A corpus-based analysis of two crucial steps in Business Management research articles: The creation of a research space and the statement of limitations[1]

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Abstract
English has been established as the Language for Research Publication Purposes in many disciplinary fields. Many scholars worldwide, therefore, face linguistic and rhetorical difficulties when writing their academic texts for publication in an L2. This paper focuses on a quantitative and qualitative analysis of two key steps of the research article: the creation of a gap in the Introduction and the statement of limitations in the Discussion. A corpus of 24 research articles in the field of Business Management are analysed in terms of the frequency of use, length and type of metadiscoursal language most commonly used in the phrasing of these two key moments of this academic genre in which authors clearly need to "market" their research. The results may be useful for designing materials and offering informed guidance to (novice) non-native writers when drafting their RAs in English in this discipline.

1. Introduction

English has become a global lingua franca in many domains, and the academic one is no exception. Throughout Europe at least, academics are now required to master the use of English for teaching, research, and even administrative purposes at their institutions. This is even more

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evident in certain areas of knowledge, such as Business Management, in which the work activity of academics is fully determined by their English language competence, which "acts as a career enabler or inhibitor" (Tietze 2008:382).

In this context the research to be presented in this paper focuses on English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP, Cargill and Burgess 2008), and more particularly on the genre of the research article (RA) published in international journals in the field of Business Management. Taking an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) approach to its analysis and drawing on previous move analysis of the RA (e.g. Swales 1990, 2004; Nwogu 1997; Lewin et al. 2001; Holmes 2007), the paper aims to explore the more or less conventionalised realization of two particularly significant steps in international research publications in English: creating a research gap in the Introduction section and stating limitations in the Discussion section. These two steps can be considered major rhetorical options to convincingly justify the worthiness of the research presented as well as to situate it within the field. The ultimate objective is to provide data which can be used to design materials and offer informed guidance to (novice) L2 writers to help them succeed in turning their research into a publishable article in English, by drawing their attention to these strategic and conventionalised ways of presenting and evaluating one's research in this writing context.

In a previous study of the macro and microstructure of Business Management RAs in English and in Spanish, it was found that the step 'Indicating a gap' in the Introduction appeared in all Introductions of the RAs in English, while it was only included in 66% of the Introductions in the RAs in Spanish (Mur-Dueñas 2010a). This indicates a significant difference in the prevailing rhetorical strategies in the RAs of this discipline in the two linguistic/cultural contexts. Other previous cross-cultural research has also reported differences on the RA Introduction move structure in different languages and contexts of publication (e.g. Burgess 2002; Árvay and Tankó 2004; Hirano 2009). Similarly, a significant intercultural rhetorical difference was found in the microstructure of discussion sections in the two sets of RAs. Whereas limitations were stated in 92% of the Business Management English RAs, this step was included in just 42% of the Spanish RAs (Mur-Dueñas 2010a). Therefore, the analysis presented here focuses on the two steps which were most significantly different in the two contexts of publication (i.e. the English-medium international one and the Spanish-medium local one).

From these rhetorical intercultural differences it can be inferred that non-native authors (or authors who are used to other academic rhetorical styles) within a particular disciplinary domain wishing to publish their research internationally in English may find it difficult to adjust to differing writing rhetorical conventions in the new publishing context and language. This difficulty may be two-fold: first, they may lack some genre-specific awareness; thus, they need to be made aware of the importance of certain rhetorical structure commonalities which may not be conventional in their own local context of publication; second, even if they are aware of the importance of these two steps, they may lack the linguistic/discursive competence to realise them.

Most previous studies in English for Academic Purposes have focused on either the rhetorical structure of a given academic genre—mainly RAs (Nwogu 1997; Holmes 1997; Posteguillo 1999; Williams 1999; Hwa Lim 2006) and abstracts (Martín Martín 2003; Lorés 2004)—or the characteristic features of such genres: hedging (Lewin 2005; Vassileva 2001; Lafuente-Millán 2008), writer presence (Vassileva 1998; Kuo 1999; Hyland 2001, 2002a; Breivega *et al*. 2002; Martínez 2005; Harwood 2005a, 2005b, Fløttum *et al*. 2006; Lorés-Sanz 2006; Mur-Dueñas 2007; Lafuente-Millán 2010), engagement markers (Hyland 2002b; Giltrow 2005) or evaluative markers (Swales and Burke 2003; Stotesbury 2003; Mur-Dueñas 2010b). This paper, however, aims at combining both types of analysis, using a top-down perspective. That is, two crucial steps will first be identified in a corpus of RAs and then explored in terms of their characteristic interpersonal lexico-grammatical realizations. Special attention will be paid to salient metadiscoursal features in the realization of the aforementioned steps. Once the lexical profile of the steps is analysed, it is intended to determine possible "genre-functional formulaic sequences" based on the most common lexico-grammatical features as "used by speakers or writers to signal that communicative purposes of the genre are being answered in particular stretches of text" (Hüttner 2007: 288). In this way, it is believed that more significant pedagogical implications and applications will be obtained.

2. Corpus and methodology

The analysis is based on a corpus of RAs in Business Management published between 2002 and 2006. It contains 24 RAs (197,922 words) published in three international high-impact journals (*Academy of Management Journal*, *Journal of Management* and *Strategic Management Journal*) and written in English by scholars based at North American institutions (who happen to be the vast majority of authors in these top academic publications).[2] This corpus forms part of a broader corpus, SERAC (Spanish-English Research Article Corpus), compiled by the InterLAE research group and which contains a total of 576 RAs in 8 disciplines, 72 RAs per discipline divided according to the language, context of publication and author's affiliation into the following three sections: (1) RAs written in English by authors affiliated to Anglophone universities (i.e. ENG); (2) RAs written in English by authors affiliated to Spanish universities (i.e. SPENG); and (3) RAs written in Spanish by authors affiliated to Spanish universities (i.e. SP).[3]

The RAs in the corpus used for this study were analysed in terms of their microstructure, determining the two steps under research. Once the steps were defined, their lexico-grammatical realization was analysed. Key features were then signalled and special attention was paid to the phraseological units used to render these communicative functions.

3. Results and discussion

In this section results obtained from the analysis of the 24 RAs in English published in international high-impact journals in relation to the two specific steps will be summarised and the implications and applications that can be drawn from them highlighted.

3.1. Creating a research gap: key lexico-grammatical features and phraseology

Twenty out of the 24 RAs in the corpus were found to include the "Creating a gap" step in the Introduction. This gap tends to contain the following characteristic features:

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[2] A list of the RAs in the corpus can be found in the Appendix.
[3] For a full description of this corpus see Pérez-Llantada (2008).

- at least one contrastive logical marker

(1) International market entry is an important topic in the management literature (Dess, Gupta, Hennart, & Hill, 1995; Peng, 2001; Tallman, 1992). However, there is a lack of empirical research focusing on the internationalization of entrepreneurial firms (Zahra, Ireland, & Hitt, 2000). (ENGBM15)[4]

(2) But although many studies have examined the relationship of control to stress-related outcomes in the workplace, there are still few studies that evaluate attempts to increase workplace control (Terry &Jimmieson, 1999). (ENGBM13)

- attitudinal language (especially positive adjectives associated with the research to be presented later and/or negative adjectives associated with the research previously carried out by other researchers)

(3) Although considerable research has examined organizational politics, a serious omission has been the failure to evaluate the political skill of the influencer, leaving us ill-informed about why influence efforts are (or are not) successful. (ENGBM12)

- and hedges and boosters modulating attitudinal language and reducing or expanding the gap in the literature:

(4) Case reports suggest that some companies do realize these benefits, but these assumptions are largely untested empirically. (ENGBM14)

(5) Most of the research exploring what factors drive dominant design selection has focused on network externalities (e.g., Choi, 1994; Cottrell, 1998; Katz & Shapiro, 1986; Khazam & Mowery, 1994; Kristianson, 1998; Shurmer, 1993). [...]. (ENGBM1)

It is interesting to note that personal pronouns are hardly used in this step. Authors do not include self-mentions in this part of the Introductions; they do not display their authorial voice when creating a gap in the literature, but rather they resort to passive constructions or abstract rhetors. Neither do they create rapport with their readers in the presentation of this type of information through the use of engagement markers (such as directives, questions or imperatives) (Hyland 2005). This can be explained by bearing in mind the potential face-threatening

[4] The information between brackets refers to the particular RA within the corpus from which the example was extracted.

act that stating a gap implies. Authors need to argue against previous research, which sometimes entails reviewing past research in rather negative terms. Thus, authors try to mitigate this not only through the inclusion of certain hedges or boosters, but also by concealing their authorial voice and distancing themselves from their readers.

The extent of use of the key features mentioned above is indicated in Table 1:

Table 1. Extent of inclusion of characteristic features in the “Creating a gap” step.

	Number of occurrences	Number of RAs
Contrastive logical markers	29	17/20
Attitude markers	36	17/20
Hedges /Boosters	32	14/20

According to the results in the table some RAs present more than one contrastive clause to phrase the “Create a gap” step and, as pointed out earlier, scholars commonly modulate the dimension of the gap and/or the evaluation of previous literature, which authors use to justify their own research.

Another interesting observation in the analysis of the corpus is that the RAs taken from the two journals with the highest impact factor (*Academy of Management Journa*l and *Strategic Management Journal*) have longer, more elaborate “Create a gap” steps. Three out of the four RAs not including this step belong to the journal with the lowest impact factor (*Journal of Management*). This stresses the importance of scholars wishing to publish in these top international journals to master the drafting of their RAs, including this key sub-function of the Introductory section.

The following table includes the particular linguistic exponents of the rhetorical function of establishing a niche in the literature:

Table 2. Particular lexico-grammatical features in the realisation of the "gap creation" step.

	Linguistic realization	Number of occurrences
Contrastive logical markers	*although*	7
	but	2
	despite	4
	even though	1
	however	5
	though	4
	while	2
	yet	1
Attitude markers	*accumulating*	1
	broaden	1
	complementary	1
	critically	1
	dearth	1
	deepen	1
	developed	1
	emergent	1
	failure	1
	ignore	2
	ill-informed	1
	important	4
	inconsistent	1
	in the early stages of maturation	1
	lack	1
	limited	2
	not enough	1
	not tested	1
	omission	1
	primary	1
	rare	1
	refinement	1
	serious	1
	short of	1
	sufficient	1
	supported	1
	unexplored	1
	unfortunate	1
	untested	1

Hedges / boosters	*a great deal of*	2
	appear to	1
	assumptions	1
	considerable	2
	considerably	1
	extensively	1
	few(er)	3
	fully	1
	largely	4
	little	5
	many	1
	most	1
	mostly	1
	much	1
	no	1
	ought to	1
	particularly	2
	rarely	1
	tend to suggest	1
	typically	1

One of the most striking findings is the linguistic diversity in the phrasing of the establishment of a gap. Whereas similar interpersonal language categories are observed, the realisations of these are extremely varied. This variability in the realisation of the step can be explained by considering the status of the authors whose writing is being explored. As Hüttner (2007: 188) claims, "the more secure writers are, the more linguistic variety is available to them and the less bound they are to adhere to particular genre-functional formulaic sequences". The corpus consists of RAs published in international journals by authors affiliated to North-American institutions, which would explain the lack of fixed formulaic statements. These scholars can be considered to have fully mastered the genre-discipline specific uses of the language; hence, their ability to use different formulae. If the writing of L2 writers had been analysed, results might have been different.

The two linguistic tokens most recurrently used in this step of the RAs in the corpus are *largely* and *little*, which make clear reference to previous research. *Largely* is used twice in combination with Present Perfect verbal phrases and twice in copulative sentences. The following could be considered genre-functional formulaic sequences in that they can be considered conventionalised and pragmatically functional instances of language (Hüttner 2007) realising the communicative purpose of the step under analysis[5]. However, they have not been found repeatedly[6] in the corpus, since, as mentioned above, variability rather than formulaicness seems to characterise the linguistic rendering of this step.

... have largely concentrated on...
... have largely been assumed...
... is as yet largely unexplored.
These assumptions are largely untested.

Little was used in the corpus both as a noun and as an adjective collocating with different research-based nouns:

... little is known about (2)
... little guidance exists about...
There has been little research on...
... little attention has been paid to...

Similarly, the following could be seen as genre-functional sequences given their pragmatic function of answering the communicative function of the particular step, although they are not recurrent. In any case, they can function as "building blocks" or "stepping stones" (Hüttner 2007) when non-native writers aim at drafting their papers in English for an international audience:

- *Though considerable theoretical work has been done on, … is much more limited.* (ENGBM1)
- *Though a number of researchers have examined…, … has received considerably less attention.* (ENGBM1)
- *Though most researchers…, … has not typically been considered …* (ENGBM1)
- *However, it is not yet fully understood why….* (ENGBM2)
- *Whereas understanding of … has deepened, understanding of … remains less developed. This is unfortunate.* (ENGBM4)
- *Yet little guidance exists about ….* (ENGBM4)
- *much of the work on … has been limited by ….* (ENGBM5)

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[5] In line with Lewin et al. (2001) common communicative purposes are found on semantic grounds, but no common lexico-grammatical realizations are discerned.

[6] No sequence has been found three or more times in the corpus, a number which is established by Hüttner (2007) as the minimum for a formulaic sequence to qualify as such.

- *However, no research to date has introduced ….* (ENGBM6)
- *Despite these facts, there has been little research on ….* (ENGBM8)
- *… demands empirical attention.* (ENGBM9)
- *Although considerable research has examined …, a serious omission has been the failure to….* (ENGBM12)
- *However, it is not enough to study …. We also need to critically examine ….* (ENGBM12)
- *But although many studies have examined X, there are still few studies that …* (ENGBM13)
- *X is an important topic in the management literature* [references]. *However, there is a lack of empirical research focusing on .....* (ENGBM15)
- *although .... have been observed, researchers have stopped short of uncovering ...* (ENGBM16)
- *Although ... has been extensively studied by various researchers (see* [references] *for reviews of this literature), a great deal of emphasis has been given to …* (ENGBM19)
- *Interest in this topic has mostly revolved around .... As such, the primary focus of the literature on... has been on X. In the process, little attention has been paid to ...* (ENGBM19)
- *However, even these have largely concentrated on ....* (ENGBM19)
- *While prior research has pointed to the importance of ...., most studies in this area evaluate ... and ignore ...* (ENGBM21)
- *Rarely has ... research focused on ..... This dearth of research on ... is particularly apparent in the context of...* (ENGBM22)

3.2. Stating limitations: key lexico-grammatical features and phraseology

All the RAs in the corpus present a discussion section and 22 RAs include a presentation of limitations of their studies of varied lengths and using different rhetorical strategies. It is assumed that by being overt about possible shortcomings of their research or raising potential counterclaims authors will ward off potential criticism (Lewin et al. 2001) and will as a result gain credibility. Fourteen out of the total 22 RAs presenting limitations do so in combination with the proposal of future avenues for research with the aim of fostering the progression and advancement of the disciplinary field and as a way of responding to the overcoming of potential shortcomings under a specific sub-section with varied headings (e.g. “Limitations”, “Limitations and Future Research”, “Limitation and Conclusion(s)”, “Limitations and (Directions for) Future Research”, “Limitations and Future Directions”, “Strengths/Limitations”).

In some cases (6 RAs) the statement of limitations is accompanied by a justification of why these potential problems could not be overcome, which contributes to highlighting the validity of the research presented regardless of any deficiencies or possible flaws; that is, the potential loss of scholars' face is redressed. This justification tends to be introduced by means of a contrastive logical marker, as in the following examples:

> (6) These data are not immune to the possibility of common method bias—always a concern when single-source, self-report data are used. However, a key predictor of work group aggression did not include information from the focal individual. In addition, the difierential relations are counter to what might be generated by common method bias. Further, many of the relationships are consistent with prior empirical and theoretical work on aggression. (ENGBM5)

> (7) Another limitation is related to external validity. Because the sample was drawn from acute-care hospitals in a southwestern state, the generalizability of our findings for other states or other types of health care providers or other industries may not be valid. We are hopeful that our sample does, nevertheless, represent organizations operating in a highly complex industry setting. (ENGBM10)

In a higher number of cases (9 RAs) at least one cause-effect logical marker is introduced to make clear the reason(s) for the limitation(s) to be presented:

> (8) Given our use of a single industry, caution should be used in generalizing beyond the financial sector. (ENGBM8)

> (9) Because the sample was drawn from acute-care hospitals in a southwestern state, the generalizability of our findings for other states or other types of health care providers or other industries may not be valid. (ENGBM10)

Hedges are also sometimes used to mitigate the force of the limitation, as in the following example:

> (10) Regarding the sample, this study controlled for industry effects through selection of one 2-digit SIC code. It is possible that results would not be generalizable to other industry contexts. (ENGBM9)

Also, very frequently sequencers are used to structure the presentation of limitations. The following is a clear example of the sequencing strategy in this particular step:

> (11) We emphasize three limitations of the present study. First, replication is needed. While our sample size is similar in size or larger than the single samples of some previous studies examining relationships of personality or emotional exhaustion with work-related outcomes (e.g., Wright & Cropanzano, 1998), we urge caution, given our small and single sample. Second, Arthur et al. (2001) pointed out the role of personality-based self-selection into specified jobs and the resultant range restriction on the personality dimension of interest. Thus, our conscientiousness-call volume performance validity coefficient may have been artificially restricted by a certain personality type of individuals seeking employment in the call center. Third, our measure of customer service quality was comprised of only one item. Researchers pursuing work in this area might find it useful to employ multi-item measures, which would not only better assess the criterion space but also permit assessment of reliability. (ENGBM11)

Finally, the statement of limitations entails the use of abundant attitude markers:

> (12) though significant results were obtained here, this work remains exploratory; The research here was constrained by ... (ENGBM1)

Table 3. Extent of inclusion of characteristic features in the "Stating limitations" step.

	Number of occurrences	Number of RAs
Contrastive logical markers	8	6/22
Cause-effect logical markers	11	8/22
Sequencing markers	8	8/22
Attitude markers	81	17/22
Hedges	33	15/22

Boosters are not commonly used in the statement of the studies' limitations; an exception is the one presented in the example below:

> (13) Clearly, then, the model presented here is underspecified and future work should incorporate additional potentially meaningful variables when appropriate and available given the sample. (ENGBM10)

Although limitations are frequently explicitly stated, these are not emphasised but rather mitigated or attenuated and duly justified to redress the potential loss of credibility that may result from them.

Another feature worth pointing out is that, in contrast to what happens in the drafting of the "Creating a research gap" step, personal references are commonly used. Sixteen RAs include the use of a personal pronoun or possessive adjective. Limitations concern the scholars' own study and they tend to highlight their own authorial voice here.

> (14) First, in this study we only examined focal firms' decisions… (ENGBM6)

> (15) First, although our theory revolves around extraorganizational signaling, we are not able to definitively refute the possibility that… (ENGBM22)

The particular linguistic exponents of each category of typical features in this particular step are listed in Table 4:

Table 4. Particular lexico-grammatical features in the realisation of the "statement of limitations" step.

	Linguistic realization	Number of occurrences
Contrastive logical markers	*however* *nevertheless*	7 1
Cause-effect logical markers	*because* *by the fact that* *consequently* *due to* *given* *since* *thus*	2 1 1 1 3 1 2

Sequencers	*... Another potential concern …, A third potential concern is...*	1
	First… Second… Third... Fourth… Finally	1
	First… Next… A final avenue	1
	… Moreover, … Finally	1
	First … Second... Third	1
	First…. …. are also… A third potential limitation	1
	One limitation is that … Further… Finally	1
	First… Second… Further	1
Attitude markers	*bias*	3
	broad	2
	cannot	2
	caution	2
	concern	4
	constrained	1
	criticize	1
	difficult	2
	exploratory	1
	fail to	1
	immune to	1
	inflated	1
	insufficient	1
	limit (v.)	8
	limitation(s)	17
	limited	2
	not able to	2
	not explore	1
	not gather	1
	not generizable	2
	not specific	1
	not test	1
	not valid	1
	only	5
	opportunities	1
	restricted	1
	significant	1
	small	7
	tempered	1
	unable to	3
	underspecified	1
	undoubtedly	1
	unexamined	1
	unexplored	1
	unfortunately	1

Hedges	*a few* *appear* *can* *certain* *could* *for the most part* *may* *might* *perhaps* *possibility* *possible* *potential* *quite* *reasonably* *relatively* *seem* *somewhat* *would*	1 1 1 2 1 1 4 2 1 2 3 5 1 1 4 1 1 1

As in the case of the previously analysed step, a great variety has been found here in the lexico-grammatical realization of this strategic communicative purpose. Some of the most common attitude markers were *limitation(s)* (12 tokens) and *limit* (8 tokens). The plural noun was frequently used to introduce this particular piece of information in the discussion section (13 RAs). Again, although the formulaic nature of the following genre-functional sequences is not attested by their recurrence in the corpus, they can be considered as such on the basis of their pragmatic function (i.e. responding to the particular communicative purpose of the step):

> *The results must be assessed in the context of the study's limitations*.(ENGBM3)
> *This empirical research is marked by a few limitations that should be addressed in future studies.* (ENGBM4)
> *We should point out additional limitations inherent in our study.* (ENGBM8)
> *While efforts were made to minimize …., limitations along these lines remain.* (ENGBM9)
> *Our study has several limitations* (ENGBM10)
> *We emphasize three limitations of the present study.* (ENGBM11)
> *As with any empirical study, there are limitations regarding this research that should be mentioned.* (ENGBM12)
> *The limitations of this study should be addressed in future research.* (ENGBM14)
> *This study contains several limitations, which in turn provide opportunities for future research.* (ENGBM15)
> *This review has several limitations.* (ENGBM16)

Finally, there are limitations to this study. (ENGBM20)
This study, like any other, has several limitations that open avenues for future research. (ENGBM22)

In the singular form it was used in these combinations:

One (potential) limitation is ... (2)
Another limitation is related to ...
A third potential limitation is the...
Another limitation of this study is that ...

... limits the generalizability of ... (2)
the use of .... limited... (3)
Exploration of... is limited by ...
.... limited our ability ...

Another common attitude marker is *small* (7 tokens) found in this combination:

a relatively small number of / amount of /sample(size)

Finally, *only* (5 tokens) is also a frequent evaluative marker in the expression of limitations:

We only examined ... (2)
We only considered...
... was comprised of only ...
We examined ... only during....

Three hedges were found to recur in the statement of limitations in the Business Management RA discussion sections under analysis: *potential* (5 tokens), *relatively* (4 tokens)—which was found to collocate mainly with *small*, as highlighted above—and *may* (4 tokens):

Another / A third potential concern is... (2)
One / A third potential limitation is ... (2)
a potential explanation for

..... may not be valid
may have been restricted by ...
results may only apply to ...
results may not be...

4. Final remarks

As Hüttner (2007: 112) states, "learners of particular genres, be they native or non-native need to become familiar not only with generic structures, but also with accepted and required formulaic patterns within these". This paper has attempted to carry out a corpus-based analysis of the linguistic peculiarities of two crucial steps in RAs in a particular discipline—the creation of a research gap in the Introduction and the statement of limitations in the Discussion—to cater for these particular needs of writing scholars. These two steps are particularly relevant for authors to convince first gatekeepers (i.e. editors and reviewers) and then peer readers of the validity of their research; that is, they perform key rhetorical functions in promoting the authors' research. Also, intercultural differences in the inclusion of these rhetorical steps in RAs had been uncovered previously by past research, which rendered the analysis of their specific linguistic and discursive realisation of special importance.

The top-down approach to the study of these two steps in RAs from the Business Management discipline has revealed particular lexico-grammatical features as being characteristic in their particular realization. This proves the importance of linking analyses of the organizational structure of academic genres with analyses of their particular lexico-grammatical encoding. The study should be expanded to include RA Introductions and Discussion sections from other disciplines in order to analyse whether the steps under study are realised to the same extent in other fields, to explore to what extent the lexico-grammatical rendering of the steps is disciplinary-dependant, and also to determine the possible formulaicness nature of the genre-functional sequences highlighted here.

The results could be used for pedagogical purposes to design materials aimed at raising scholars' awareness of the importance of these rhetorical strategies but also at focusing on the linguistic resources to be used so that the disciplinary members' expectations are met in the international context of publication in English. It is believed that ESP or ERPP materials should be based on corpus-based genre research results, such as the ones presented here. Following Hyland (2005), the results could be the first step to create "tasks which sensitize students to the rhetorical effects and features that tend to recur in particular genres and communities" (2005: 181). As such, scholars interested in becoming familiar with the prevailing rhetorical conventions in international publications in English in their fields should be asked to: (1) observe the structural patterns which were the basis of the analysis in this paper together with key metadiscoursal elements in their lexico-grammatical rendering as extracted from a relevant corpus; (2) practice those elements in particular contexts, making scholars aware of the effect their linguistic and pragmatic choices may have on the readership; and (3) carry out writing tasks which involve introducing the structural patterns and using the features previously observed and practiced, and also critically approach previous own written texts as well as texts written for other contexts of publication (in English or the mother tongue). This proposal to turn the results of the research into pedagogical materials and informed guidance can be considered as taking a critical pragmatic approach, which "acknowledges that students should be exposed to dominant discourse norms […but] stresses that students have choices and should be free to adopt or subvert the dominant practices as they wish" (Harwood and Hadley 2004: 357) or as they are allowed to.

These materials could be of special use for junior English L1 researchers as well as junior or experienced English L2 scholars who may wish to start publishing their research in top international journals in their disciplines. By familiarising (non-) native (novice) scholars with the common lexico-grammatical realisation of these steps, they will become aware of the importance of presenting their research in the light of a previously determined niche and concluding their papers by pointing out certain limitations in English RAs aimed at high-impact factor sites for publication. As pointed out above, they may not be used to these rhetorical conventions in their own languages and national contexts of publication. Making them observe, analyse and produce them following the "building blocks" or "stepping stones" (Hüttner 2007) outlined may further help them frame their research neatly and be able to "market" it more successfully in the competitive sphere of international publications in English, which in this field are largely dominated by Anglo-American scholars.

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Appendix: List of RAs in the corpus

ENGBM1
SCHILLING, M. A. 2002. “Technology success and failure in winner-take-all markets: the impact of learning orientation, timing and network externalities.” *Academy of Management Journal* 45 (2): 387-398.
ENGBM2
BUCHHOLTZ, A. K. et al. 2003. “The Role of Human Capital in Postacquisition of CEO departure.” *Academy of Management Journal* 46 (4), pp. 506-514.
ENGBM3
COMBS, J. G. and SKILL, M. S. 2003. “Managerialist and Human Capital explanations for key executive pay premiums: a contingency perspective.” *Academy of Management Journal* 46 (1): 63-73.
ENGBM4
Fynn, Francis. 2003. “How much should I give and how often? The effects of generostiy and frequency of favor exchange on social status and productivity.” *Academy of Management Journal* 46 (5): 539-553.
ENGBM5
Glomb, Theresa M and Hui Liao. 2003. “Interpersonal aggression in work groups: social influence, reciprocal, and individual effects.” *Academy of Management Journal* 46 (4): 486-496.
ENGBM6
Williamson, I.O. and Cable, D.M. 2003. “Organizational hiring patterns, interfirm network ties, and iterorganizational imitation.” *Academy of Management Journal* 46 (5): 349-358.
ENGBM7
DIETZ, J. et al. 2004. “Service climate effects on customer attitudes: an examination of boundary conditions.” *Academy of Management Journal* 47 (1): 81-92.
ENGBM8
RICHARDS, O. C. et al. 2004. “Cultural diversity in management, firm performance and the moderating role of entrepreneurial orientation dimensions.” *Academy of Management Journal* 47 (2): 255-266.
ENGBM9
Saxon, Todd and Dollinger Marc. 2004. “Target reputation and appropriability: picking and deploying resources in acquisitions.” *Journal of Management* 30 (1): 123-147.
ENGBM10
Walters, B. A. and Bhuian S.A. 2004. “Complexity absorption and performance: a structural analysis of acute-care hospitals.” *Journal of Management* 30 (1): 97-121.

ENGBM11
Witt, L.A. Martha C. Andrews and Dawn S. Carlson. 2004. "When conscientiousness isn't enough: emotional exhaustion and performance among call center customer service representatives." *Journal of Management* 30 (1): 149-160.
ENGBM12
Ferris, Gerald R, Darren C. Treadway, Robert W. Kolodinsky, Wayne A. Hochwarter, Charles J. Kacmar, Ceasar Douglas and Dwight D. Frink. 2005. "Development and validation of the political skill inventory." *Journal of Management* 31 (1): 126-152.
ENGBM13
Logan, Mary S. and Daniel C. Ganster. 2005. "An experimental evaluation of a control intervention to alleviate job-related stress." *Journal of Management* 31 (1): 90-107.
ENGBM14
Shaw, Jason D., Nina Gupta, Atul Mitra and Gerald E. Ledford Jr. 2005. "Success and survival of skill-based play plans." *Journal of Management* 31 (1): 28-49.
ENGBM15
Rothaermel, Frank T., Suresh Kotha and H. Kevin Steensma. 2005. "International market entry by US Internet firms: An empirical analysis of country risk, national culture, and market size." *Journal of Management* 32 (1): 56-82.
ENGBM16
Stewart, Greg L. 2006. "A meta-analytic review of relationships between team design features and team performance." *Journal of Management* 32 (1): 29-54.
ENGBM17
Barr, P.S. and Glynn, M.A. 2004. "Cultural variations in strategic issue interpretation: relating cultural uncertainty avoidance to controllability in discriminating threat and opportunity." *Strategic Management Journal* 25: 59-67.
ENGBM18
Sanders, Gerard W.M. and Steven Boivie. 2004. "Sorting things out: valuation of new firms in uncertain markets." *Strategic Management Journal* 25: 167-186.
ENGBM19
Shamsie, Jamal, Corey Phelps and Jerome Kuperman. 2004. "Better late than never: a study of late entrants in household electrical equipment." *Strategic Management Journal* 25: 69-84.
ENGBM20
Berry, Heater. 2006. "Leaders, laggards and the pursuit of foreign knowledge." *Strategic Management Journal* 27: 151-168.

ENGBM21
Darnall, Nicole and Daniel Edwards Jr. 2006. “Predicting the cost of environmental management system adoption: the role of capabilities, resources and ownership structure.” *Strategic Management Journal* 27: 301-320.
ENGBM22
Higgins, Monica G. and Ranjay Gulati. 2006. “Stacking the deck: The effects of top management backgrounds on investor decisions.” *Strategic Management Journal* 27: 1-25.
ENGBM23
Hoekter, Glenn. 2006. “Do modular products lead to modular organizations?” *Strategic Management Journal* 27: 501-518.
ENGBM24
Whestphal, James, Steven Boivie and Daniel Han Ming Chng. 2006. “The strategic impetus for social network ties: Reconstituting broken CEO friendship ties.” *Strategic Management Journal* 425-445.