

Genre Analysis of Chief Examiners' Reports from Selected Colleges of Education in Ghana



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ABSTRACT

Although studies on genre abound in the Ghanaian literature, only a few have paid attention to the form and function of Chief Examiners' Reports on the academic performance of candidates at examinations. To address this gap, the current study analyzes Chief Examiners' Reports from selected Colleges of Education, covering several disciplines. The study adopts a qualitative descriptive design to examine movement patterns as well as the linguistic devices employed in such reports. Cast in Bhatia's model of move analysis theory and Kanoksilapatham's move criteria, the study shows that moves employed include both obligatory and optional ones: six (out of the ten) of the moves are obligatory while four are optional. Furthermore, the study found that most Chief Examiners' Reports lack *Introduction* sections, and there appears to be no standard structure/format in Chief Examiners' Reports. Regarding stance-taking devices, the study found that only three pronouns, *it*, *they* and *this* were used. It is recommended that Chief Examiners pay critical attention to the *Introduction* segments of their reports and that a standard format is provided to all Chief Examiners so as to achieve uniformity.

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INTRODUCTION

Report writing is an important academic practice in all spheres of life. It forms a crucial aspect of corporate activities especially because it aids in the free flow of communication and ensures appropriate record-keeping which is key in organisational development. Depending on the target audience, purpose, and type of information (intended) to be conveyed, reports vary in scope, style and structure. The structuring and/or sectioning of academic writings have been technically referred to as *movement patterns* ((rhetorical) moves).¹ In academic writing, moves help writers to develop their ideas coherently by building their points in a step-wise manner such that readers can follow. Across disciplines, writers tend to rely on similar moves or rhetorical steps achieved through the various sentences and paragraphs. As observed by Swales, regardless of academic discipline and more and less formal writing, the first kind of move is usually the *introductory*

¹ John Malcolm Swales, *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research settings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

move.² However, as will be shown later in this paper, crucial as the Introductory segment is, most Chief Examiners' Reports completely ignore it.

Swales is credited with creating the first genre-based study in 1981, in which he analyzed forty-eight (48) research articles (RAs) openers from a variety of scientific disciplines. In that study, he came up with a four-move model. However, he later reviewed it downwards to a three-move model in 1990, after some criticism.³ Since Swales' seminal work, many studies on genre analysis on various sections of articles have emerged. However, one area in genre-based analyses which has received little attention is the Chief Examiners' Reports, as a type of academic writing, hence, the need for the present study.

This study, focuses on the Chief Examiners' Report from selected Colleges of Education in Ghana. As the name suggests, these reports are summary reports written by Chief Examiners (usually experienced lecturers), after assessing the overall performance of candidates in an examination. The reports are primarily meant for quality assurance and policy-making purposes at Academic Board meetings in the respective Colleges of Education. They also aid in decision-making. In particular, Chief Examiners' reports (CERs) give feedback to stakeholders on students' strengths and weaknesses in the examinations, and also make recommendations as to how the weaknesses identified could be remedied.

CERs are expected to follow (pre)specified structures and formats. However, not all reports follow the prescribed format. So far, not so much attention has been paid to the subject of the form and function of CERs, hence, the need for this present study which seeks to analyze the various move patterns employed in the genre of CERs. The study is an attempt to fill the gap in the literature, as it seeks answers to the following questions: (1) What are the rhetorical patterns and shifts in CERs from Colleges of Education in Ghana? (2) What are the most typical language characteristics discovered in CERs from educational institutions? (3) What are the differences in examiners' findings in terms of subject areas (English-related, Mathematics-related, and Science-related courses)? The researchers offer a cross-disciplinary genre analysis of CERs of Colleges of Education (CoEs). In all, about 18 CERs were selected from across various disciplines (ranging from English-related to Mathematics-related, and Science-related courses), from 2016 to 2018.

The study is organized as follows: an introduction on the concept of genre (and genre analysis); a discussion on the art of report writing, highlighting the Chief Examiners Reports as a type of academic writing; presentation of methods used and data collection; discussion on the theoretical framework and English for Specific Purposes in comparison with other competing theories; an analysis and discussion on the various move strategies found in the CERs database; a conclusion with recommendations for further improvement.

The Concept of Genre

Genre is a term in the linguistic field and rhetorics that categorizes writing by similarities in form, style and subject matter. Swales defines a genre as "a group of communicative occurrences with a shared set of communication goals."⁴ In light of the definition provided above, CERs constitute a form of written genre. The definition of genres as provided by Swales explains how genres are categorized according to their communication function. Bhatia also defines genre as "the use of language use in conventionalized communicative setting in order to give expression to a specific set of communicative goals of a disciplinary or social institution, which give rise to stable structural forms by imposing constraints on the use of lexico-grammatical as well as discoursal resources."⁵

From the definitions given, it can be said that any text of conventional form and content can be termed a genre. A genre, therefore, is associated with conventionality and tradition. Swales posits that experts should initiate any new member of each community. This is because it is not automatic that a new member can share in the genres by just being in contact with the community.⁶ Martin & Rose emphasize the fact that

² Swales, *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*.

³ Swales, *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*.

⁴ Swales, *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*

⁵ Vijay Kumar Bhatia, *Worlds of written discourse: A Genre based view*, (London: Continuum, 2004),3.

⁶ Swales, *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*.

genres must be taught in the educational formal system or at work. Together with scholars of the Sydney School, they believe that teachers are not consciously aware of genres, therefore linguists must help in that direction.⁷

Genre Analysis

Bhatia describes genre analysis as a multi-disciplinary activity aimed at determining the form of any given type of writing and assisting persons in reproducing it using the proper lexicon and grammar.⁸ The beginning assumption of genre analysis, according to Hopkins and Dudley-Evans, is “an explicit description of the way in which texts are arranged.”⁹ Hyland adds to this by arguing that “[G]enre analysis is the study of how language is used within a particular context. Genres differ in that each has a different goal and they are structured differently to achieve these goals.”¹⁰ In the area of academic writing, Kanoksilapatham applied genre analysis to biochemistry,¹¹ while Samraj has applied it to biology.¹² Posteguillo applied genre analysis in computer science¹³ while Williams applied it in medicine.¹⁴ The Move analysis has been used to examine professional discourse. Scholars like Bhatia and Upton focused on legal text and philanthropic discourse, respectively, with a concentration on direct mail letters.¹⁵ In genre analysis, Kanoksilapatham uses a criterion to classify the moves according to the frequency of occurrence into obligatory, conventional, and optional moves. According to Kanoksilapatham, the occurrence of 100% move of the corpus is classified as obligatory, 60% to 99% is classified as conventional and less than 60% is classified as optional.¹⁶

Report Writing

The purpose of writing a report is to give the reader information. As a result, a well-organized report will benefit both the writer and the reader. Even if the format could be changed, it is best if the writer follows it. Maintaining the format guarantees that the report contains all relevant information and is presented logically. According to the British Standard, a report’s fundamental components are the title, summary, table of contents, introduction, the major body of the report, findings, recommendations, appendices, and references.¹⁷ The report’s title is the reader’s initial point of contact, and its objective is to inform them of the report’s contents. Afful and Mwinlaaru and Haggan investigated the titles of research/conference papers. They recommend that titles should be brief and concise.¹⁸ From the introduction through the recommendations, the summary or abstract provides a quick overview of the entire report. It must include the necessary details. As long as the relevant information is covered, the shorter the summary, the better.

The table of contents aids the reader in rapidly locating specific material inside the report. It is organized into headings that correlate to page numbers. The introduction comes next. The first section of the report, the introduction, establishes the report’s context. It explains why the report is being created and what

⁷ J.R. Martin & D. Rose, *Genre relations: Mapping culture*. (London: Equinox, 2007).

⁸ Bhatia, *Worlds of written discourse: A Genre based view*,3.

⁹ A. Hopkins and T. Dudley-Evans, “A genre-based investigation of the discussion sections in articles and dissertations” *English for Specific Purposes*, 7(2), (1998): 113 – 122.

¹⁰ K. Hyland, “Genre analysis: just another fad?”. *Forum* 30(2), (1992):1 – 17.

¹¹ B. Kanoksilapatham, “Rhetorical structure of biochemistry research articles”, *English for Specific Purposes*, 24(3), (2005): 269- 292.

¹² B. Samraj, “Introductions in research articles: Variations across disciplines”, *English for Specific Purpose*. 21(1),(2002),1-17.

¹³ S. Posteguilla, The schematic structure of computer science research articles. *English for Specific Purposes*, 18(2), (1999): 139- 160.

¹⁴ I. Williams, “Results sections of Medical research articles: Analysis of rhetorical categories for pedagogical”, *English for Specific Purposes*, 18(4), (1999): 347- 366.

¹⁵ V.K. Bhatia, *Analyzing Genre: Language Use In Professional Settings*, (London: Longman, 1993); T. Upton, “Understanding Direct Mail Letters as a Genre” *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 7(1), (2002):65- 85.

¹⁶ Kanoksilapatham, “Rhetorical structure of biochemistry research articles”.

¹⁷ British Standards Institution, *Presentation of Research and Development Reports*. (London: BSI, 1972).

¹⁸ J. Afful and I. Mwinlaaru, Commonality and individuality in academic writing: An analysis of conference paper titles of four scholars. *English for Specific Purposes World*, 27(1), (2010): 1- 32; M. Haggan, Research paper titles in literature, linguistics and science: Dimensions of attraction. *Journal of pragmatics*, 36(2), (2004): 293- 317.

information it contains. The report's main part examines the methodologies and findings. The approaches illustrate the writer's actions and how they went about doing them. The results present the writer's evidence, which should be organized logically so that the conclusion can readily follow the facts. The conclusion will be reached based on the evidence offered in the previous sections. Information not found in the main body of the report is included in the conclusions. Recommendations are not required in a report, but if they are included, they should be rational. The recommendations should ideally consist of a succinct summary of what should or should not be done. The glossary, tables, graphs, and drawings are included in the appendix, while the references section lists the authors, publications, journals, and theses that were used.

Chief Examiners' Reports (CERs)

CERs include a detailed study of the standards of response as well as a review of applicant performance on tests. Each year, the reports are released in a limited number of themes and programs. There are about forty-six (46) public Colleges of Education (CoEs) in Ghana, and each of them is affiliated to one of the 5 traditional universities; namely, the University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, University of Education, and University for Development Studies. These universities are the examination bodies for the colleges; hence, the chief examiners are selected from these institutions. They are supposed to submit their reports on the general performance of students in every semester examination to the colleges for discussion and decision-making purposes. The reports usually contain comments on the performance of students in sections of the papers in the various courses, the difficulty level or otherwise of the questions, and the strengths and weaknesses of students in the papers of the various courses. This study seeks to expand scholarship on the form and function of CERs as a type of genre. In particular, it analyzes the moves and also evaluates the similarities/dissimilarities between reports from different disciplines.

Theoretical Framework

Three schools of thought have shaped genre study methodologies. They are New Rhetoric Studies (RGS), Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), and English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

a. New Rhetoric Studies

This was developed by Bawarshi and Reiff. Genre is viewed as a social action by this school of linguists. This theory analyzes genre using all humanist, social, and cultural methods, as well as the supply of all rhetorical disciplines.¹⁹

b. Systemic Functional Genre Studies

This school of genre studies is known as the "Sydney School." This school's theoretical foundation was built on Halliday's work. SFL emphasizes why and how people utilize language in social situations. Genres are considered social by these SFL academics, as well as the New Rhetoric Studies because people participate in genres with other people. Second, genres are thought to be goal-oriented because individuals use them to get things done.²⁰

c. The English for Specific Purposes Genre Theory (ESP)

Swales, Bhatia, Dudley-Evans, and Flowerdew are among the linguists in this school. Swales cites two ESP genre analysis characteristics. These include a concentration on academic and research English, as well as the application of genre analysis.²¹ The concept of genres, according to ESP scholars, is utilized to study both spoken and written materials utilized in academic and professional settings. These scholars are particularly

¹⁹ A.S. Bawarshi, and Mary Jo Reiff, *Genre: An introduction to History, theory, research, and pedagogy*. (West Lafayette, Indiana: Parlor Press. Best Assignment Writers ,2000). Significance of report writing. UK: Best Writers. <https://www.bestassignmentwriters.co.uk/blog/significance-of-report-writing/> Date Accessed 20th March, 2020.

²⁰ Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*.

²¹ Swales, *Genre Analysis: English In Academic And Research Settings*.

interested in the communication aims of certain genres, such as experimental research articles and university lectures. This category includes CERs from educational institutions which are focused on in this research. This study is, therefore, cast in the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) framework given that it provides a relatively useful formalism for analyzing reports.

Models of Move Analysis

Many models are used for genre analysis. The following are some of the models:

Swales's Model

Table. 1 Swales's C.A.R.S. Model cited in Aranha's (2004)²²

Move 1	Establishing a research territory
	Making broad remarks or demonstrating that the field of study is relevant, essential, or critical (optional) Introducing or evaluating past study findings (obligatory)
Move 2	Establishing a niche
	Identifying a research gap, posing concerns regarding prior research, or expanding past information (obligatory)
Move 3	Occupying the niche
	Explicitly stating the research's goals or the nature of the study (obligatory). announcing the most important discoveries (optional) indicating the research paper's structure (optional)

This model is well known by many researchers who researched introductions. The C.A.R.S. model is now the framework used in numerous studies on the structure of the research introduction section. Swales revised this model to three rhetorical moves, with several steps. The composition of C.A.R.S' model is illustrated in Table 1. above.

The Hyland Model

From Swales' model, many researchers have conducted research into the different sections of research articles. Hyland's framework also has five moves for research article abstracts, namely: Introduction, Purpose, Method, Product, and Conclusion.²³ The model was used by other researchers to analyze research abstracts. Other researchers who conducted research on this section are Lores, Martin, Atai & Falah, Brett, Thompson, and Williams.²⁴

Table 2: Hyland's five-move Model

Moves	Function
M1 - introduction	Establishes the context of the paper and motivates the paper

²² J. Swales and C. Freak, *Academic writing for graduate students*. (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 175; S. Aranha, *Contribuições para a introdução acadêmica*. Unpublished doctoral thesis dissertation, Paulista State University, Campus of Araraquara, São Paulo, Brazil, 2004.

²³ K. Hyland, *Disciplinary discourses: Social interactions in academic writing*. (London: Longman, 2000)

²⁴ R. Lores, "On RA abstracts: From rhetorical structure to thematic organisation", *English for Specific Purposes*, 23(3), (2004): 280-302; P.M. Martin, "A genre analysis of English and Spanish researcher paper abstracts in experimental social sciences" *English for Specific Purposes*, 22(1), (2003): 25- 43; M.R. Atai and S. Fallah, *A contrastive genre analysis of results and discussion sections of applied linguistics articles written by native and non-native English speakers*, (2005). In Shirani, S. & Chalak, A. *Genre analysis of Iranian Students' Master Theses*. Australian International Academic Centre (2018). www.all.s.aiaac.org.au Retrieved 20th March, 2020; P. Brett, "A genre analysis of the results section of sociology articles", *English for Specific Purposes*, 13(1), (1994):47 -59; D.K. Thompson, Arguing for experimental "facts" in science. *Written Communication*, 10(1), (1993):106- 128; Williams, "Results sections of Medical research articles", 347- 366.

M2 - purpose	Establishes the paper’s background and motivates it. Indicates the paper’s goals, hypotheses, and objectives.
M3 - method	Provides information on design, procedures, data analysis, etc.
M4 - results	Indicates results, achievements and the argument
M5 - conclusions	Provides details on the design, techniques, and data analysis, among other things. Results, accomplishments, and the debate are all listed. Interprets or expands on the findings, pointing to applications or broader implications, and extending the scope of the paper’s interpretation.

Bhatia’s (1993) Model

Singh, Shamsudin, & Zaid cited Bhatia’s seven methods for analyzing foreign genres.²⁵

a. Placing the given genre text in a situational context

The first stage in evaluating unfamiliar genres, according to Bhatia, is to place the genre-text inside the situational context, which can be done utilizing prior experience, internal textual indications, and encyclopedic knowledge. The researcher was able to contextualize the CERs in this study because of his expertise as a senior team leader.

b. Surveying existing literature

Many works of literature have been made available as a result of research conducted in various professional settings using specific genre texts. According to Bhatia, this literature includes material on analyses of the genre in question, or comparable genres, linguistic and genre analysis methodologies, procedures, and theories that may be relevant to the scenario under examination.

c. Refining the situational/contextual analysis

According to Bhatia, the following step is to fine-tune the analysis by defining the text’s speakers or writers, as well as the audience’s relationship and aims.

d. Selecting corpus

According to Singh, Shamsudin, and Zaid, to select the precise sort of corpus to be developed and used, one must first identify the genre in issue, fully define and characterize it in order to distinguish it from other like genres.²⁶ For this investigation, the researcher chose chief examiners’ reports from schools of education.

e. Studying the institutional context

Bhatia also recommends looking into the institutional setting in which the genre is being used. This includes looking at the linguistic, social, cultural, intellectual, and professional standards and conventions that govern how people use language in different situations.

f. Levels of linguistic analysis

Bhatia’s second proposal is to decide on the level or levels of analysis to be performed, which is heavily dependent on the study’s aim. The first level is to examine the lexico-grammatical characteristics of the texts in the genre, the second level is to examine the text–patterning, and the third level is to examine the structural interpretation of the text genre.

g. Specialist information in genre analysis

Bhatia also proposes using expert knowledge from a practicing member of the discipline culture where the genre is being used to give genre analysis conclusions more credence.

²⁵ M.K.S. Singh, S. Shamsudin and Y.H. Zaid, “Iranian EFL learners’ collocational errors in speaking skill” *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 66, (2013):370 – 379. Date Accessed 20th April, 2020: www.sciencedirect.com

²⁶ Singh, Shamsudin and Zaid, “Iranian EFL learners’ collocational errors in speaking skill”.

The authors employed some of these processes in this study because the materials used in the study were unique genres. This genre includes promotional letters, job application letters, legislative provisions, and editorial letters. Since CERs are novel genres, this model was adopted for the study.

Empirical evidence

Many studies have been conducted on move analysis on the various sections of academic papers. Mention could be made of the works of Bhatia and Samraj.²⁷ Samraj for instance compared the research article introduction from a wide variety of disciplines and indicated that there are four basic move structures in the introduction of research articles.²⁸ Keshavarz, Atai, and Barzegar also researched the Introductions written by Iranian and non-Iranians in applied linguistics based on Swales's C.A.R.S. model.²⁹ They found that there was no significant difference between the frequency of Move 1 and Move 2 in both categories of Introductions, but there was a significant difference between the frequency of Move 3. The report went on to say that many of the Iranian writers did not use Move 3.³⁰ Other researchers who conducted studies in research article introductions include Adjina & Hadjadj.³¹

For the other sections, the works of the following scholars can be stated: Afful & Mwinlaaru and Haggan for studies on titles;³² Hyland, Lores Martin for studies on abstracts;³³ Atai & Falah, Brett, and Thompson and Williams for studies on results of research works;³⁴ Atai & Falah, Holmes, Hopkin and Dudley-Evans, and Nodoushan and Khakbaz for works on the discussion section;³⁵ Finally, Yang & Allison worked on research conclusions.³⁶

For all these research articles, only a few researchers focused on move analysis. Some of these researchers are Nwogu and Posteguillo.³⁷ Henry and Roseberry conducted a corpus analysis of the moves and techniques utilized in the genre of job application letters using 40 job application letters authored by native English speakers.³⁸ Thompson used a corpus of 20 Ph.D. theses to develop a tagging method for

²⁷ B. Samraj, "An Exploration Of A Genre Set: Research Article Abstracts And Introduction In Two Disciplines" *English for Specific Purposes*, 24(2), (2005):141- 156.

²⁸ Samraj, "Introductions in research articles: Variations across disciplines", 1-17.

²⁹ M.H. Keshavarz, M.R. Atai, and V. Barzegar, "A contrastive study of generic organization of research article introductions written by Iranian and Non-Iranian writers in applied linguistics. *Teaching English Language and Literature Society of Iran*, 1(2), (2007): 13- 34.

³⁰ Keshavarz, Atai, and Barzegar, "A contrastive study of generic organization of research article".

³¹ C. Adjina and I. Hadjadj, *Academic Master Dissertation in ESP and Applied Linguistics (Analysis of the Move Structure of Published Research Article Introductions Written by EFL Advanced Writers)*, 2016.

Accessed: <https://bu.univ-ouargla.dz/master/pdf/ADJINA-HADJADJ.pdf?idmemoire=3999>

³² Afful and Mwinlaaru, "Commonality And Individuality In Academic Writing.": Haggan, "Research paper titles in literature, linguistics and science," *English for Specific Purposes World*, 27(1), (2010): 1- 32.

³³ Hyland, *Disciplinary discourses: Social interactions in academic writing*; Lores, "On RA abstracts: From rhetorical structure to thematic organisation" (2000): 12-15; Martin, "A genre analysis of English and Spanish researcher paper abstracts in experimental social sciences," (2007): 31-33.

³⁴ Atai and Fallah, *A contrastive genre analysis of results and discussion sections of applied linguistics*, (2018): 14-15; Brett, "A genre analysis of the results section of sociology articles," *English for Specific Purposes*, 13(1),(1994):47 -59;Thompson, Arguing for experimental "facts" in Science; Williams, "Results sections of Medical research articles", 347- 366.

³⁵ Atai and Fallah, *A contrastive genre analysis of results and discussion sections of applied linguistics*; R. Holmes, "Genre analysis and the social sciences: An investigation of the structure of research article discussion sections in three disciplines", *English for Specific Purposes*, 16(4), (1997): 321- 337; Hopkins and Dudley-Evans, "A genre-based investigation of the discussion sections in articles and dissertations"; M. Nodoushan and N. Khakbaz, "Theses 'Discussion' sections. A structural move Analysis", *International Journal of English Studies*, 5(3), (2011): 111- 132.

³⁶ R. Yang, and Allison "Ras in applied linguistics: Moving from results to conclusions", *English for Specific Purposes*, 4(22), (2003): 365- 384.

³⁷ Kevin N. Nwogu, The Medical research paper: Structure and functions. *English for Specific Purposes*, 16(2), (1997): 119- 138; Santiago Posteguilla, "The schematic structure of computer science research articles".

³⁸ A. Henry and R.L. Roseberry, A narrow-angled corpus analysis of moves and strategies of the genre: 'Letter of Application'. *English for Specific Purposes*, 20(2), (2001):153-167.

distinguishing between two types of citations.³⁹ Editorial letters submitted to international journal writers were also analyzed by Flowerdew and Dudley-Evans.⁴⁰

Finally, Upton focused on non-profit organizations' altruistic discourse.⁴¹ For a specific reason, all of these investigations were conducted in English.

DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative design given the nature and the texture of CERs as a type of academic writing. In a qualitative mode, convenience sampling as the technique was used for sampling, because this involves the selection of subjects and elements that are available to the researchers to meet the study criteria. A total of eighteen (18) CERs by nine (9) Chief Examiners of Language (English), Mathematics, and Science courses were used for the study. The composition of the reports was as follows: five (5) from English, eight (8) from Mathematics, and five (5) from Science. The CERs were retrieved from a college of education file after permission was sought by the researchers.

Table 3. Sub-discipline, number of reports, and number of chief examiners

Sub-discipline	N. of reports	N. of chief examiners
English-related	5	1
Maths-related	8	4
Science-related	5	4
Total	18	9

Source: Field data, 2020

ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION, AND FINDINGS

Analysis

Adopting Bhatia's model of move analysis, the researchers identified moves and stages in the eighteen (18) CERs. To begin, they prepared a move classification list to serve as a guideline for the reports. Moves are defined as the goal of a component of a context in this study, whereas steps are defined as the items used to attain that goal. The study used a cut-off point for move classification based on Kanoksilapatham's criterion, which classifies moves into three categories depending on their frequency of occurrence: obligatory, conventional, and optional.⁴² The frequency of occurrence indicates that the corpus is obligatory in 100 percent of cases, conventional in 60 percent of cases, and optional in fewer than 60 percent of cases. The researchers used the following coding system to analyze the reports' movements:

Table 4. Coding of samples

Course code	Course Title	Code assigned
EBS 143	Geometry and Trigonometry	GT 1
EBS 104	Elementary Geometry	EG 2
EBS 101	Algebra I	AL 3
EBS 102	Algebra II	ALL 4
FDC 112	Number and Algebra	NA 5
EBS 169/169J	Trigonometry (New Course)	TN 6
FDC 112M	Algebra and Geometry	AG 7
PFC 222	Meth. Of Teaching Basic Sch. Maths	MTBS 8

³⁹ P. Thompson, Citation practices in PhD Theses(2000) In: Singh, M.K.S., Shamsudin, S. & Y.H. Zaid (2013)

“Iranian EFL learners' collocational errors in speaking skill” *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 66, 370 – 379.

⁴⁰ J. Flowerdew and T. Dudley-Evans, Genre Analysis of Editorial Letters to International Journal Contributors. *Applied Linguistics*, 23(4), (2002): 463- 489.

⁴¹ Upton, “Understanding Direct Mail Letters as a Genre”.

⁴² Kanoksilapatham, “Rhetorical structure of biochemistry research articles”.

FDC 114	Integrated Science	IS 9
FDC 214	Methods of Teaching Science	MTS 10
FDC 224P	Physics 2 (2019)	PH 11
FDC 224P/PP	Physics 2 (2017)	PP 12
EBS 142P	General Physics	GP 13
EBS 108	Language and Linguistics	LL 14
FDC 211	Methods of Teaching English (2019)	MTE 15
EBS 135	English Language Studies	ELS 16
FDC 211	Methods of Teaching English (2017)	MTS 17
FDC 111	English Language Studies (2017)	ELS 18

Source: Field data, 2020

The researchers also re-examined each report's moves and noted their sequence to identify the move structure.

Findings

After a critical analysis of the CERs from the Colleges of Education, it was revealed that a total of ten (10) moves comprising six (6) obligatory and four (4) optional moves were employed in the CERs. In addition, some of the moves had steps. Below are the moves:

Table 5. Rhetorical moves and steps of chief examiners' reports

Rhetorical move	Obligatory or Optional
Move 1: Name of the affiliated University	Obligatory
Step 1: Name of the examining body	
Step 2: Name of examination for which the report is written	
Step 3: Title of the report	
Move 2: Introduction	Optional
Move 3: General comments on students' performance	Obligatory
Step 1: Brief statistics of students' performance	
Move 4: Observation	Optional
Move 5: Specifics	Optional
Move 6: Strengths	Obligatory
Step 1: Areas where students' performance was good	
Move 7: Weaknesses	Obligatory
Step 1: Areas where students' performance was poor.	
Move 8: Suggestions/Recommendation	Obligatory
Step 1: Ways to remedy students' poor performance	
Move 9: Date on which the report is written	Optional
Move 10. Name and designation of the report writer	Obligatory
Step 1: Name of the chief examiner	
Step 2: Signature	
Step 3: Designation	

Source: Field data, 2020

As earlier noted, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

Question 1.

What are the rhetorical patterns and shifts in CERs from COEs?

As earlier indicated, a total of 10 moves comprised six (6) obligatory and four (4) optional moves. The

moves were classified into obligatory and optional moves based on Kanoksilapatham's criterion of move classification. There was no move that could be classified as conventional.

Obligatory moves

As shown in Table 5, the obligatory moves are Moves 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, and 10. These moves were arranged according to how they occurred in the reports. *Move 1* is captioned "The name of the affiliate University." This move, as well as the steps, appeared in all the reports, giving a 100% of occurrence. Move 3 gave general comments about the performance of the students. It highlighted the performance of students in percentage terms. This move is obligatory because it accounted for a 100% occurrence. For example: *"The number of candidates who wrote the paper was 14,045. Out of this number, 6,674 representing 47.5% obtained scores of 50% and above. Only 141..."* (MTBS 8)

Move 6 is captioned "Strengths". This is the main move of the reports as it highlights the itemized strengths of students. This move has a 100% occurrence. For example, *Candidates showed good knowledge in the following content areas:*

- *Direct evaluation of binary operations*
- *Solving inequalities and representing the result on a number line*
- *Application of sum of angles in a triangle.* (AG 7)

Move 7 is also captioned "Weaknesses". This also highlighted students' difficulty areas in the examinations. It also had a 100% occurrence. For example:

"Candidates showed weak content knowledge in the following areas:

- *formulating appropriate algebraic equations from given word statements*
- *simplifying Mathematical problems in fractional forms*
- *definition of functions and using it to distinguish functions from relations."* (AL 3)

Move 8 is the suggestions/recommendations move, which accounts for 100% occurrence. This move gives suggestions or recommendations as to how students' poor performance could be addressed. For example:

"Candidates need further exposure to the following:

- *Grouping meaning of division*
- *Stem-and-leaf plot of 3-digit measures*
- *Comparison and missing addend meanings of subtraction..."* (MTBS 8)

Move 10 has the caption "Name and designation". This is the move where the signatures of the chief examiners who wrote the reports were found. The names of the chief examiners and their designations were also stated. This appeared in all the reports, representing 100% occurrence.

Optional moves

Moves 2, 4, 5, and 9 were identified as optional moves. Move 2 is the Introduction. It is interesting to note that such an important move appeared in only three of the reports, giving 16.7%. Move 4 is captioned "Observation", and it accounted for only 5.6% occurrence. "Specifics" is coded Move 5. It appeared only in one report, representing 5.6%. Though the chief examiner for this course tried to summarize the performance of students in the various sections of the examination paper, he decided to give it the caption "Specifics". Move 9 is the date on which the report was written. This appeared in seven of the reports, representing 38.9%.

Rhetorical patterns

After examining how each of the CERs reports was ordered, the researchers drew a diagram showing a succession of moves in the reports of various disciplines. The table below shows the pattern.

Table 6. Move patterns of Mathematics related courses

Reports for Mathematics related courses	Moves
GT 1	M1→M3→M6→M7→M8→M10
AG 7	M1→M3→M6→M7→M8→M10
AL 3	M1→M3→M6→M7→M8→M10
MTBS 8	M1→M2 →M3→M6→M7→M8→M10
EG 2	M1→M3→M6→M7→M8→M10
NA 5	M1→M3→M6→M7→M8→M10
ALL 4	M1→M3→M6→M7→M8→M10
TN 6	M1→M3→M6→M7→M8→M10

Source: Field data, 2020

In Table 6, it is noted that all the move patterns of Mathematics-related courses are similar except in sample MTBS 8 which has Move 2 in addition.

Table 7. Move patterns of Science related courses.

Reports for Science related courses	Moves
IS 9	M1→M4→M5→M8→M9→M10
PH 11	M1→M2→M3→M6→M7→M10
MTS 10	M1→M3→M6→M7→M8→M10
PP 12	M1→M2→M3→M6→M7→M10
GP 13	M1→M4→M6→M7→M8→M10

Source: Field data, 2020

In the Science related courses, apart from Move 1, Move 6, Move 7 and Move 10 which are similar, the rest of the moves are different.

Table 8. Move patterns of English related courses

Reports for English related courses	Moves
LL 14	M1→M3→M4→M6→M7→M8→M10
MTE 15	M1→M3→M6→M7→M8→M10
ELS 16	M1→M3→M6→M7→M8→M10
MTS 17	M1→M3→M6→M7→M8→M10
ELS 18	M1→M3→M6→M7→M8→10

Source: Field data, 2020

In Table 8, the move patterns in the English-related courses are almost similar. Moves 1, 3, 6, 7,8, and 10 are in all the samples of the reports.

Question 2.

What are the most typical language characteristics discovered in CERs from educational institutions?

Linguistic Features

In addition to the moves and the move order patterns, the researchers also analyzed the linguistic patterns. The study analyzed tense, voice, modals, pronouns, and the types of sentences. The tense used for the reports was predominantly past tense. Examples can be found in the following.

“Two candidates could not write the composition....” (ELS 18)

“Candidates had difficulty in stating core points, objectives and RPK.” (MTS 17)

Secondly, the reports had a combination of active and passive voices.

For example, Active voice: “*Most candidates stated the properties of language correctly.*” (LL 14)

Passive voice: “*Graph work was done appropriately with headings, labelling...units.*” (GP 13)

Furthermore, there were a lot of modals in the reports. Examples are: *should* and *could*.

“*Most candidates could not define specific heat capacity of a substance correctly.*” (PP 12)

Another feature of these reports is that there were many preambles to sentences in all the samples. For example:

Many students showed the following weaknesses:

- *Students’ inability to use graphs to answer related questions.*
- *Students’ inability to quote and apply both compound and double angles.*

(Sample TN 6)

To add to this, a mixture of simple, compound, and complex, sentences was used. The Science-related and Mathematics-related reports were predominantly made of simple and compound sentences, while the English-related courses used many compound and complex sentences.

For example:

This is the first time candidates were writing the paper so they had no past questions to refer to. → **compound sentence** (English: Sample LL 14)

Performance in this paper was generally not very good. → **simple sentence** (Mathematics: Sample AG 7)

The experiment was a compulsory question for all candidates. → **simple sentence** (Science: Sample PH 11)
Though most of the candidates performed well in the Section A, the performance in Section B was not very encouraging. → **complex sentence** (English: Sample MTS 17)

To add to the above, it was noted from the analysis that only a few pronouns were used in all the reports. These were: “*they, it, and this.*” “*They*” was used in place of *students* in some instances. “*It*” was used to replace the *question*, while “*this*” was used as a demonstrative pronoun.

Question 3.

3. How different are Chief Examiners’ findings from COEs in English-related, Mathematics-related, and Science-related courses?

The results show that even though the reports had some kind of format, there were differences among them. The reports of the Mathematics-related courses were; however, similar. Except for Sample MTBS 8 which included M2, which is Introduction, the rest had the move patterns M1→M3→M6→M7→M8→M10. The moves in the reports of the Science-related courses were; however, not consistent. A look at Table 6 reveals that whereas the moves in Sample IS 9 is M1→M4→M5→M8→M9→10, that of Sample PP 12 had the following moves: M1→M2→M3→M6→M7→M10. The reports from the English-related courses were however, almost similar to that of Mathematics-related courses.

DISCUSSION

The overall composition of the Science-related reports and the Mathematics-related reports differed significantly. The study showed that, unlike previous reports from other examining organizations, the reports did not have a set format. The West African Examination Council, for example, has the following format for chief examiners’ reports in all subjects: General comments, a summary of candidates’ strengths, a summary of candidates’ weaknesses, suggested remedies, and detailed comments. The Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education also has the following format: Key messages, general comments on the performance of the candidates, question by question, and comments on specific questions.

Furthermore, it was noticed that the *Introduction*, a very important component of reports, was missing in most of the reports. Only 16.7% of the reports contained introductions. Swales shows how important the introduction is to every report, be it a research article or any other report.⁴³ Apart from Swales, many other researchers researched the introduction sections of reports. Notable among them are Bhatia, Samraj, Keshavarz, Atai and Barzegar.⁴⁴ The *Introduction* ushers the reader into what to expect in the report by putting the issue to be looked at in context or perspective.

Furthermore, the study revealed that the CERs from COEs were written according to the examiners' style. This became evident when two reports from different courses in the same discipline written by the same chief examiner were compared. It came to light that the examiner repeated the same format for the two different reports. Furthermore, reports from different chief examiners from the same department were also not identical, except in Mathematics-related reports which were almost similar. One would have thought that since the reports were coming from the same department, the reports would have had the same format, but the reverse was the case, as it is in the case of Science-related courses. This lends credence to the fact that the reports were written using individual styles. In the analysis of the linguistic features, it came to light that the Science-related courses and the Mathematics-related courses made use of many simple sentences laced with appropriate registers. This was to enable the reader to understand the message without any ambiguity, while English-related courses used a lot of compound and complex sentences.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to look at the reports of chief examiners from colleges of education. The study relied on the reports of eighteen (18) chief examiners from English, Mathematics, and Science courses. The technique of Bhatia was utilized to analyze textual genre. Furthermore, using Kanoksilapatham's move criteria, we classified moves that had 100 percent occurrences obligatory, while 60 percent and below were classified as conventional and optional respectively. From the analysis, it was observed that six (out of the ten) of the moves were optional while four are optional. The reports were found to have only three pronouns: *it*, *they*, and *this*. An interesting observation made in this study is the fact that most Chief Examiners' Reports lack *Introduction* sections, and that Chief Examiners' Reports followed no particular standard structure/format. It is recommended that Chief Examiners pay critical attention to the *Introduction* segments of their reports and that a standard format is provided to all Chief Examiners so as to achieve uniformity.

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⁴³ Swales, "Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings." 20-22

⁴⁴ Samraj, "An Exploration of a Genre Set", 141- 156; Keshavarz, Atai, and Barzegar, "A contrastive study of generic organization of research article".

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