A MOVE ANALYSIS OF METHOD CHAPTERS BY VIETNAMESE TESOL MASTER'S STUDENTS

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Abstract
Although Method sections/chapters play an important role in both convincing the readers of the validity of the means employed to obtain the results and strengthening the credibility of the findings subsequently to be reported in the Result sections/chapters, they have received scant attention. Motivated by the lack of previous research on these sections/chapters and of literature on how non-native English writers compose them, this paper investigates the move-step structures of the Method chapters in TESOL master's theses written by Vietnamese. Through the revised framework for analyzing the Method chapters of master's theses in Applied Linguistics from ProQuest and the interviews with thesis writers and supervisors, the study revealed not only the rhetorical structures of these chapters produced in Vietnam but also the commonalities and differences from those written by international writers. These findings suggest that these Vietnamese postgraduates' conformity to the global norms and their adaptation to meet the expectations of their local discourse community in composing their Method chapters.
Key words: Method chapters, Master's theses, TESOL, Vietnamese writers, Genre analysis

1.
1. Introduction
Method sectionstend to remain elaborate and significant in humanities and social sciences (Lim, 2006; Swales, 1990; Swales & Feak, 1994) although they have been downplayed in the hard disciplines (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Swales, 2004; Swales & Feak, 1994). Swales (1990) claims that the Methods in the soft disciplines have an elaborate step-by-step

description of the methods employed in the reported study while they are "heavily clipped" in science Method sections (Swales, 2004, p. 220). Such disciplinary variations are due to different readers' interest in research methodology across disciplines. In fact, in science, engineering and medical sciences, standard experimental practices and established scientific procedures and methods are widely known and available to people in the fields whereas in social sciences, research methodology is "a very important and hotly debated issue" (Swales, 1990, p. 165). In other words, without sound Method sections, authors in these soft disciplines are unable to convince readers of the validity of the means employed to obtain results and strengthen the credibility of the findings subsequently reported in the Result sections.

Despite the importance of the research methodology in the social sciences, few studies have investigated the move structure of Method sections(Bruce, 2008; Kanoksilapatham, 2005; Lim, 2006; Mur-Dueñas, 2007; Nwogu, 1997; Peacock, 2011), and there is still no clear model for the communicative functions of this section in research articles (RA) in all disciplines, as claimed by Kanoksilapatham (2005). Lim (2006)analyzed twenty RA Method sections from two high-statusmanagement journals and found that most Method sections in his corpus contained three major moves: *describing data procedures*, *delineating procedures for measuring variables*, and *elucidating data analysis procedures*. Moreover, there were differences between eachrhetorical move and the linguistic features in the constituent steps of each move. In a study conducted byMur-Dueñas (2007), who analyzed 24 business management Method sections of the two corpora (English and Spanish), some marked differences between the two corpora were revealed. The range and number of steps (corresponding to the same move) included in the Spanish RA Method sections were less homogenous than those in the counterpart. *Reference to the past research*, *Reference to previous literature,* and *Claiming validity*predominantlyoccurred in the English corpus while they were infrequently found in the Spanish corpus. Mur-Dueñas (2007)believes that the differences may be the result of influences from the socio-cultural contextswhere the RAs were written and published. Another study focusing on the Method section across eight disciplines is by Peacock (2011)and seven moves and the interdisciplinary differences in relation torhetorical moves and move cycles were found in his large corpus (288 RA Method sections).*Procedure* occurredin all the Method sections. While *Materials* and *Analysis*moves were extremely common in the hard sciences (Biology, Chemistry, and Physics),*Subjects* and *Data analysis* were the salient moves in the soft sciences (Business, Language andLinguistics, Law, Public and Social Administration). Moreover, the move cycle was found more frequently in science Method sections than those in non-science Method sections. The most obvious difference was the description of methodological information provided for the reader. That is, most hard scienceMethods tended to rely on shared knowledge and had little statement of rationale ordiscussion while those in the social sciences were more likely to provide a detaileddescription of method. This difference tends to reflect the speed variation of the Method sections identified by Bloor (1999) and Pramoolsook (2009). Although these findings provide us a better understanding of how the Method sections in RAs are organized, student writers as well as non-native English writers may find them confusing. As indicated by Peacock (2011), as genre conventions vary across disciplines, non-native English writers need to know the move structure of Method sections in their own disciplines.

With an increasing demand for Vietnamese teachers of English to hold a master's (M.A.) degree by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), TESOL M.A. programs have been developed across the country. These three-year programs are mainly conducted by Vietnamese teachers whose doctorates were obtained overseas or in Vietnam. The M.A. programs require their students to finish 60 credits and a thesis for their graduation. However, as stated in previous studies(Dong, 1998; Paltridge, 2002; Shaw, 1991), writing a thesis in English is challenging for both native and non-native English speaking students. Despites these difficulties, as revealed in the interviews with thesis writers and their supervisors, TESOL M.A. students in Vietnam have little or no formal instruction on how to write each part of a thesis, but are provided with guidelines. These students just consult with the guidelines, published books on thesis writing, or theses written by students in previous courses in their school library, and then format their own theses.Although the guidelines on thesis writing provided by each university are worded slightly differently from each other, they all include almost identical required parts for each chapter of a thesis. Take the guidelines for the thesis *Method*chapter provided by these universities as an example. This chapter should includeWHEN and WHERE the study was carried out, WHAT materials, techniques, samples, data, approaches, theoretical frameworks were used in the study, HOW the study was carried out, and WHAT procedures were used.Paltridge (2002) finds that guidelines and handbooks which focus on thesis writing do not show students the range of thesis options nor do they provide the rationale for the various choices thesis writers make.

Given such challenges, very few studies have focused on the structure of M.A. theses though a large number of studies on research articles and some on Ph.D. dissertations(Bunton, 2002, 2005; Dong, 1998; Kwan, 2006; Swales, 2004; Thompson, 2001, 2005)have been conducted. Some studies have explored the organization of certain sections of M.A.theses, such as *Acknowledgements*(Zhang, 2012), *Introductions*(Nguyen & Pramoolsook, 2014b),*Literature Review* chapters (Nguyen & Pramoolsook, 2014a),*Introduction* and *Discussion* sections(Dudley-Evans, 1986) and *Conclusions* (Hewings, 1993)and the overall organization of the thesis across disciplines(Paltridge, 2002), in Applied Linguistics(Chen & Kuo, 2012) and with a focus on the structure of *Introductions* across three disciplines(Samraj, 2008). Although these studies have provided us with a general view of the generic structure of M.A. theses, the majorityfocus on texts produced in British, American, and Australian institutions. What is apparent is the scarcity of studies on texts written by non-English writers, and especially those written by Vietnamese.This investigation therefore, attempts to study the *Method*chapters of M.A. theses written by Vietnamese TESOL students, but with a focus on the generic moves/steps and structures of these *Method*chapters. The results of this study are likely to contribute to the literature on how non-native writers, in particular Vietnamese students, compose this specific genre in English. Furthermore, this study also responds to the need pointed out by Dudley-Evans (1999)and Thompson (1999)for more studies and investigation on the texts generated by students.

2. Methods
The data consist of 24 electronic M.A. theses written during the years 2009-2012 by Vietnamese students in TESOL. Only the theses produced during this period of time in the South of Vietnam were selected since generic structures are subject to variation across time

and this selection of theses is expected to reflect the current practice of thesis writing by this group of M.A. students in this part of Vietnam. These theses were randomly obtained with the writers' consent and from the libraries of all three universities providing this M.A. program (eight from each). After permissions were obtained from the heads of the English departments, the researchers contacted thesis writers for their permission to use the theses. After receiving the thesis writers' permission, the researcher informed the librarians or the program coordinators and the electronic theses were sent to the researchers. To create a corpus, each Method chapter was randomly coded from M1-M24 for the ease of reference and the anonymity of the thesis writers. The resulting corpus of 24 Method chapters consisted of 75,617 words (an average of 3,150 words each).

The Method chapters were first analyzed for their overall organization by looking at the section headings. The section headings within these chapters were noted and compared because they indicate the function of the section and may provide an indication of the moves and steps in the chapter. This was followed by a detailed investigation in terms of moves and steps using the revised five-move model by Chen and Kuo (2012) for analyzing the Method chapters in Applied Linguistics (Table 1). From an elaborate scheme for analyzing the move-step structures of the Method section proposed by Lim (2006), Chen and Kuo(2012) modify and add two new moves (anindependent move of *Referring to other studies*and *Introducing the Method chapter*) and a few steps in order to make them suitable for the Applied Linguistics theses in their corpus.

Table 1: Chen and Kuo's (2012) framework for the method chapter of M.A. theses in Applied Linguistics (pp. 49-50)

Move 1: Introducing the Method chapter	• Indicating chapter/section structure • Providing an overview of the study • Indicating theory/approach
Move 2: Describing data collection method and procedure(s)	• Describing the sample (participants, location, time, etc.) • Describing methods and steps in data collection • Justifying data collection procedure(s)
Move 3: Delineating methods of data analysis	• Presenting an overview of the (data analysis) design • Explaining specific method(s) of data analysis • Explaining variables and variable measurement • Justifying the methods of measuring variables or data analysis
Move 4: Elucidating data analysis procedure(s)	• Relating(or recounting) data procedure(s) • Justifying the data analysis procedure(s) • Previewing results
Referring to other studies	• Providing background information • Providing definition of terms • Providing support or justification

Move 1 (*Introducing the Method chapter*), with three steps giving a brief overview of the method chapter is newly added to Chen and Kuo's (2012) model. Moves 1, 2 and 3 in Lim's (2006) become Move 2, 3 and 4 respectively in this new model. However, the step

"*Explaining variables and variable measurements*" is added under the move of *Delineating methods of data analysis* (Move 3) of the new model. In addition to its completeness, this framework is the direct result of the investigation of the whole M.A. thesis in Applied Linguistics, which is very close to TESOL, the field of this current study. Therefore, this framework is expected to be applicable for the move-step identification of the corpus of 24 TESOL M.A. thesis Method chapters in Vietnam. Moreover, to interpret the frequency of the moves and steps found in the study,the criteria suggested by Kanoksilapatham (2005) were employed. According to these criteria, if a particular move or step occurs in every thesis (100%), it is classified as "obligatory". If a move or step is found below 60% in the corpus, it is regarded as "optional" and if the occurrence of a certain move or step ranges from 60-99%, it is "conventional". To ensure the reliability of the textual analysis(Crookes, 1986), two researchers, who hold a doctoral degree and specialize in corpus-based analysis, analyzed the texts in this corpus separately, yielding high inter-rater reliability rates (93%).

Apart from the genre-based analysis on these texts, discourse-based, semi-structured interviews with six thesis writers and three thesis supervisors on the ground of their availability (two thesis writers and one supervisor from each university) were included to provide clarifications and insightful understanding regarding unconventional aspects of writing this genre in the social context of the TESOL discourse community in Vietnam (Biber, Connor, & Upton, 2007; Flowerdew, 1999a, 1999b; Hyland, 2000) (Appendix A). The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese as this encourages them to express what they really thought about the questions. All interviewswere recorded and subsequently checked with participants where clarification was needed. Finally, only the information that helped clarify the issues related to the thesis writing process were translated and used throughout the texts with the aim of shedding more light on how this group of M.A. students composed these two genres of theses in the TESOL discourse community in Vietnam.

3. Findings on Move-Step Structures
3.1 Overall Structures

With the length of 75,617 words (an average of 3,150 words a thesis), the Method chapters of these TESOL M.A. theses in Vietnam accounted for 15.4% of the length of the total corpus. This does not confirm Peacock's (2011) finding in the Method sections of Language and Linguistics,which made up nearly a quarter (24%) of the RAlength. This difference could be due to the nature of their discourse communities in which the Method sections of a RA should be highly elaborated, enabling the replication of the study by all kinds of its readers while with a limited number of the intended audiences, the Method chapters of M.A. theses do not occupy the great length of the whole theses (Swales, 1990). The length of the chapter aside, there is a great difference in the ranges of word numbers between these Method chapters in the current corpus. In fact, the longest Method chapter had 5,706 words while the shortest consisted of 794 words. According to Lim (2006), the length of the Method sections depends on the numbers of variables and the justifications provided for each chosen method. His claim on the length of Management RA Method sections is appropriately applied in understanding the length differences between these current Method chapters as revealed in the interviews with six thesis writers.

In addition, the Method chapters in these theses tended to reflect the "slow" or "extended" characteristics proposed by Swales and Feak(1994, p. 166; 2000, p. 206)and Bloor (1999)because they included an elaborate description of the samples, methods of data collection and data analysis procedures. Moreover, the general rhetorical features of these Method chapters follow the characteristics of "slow" Method sections described by Bruce (2008) in terms of chronological idea organization, general-particular textual organization with section headings and sub-headings and descriptive elaboration. In fact, the Method chapters in these TESOL M.A. theses started with a brief but comprehensive summary of the whole chapter, followed by detail sections of descriptive information about the samples, location, time and data collection and analysis procedures which were chronologically described.

3.2 Section Headings
All of these Method chapters were divided into sections or subsections with generic headings (Table 2). These headings are grouped according to their communicative purposes, and they are listed in the order they are sequenced in these chapters. The employment of generic section headings and subheadings in these Method chapters written by Vietnamese tended to make it fairly easy for the moves and steps in the text to be identified. In fact, by reading the headings and subheading used in these chapters, readers would understand the type of research approaches or methods, instruments and subjects used in the reported study. The sufficiently frequent use of these discourse and linguistic markers/clues in the Method chapters by these Vietnamese thesis writers is similar to that of Indonesians who published their RAs in their national journals (Safnil, 2013). The similarity in using the generic section headings and subheadings in the Method chapters of M.A. theses and the Method sections of RAs between Vietnamese and Indonesians, respectively could be due to their limited readership. In fact, in the TESOL discourse community in Vietnam, an M.A. thesis is written in order to prove to the intended audience; namely, supervisors, examiners or committee members, that besides knowledge of his/ her specialized field, a thesis writer is familiar with the research skills and he is qualified for the degree.

Table 2: Section and subsection headings in the Method chapters of TESOL M.A. theses

Section headings	Subsection headings
Introduction	
Research aims	
Research questions of the study	
Research questions	
Hypotheses	
Research questions and hypotheses	- Research questions - Hypotheses
Research design Design of the study General perspectives Experimental design	- Case Study - Mixed method approach - The subjects - Instruments
Research	

Setting/Context/Site	
Research participants Participants Characteristics of subjects Respondents of the study Population and sample	- The students - The teachers - The university - The classes - The teacher participants/respondents - The student participants/respondents
Research instruments Research tools Kinds of instrument The measurement instruments Instrumentation Instruments for data collections	- Questionnaire/ Survey questionnaire to students/teachers - Classroom observation - Interview - Document reviews - Tests - Pretests - Posttests
Materials	- The target words - The course book/text book - Other materials
Variables in the research	- Dependent variables - Independent variables - Controlling the threats to the validity
Data types	- Nominal data - Ordinal data - Textual data
Data collection procedures Procedures Collecting data	- Procedures for conducting questionnaire survey - Procedures for conducting the interviews - Procedures for administering the questionnaire to student/teacher respondents - Administering the pretests/posttests/delayed tests/ interviews
Data analysis procedures Data analysis methods Data analysis Analytical frameworks Analyzing data	- Questionnaire data analysis - Classroom observation analysis - Interview data analysis - Pretests and posttests - Qualitative data processing/analysis - Quantitative data processing/analysis
Ethical consideration	
Limitations of the study	
Summary Chapter summary Summary of the chapter	

3.3 Moves

Besides the overview, these Method chapters written in the TESOL discourse community in Vietnam tended to include all the suggested elements in the guidelines provided by their universities. Moreover, they had all five moves identified in the Method chapters of Applied Linguistics theses from ProQuest (Chen & Kuo, 2012) (Table 3),and the first four moves had a linear pattern whereas the independent move (*Referring to other studies*) is present in all these four moves. The straightforward presentation identified in these Method chapters of the TESOL M.A. theses and the use of generic section headings and subheadings are likely to be in line with Swales and Feak (1994) who comment that the Method section of RAs is "merely labeled rather than characterized" (p. 167). The frequent occurrence of *Referring to other studies* across the four moves in the current Method chapters conforms to the way English writers in Mur-Dueñas (2007) wrote their RA Method sections.

Table 3: Move-Step Structures of 24 TESOL M.A. Thesis Method Chapters

Moves & Steps	Total*	%
Move 1: Introducing the Method chapter	**24**	**100**
Indicating chapter/section structure	**24**	100
Providing an overview of the study	**17**	71
Research aims	**11**	46
Research questions	**14**	58
Hypotheses	**7**	30
Indicating theory/approach	19	79
+ justifying the chosen approach	5	21
Move 2: Describing data collection method and procedure(s)	**24**	**100**
Describing the sample (participants, location, time, etc.)	**24**	100
+ Location + characteristics	**14**	59
+ Participants + characteristics	**22**	92
+ Time	**7**	30
Describing methods and steps in data collection	19	79
+ Instruments	24	100
- purpose	19	79
- justifying the chosen instrument	18	75
- subjects	6	25
+ steps	22	92
+ Time	6	25
+ Location	3	13
Justifying data collection procedure(s)	3	13
Move 3: Delineating methods of data analysis	**19**	**79**
Presenting an overview of the (data analysis) design		0
Explaining specific method(s) of data analysis	19	79
+ Research aims	1	4
Explaining variables and variable measurement	**1**	4

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Justifying the methods of measuring variables or data analysis	0	0
+ Limitations of the studies	1	4
Move 4: Elucidating data analysis procedure(s)	5	**21**
Relating(or recounting) data procedure(s)	1	4
Justifying the data analysis procedure(s)	**4**	17
Previewing results	0	0
Referring to other studies	24	**100**
Providing background information	7	30
Providing definition of terms	0	0
Providing support or justification	24	100
Chapter summary	19	54
+ Summarizing the chapter	19	79
+ Introducing the next chapter content	15	63

* The total occurrences of moves/steps in the data
*- The **bold** steps indicate the newly identified ones in the corpus and they are placed in the order they occurred in the texts*

Furthermore, the first two moves (*Introducing the Method chapter* and *Describing data collection method and procedure(s)*) are obligatory and while Moves 3 and 4 are conventional and optional, respectively. Although the dominant appearance of Moves 1-3 in the current Method chapter corpus confirms Chen and Kuo's(2012) findings in M.A. theses and those of Peacock (2011) in the Method sections of social science RAs, variations were still found and their details are provided in the following paragraphs.

Although Move 1 (*Introducing the Method chapter*) was newly identified and added to Lim's (2006) framework by Chen and Kuo (2012)in order to reflect the presence of this move in their M.A. thesis corpus in Applied Linguistics, it was found to be a compulsory move in this TESOL M.A. corpus of theses in Vietnam. Similar to Move 1,*Chapter summary*, which is not provided in the guidelines by these universities with a TESOL M.A. program, occurred in 100% and 79% of this Method chapter corpus, respectively (Table 3). In fact, all Method chapters in this corpus started with an indication of the chapter structure (*Introducing the chapter structure*), as can be seen in Example (1), an overview of the reported study (*Providing an overview of the study*) and the research design (*Indicating theory/approach*), and 19 ended with the summary of the chapter. Moreover, more than 50% of the Method chapters (13 out of 19 theses with the chapter summary) in this corpus had a separate section headed "Summary" for this communicative function while five chapters have "Introduction" as the heading for the introductory purpose. As revealed in the follow-up interviews with thesis writers and their supervisors, the presence of both chapter introduction and chapter summary in these Method chapters reflects the distinctive practice of organizing each chapter in the TESOL discourse community in Vietnamdespite the fact that this information is not included in the guidelines. In fact, almost all of six thesis writers (M6, M11, M14, and M17) reported that they were advised to add the opening and closing sections at the beginning and the end of each chapter and even of each sub-section of chapters.As mentioned in previous

studies on Vietnamese written discourse (Nguyen & Pramoolsook, 2014a; Phan, 2011), the prominent presence of these introductory and concluding texts reflect the established practice of following an Introduction-Body-Conclusion pattern in composing an academic text.

(1) *"This chapter provided details description for the research methodology including (1) the research questions and hypotheses, (2) the research design, (3) the participants, (4) the research instruments, (5) the materials used in the study, (6) the data collection procedures, (7) the data analysis method."* (M13)

Different from Chen and Kuo's(2012) framework, the presence of *Chapter summary* in this Method chapter corpus is considered as a new move since it was identified in more than 50% of the corpus (19 theses) (Nwogu, 1997). However, the presence of its steps *Summarizing the Method chapter* (79%) and *Introducing the content of the next chapter* (62.5%) (Example 2) suggests that they are conventional (Kanoksilapatham, 2005).

(2) *"3.8. SUMMARY*
This chapter has presented and evaluated the methodology used to investigate teachers' attitudes towards the theory of CLT, learners' attitudes towards the practice of CLT, and the application of CLT at FLC-USSH. A descriptive research design, including both qualitative and quantitative methods, was employed. Data were collected from questionnaires, interviews and direct-classroom observation.The analysis of data collected are presented and discussed in the next chapter." (M7)

In addition to the compulsory Move 1 and the newly identified move (*Chapter summary*) at the beginning and the end of the chapter, respectively, this study shows that Move 2 (*Describing data collection method and procedure(s)*) was present in 24 theses (100%) while Move 3 (*Delineating methods of data analysis*), which is important in Language and Linguistics (Peacock, 2011), was identified in 19 theses (79%). Move 4 (*Elucidating data analysis procedure(s)*), which is similar to that in Chen and Kuo (2012), appeared much less frequently than the first three moves (20.8%). This finding suggests that Move 2 is compulsory while Move 3 and Move 4 are conventional and optional, respectively, according to Kanoksilapatham's criteria(2005).

3.4 Steps

It is worth mentioning that among the three steps identified in Move 1 of the Method chapter in Chen and Kuo (2012), the step *Introducing the chapter structure* is obligatory in this TESOL M.A. thesis corpus due to its presence in all Method chapters of the corpus. Besides this obligatory step in Move 1, research aims, research questions and hypothesis were found under the step *Providing an overview of the study* of Move 1 (45.8%, 56%, and 29%, respectively), and some of which have a corresponding heading for each element. The practice of including research aims, research questions and hypothesis in the TESOL discourse community in Vietnam confirms Peacock's (2011) finding in the Method sections of four non-science disciplines (Business, Language and Linguistics, Law, and Public and Social Administration). However, according to Kanoksilapatham's(2005) criteria, these three elements under *Providing an overview of the study* in the TESOL M.A. thesis corpus

in Vietnam are optional. In contrast to the presence of these three elements, the step *Indicating theory/approach* is conventional since it was identified in 19 theses (79%) and five of which (20.8%) provide the justification for the chosen research design as illustrated in Example (3) below.

(3)*"Adescriptiveresearchdesignwasemployedtounderstandteachers'perceptions   of using   e-lessonplansandhowthetenthgradersatXSchoolrespond toteachingEnglishfrome-lessonplans.Descriptiveresearchwaschosenforitisused todescribeachievement,attitudes,behaviorsorothercharacteristics   ofagroupof subjects(Shumacher,2001,p283).AccordingtoKhan(1990),descriptivemethodis concernedwiththepresentandattemptstodeterminethestatusofthephenomenon underinvestigation.Furthermore,itprovidesdescriptions   ofphenomenathatoccur naturally,withouttheintervention   ofanexperimentoranartificiallycontrived treatment.(Seliger,1989, p116)"* (T5)

Similar to Chen and Kuo's(2012) finding, two steps of Move 2 (*Describing methods and steps in data collection* and *Describing the sample*) were found to be compulsory in this study. Chen and Kuo (2012) claim that Applied Linguistics writers of their thesis corpus tend to focus on the samples, the procedures and methods of data collection, and their claim is likely to be true for the Vietnamese TESOL thesis writers as well. Moreover, Peacock (2011) emphasizes that subjects and data analysis are important in Language and Linguistics. In *Describing the sample*, for example, the detailed information about the location, the sample characteristics, and the time when the reported study was conducted was provided in the Method chapters of these TESOL M.A. theses. The detailed description on the subjects aside, the methods and steps in data collection in the M.A. thesis corpus in Vietnam are likely to be more elaborate than those in Chen and Kuo (2012)because for each data collection method/instrument, careful descriptions on the steps, purposes and justifications were given (Example 4). In fact, the number of the instruments employed in collecting the data in each thesis decides the number of cycles of these three sub-steps. This finding is different from that of Chen and Kuo (2012), where the justifications were provided for the whole data collection procedure while *Justifying data collection procedure(s)* was found in only three theses (12.50%) in the TESOL M.A. corpus in Vietnam. However, the occurrence of this justifying step for each chosen instrument in the current corpus is likely to be in accordance with Lim (2006) which states that justifying each single method of variable measurements is present in all RAs while justifying the whole procedures of data collection and analysisoccurred less frequently in the Method sections of his Management RA corpus. This practice of providing purposes and justifications for each data collection method or instrument in these theses of the current Method chapter corpus was clarified in the interviews with the thesis writers and their supervisors in the TESOL discourse community in Vietnam. While these thesis writers revealed that their supervisors asked them to provide the rationale of their chosen methods and instruments, the supervisors claimed that such information would be questioned in the thesis defense; their supervisees had better explicitly state it in their theses.

(4)*"3.4.1. Survey questionnaire to students*

This study was designed to investigate metacognitive reading strategies. Since most reading strategies were unobservable, a questionnaire was developed as a major research instrument in order to elicit data from subjects. Anderson (1990) approved that the questionnaire had become one of the most useful means of collecting information. Thus, the data for this study were collected through a questionnaire adapted from the survey of reading strategies (SORS)." (M17)

The newly added step *Explaining variables and variable measurement* by Chen and Kuo (2012)in their corpus was absent in this corpus of TESOL M.A. theses written by Vietnamese students. This could be due to the fact that this information was previously presented in the step *Explaining specific method(s) of data analysis*. Besides the similarities and differences in Move 3 steps between the current thesis corpus and that of Chen and Kuo (2012), the presence of a separate section, *Limitations*, in one thesis (M19) in the TESOL community in Vietnam could be considered as an exception although this step is claimed to occasionally occur in Language and Linguistics by Peacock (2011).

In Move 4, the most common step is *Justifying the data analysis procedure(s)* while only one Method chapter repeated the data analysis procedure (Table 3.2). Furthermore, there was a complete absence of *Previewing results*in the current Method chapter corpus, which is similar to Chen and Kuo's (2012) finding, and the absence of this step was accounted for its inclusion in the Result chapters. However, this finding is not in line with that of Lim (2006) in which this step was found to be the most common. This difference could be due to the various conventions of different genre types (RAs and M.A. theses) between these two studies. Another explanation for the complete absence of *Previewing results* in the Method chapters of TESOL M.A. theses by Vietnamese is the guidelines provided by the universities with this TESOL M.A. program.

Finally, *Providing support or justification* for the chosen methods of data collection and analysis (Examples 3 and 4, above)was found to be the most predominant function in the independent move of *Referring to other studies*. Like the finding in Chen and Kuo (2012), this step is compulsory because it was found in all twenty four Method chapters of the current corpus.On the other hand, the step *Providing background information* was found in seven Method chapters (29%) while there was a complete absence of *Providing definition of terms*. As mentioned earlier, in the Method chapters of the TESOL M.A. theses written by Vietnamese students, each adopted instrument or method of data collection and analysis was followed by the justification or background information, making the cycles of these steps.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study examined the rhetorical structures of 24 Method chapters in TESOL M.A. theses written by Vietnamese postgraduates by employing the revised framework by Chen and Kuo (2012) for analyzing the Method chapters of M.A. theses in Applied Linguistics from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. The results showed both the differences and the commonalities shared by these two groups of writers. Regarding

their similarities, both Method chapter corpora had five moves and a linear pattern of the first four moves in which the independent move of *Referring to other studies* was found to function as support and justification. Moreover, Moves 1 and 2 were obligatory while Moves 3 and 4 were conventional and optional, respectively. In terms of steps, *Indicating chapter/section introduction* and *Describing samples* were found in all Method chapters and *Previewingresults* was completely absent. While the commonalities with regard to the move-step structures of the Method chapters of these two thesis corpora reflect these Vietnamese writers' compliance to the international norms, the variations are likely to indicate their adaptation to the expected practice of composing these chapters in their local discourse community.The presence of Move 1, the newly identified move of *Chapter summary* with two conventional steps (*Summarizing the chapter* and *Introducing the next chapter content*) and the high frequent cycle of *Instrument-Purposes-Justifications*provided for each research instrument/method tend to indicate the expected convention. From the interviews with thesis writers and their supervisors, it is learnt that this convention is distinctive in the TESOL discourse community in Vietnam even though it is not stated in the provided guidelines.Although this project was conducted with a small corpus of TESOL M.A. theses in Vietnam, it is expected to add to our knowledge of how non-native English speakers write thesis Method chapters in English, to which scant attention has been paid. Moreover, from the similarities and differences in the Method chapters produced by international writers from ProQuest and Vietnamese, a genre-based approach course can be developed in order to make future TESOL M.A. writers in Vietnam known about the rationale for their choices in composing this particular chapter of their theses.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Is there the required number for the Method chapters of your theses?
2. Is opening Method chapters with a brief review of the previous chapter and an introduction, and concluding them with a brief summaryand/or an introduction to the content of the next chapter common in your discourse community?
3. Why was each research instrument/tool or method justified in the Method chapters written at your TESOL discourse community in Vietnam?

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