A Case Study of ESP Practice: Towards Better Tutoring of College Student Graduation Thesis Abstract and Introduction Writing

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Abstract

This research is a case study approach towards the better tutoring of college student graduation thesis abstract and introduction writing as English for Specific Purposes practice. Based on the situation in Shanghai University of Electric Power (SUEP), this study starts with the exploration of what was claimed by Vijay K Bhatia as something of which "even expert members of the academic community sometimes fail to make a proper distinction" (Bhatia, 1993, p.76), that is, the differences between two genres of academic writing, namely, abstract and introduction. Thirty-five pairs of SUEP student abstracts and introductions, chosen at random, were analyzed, ten SUEP thesis tutors were given a questionnaire about their way of tutoring in thesis writing, and ten currently-used reference books for essay writing were reviewed, in order to see whether any problems actually exist in real thesis writing and tutoring practice. In the research, three main defects were found indeed in the student abstracts and introductions: (a) failure to observe proper moves normally adopted to realize the communicative functions of the abstract and introduction, (b) content misplacement and, (c) irrelevant ideas in the two parts of the essay. These problems seem to have resulted from the students' unawareness or confusion of the two different genres of writing. Thesis tutors and reference materials checked in this study, however, were found not to pay enough attention to the distinction either, thus echoing Bhatia's statement mentioned above. Then, after a careful discussion of differences between abstract and introduction from a comparative perspective, this study concludes that the following factors might be decisive to improve the situation: (a) specific move-based requirements for abstract and introduction writing in students' essay writing, (b) thesis tutors' awareness of the necessity to help students notice and realize these differences as a demonstration of academic writing competence, (c) practical related reference materials for students, (d) reasonable assessment standards to consolidate the necessity of the distinction, (e) lectures to teach such important points as move-structure, and commonly used phraseology in each move, and (f) further attention to similar issues such as citation, referencing and conclusion to see if they are also dealt with according to internationally accepted academic practice in students' essay writing.

Key words: Abstract; Introduction; Genre differences; Writing tutoring

INTRODUCTION

Abstract and introduction are two important parts of an academic essay. They are required for the English-major student's graduation thesis in Shanghai University of Electric Power (SUEP) as they perhaps are in almost every other university throughout the world. Functionally, these two parts are supposed to be different; otherwise, what is the purpose to put them together, one after the other, in the same article? However, our own writing experience may tell us that it is by no means easy to tell one very clearly from the other. "Indeed, even expert members of the academic community sometimes fail to make a proper distinction between the two" (Bhatia, 1993). In spite of the fact that huge amounts of reference

materials, printed, electronic or on the Net, have been produced to help with the writing of thesis abstract and introduction, they usually deal with the two separately, and few of them discuss the two in a comparative or contrastive perspective. Some experts argue (Cortes, 2004), however, that simple exposures to different things do not guarantee the perception of the differences. It is the same case with the current abstract and introduction tutoring. If it is conducted without necessary comparison and differentiation, it may hardly be called an effective ESP practice since ESP, by its nature, addresses specific language study problem in a practical perspective. Therefore, new approaches should be researched and taken to teach these two "seemingly similar genres" (Bhatia, 1993) to help students write abstracts and introductions in accordance with academic norms to fulfill their own respective communicative functions. This study is such an attempt with the purpose of:

1. First of all, investigating what main problems really exist in student graduation thesis abstracts and introductions as in the case of SUEP.

2. Then, discussing the differences between abstract and introduction in terms of communicative purposes, cognitive structuring and assessment standards with the purpose of making a practical summary of the differences that students should be clear about when they are writing their theses.

3. Finally, suggesting ways to improve the tutoring of student graduation thesis abstract and introduction writing in such areas as tutors' own clear awareness of the distinction between the two different genres, clearly-stated official requirements, practical reference materials, necessary coaching lectures and reasonable assessment standards.

1. THEORETICAL BASIS FOR THE STUDY

As we know, in ESP, genre—a key concept in this paper—is often defined as "structured communicative events engaged in by specific discourse communities whose members share broad communicative purposes" (Swales, 1990). In order to fulfill these communicative purposes, the specific discourse community members need to analyze and understand the structured communicative event or genre as is called. Of different kinds of ESP genre analytic framework, the most famous is perhaps Swales' concept of "moves" (Swales, 1990). Swales' move is said to be a "defined and bounded communicative act that is designed to achieve one main communicative objective" (Swales & Feak, 2000, p.35). Abstract and introduction, for example, both have academic communicative objectives of their own and these objectives are respectively realized by several "moves". Swales' work (Swales, 1981) is the first to analyze the schematic structure of an academic genre. His analysis was based on a corpus of forty-eight research article introductions from three fields of biology,

medical science and social sciences. In his study, Swales reported that there were four distinct structural stages, or 'moves' as he called them, in the introduction sections: (a) Establishing the Field, (b) Summarizing Previous Research, (c) Preparing for Present Research, and (d) Introducing Present Research. Later on, Swales revised his 4-step move structure into 3-move model: establishing a territory move or reviewing previous studies of related topic, presenting the present work move or discussing what the present study is about, and establishing a niche move or indicating a gap in previous studies and trying to show what the author is intended to fill up for the gap. Whether the 4-step moves structure or the 3-move model, the essence remains the same:

Swales' "move" structure, as a powerful tool in the analysis of a particular genre, is surely a significant result in linguistic research. Bhatia said that "The monograph by Swales on 'Aspects of Article Introduction' was probably the most significant contribution to the development of genre theory …" (Bhatia, 2008, p.9) ESP teachers, as we know, have always been trying to put the results of linguistic researches into various pedagogical practices. So is with the case of the "move" structure. As we can find in many linguistic periodicals, there are too many such research cases to mention in particular. It can be said with certainty that Swales' move structure has become one of the guidance principles in the analysis of genres. It is, therefore, the theoretical basis for this study as well.

2. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The following research methodology was used in this study:

1) Setting up a small corpus by means of collecting at random no less than 30 SUEP student graduation theses, and then analyzing their abstracts and introductions in terms of, a) composition structures, against the academically accepted moves adopted for the writing of the abstract and introduction, b) any content misplacement in the two parts, and c) any content irrelevance.

2) Conducting a questionnaire of no less than 10 Chinese thesis tutors about their understanding of the differences between the abstract and the introduction and their usual tutoring practice.

3) Finding and checking no less than 10 reference books on the thesis writing to see what guidance has been provided for the writing of the abstract and the introduction respectively

4) Reviewing SUEP official requirements for successful graduation thesis with focus on any specific demands for abstract and introduction writing.

5) Having a more detailed review of related literature of "genre analysis" in order to appreciate better what has been assumed as "typical moves" respectively for structures of the thesis abstract and the thesis introduction.

6) Making a comparative or contrastive study of the

"typical moves" to highlight the most important features that should be included or should not be misplaced in the abstract or the introduction.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Problems With Students' Abstracts and Introductions

An analysis of 35 SUEP student graduation papers collected at random reveals the following three main problems exist in the student abstracts and introductions (see Table 1):

1) Student abstracts and introductions do not contain all the necessary moves, and the percentage of those with a standard move structure for abstract is very low (5.7%, only 2 abstracts) and worse still no single introduction follows the standard move structure, for example, only two out of thirty-five have some degree of literature review. The typical type in student abstracts has been found to be Background/Purpose-Method (63%), and the commonest type in student introductions to be Field/Background-Present research (57%).

2) Some students misplaced contents in the two parts: typically emphasizing their research conclusions in introductions without indicating why they should do this research, while on the other hand describing in abstracts article structures, such as Chapter One discusses so and so and Chapter deals with so and so, etc. (see attached example 1 and 2).

3) There was a considerable amount of irrelevant content in student abstracts and/or introductions when they were discussing the background of researches (see attached example 3)

Table 1
An Analysis of SUEP Graduation Thesis Abstract and Introduction (35 Samples)

Move structure								Content misplacement	Content irrelevance
Abstract				Introduction					
M1	M2	M3	M4	M1	M2	M3	M4		
35 (100%)	22 (63%)	15 (43%)	16 (46%)	31 (89%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)	22 (63%)	14 (40%)	13 (37%)

Notes: Abstract M1: introducing background/purpose; M2: describing methodology; M3: summarizing results / main findings; M4: presenting conclusions ; Introduction; M1: establishing the field; M2: summarizing the previous research; M3: preparing for the present research (indicating a gap to be filled); M4: describing the present research. Attached at the end of this paper are three typical examples of student abstracts and introductions, given to show how this writer analyzed and assessed these abstracts and introductions.

3.2 Tutors' Own Vagueness of Differences Between Abstract and Introduction

Ten Chinese thesis tutors were given a questionnaire about their abstract and introduction tutoring practice (see Table 2) Of the ten, one was professor, three associate professor, and six lecturers. 70% of the tutors offered to give their students specific tutoring about the writing of abstract or introduction. But only 30% of the teachers were asked by their students about how to write abstract and 20% or so about introduction. When asked if they ever offered to make a distinction between the abstract and the introduction for their students, 80% of the tutors answered affirmatively while at the same time only 40% of them gave a definite yes when asked if they could make a proper distinction between abstract and introduction. Tutors' own vagueness of the differences was reflected in their eagerness for better teaching materials to deal with more clearly the differences between the two academic genres.

Table 2
A Questionnaire of SUEP Thesis Tutors on Abstract and Introduction Tutoring Practice

Teacher No.	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
1	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	B	Y
2	Y	Y	N	N	Y	A	Y
3	Y	Y	N	N	Y	B	Y
4	N	N	N	N	Y	B	N
5	Y	N	N	N	Y	A	Y
6	N	N	Y	N	N	B	Y
7	N	Y	N	N	Y	B	Y
8	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	A	Y
9	Y	Y	N	N	Y	B	Y
10	Y	Y	N	N	Y	A	Y

Notes：Question 1: Do you offer to give the student specific tutoring about the writing of the abstract? (Y or N); Question 2: Do you offer to give the student specific tutoring about the writing of the introduction? (Y or N); Question 3: Do your students often ask about how to write the abstract? (Y or N); Question 4: Do your students often ask about how to write the introduction? (Y or N); Question 5: Have you ever offered to make a distinction between the abstract and the introduction for your students? (Y or N); Question 6: You can make a proper distinction between the abstract and the introduction if your students ask about that, can't you? A. Surely B. Not so surely C. No; Question 7: Do you think it is better for the teaching material and reference material to make that distinction? (Y or N)

3.3 Regrets With Reference Materials

Ten reference books, which are all currently used by students, were reviewed (Table 3) Four of them deal with both abstract and introduction, but only separately. Four books discuss only introduction and ignore abstract. The other two of the ten reference books do not give a title either for abstract or introduction. One of the books, namely *Good Essay Writing* written by Peter Redman et al, published by The Open University in 1998, says that "One common way to write an introduction is to treat it like an 'abstract'", thus echoing Bhatia's observation that "even expert members of the academic community sometimes fail to make a proper distinction between the two."

Limited as it is, this review does suggest that the differences between the abstract and the introduction are regrettably ignored by reference books and at least are not dealt with in a useful contrastive or comparative perspective, in spite of the fact that these two parts of an essay have their own un-interchangeable communicative functions to deserve proper treatment .

Table 3
An Analysis of The Reference Books for the Writing of Thesis Abstracts and Introductions

No.	Name of the reference book	Abstract		Introduction		Comparison of the two	Notes
		General guidance	Detailed steps	General guidance	Detailed steps		
1	*Writing An Essay.* Brendan Hennessy. How to Books Ltd, Plymbridge House. 1994				√		
2	*Technical Writing and Professional Communication.* Thomas N. Huckin and Leslie A. Olsen. McGraw-Hill, Inc. 1991	√		√			
3	*How to Write Better Essays.* Bryan Greetham. PALGRAVE. 2001			√			
4	*Good Essay Writing.* Peter Redman et al.. The Open University. 1998			√			*"One common way to write an introduction is to treat it like an 'abstract'".*
5	*Thesis and Assignment Writing.* Jonathan Anderson, Millicent Poole, John Wiley & Sons, 1994	√		√			
6	*Writing Your Thesis.* Paul Oliver. SAGE Publications Ltd ,2008	√		√			
7	How to Write Essays. John Clanchy and Brigid Ballard, Addision Wesley. Longman Australia Pty Limited, 1998						No guidance specifically for abstract and introduction
8	*How to Write Essays.* Roger Lewis. National Extension College Ltd and Collins Education. 1993			√			
9	Graduate Students' Guide to Theses and Dissertation. George R. Allen. Jossey Bass Publishers. 1987						No guidance specifically for abstract and introduction
10	*Surviving Your Dissertation.* Kjell Erik Rudestan. Rac R. Newton Sage Publicationa, Inc .1992	√	√				"Literature Review" separately dealt with

3.4 Lack of Formal Specific Requirements

A careful review of the official documents for the writing of the graduation thesis in SUEP failed to find any specific requirements for the abstract and the introduction, though it is required that these two parts be written separately, apart from a demand of "no less than 5000 words for the main body of the thesis". This lack of official requirements for standard abstract and introduction indicates, from one more angle, that the difference between the two genres is not properly recognized.

4. DISCUSSIONS ON DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ABSTRACT AND INTRODUCTION

It is no doubt that the abstract and the introduction of a thesis are different in their academically communicative functions and, accordingly, should have their own proper writing structures. Any ignorance, misplacement, confusion or repetition of the contents of the two parts would result in an academically defective paper.

Therefore it is important to help students to see and make a distinction between the two while they are learning and practicing the skills of how to write a qualified academic thesis.

4.1 Different Communicative Purposes

Abstract and introduction, indeed, appear to be very similar in that they are associated with the same research setting, have the equal level of formality and share similar participant relationships. However, they are different genres because they have their distinct communicative purposes. "The communicative purpose which the genre is intended to serve is the most important factor in genre identification." (Bhatia, 1993)

The abstract of an essay has a well-defined and well-accepted communicative purpose: giving the reader an exact and concise knowledge of the full essay with the author's conclusion as a key element. The communicative purpose of the introduction, however, is different: it only introduces the article without covering everything of it, usually without the necessity of mentioning the conclusion. It informs the reader of a link between what has been done

before in the relevant field of research and the author's study, thus motivating and justifying his present research. That is why the discussion of previous research, or literature review, is often an essential element in the introduction while no such thing at all exists in the abstract.

4.2 Different Structures

As a result of different communicative functions, abstract and introduction have their own cognitive structuring. When analyzing genres' structures, researchers often use "move" as the basic unit. Santos (1996) gave a clear definition of "move" after Swales (1990, p.485): "As genres are purposed, staged activities, the move was chosen as the unit of analysis. A move is to be considered as a genre stage which has a particular, minor communicative purpose to fulfill, which in turn serves the major communicative purpose of the genre".

The common moves suggested by many reference books for abstract are Background/Purpose-Method-Findings-Conclusion, while for introduction Swales' CARS model or Create A Research Space model is widely accepted, that is, reviewing items of previous research in the related field, indicating a gap or raising a question that previous research has not answered and announcing the present research and indicating article structure.

4.3 Different Assessment Standards

Based on the different communicative purposes and different composition structures, abstract and introduction are assessed for their appropriateness by different standards. A good abstract must answer the following questions satisfactorily:

1) what the author did.

2) how the author did it.

3) what the author found.

4) what conclusion the author made from his findings.

A successful introduction, on the other hand, must help readers to understand:

1) what field that the author's present research belongs to.

2) what previous research has been done in that field.

3) what problem(s) still exist(s) or remain(s) unsolved.

4) how the present research is intended to solve the problem(s)

Now let's have a look at a pair of examples of abstract and introduction to see what is meant by the discussion of Section 5.1 to Section 5.3:

Abstract:

This paper reports a schematic analysis of LR (literature review) texts drawn from research articles (RAs) written in English and from research articles written in Chinese. The schematic structure of these articles was explored via coding and genre analysis. Generic and intercultural perspectives were used to identify similarities and differences between these two groups of articles. It was found that both groups were characterized by a 4-move pattern. The move structure of the Chinese LRs, however, was found to be more straightforward than the move structure of the English LRs. Most of the other observed differences were related to strategy use below the level of moves.

The move structures identified in this study may highlight some useful meta-language that will enable students and apprentice writers to be better able to overcome the structuring problems they encounter when writing LRs. (Hu, 2010)

This abstract may well serve as a typical example of realizing the communicative purpose of an abstract in that it, first of all, clearly outlines the main contents of the paper: (a) what the author did – a schematic analysis of LR (literature review) texts drawn from research articles (RAs) written in English and from research articles written in Chinese; (b) how the author did it – via coding and genre analysis and using generic and intercultural perspectives to identify similarities and differences between these two groups of articles; (c) what the author found – that both groups were characterized by a 4-move pattern, that the move structure of the Chinese LRs, was more straightforward than the move structure of the English LRs and that most of the other observed differences were related to strategy use below the level of moves; and (d) what conclusion the author made from his findings – The move structures identified in this study may highlight some useful meta-language that will enable students and apprentice writers to be better able to overcome the structuring problems they encounter when writing LRs.

Introduction:

The first studies of scientific and technical English viewed it as a register, as a type of discourse, with the texts representing it sharing common features. The studies' objective was to define the specific characteristics of this type of discourse, without paying attention to variation in the use of these features depending on the genre. In the early 1990s, some researchers began to analyze scientific and technical English with a different approach, looking at how different genres make use of specific combinations of linguistic features and how the meaning and function of these features may change in different genres. The features and conventions of the genre are explained in relation to its communicative purpose, which is determined by the social context in which the genre is produced. Genre analysis has evolved to include not only the study of specific linguistic features but also the analysis of the social context, the culture, the ideology and organization of the discourse community, and the practices of this community.

The purpose of this paper is to report how genre analysis has been (and is) applied to the study of technical communication and to provide a review of research that shows the relevance of the concept of genre for technical practice. The paper will explore how genre analysis provides a framework for investigating and understanding technical communication issues.

After defining the concept of genre, the paper presents two lines of research: studies that analyze the textual features of genres and studies that focus on the social context or discourse community. This description is followed by discussion of the usefulness of the concept of genre in teaching technical communication. The paper concludes with some implications both for understanding and teaching technical communication. (Luzon, 2005)

This introduction, short as it is, equally serves well as a typical example of realizing the communicative

purpose of an introduction. The first paragraph answers the questions of (1) what field that the author's present research belongs to: discourse or genre analysis, and (2) what previous researches have been done in that field: (a) to define the specific characteristics of scientific and technical English; (b) to analyze scientific and technical English with a new approach of looking at how different genres make use of specific combinations of linguistic features and how the meaning and function of these features may change in different genres; (c) to study genres by analyze the social context, the culture, the ideology and organization of the discourse community, and the practices of this community.

The second paragraph, though not stating directly what problems still remains unsolved, makes it very clear what the author thinks is worthwhile in this field of study: to report the application of genre analysis in the study of technical communication and to explore how genre analysis provides a framework for investigating and understanding technical communication issues.

The third and last paragraph tells us in what way the present research is intended to fulfill its research aim: first of all, defining the concept of genre, then presenting two lines of research: studies that analyze the textual features of genres and studies that focus on the social context or discourse community, and finally discussing the usefulness of the concept of genre in teaching technical communication.

4.4 A Comparative Summary of Main Differences

To sum up what has been discussed from section 5.1 to 5.3 together with the pair of examples of abstract and introduction, the main difference between abstract and introduction is that abstract mainly answers the question of What the author did and introduction tells the reader Why the author did it. The following summary can be made tentatively to make clear the main differences between the two different parts of an essay:

Table 4
A Comparative Summary of Main Differences Between Abstract and Introduction

	Present research	Previous research	Research method of present research	Main findings of present research	Conclusion of present research
Abstract	Purpose		√	√	√
Introduction	Purpose, article structure, etc	√ (including unsolved problems)	(√)		

From the above table, we can find that actually there is not much in common between the two, except that the indication of the purpose of the research is overlapped, which, in Bhatia's words (1993), is "necessary and quite logical, because the abstract not only always precedes the introduction but can also occur on its own, outside the research article". As for the research method, the abstract should definitely mention it while the introduction may or may not make such a description.

One more difference that is worth pointing out here is that article structure, if described, is always in the part of introduction rather than in the part of abstract.

5. REFLECTIONS ON IMPROVEMENT OF ABSTRACT AND INTRODUCTION TUTORING

For the better tutoring of student graduation thesis abstract and introduction writing, the following measures may be decisive and therefore can be taken.

5.1 Formal Specific Requirements

It is required in SUEP that a graduation thesis should have an abstract and an introduction separately, but there are no specific requirements for the composition of the two, as this research has found (see 4.4). It can be argued that at the level of undergraduate study, students should not only learn collegiate knowledge but acquire basic research skills. Following academically accepted forms

of graduation paper is just one of those skills. Abstract and introduction, as discussed before, are two important parts or genres of academic writing. College graduates should know how to write them properly and accordingly, detailed official specific requirements are needed to remind students of the necessity of observing them for a successful graduation thesis as a whole. It could be suggested that no less than 20% of the whole assessment should be allocated to the writing structure of the thesis, and of this 20% a reasonable further percentage, 30% for instance, should be given to the structures of abstract and introduction including the awareness of the differences between the two, (while other 70% can be distributed among citation, conclusion, referencing, key words and other important elements of a thesis).

5.2 Tutors' Clear Awareness

Quite a number of SUEP tutors did not care so much about the differences between abstract and introduction as this research has discovered, though the sample was relatively small (only ten tutors were involved). Still, it is worth calling tutors' attention to a clear awareness that abstract and introduction are two different genres of academic writing, which college graduates should learn to tell from each other and write them properly for their graduation thesis as necessary demonstration of their academic competence. Therefore it could be demanded that every tutor should offer to help his or her student(s) to distinguish abstract and introduction before actual writing begins. This would be beneficial both to the students and

the tutor as well since it would save him or her time to make corrections. For example, Brian Sutton suggested asking students the following questions before they actually write an introduction:

1) Do you begin by establishing the significance of your research area?

2) Do you summarize previous relevant research in the area?

3) Do you point out a "gap" in that previous research—perhaps an area the research has overlooked (such as whether or not its conclusions apply to the local situation), or possibly a question as to whether the research methods or interpretations of results in previous studies are completely reliable?

4) Do you make clear (whether or not you state it explicitly) that in the rest of your paper you will present your own original research to fill the "gap" pointed out in Question 3?

5.3 Practical Reference Materials

Reference materials are important. However, as this research has found, there are huge amounts of reference materials, printed, electronic or on the internet, for the writing of abstract and introduction, but the differences between the two are regrettably ignored and at least are not dealt with in a useful contrastive or comparative perspective. People may say that separate directions are just enough if they can be observed properly and why we should bother to talk specifically about the differences. But the things are that academic writing needs to be explicitly taught to those who want to acquire that academic skill. Cortes (2004), in one of her articles for the periodical of "English for Specific Purposes"*,* once pointed out that simple exposure to research resources in one's field does not guarantee acquisition of the writing convention; thus helping students to be aware of the differences between different genres of academic writing is an important task for teachers who should select, compile, write or recommend practical reference materials to students. Therefore, efforts should be made to have a serious plan for better thesis writing reference materials as in the case of SUEP.

5.4 Reasonable Assessment Standards

Assessment can play an important role in the proper observation of requirements. It is the same case with abstract and introduction writing. Assessment standards, however, must be reasonable to work. Careful studies should be made for proper weights to be given to such equally important elements of a successful graduation thesis as conclusion, citation, referencing, apart from abstract and introduction.

5.5 Related Lectures

Lectures can be offered when necessary. For example, move-structure, commonly used phraseology in each move (see Table 5) and main differences between

abstract and introduction can be systematically introduced in the lectures.

Table 5
Commonly Used Phraseology in Different Moves in Abstract and Introduction

Background	This article presents the results of…, several studies have shown…,
Gap	But, to date, very few…, …however…,
Purpose	The goal/aim of the study is…, this article presents evidence of/reports on the findings of…, the survey concerned…, this study investigated/examined/compares/presents/explored/ reported…, the study was aimed at
Findings	The results showed/revealed/suggested that, findings of the study indicated, …were found to…
Method	The analysis is based on…,
Conclusion	The research results provide…, it is argued that…, these finding lend support to…, findings demonstrate/imply…, the paper closes with a discussion of…, this study reveals that, we suggest…, it is proposed/posited that, the results may be/are interpreted that/as…, …is confirmed, Possible accounts for the results include…,

Note. Source: Text analyses and online material development for EAP graduate courses by Wen-Min Hsieh and Hsien-Chin Liou

5.6 Other Considerations

Due attention should also be called to carry similar researches into other aspects of the graduation thesis writing such as citation, referencing and conclusion to see if they are done according to internationally accepted academic practice.

CONCLUSION

This research, with SUEP as a case study, tried to discover main problems with college students in their writing of abstract and introduction for graduation theses. Failure to observe proper move-structure, content misplacement, and irrelevance were found to be three main problems. They seem to have resulted from students' unawareness or confusion of these two different genres of academic writing. Thesis tutors, reference materials or school official requirements, however, did not pay enough attention to the distinction either. This study, based on a detailed discussion of the differences between abstract and introduction in terms of communicative purposes, cognitive structuring and assessment standards, proposed six concrete measures to deal with the problems, namely, (a) making official specific requirements for abstract and introduction writing, (b) strengthening thesis tutors' awareness of the necessity to teach students notice and realize these differences as a demonstration of academic writing competence, (c) compiling or writing practical reference materials for students, (d) establishing reasonable assessment standards to consolidate the

necessity of making that distinction, (e) offering lectures when necessary to teach such important points as move-structure, commonly used phraseology in each move and the like, and (f) calling further attention to similar issues like citation, referencing and conclusion to see if they are dealt with according to internationally accepted academic practice.

One limitation of this study was that the problems discovered in the student abstract and introduction were based on this writer's own judgment, especially the analysis of the move-structure of these abstracts and introductions being purely personal, though three typical examples have been given to show how this writer assessed these student abstracts and introductions. Another obvious limitation was that the samples of 35 pairs of student abstracts and introductions, 10 thesis tutors and 10 reference books might not be satisfactorily large in number, and therefore further research will be ideal.

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