

MOVES IN THE SECTIONS CONCLUSION AND CONCLUSIONS IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS RESEARCH ARTICLES

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Abstract. Interest in ‘unconventional’ sections of research articles has lately increased, as it is necessary to reveal more information about their generic structure. These studies are especially vital for non-native novice researchers. The present paper continues the investigation of move-step distribution in the Conclusion section (e.g. Yang and Allison, 2003; Moritz, Meurer and Kuerten Dellagnelo, 2008). This time thirty-six research articles were chosen from two journals in applied linguistics. The two-level analysis demonstrates that there is only a slight difference between move-step distribution in the sections labelled with different headings – *Conclusion* and *Conclusions*. It was confirmed that applied linguists employ a variety of move-step sequences in the Conclusion(s) sections, and therefore it is necessary to devote more attention to acceptable varieties in ‘unconventional’ sections in academic writing classes at the tertiary level.

Key words: applied linguistics, research articles, ‘unconventional’ sections, Conclusion, Conclusions, move-step analysis

INTRODUCTION

It is very challenging to teach the Conclusion(s) section, as there is little information about its rhetorical structure in different disciplines. When discussing the IMRD (i.e. Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion) pattern of research articles (RAs), Swales noted that some sections such as Conclusions and others may appear as ‘additional or substituted sections’ to the conventional ones (1990: 170). Despite this indication, several studies applied Swales’s IMRD model to the analysis of the whole RA and/or separate sections in different disciplines, excluding the other types of section from their corpus (e.g. Samraj, 2002 on environmental science; Kanoksilapatham, 2005; 2007 on biochemistry; Lim, 2006, 2007 on management; Lim, 2010 on applied linguistics and education; Li and Ge, 2009 on medicine; Stoller and Robinson, 2013 on chemistry). Kanoksilapatham (2005: 291), for example, found that the Discussion section contained three obligatory moves: (1) *Contextualizing the study* (with 2 steps), (2) *Consolidating results* (with 6 steps) and (3) *Stating limitations of the study* (with 3 steps), as well as one optional move *Suggesting*

further research. Later, Stoller and Robinson (2013) viewed the Conclusion as the second move of the Discussion section: Move 1 *Reminds the reader of the results* (Submove 1) and then interprets them (Submove 2), the second move *Summarizes the work* (Submove 1) and *Suggests overall implications/applications of the work* (Submove 2) (ibid.: 52).

Lately more attention has been devoted to ‘unconventional’ patterns when discussing the whole RA structure (see research by Lin and Evans, 2012 on several disciplines, including applied linguistics; Maswana, Kanamaru and Tajino, 2015 on engineering; Tessuto, 2015 on law). Move-step (Swales, 1990) or move-submove (Bhatia, 2006: 86) analyses of applied linguistics RAs has resulted in more sections than that proposed by Swales in 1990. An increasing number of researchers have selected ‘unconventional’ sections, such as the Literature review section (Kwan, Chan and Lam, 2012 from information systems; Yağız et al., 2014 from applied linguistics), the Conclusion section (Moritz, Meurer and Kuerten Dellagnelo, 2008 from applied linguistics; Morales, 2012 from intercultural; applied linguistics) and the Pedagogic Implications section (Young and Allison, 2003 from applied linguistics). In the studies on applied linguistics RAs, there have been several attempts to accommodate Swales’ model for the discipline. For example, the Move-Step model proposed by Yang and Allison (2003) was later elaborated by Moritz Meurer and Kuerten Dellagnelo (2008), and it is interesting that they found no definite patterns in the Conclusion section in their corpus. The studies also emphasize that further research is needed to obtain more insight into the organizational structure of the genre in applied linguistics. Thus, the goal of the present paper is the analysis of move-step distribution in the sections labelled with different headings – *Conclusion* and *Conclusions*.

The next section of the present paper focuses on a more detailed overview of the main findings concerning the Conclusion section.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Lin and Evans’s (2012: 157–158) study of 19 empirical RAs showed that *Introduction–Literature Review–Method–Results and Discussion–Conclusion* (ILM[RD]C) is the most typical rhetorical pattern in applied linguistics, English language teaching and theoretical linguistics as well as management and marketing fields. They pointed out that more research should be devoted to ‘independent’ sections’, for example, *Implications, Directions for Future Research, Limitations and Applications*.

Studies in other disciplines demonstrated that the Conclusion section can be either a part of another section or a free-standing section; however, in some cases the Discussion section performed the function of a conclusion. Maswana, Kanamaru and Tajino’s (2015) analysis of full-length articles in engineering divided them into the Introduction, Body (Methods and Results sections) and the Concluding section, the latter of which was labelled with the conventional heading *Discussion* or other types of headings, such as

Discussion and Conclusion(s); Conclusion(s); Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Actions; Extensions; Discussion and Open Problems; Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations; Future Prospects; Functional Implications. They considered that the Conclusion sections varied due to a different emphasis in RAs and different subdisciplines. Engineering researchers, who participated in coding the RAs, admitted that the Move-Step method could be useful in raising student awareness of differences in subdisciplines despite the fact that it might be difficult to tag moves and steps in articles with unconventional generic structure. Tessuto (2015), when analysing the generic structure of 90 RAs in the law discipline, found that free-standing Conclusion sections prevailed in the selected corpus. The majority of the Conclusion sections contained *Summarizing the study* move (91%), while less frequent moves were *Evaluating the study* (71%) and *Deduction from the research* (64%). These moves were used repeatedly in their corpus.

Yang and Allison (2003), in their turn, analysed four high-impact journals in applied linguistics and education: *Applied Linguistics*, *TESOL Quarterly*, *English for Specific Purposes* and *English Language Teaching Journal*, published in 1996 and 1997. In the study, they excluded citations, which have a supportive function of moves and/or steps. Yang and Allison, however, admitted that it was difficult to trace moves or steps, as some text segments had several communicative purposes; therefore, they had to view them in context in order to state the main purpose. Conclusion sections were found only in 65 per cent of 20 cases in their corpus of applied linguistics RAs. Their headings were mainly conventional (in 11 cases out of 13), but only two were functional (e.g. *Concluding Remarks* and *Limitations of the Study*). Yang and Allison observed that the wording of the headings and, thus, the scope of the section (e.g. *Limitations of the Study*) depended on the communicative purpose on the next section (e.g. *Pedagogic Implications*). They found that the Conclusion section was not used in all journals; namely, the Conclusion section dominated in *TESOL Quarterly*, while the Discussion section was the last section in *English for Specific Purpose*. Yang and Allison concluded that these sections had a different communicative purpose and structure. In the papers that contained both sections, the Discussion section dealt with specific results, whereas the Conclusion section summarised and emphasized the significance of outcomes (ibid.: 380). However, they also concluded that the authors in applied linguistics and education were 'flexible' when writing the concluding part of the paper and that the functions of both sections, although overlapping, provided a different emphasis (ibid.: 381).

Some subsequent studies in applied linguistics (e.g. Morales, 2012; Kashiha, 2015) successfully employed the Move-Step method proposed by Yang and Allison (2003) (see Table 1). Morales (2012), for example, investigated RA Conclusion sections written by Filipino and Japanese authors in English for international journals. Although the sample size was small, he noticed intercultural differences in the texts, thus, revealing the need to deal with

‘unconventional’ sections when teaching research paper writing. However, some further studies in applied linguistics (Moritz et al., 2008) and other disciplines (Maswana, Kanamaru and Tajino, 2015; Tessuto, 2015) found it necessary to elaborate Yang and Allison’s Move and Step model.

Table 1 The Move-Step models of the Conclusion sections in applied linguistics

<p>Yang and Allison’s model (2003: 379)</p>	<p>MOVE 1 – SUMMARIZING THE STUDY MOVE 2 – EVALUATING THE STUDY Step 1 Indicating significance/advantage Step 2 Indicating limitations Step 3 Evaluating methodology MOVE 3 – DEDUCTIONS FROM THE RESEARCH Step 1 Recommending further study Step 2 Drawing pedagogic implication</p>
<p>Moritz, Meurer and Kuerten Dellagnelo’s model (2008: 239)</p>	<p>MOVE 1 – RESTATING THE INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT STEP A Stating the purpose, research question or hypothesis STEP B Establishing a territory/niche STEP C Making reference to previous research MOVE 2 – CONSOLIDATING THE RESEARCH SPACE STEP A Summarizing findings/results STEP B Stating method STEP C Making reference to previous research STEP D Suggesting future research STEP E Raising questions MOVE 3 – SUMMARIZING THE STUDY MOVE 4 – COMMENTING ON RESULTS STEP A Interpreting results STEP B Comparing results with literature STEP C Raising questions MOVE 5 – EVALUATING THE STUDY STEP A Indicating limitations STEP B Indicating significance STEP C Evaluating methodology STEP D Suggesting future research MOVE 6 – MAKING DEDUCTIONS FROM THE RESEARCH STEP A Drawing implications/applications STEP B Recommending/suggesting STEP C Making reference to previous research STEP D Suggesting future research STEP E Making overall claim</p>

Moritz et al. (2008) carried out a contrastive analysis of applied linguistics RAs written in English and Portuguese for two Anglo-American journals (6 RAs from *Applied Linguistics*, published in 2002–2004 issues and six from *English Language Teaching Journal*, published in 2004–2005 issues) and three journals published in Brazil. They focused not on the type of journals, but whether the articles were written in Portuguese, as the first language, and English, as the first or the foreign language (henceforth EL1 and EL2). Moritz et al.'s study resulted in six moves and twenty steps and no definite pattern of the Conclusion sections. Move variation in the texts was explained by little knowledge about the section and, consequently, lack of guidelines in writing it. Thus, they emphasized the need for further studies in applied linguistics. Table 1 reflects the authors' suggested logical arrangement of the moves and/or steps, but not as these originally appeared in the RAs of their corpus. If compared with Yang and Allison's study, where Move 1 *Summarizing the study* and Move 2 Step 2 (henceforth M2S2) *Drawing pedagogic implication* dominated, in Moritz et al.'s study M6 *Making deductions from the research*, M5 *Evaluating the study* and M2 *Consolidating the research space* prevailed in both types of English texts (EL1 and EL2), while M4 *Commenting on results* and M6 *Making deductions from the research* prevailed in EL1 texts.

As the previous studies analyse the Conclusion section labelled with different headings, which may imply different communicative purposes, this paper will compare two sections *Conclusion* and *Conclusions* in order to find out any difference in move-step distribution. Moreover, the choice of other journals in the field of applied linguistics could provide more insight in the rhetorical structure of the section.

METHOD

The corpus for this study consisted of two internationally recognized journals in applied linguistics which have not been discussed in the above mentioned studies – the *Journal of Second Language Writing* (JSLW) and *Journal of Pragmatics* (JP). The articles (henceforth As) which had an IMRD structure were randomly selected from the issues published from 2010 to 2015. 20 articles (10 from each journal) contained the section *Conclusion*, but 16 (8 from each journal) had the section *Conclusions*, which as it turned out was less frequently used in RAs than the other section type.

It should be noted that the section *Conclusions* in the JSLW was not always free-standing. In A2, the heading *Implications and Conclusions* was used, thus adding emphasis to one of the steps commonly found in the Conclusion section (see, e.g. research by Yang and Allison, 2003). The section *Conclusions* of A4 contained two subsections *Pedagogical Recommendations* and *Suggestions for Further Research*, thus devoting more attention to two steps of Move 3.

In A5, *Conclusions* was one of the three subsections of the Discussion section, the other two being *Implications* and *Limitations*. These three sections followed the discussion of the findings, which did not have any subheading. In A6, *Conclusions* was a subsection under the main heading *The Present Study*, the other six being *Research questions*, *Methodology*, *Linguistic production: Syntactic complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF)*, *Analysis*, *Results* and *Discussion*. In the other cases, the section *Conclusion(s)* in both journals stands alone.

Altogether six cases with footnotes were found in both section types as part of a move and/or a step. Three of them were in the section *Conclusions*: in JSLW A4 (19 words in M2S6) and A 8 (134 words in M3S2), and in JP A4 (26 words in M3S3). The other three occurred in the section *Conclusion* in JSLW A5 (48 words in M3S1), and in JP A2 (3 footnotes 69 words long in M2S6) and A6 (36 words in M1). As the choice whether to provide information in footnotes or incorporate it in the main text may depend on the manuscript guidelines of a research journal, the number of words of the footnotes was counted together with the main text. The major communicative function of a footnote is to explain or add information; thus, it was interesting to find that the author had chosen to put part of essential information about *Further research* (M3S3) there;

e.g. *Main text*: Therefore, it is possible to supplant devices from one modality with those from another, depending on situational opportunities, anticipated rhetorical effects or efficiency for securing understanding.¹⁷

Footnote: Future research should deal in detail with the precise (interactional) conditions and consequences of substituting resources from one modality with another for the same interactional task. (Conclusions, A4, JP)

The framework for the present study was developed from the several previously discussed models (Swales, 1990, 1994; Yang and Allison, 2003, 2004; Moritz, Meurer and Kuerten Dellagnelo, 2008). Although Moritz et al.'s (2008) model may seem more detailed and, thus more informative than that proposed by Yang and Allison (2003), it could be rather complex for the needs of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. Moreover, it contains similar or overlapping steps, such as M5SD and M6SD (*Suggesting future research*); M6SA (*Drawing implications/applications*) and M6SB (*Recommending/suggesting*). In the present study, the two-level analysis (moves and steps) was done manually on the basis of the content and communicative purpose of the section. Similar to Yang and Allison's (2003) study, the type of move was determined by its dominating communicative function in the text. After the preliminary tagging of the texts, the dominating moves and steps were located. In the second phase, the final analysis was done which resulted in 3 moves and 12 steps as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2 **The move-step sequences used in the sections *Conclusion(s)***
(based on Yang and Allison's, 2003; Moritz, et al.'s, 2008 models)

MOVE 1	PROVIDING A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY
MOVE 2	SUMMARISING THE MAJOR POINTS OF THE STUDY
	Step 1 Stating the purpose/goal Step 2 Stating the research question(s) or hypothesis Step 3 Establishing the research territory/niche Step 4 Stating the research method(s) Step 5 Interpreting specific findings Step 6 Summarising the results/drawing conclusions Step 7 Comparing/contrasting present and previous results Step 8 Indicating the significance/topicality of the study
MOVE 3	MAKING DEDUCTIONS FROM THE RESEARCH
	Step 1 Drawing implications/applications Step 2 Indicating limitations Step 3 Suggesting further research Step 4 Making an overall claim

The comparative analysis of the sections named *Conclusion* and *Conclusions* will be based on this model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1 VOLUME OF THE SECTIONS

At first, it seemed important to compare the volume of the sections under two different headings.

As to the section *Conclusion* (see Table 3), it was almost of the same volume in both journals (5826 words in JSLW, the mean – 583; 5511 words in JP, the mean – 551). The volume of the section *Conclusion* ranged from 242 to 689 in JSLW and 253 to 1057 words in JP. The section *Conclusion* was almost of equal size (50% exceeded the mean in JSWL and 40 % in JP).

The volume of the section *Conclusions* in the present corpus was longer (11934 words; with the mean of 1492) than *Conclusion* (11337 words; with the mean of 1134), despite their smaller number (16 v. 20 sections) in the present corpus. However, there was some difference between both journals, as the total volume of the section *Conclusions* in JP was much larger in JSLW (7268 words; the mean – 909) than that in JP (4666 words, the mean – 583). The volume of the section *Conclusions* ranged from 259 to 1478 words in JSWL and from 160 to 1071 words in JP. Only 37.5 per cent of the section in JP was longer than the mean, while in the other journal, it comprised 50 per cent of the volume. This implies that more space was devoted to the section labelled *Conclusions* in JSLW.

Table 3 The volume of the section Conclusion(s)

Section	Journal	Volume	Mean	Shortest section	Longest section
Conclusion	JSLW	5826	583	242	689
	JP	5511	551	253	1057
Total (N=20)		11337	1134		
Conclusions	JSLW	7268	909	259	1478
	JP	4666	583	160	1071
Total (N=16)		11934	1492		

N – number

The results reported above show that both section types of the present study were much longer than in Moritz et al.'s (2008) corpus (86–454 words in EL1; 158–523 words in EL2). As no definite heading was mentioned in their study, we should be cautious in establishing any firm link between these findings. However, we can assume that the concluding sections might depend on the journal type.

2 MOVE-STEP FREQUENCIES

No correlation was found between the length of the section and the number of moves; namely, not always longer sections had more moves. For example, the section *Conclusion* of A6 in JP contained only M1, but was relatively long in the present corpus (1057 words), while 445 word long article had 6 moves and/or steps (A10 in JP). Also, in JSLW A1 with 314 words had 8 moves and/or steps, while A6 with 827 words only 3. The same refers to the other section type. In JSLW, the section *Conclusions* of A5 was only 250 words long, but contained 5 moves, while only 4 moves were used in A1 with 1347 words. Similarly, JP A3, which was 429 words long, had 6 moves, but A1 which was 1071 words long had only 5 moves.

In the section *Conclusion*, the most frequently utilized moves were M3S3 *Suggesting further research* (14 cases out of 20 RAs; 70%), M2S6 *Summarising the results/drawing conclusions* (13 cases; 65%) as well as M3S1 *Drawing implications/applications* and M3S2 *Indicating limitations* (10 cases or 50% each). The examples below illustrate the basic moves:

e. g. 1) The question remains uncertain as to whether tendencies to take responsibility or remain non-committal may be shaped by different grammatical structures across different languages. [...] However, a more comprehensive analysis will be needed to investigate this issue. (A 5, JP) – *Suggesting further research*

2a) We are able to draw four main conclusions from this study, focusing on the implications for L2 writers. (A3, JSLW) – *Drawing conclusions*

2b) We hope that readers will conclude, as we did, that ... (A2, JSLW) – *Drawing conclusions*

2c) ... this study demonstrated that the expert's rhetorical knowledge of the research article genre had driven his redrafting of novice texts, hence the elimination of the textual copying therein. (A4, JSLW) – *Summarising results*

2d) On the basis of evidence from spontaneous and elicited discourse data, this paper argues that, ... (A8, JP) – *Summarising results*

3) As previous research suggests (e.g. Cogo and Dewey, 2006; Mauranen, 2006, 2007), explicitness as a strategy of social interaction seems to be common and useful in ELF encounters. Since mediation was found to increase explicitness, it thus seems to be a valuable strategy to be used in ELF encounters. ... (A4, JP) – *Implications introduced using reference to sources*

4) However, this study only focused on one area of scientific inquiry within a short time span. (A9, JP) – *Indicating limitation*

However, different moves dominated in each journal. In JSLW, M3S3 *Suggesting further research* (9 cases; 90%), M2S8 *Indicating the significance/topicality of the study* and M3S1 *Drawing implications/applications* (7 cases each; 70%), and M2S2 *Stating the research question(s) or hypothesis* (6 cases; 60%) were more frequently used, while in JP M2S6 *Summarising the results/drawing conclusions* (8 cases; 80%). Half of the papers contained M2S1 *Stating the purpose/goal* and M2S6 *Summarising the results/drawing conclusions* in JSLW, and M3S3 *Suggesting further research* in JP. A few moves were not found in this section, namely, M1 *Providing a general overview of the study* and M2S3 *Establishing the research territory/niche* in JSLW; and M2S2 *Stating the research question(s) or hypothesis*, M2S4 *Stating the research method(s)* and M2S5 *Interpreting specific findings* in JP (see Table 4).

Table 4 **Conclusion** (N=20)

	M1	M2								M3			
		S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S1	S2	S3	S4
JSLW	0	5	1	0	3	2	5	1	7	7	6	9	3
JP	2	2	0	2	0	0	8	1	2	3	4	5	2
Total	2	7	1	2	3	2	13	2	9	10	10	14	5

As to the section *Conclusions*, M2S6 *Summarising the results/drawing conclusions* (13 cases out of 16 RAs; 81%), M3S3 *Suggesting further research* (12 cases; 75%) and M2S1 *Drawing implications/applications* (10 cases; 63%) dominated (see Table 5). However, in JSLW M3S2 *Indicating limitations* was also frequently used (75%).

Table 5 Conclusions (N=16)

	M1	M2								M3			
		S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S1	S2	S3	S4
JSLW	0	6	0	1	1	0	7	1	4	2	6	8	3
JP	3	4	0	2	1	1	6	3	4	1	3	4	0
Total	3	10	0	3	2	1	13	4	8	3	9	12	3

Although the number of RAs with the sections *Conclusion* and *Conclusions* was different, still a few tendencies can be discussed. In both section types, M2S6 *Summarising the results/drawing conclusions* and M3S3 *Suggesting further research* dominated (75% each), while M2S1 *Stating the purpose/goal* (63% v. 35%) prevailed only in the section *Conclusions* and M3S1 *Drawing implications/applications* (50% v. 19%) in the section *Conclusion*. M2S2 *Stating the research question(s) or hypothesis* and M2S5 *Interpreting specific findings* were least frequently utilized in both section types of the present corpus. All in all, M2 *Summarising the major points of the study* dominated in the present corpus (80 cases or 54%), but this move prevailed only in the section *Conclusions* (41 cases or 59%). In the section *Conclusion*, M2 and M3 *Making deduction from the research* occurred in 39 (or 49%) cases each.

Although the model employed in this study contains a slightly different move-step distribution, we can observe similar results in comparison with Yang and Allison's research (2003) where *Summarising the study* and *Drawing pedagogic implications* dominated and with Mortiz et al.'s (2008) study where *Making deductions from the research* prevailed in English texts. In the present study, *Pedagogic implications*, however, dominated only in the section *Conclusion* of one journal (JSLW).

3 MOVE-STEP SEQUENCES

All in all, more moves and/or steps were used in JSLW than in JP: in 48 JSLW's and 32 JP's *Conclusion* section; in 48 JSWL's and 35 JP's *Conclusions* section. The texts of the present corpus displayed a variety of move-step sequences (see Tables 6 and 7). In contrast to Mortiz et al.' study (2008), where no definite pattern occurred, in this corpus, two patterns were used twice in the section *Conclusion*: the M2S6-M3S1-M3S4 pattern in JSLW (A 5 and A 6) and the M2S6-M3S3-M3S1 pattern in JP (A3 and A4). M1 alone was used twice in the section *Conclusion* (A6 and A7) and once in *Conclusions* (A 2) in JP. As seen in the tables below, steps were repeated and/or interrupted (e.g. *Conclusion* of A1 in JSWL; A3, A5 and A8 in JP; *Conclusions* of A2, A4, A5, A6 in JSWL).

In six out of eight (75%) cases, Move 2 *Summarising the major points of the study* was the last move in JP. M3 *Making deductions from the research* was less frequently used as the final move in the present corpus if compared with Moritz et al.'s (2008) study (69.4% v. 94.4%). In 8.3 per cent of cases, Move 3 was not used at all in the concluding sections of both journals.

Table 6 Move-step sequences in the section Conclusion

No of RA	JSLW	N of moves/ steps	JP	N of moves/ steps
1	M2S1-M2S5-M2S2-M2S7-M2S5-M2S8-M3S2-M3S3	8	M2S3-M2S6-M2S8	3
2	M2S1-M2S4-M2S5-M3S1-M3S2-M3S3-M3S4	7	M2S3-M2S1-M2S6	3
3	M2S4-M2S6-M3S1-M2S8-M3S3	5	M2S6-M3S2-M3S1	3
4	M2S1-M2S4-M2S6-M3S2-M2S8-M3S1	6	M2S6-M3S3-M3S1	3
5	M2S6-M3S1-M3S4	3	M2S6-M3S3-M3S2-M3S3-M3S4	5
6	M2S6-M3S1-M3S4	3	M1	1
7	M2S1-M3S2-M2S6-M3S3-M3S1-M2S8-M3S3	7	M1	1
8	M2S1-M3S2-M2S8-M3S3	4	M2S6-M3S3	2
9	M3S1-M2S8	2	M2S6-M3S1-M2S8-M3S2-M3S3	5
10	M2S8-M3S2-M3S3	3	M2S1-M2S6-M2S7-M3S2-M3S3-M3S4	6
Total		48		32

If two moves occur in one sentence, they may be used in reversed order. As seen in the example below, the main clause shows that the study (M2S8) is important despite its limitations (M3S2).

e.g. Although it only involved one expert writer at a particular EAL institutional site [M3S2], it is hoped that the study has succeeded in providing further evidence of the crucial role that an expert writer in the capacity of a supervisor plays in scientific publication. [M2S8] (Conclusion, A4, JSLW)

In another example, the use of the main clause demonstrates that emphasis is placed on the implications drawn from the study (M3S1) rather than its limitations (M3S2),

e.g. Drawing from our findings and taking into account the small number of the teacher sample [M3S2], we argue that teacher training and further education concerning bilingualism and intercultural teaching/learning could include the clarification of the concepts... [M3S1] (Conclusion, A3, JP)

Table 7 Move-step sequences in the section *Conclusions*

No of RA	JSLW	N of moves/ steps	JP	N of moves/ steps
1	M2S6-M3S1-M3S3-M2S8	4	M2S1-M2S6-M2S7-M3S3-M2S8	5
2	M2S1-M2S6-M3S2-M2S6-M3S2-M2S6-M3S2-M3S3	8	M1	1
3	M2S1-M2S6-M3S2-M3S3	4	M2S3-M2S4-M2S6-M3S2-M2S6-M3S3	6
4	Conclusions: M2S6-M2S3-M2S6-M3S2-M3S3 <i>Pedagogical implications:</i> M3S1 <i>Suggestions for further research:</i> M3S3	7	M2S3-M2S6-M3S3-M2S8	4
5	<i>Conclusions</i> (subsection): M2S1-M3S3-M2S8-M3S3-M3S4	5	M2S1-M2S6	2
6	M2S1-M2S6-M3S3-M3S4-M3S2-M3S3-M3S2-M3S3	8	M2S1-M2S6-M2S7-M3S3-M2S8-M3S2	6
7	M2S1-M2S8-M2S6-M2S4-M3S2-M3S3-M3S4	7	M1-M2S1-M2S6-M3S2-M2S8-M3S1	6
8	M2S1-M2S6-M2S8-M3S2-M3S3	5	M1-M2S6-M2S5-M2S7-M2S5	5
Total		48		35

Thus, although the moves occur in reversed order, the choice of clause type puts the second part of the sentence in the foreground.

In the previous studies, there was a different approach to references. For example, Moriz, et al. (2008) viewed *References to sources* as a separate step in several moves. However, in other studies (e.g. Yang and Allison, 2003; Maswana et al., 2015; Tessuto, 2015) such a step was not discriminated. In this study, the use of sources was considered as a support for the argumentation provided in a text, but not a new step. Sources were mainly cited in M2S6 *Summarising the results/drawing conclusions* (7 cases or 44% in the *Conclusions* section and 7 cases or 35% in the *Conclusion* section), M3S3 *Suggesting further research* (correspondingly, 8 cases or 50% and only 2 cases or 10%) and M3S1 *Drawing implications/applications* (1 case or 6% and 7 cases or 35%). Less frequently sources occurred in M3S2 *Indicating limitations* (5 cases), M2S8 *Indicating the significance/topicality of the study* and M1 *Providing a general overview of the study* (2 cases each) in both section types. Of course, sources were cited or the previous parts of the article were referred to in all five cases of M2S7, where the findings were compared with prior research.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study aimed at searching for differences between ‘unconventional’ sections *Conclusion* and *Conclusions* in applied linguistics journals.

It may be suggested that the volume of the sections with the communicative purpose to conclude a RA may be of various length in different journals in applied linguistics. What has been noticed in the present corpus is that the section *Conclusions* tends to be longer than the section labelled *Conclusion*. The difference in the length of these concluding sections might depend on the information provided in the other sections of the RAs.

As a result of a two-level analysis of the sections, the salient moves and steps were selected for the model. The analysis of the sections revealed that no certain Move-step sequences were used in *Conclusion(s)*, but sometimes some moves may dominate in a journal; namely, there was a tendency to utilize only one move by providing just a general overview of the study in JP. All in all, no real difference was found between both types of sections. A larger number of moves in a section do not determine that it will be longer.

Pedagogical implications from this study are that academic writing instructors in an EFL classroom should draw more attention to different strategies writers utilize when reporting their research in applied linguistics. Students could discuss the most typical moves and steps and investigate how they are organized in RAs. As the present paper is a case study of only two journals and the number of the RAs is insufficient to make generalizations about the *Conclusion(s)* section, it is vital to continue the research not only in the same discipline, but also in other disciplines.

The results of the present study accord with the previous studies in applied linguistics, where it was stated that authors are ‘flexible towards the end’ (Yang and Allison, 2003); however, it is still unclear whether this ‘flexibility’ is due to neglecting differences in the communicative purposes of each section. Further studies could be based on other journals in order to compare results with the manuscript guidelines and find out the authors’ views about their choices. Still, the following questions remain open: What determines the choice of section headings? What are (if any?) the differences between the sections labelled with different headings? Of course, more attention should be paid to elaborating guidelines in writing a RA, as a hybrid sub-genre of research papers, which has (should have?) its own distinct features.

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RESEARCH ARTICLES ANALYSED

Conclusion**Journal of Second Language Writing**

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