not included in the model. Another

interesting conclusion made by Bunton was that most introductions adhered to the two-part structure that the CARS model presupposed (Move 1/Move 2 recycles followed by Move 3). Bunton suggested a move-step model for Ph.D. thesis introductions in light of these find

In order to examine Ph.D. thesis introductions written by computer science authors, Soler-Monreal et al. (2011) used Bunton's (2002) move-step model. They discovered that most introductions followed Bunton's model's moves and steps. Contrary to the introductions examined by Bunton, the majority was discovered to comprise the CARS model's tripartite structure (Move 1-Move 2-Move 3). To examine how steps might be ordered in the introductions of Ph.D. theses in English literature studies, Ono (2017) applied Bunton's (2002) and Swales and Feak's (2012) CARS models. Ono claims that the literature introductions, however, have so many step-related characteristics that are at odds with these models that he was forced to create essentially a new framework for the research. He also showed that the overall structure of the literature introductions is no longer comparable to the two- or three-part structure of the CARS model because of the intricacy of the step-sequencing in those introductions.

The Objectives

The rhetorical structure of thesis chapters has received considerable attention at in recent years. Many studies have utilized the Creating-A-Research-Space (CARS) model or its modified version proposed by Bunton (2002) as an analytical tool to study the rhetorical structures of different genres including theses and research articles. The study had the following objectives:

i.   To examine the move structure of master's thesis introductions based on Bunton's (2002) move-step model
ii. To identify structural features specific to theses on ELT and applied linguistics

Methodology

Corpus of the study. The abstract introductions of section 10 theses submitted by students at the Department of English Education, Central Department of Education, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal serve as the corpus for this study. These theses were submitted to the Department of English Education in 2020-2022. All these theses are related to English language teaching and applied linguistics. The theses collected for this purpose were: 1. English code-mixing in Nepalbhasa Times 2. Challenges faced by novice English language teachers during the induction period 3. Developing speaking skills through task-based language teaching 4. Rapport building strategies of teachers in ELT classroom: A narrative inquiry 5. Teachers' perceptions towards the use of multimedia in teaching the English language 6. Effectiveness of YouTube videos in teaching vocabulary 7. Reflective Practice: A Professional Learning of English Teachers 8. Critical analysis of beauty product advertising discourse in magazine 9 Role of homework on English language learning: A case of Sindhupalchok District 10. Use of information and communication technologies in learning English at the master level.

All of them have a similar format consisting of a similar number of components. Among the theses submitted to the department were selected randomly for this purpose.

Bunton's model for Ph.D. introductions (2002). ELT researchers have acknowledged the importance of the rhetorical structure of chapters in master's theses. Accordingly, several studies have been carried out to find out the structure of particular chapters in master theses and dissertations. One of the areas that has received a lot of attention is the *introduction*. Bunton (2002), Dong (1998), Swales & Najjar (1987), Thompson (2005) have worked on Introduction to Ph.D. dissertations.

Although a large number of studies are available focusing on the rhetorical structures of different components of master's theses, we find a few studies which focus on the rhetorical structure of introduction chapters of theses (Bunton 2002, 2005, Dong, 1998). Table 1 below presents Bunton's model for Ph.D. introductions.

Table 1 Bunton's Model

Often present	Occasionally present
Move 1: Establishing a Territory	
STEPS	
1. Claiming centrality	
2. Making topic generalizations	
and giving background information	Research parametres
3. Defining terms (Eg, A, So)	
4. Reviewing previous research	
Move 2: Establishing a Niche	
STEPS	
1A: Indicating a gap in research	
1B: *Indicating a problem or need*	
1C: Question-raising (So, A)	Counter-claiming
1D: Continuing a tradition (M, So)	
Move 3: Announcing the Present Research (Occupying the Niche)	
1: Purposes, aims, or objectives	Chapter structure
2: Work carried out	Research questions
3: Method	
4: Materials or Subjects	Theoretical positions (so)
5: Findings or Results	
6: Product of research (Eg)/Model proposed (So)	Defining terms
7: Significance/Justification	Parametres of research
8: Thesis structure	Application of product (Eg)
	Evaluation of product (Eg)

Results and Discussion

The introduction sections of the theses were carefully selected to identify rhetorical structures used in the sections. In the stage of analysis, structures used in the introductions were identified, and their frequency of occurrences was counted.

General heading in the introduction section. The applied linguistics theses at the Department of English Education, University Campus, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, consist of five chapters. *Chapter one* is the introduction section. It consists of subheadings like

Background of the study/Context, Statement of the problem, Rationale of the study, Objective of the study, Research questions or hypothesis, Significance of the study, Delimitation of the study, and Operational definition of the key terms. Table 2 below records all these subsections. Introductions are vital in theses as they play an integral role in showing the relevance of the research about to be reported to previous work in the field (Bhatia, 1993) and setting up the reader's expectations.

The headings are organized in the table according to the order in which they occurred in their Introductions. The section headings in bold are those that must be used according to the university's rules. This table also shows the subsections each *Introduction* consisted of.

Table 2 below presents the moves and steps found in the corpus of the introduction chapter. One tick (√) indicates an occurrence of a certain step in each introduction.

Table 2 Number of subheadings in the introduction section

General subheadings in the introduction sections of theses

Sub-headings					Thesis Introduction Nos					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Background of the study/context	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Statement of the problem	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
The objective of the study	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Research question or hypothesis	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Significance of the study	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Delimitation of the study	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Operational definition of the key terms	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Total section headings	**7**	**7**	**7**	**7**	**7**	**7**	**7**	**7**	**7**	**7**

Table 2 presents the introduction sections of theses submitted at the Department of Education, Tribhuvan University, Nepal. Students have incorporated all seven components as they are required to follow the thesis writing guidelines provided by the Department. The 'Introduction' included all the suggested parts (Background, statement of the problem, Rationale of the study, Research objectives and/or hypothesis, delimitation of the study, and definitions of the key terms).

Moves. Bunton (2002) claims that the *introduction* consists of three moves namely establishing a territory, claiming a niche, and occupying the niche. Each move entails a variety of steps for the accomplishment of that move.

Move 1: Establishing a territory. Theses usually begin with the establishment of the context. In this move, the authors try to show that the area they have chosen is genuine and important. The authors in the move attempt to argue that the area selected is central, interesting, relevant, and timely. Table 3 below demonstrates move 1 and the steps found in the corpus of the introduction chapter. One tick (√) indicates an occurrence of a certain step in each introduction.

Table 3 Move 1 and steps

STEPS	Thesis Nos										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	occurrences										
1. Claiming centrality	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10
2. Making topic generalizations and giving background information	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10
3. Defining terms	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10
4. Reviewing previous research	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10

Move 1 is establishing a territory that comprises the following four steps: 1. Claiming centrality 2. Making topic generalizations and giving background information 3. Defining terms, and 4. Reviewing previous research. Although all the theses have steps 1-3, the *introduction* lacks step 4, that is, reviewing previous research. Students have not included this step in this chapter as this step is a part of chapter II in the M.Ed. thesis guidelines provided by the Dean's Office, Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University. The guidelines place the literature review as a separate chapter. One of the authors in her thesis entitled "Developing speaking skills through task-based language teaching" claimed the centrality in the following way:

> *Speaking is one of the primary skills of language learning. As the primary function of language is to make the learners able to interact and communicate, the teaching of speaking becomes one of the important skills to be taught or focused on. Speaking is one of the productive skills in oral mode. (Thesis no. 3)*

In the thesis entitled "Rapport building strategies of teachers in ELT classroom: A narrative inquiry" the author highlights the centrality of the field as: "Several studies show that rapport building between teachers and students influences the individual success of students in addition to their perceptions of higher education and career aspirations" (Thesis No 4). The researcher further justifies the issue as below:

> *Recent studies have found that a good relationship between teachers and students plays a vital role in enhancing language proficiency and developing different language skills. (Thesis no. 4)*

Similarly, one of the components of establishing a territory is *defining terms*. All the theses have defined the terms specific to their titles. Some examples are given below:
Example 1:

Code: Code refers to "different languages, or quite different varieties of the same language". According to Wardhaugh (2008) "the particular dialect or language that a person chooses to use on any occasion is a code, a system used for communication between two or more parties" (Thesis no. 1).

Example 2:

Rapport building: In this research, rapport building refers to a good atmosphere for teaching and learning or good or positive relations among teachers and students for effective teaching and learning (Thesis no. 4).

Example 4:

Narrative inquiry: Narrative inquiry refers to the process of gathering information for research through storytelling. Narrative research is "the study of how different humans experience the world around them; it involves a methodology that allows people to tell the stories of their 'storied lives'. In my study, teachers' narratives are the stories of teachers who use different strategies for rapport building based on their own experiences that they encounter during their personal and professional lives. (Thesis no. 4)

The results show that Nepalese Applied linguistics thesis introductions lack step 4 of Move 1 where the students need to review the previously done work in the field. This suggests that Nepalese ELT and Applied linguistics theses tend to avoid the step of reviewing the previous research in the introduction chapter.

Move 2: Establishing a niche. In this stage, authors point out a weakness in the account so far by indicating a gap in previously done research in the field. Swales and Feak (2004) consider the stage obligatory. Table 4 below presents the move 2 and steps found in the corpus of the introduction chapter. One tick (√) indicates an occurrence of a certain step in each introduction.

Table 4 Establishing a Niche

Move 2: Establishing a Niche											
	Thesis Nos										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
STEPS					occurrence						
1A: Indicating a gap in research	-	√	-	√	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
1B: *Indicating a problem or need*	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10
1C: Question-raising	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
1D: Continuing a tradition	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**0**

Move 2 is expected to incorporate the other four steps. The steps are: indicating a gap in research, indicating a problem or need, question-raising, and continuing a tradition. The writers establish a niche using these steps. Two thesis introductions indicated gaps in their thesis introductions. The following is an extract from the thesis entitled "English code-mixing in Nepalbhasa Times".

> *English codes are pervasive in Nepalbhasa newspapers such as Sandhya Times, Sahid, etc. Therefore, I have chosen one of the Nepalbhasa newspapers 'Nepalbhasa Times' in which English codes are mixed. Many researches have been carried out in many indigenous languages like Gurung, Tharu, Bhojpuri, Maithili, etc. I want to know why English words are used in Nepalbhasa Newspapers, and how they are mixed in*

sentences. So, I have chosen code-mixing in Nepalbhasa Times as my thesis topic. (Thesis no. 1)

This excerpt suggests that ELT and Applied linguistics theses use step two of move 2 indicating a problem or need in research. In this step, the writers exposed the fault of the theses or research already done by their senior colleges. In this corpus of introduction, step 3 (1C) was not used. Writers also did not use step 1A in their thesis introductions as indicating a gap is a part literature review in the guidelines given by the Department of English Education which students are required to follow to get their thesis approved by the Department.

Move 3: Announcing the present research. This move occupying the niche discusses how it is filled through additional research. In this stage researchers present the purposes of the research and state the nature of the research. Presenting the purposes of the research is considered to be obligatory in the introduction section of scientific writing.

Table 5 Announcing the Present Research

Move 3: Announcing the Present Research (Occupying the Niche)

	Thesis Nos										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
1: Purposes, aims, or objectives	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10
2: Work carried out (Eg, Si)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3: Method	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4: Materials or Subjects	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5: Findings or Results	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
6: Product of research (Eg)/Model proposed (So)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
7: Significance/Justification	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10
8: Thesis structure	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

Regarding the use of move 3, two of them were used by the writers. All students used step 1, that is, purposes, aims, or objectives, and step 6 which Bunton (2002) names as significance/Justification. One of the examples stated in the thesis entitled "Rapport building strategies of teachers in ELT classroom: A narrative inquiry" is as follows:

The objectives of the study were as follows:
  i. *To explore the rapport-building strategies of teachers in ELT classrooms.*
  ii. *To find out the importance of rapport building in teaching and learning.*
  iii. *To identify the challenges to building a good rapport with the students. (Theis No. 1)*

Likewise, the thesis entitled 'Reflective Practice: A Professional Learning of English Teachers' states the justification of the study as:

> *Reflective practice has been a dominant approach to teacher training and professional development nowadays. . . . . For change in education system, Dewey (1933) brought forward the concept of reflective thinking that was later developed by Schon (1983, 1987). Dewey (1933) emphasized on thinking; not any kind of thinking but systematic thinking which he called reflective thinking. (Thesis no.7)*

The thesis 'Reflective Practice: A Professional Learning of English Teachers' presents the significance of the study in the following way:

> *This study is significant because of two main reasons. The first one is that the stories of the teachers are written in detailed account which can be used as authentic source of data for further analysis by other researchers and on the other hand, this data in the form of story is easy to read and understand about teachers' professional life. Along with that, a wide range of literature has been provided in the literature section which can be mostly used by teachers, students and administrators to understand about reflective practice. (Thesis no. 7)*

Table 4 shows that out of the eight steps proposed by (Bunton 2002), Nepalese students at the Department of English education employed only two in their theses introductions.

Alignment with Bunton's (2002) model. Bunton (2002) argues that the *introduction section* generally consists of all three moves namely establishing a territory, claiming a niche, and occupying the niche. Each move entails a variety of steps for the accomplishment of that move. Table 6 presents the steps found in the corpus of the introduction of M.Ed. theses at the Department of English Education at Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Table 6 Rhetorical structure of M.Ed. thesis introductions

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Thesis Nos
Move 1: Establishing a Territory STEPS						Occurrences					Total
1. Claiming centrality	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10
2. Making topic generalizations and giving background information	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10
3. Defining terms	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10
Move 2: Establishing a Niche STEPS											
1A: Indicating a gap in research	-	√	-	√	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
1B: *Indicating a problem or need*	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10
Move 3: Announcing the Present Research (Occupying the Niche)											
1: Purposes, aims, or objectives	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10
7: Significance/Justification	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	10

As can be seen in table 6, out of 16 steps, only 6 steps were found in the corpus of introduction. The most frequently used steps are: Claiming centrality, making topic generalizations, and giving background information, indicating a problem or need, purposes, aims, or objectives, significance/justification.

Steps 1, 2, and 3 in move 1 were found in all *introductions* of the theses. It was found that steps S1 and S2 were embedded in the background section of the theses. They did not appear as separate headings. Step 3 of move 1 *Defining terms* appeared as a separate heading in the corpus. It occurs in all theses with the subheading *operational definitions of the key terms at* the Department of English Education, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal. Step 2 in

move 2 was found in all ten *introductions* with a separate section under the heading *statement of the problem*. Likewise, steps 1 (Purposes, aims, or objectives) and step 7 (Significance/Justification) were found in all ten *introductions*. Table 6 shows that the moves and steps used in the corpus were: move 1 (S1-S2-S3), move 2 (S2), and move 3 (S1-S7).

Conclusions

The introduction, a smaller genre within the thesis as a whole, is the subject of this research. Swales' (1990) CARS model is widely used for writing thesis introductions. The model contains three moves that are used to carry out different rhetorical functions including the rationale for the research. These moves are adopted when writing the introduction chapters of master's theses in order to convince the reader that the study is important. The present study sought to identify the generic moves and steps and the structures of the introduction chapters of master's theses written by Nepalese students in the field of ELT and Applied Linguistics. Based on the modified CARS model (Bunton 2002), this study found that ELT thesis *Introductions* employed six, out of 16 steps namely 1. claiming centrality, 2. making topic generalizations and giving background information 3. defining terms, a gap in research 4. Indicating a problem or need 5. Purposes, aims, or objectives 6. Significance/Justification. Thus, the findings of this study are partly congruent with the modified CARS model by proposed Bunton (2002). The organization of the moves and steps used in the *introductions* of ELT and applied linguistics theses were: move 1 (S1, S2 & S3), move 2 (S2), and move 3 (S1 & S7). The findings of this study will provide a model on how to draft an effective introduction chapter for novice writers in ELT and Applied Linguistics theses in Nepal or in settings with similar contexts.

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