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# A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF MOCK EXAMINATION ESSAYS IN THREE DISCIPLINES-THE CASE OF VE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

**ROBERT ATSU OKOR**

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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# A RHETORICAL ANALYSIS OF EXAMINATION ESSAYS IN THREE DISCIPLINES-THE CASE OF VE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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**A Thesis in the Department of English Education,
Faculty of Foreign Languages Education, submitted to the
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of the requirements for the award of the degree of**

**Master of Philosophy
(English Language)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**NOVEMBER, 2023**

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# DECLARATION

## STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **ROBERT ATSU OKOR**, declare that this Thesis, except for quotations and references contained in published works, which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is my original work and has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: ……..……

DATE: ……..……

## SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: **DR. AMMA ABRAFI ADJEI**

SIGNATURE: ……..……

DATE: ……..……

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# DEDICATION

Dedicated to my lovely daughter, Nyeadzi Okor, and the endless memory of my late uncle, Mr. Emmanuel Sebuava Korsi Gadze.

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# ACRONYMS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| LIT | - | Literature |
| BM | - | Business Management |
| BIO | - | Biology |
| LITP | - | Literature Prompt |
| BMP | - | Business Management Prompt |
| BIOP | - | Biology Prompt |
| LITT | - | Literature Teacher |
| BMT | - | Business Management Teacher |
| BIOT | - | Biology Teacher |
| LITST | - | Literature Student |
| BMST | - | Business Management Student |
| BIOST | - | Biology Student |

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# ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to qualitatively analyse written mock examination essays from three different disciplines (literature, business management, and biology) in Ve Senior High School. The scholarship focused on the organisational structure and two key rhetorical features (the introduction and conclusion) of students' essays, as well as their interpretation of examination prompts. The research used the theory of English for Specific Purpose, hence, Swales (1990) move analysis, Hewings (1993) and Horowitz (1986,1989) move analysis were used to examine the introduction, conclusion and examination prompts of 50 censused essays. Three heads of departments, six subject-specific teachers, and six students were also interviewed. Analysis revealed that while most students used a five-paragraph essay structure, biology students did not use an introduction or conclusion due to the structure of their examination prompts. In addition, literature examinees preferred 2-moves to achieve their communication purposes, while business management used 3-moves. At the conclusions, both literature and business management candidates used 2-moves to achieve their communication purposes. The study contributes to the field of rhetorical analysis in academic writing, specifically in the context of Ghanaian high schools. It highlights the importance of incorporating rhetorical analysis in the curriculum of Ghanaian high schools to improve critical thinking and analytical skills among students, enhancing their writing skills, and equipping them with the necessary tools to excel academically and professionally. It is recommended that future researchers should investigate the impact of introductions and conclusions on the quality of writing in disciplinary groups.

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# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

Within the primary, secondary, and tertiary education landscape, subjects programmed to enhance students' spoken or written English proficiency have always been part of Ghana's educational system. Regarding the written aspect of the Ghanaian Educational System, the examination essay has been a central component as it is considered an effective way to assess students' writing skills and knowledge.

Morley-Warner (2009) defines academic writing as a formal way to write a well-structured paper using vocabulary that is more formal, grammar, and sentence structure. Roxas (2020) supports this definition when he says academic writing is more than just using correct grammar and expressive words. He further opines that language use in an academic writing piece goes beyond grammar and lexical rules of creating sentences. It must sport a well-organised structure from the beginning until the end. In addition, it pertains to the right chunking of paragraphs and the correct use of cohesive and transitional devices, among others.

Pablo and Lasaten (2018) observed that the most common difficulty encountered by students when attempting to intermingle content and ideas was the lack of imagination, while the most common difficulty with the organisation (which the current study is concerned with) was the lack of connections. Similarly, when it comes to vocabulary and word choice, the students' most common difficulty was the improper use of words and phrases. At the same time, poor language structure was the most common issue.

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In the face of this convolution, Al Fadda (2012) argued that academic writing in English at advanced levels is a challenge and difficult even for most native speakers, and more so with second language speakers like most Filipino SHS students. Mutimani (2016) asserts that when students enter a university, they are confronted with a new and unfamiliar context of teaching and learning through writing different tasks. Therefore, students' academic success is connected to their ability to write their examination essays effectively. Graham and Perin (2007, p.445) amplify this, as writing is an essential skill students need to succeed academically and professionally. Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive approach to evaluating exam essays that focus on the rhetorical strategies employed by students.

Generally, examination means testing and estimating one's academic ability and performance. It also means testing a student's knowledge through written or oral questions based on the prescribed syllabus provided for the test within a specified period (Collins & O'Brien, 2011). According to Hill (1982), an examination is a subject of research and the primary data for research. It is a vital part of the teaching, learning process, and educational development, which determines the destiny of students and their life careers.

Previous research has demonstrated the importance of examination essays in developing writing skills. For instance, Klenowski (2009) suggests that these essays allow students to demonstrate their understanding of a subject and communicate their ideas effectively. However, the effectiveness of this teaching method is limited by the lack of a comprehensive evaluation process. In addition, one of the challenges of assessing exam essays is the subjective nature of evaluation. According to Madaus and Clarke (2001), the evaluation of an essay is subject to human misinterpretation and

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prejudice, which may result in contradictory and unreliable outcomes. That notwithstanding, this study will provide a more objective and systematic approach to assessment by using rhetorical analysis to evaluate exam essays.

Albeit numerous scholarships explored students' writing difficulties (Bakuuro, 2017; Owu-Ewie & Williams, 2017; Roxas, 2020 and Trinh *et al.*, 2023), factors (Boahen, 2021); problems (Moses & Mohamad, 2019; Yusuf, 2020); performance (Bonsu, 2021; Badu et al, 2010; Nutakor & Israel, 2023); there is a limited empirical exploration, on senior high school academic writing, through the lens of rhetorical analysis, that can evaluate and improve the quality of written examination essays. This study seeks to contribute to instruction by using rhetorical analysis to evaluate mock exam essays in three disciplines- Literature, Business Management, and Biology, and to provide insights into how students use rhetorical features (introduction and conclusion) to communicate their ideas effectively, particularly at senior high school.

### 1.1.1 The Role of Rhetorical Analysis

Scholarly work in rhetorical analysis has received unwavering attention in the last few years. Rhetoric mainly means the science and art of using words effectively and purposely to persuade others (Suciati & Ambarini, 2018). Fleming (1998) added that rhetoric comes from the theory of how best a speaker or a writer can persuade by using linguistic devices. According to Aristotle, as cited in Alo (2012), rhetoric is the faculty of finding persuasive tools of using language to cause an effect on the audience. Zachry (2009) argues that the general focus of rhetorical analysis is to arrive methodically at insights into the performance of a communication event (or assemblage of events) through an investigation of selected features of the event.

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As a result of the growth of mass media and education across the globe, the desire to understand how people react to the many representational forms to which they are exposed has grown. Interested scholars used rhetorical analysis to make sense of the relationship between people's beliefs and behaviours. Due to the critical role of rhetorical analysis, its tentacles spread broadly and are used by scholars in many fields, especially in speech communication, writing studies, literary studies, and biblical studies. In recent times, scholars working in cultural studies, feminism, politics, science, technology, and education, among others, have also found rhetorical analysis to be a productive framework for structuring their inquiries.

It is worth mentioning that rhetorical analysis does rely on theories. These theories include traditional, new rhetorical, and critical-postmodern. The traditional perspective predates the twentieth century and includes scholars such as Gorgias, Isocrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. Standing tall among them, however, is Aristotle, whose work served as the foundation. As a result of his systematic theory of persuasion, one cardinal role of rhetorical analysis is the ability to persuade others to believe through communication (Zachry, 2009). According to Aristotle, individuals persuade others through three means: the character or credibility of the source of communication (ethos), the stirring of emotion in the individual(s) being persuaded (pathos), or proof of truth (or apparent truth) through reasonable argument (logos) - (rhetorical appeals). The New Rhetoric is associated with Kenneth Burke, Chaim Perelman, and Lucy Olbrechts-Tyteca. They see rhetoric analysis as an embellishment or ornament, like with the deployment of devices. For Burke, as cited in Zachry (2009), the ability to understand and analyse the social uses of rhetoric was powerful in that it made it possible to understand the nature and reason(s) for human action. The last perspective,

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critical-postmodern, focuses on how power is created and the prominence of critique as an intrinsic module of analytical work.

The decisive role of rhetorical analysis in evolving understanding into the communicative practices associated with other fields, other than the usual academic and non-academic, is evident in two studies focused on different communicative events. The first is Stuart Blythe's attempt to discuss the practices and possibilities of preaching as a rhetorical act. The researcher used critical rhetorical analysis of four sermons preached by Dr John Gladstone (1921–2005) between 1962 and 1985. Findings indicate the interpretation of scripture, use of language, voice, and purpose as rhetorical strategies deployed by Rev. Dr John Gladstone. Further analysis revealed that he appealed primarily to logos, with appeals to ethos and pathos integrally connected to and subjugated to the teaching voice he adopted. In addition, his rhetorical approach to preaching gained him the reputation of a gifted preacher in context.

The second is Muller's (2023) "Monkey Business in a Kangaroo Court: Reimagining Naruto v. Slater as a Litigious Event". The study performs a critical rhetorical analysis of out-of-court texts about Naruto v. Slater, colloquially known as the "Monkey Selfie Lawsuit." By veering from a legal positivist perspective on law and turning toward theories of the public screen, it argues that while People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) formally lost its case on appeal, the agency successfully litigated its case in the court of public opinion.

### 1.1.2 Examination Essays across Disciplines

Examination essay analysis encompassing a range of subjects is fundamental to enlightening our understanding of transferability concerning rhetoric methods and literary aptitude, hence discipline variation. Hyland and Bondi (2006) define disciplines

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as institutional convenience, networks of communication, and domains of values and modes of inquiry. This implies that the various academic disciplines are commonly regarded as systems created for institutional structuring, pathways for communication among experts, domains characterized by specific sets of values, and methods for conducting research and investigations. These disciplines serve as distinct frameworks that organize knowledge and expertise, enabling experts to communicate, share, and advance knowledge within defined areas of study. Each discipline represents a unique set of beliefs, practices, and principles that guide its approach to examining and understanding various phenomena. The values, methodologies, and communication networks within each discipline contribute to its distinct identity and the pursuit of knowledge within that field. In their study, Kaidan et al. (2021) revealed that in looking at cross-disciplines, potential similarities tend to be greater across the disciplines within one area than those across four areas. Alternatively, they believe that differences tend to bend towards the disciplines across areas than within one specific area. In effect, looking at examination across disciplines will offer us a better view in understanding how and why they orient their readers in the manner they do. The following empirical studies (Hyland & Bondi, 2006; Suntara & Usuha, 2013; Parodi, 2015; Kaiden et al., 2021; Boginskaya, 2023) are consulted to show the importance of genre (examination essays) across disciplines.

Hyland (2006) is the pioneering work on discipline variations. This work of his led to a work done by himself and Bondi (Hyland & Bondi, 2006) termed "Academic discourse across disciplines" The two observed that writers in different fields represent themselves, their work, and their readers in different ways. They have added that writers in humanities and social sciences take more personal positions than those in science and engineering, focusing less on methods and warrants and referring more to social

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actors and processes (p.36). To them, there is the need to recognise the potential tremendous diversity of disciplines.

From two related disciplines, Suntara and Usuha (2013) deployed an analytical framework of Santos' (1996) 5-move model and Hyland's (2000) 5-move model to identify the rhetorical moves in a total of 200 research articles abstract from three journals in the field of linguistics and three from applied linguistics. The study's findings show three conventional moves in abstracts in linguistics as against four found in applied linguistics. After the inquisition from the two related disciplines, Suntara and Usuha (2013) draws the pedagogical implication conclusion that rhetorical structure and some linguistics features of research article abstracts be incorporated into academic writing course for graduates and postgraduates students to prepare them to participate in the research world.

Boginskaya (2023) compared international metadiscourse markers in 96-research article abstracts of Russian and Spanish scholars in linguistics. The study discovers the seeming variations between two non-native speakers who use the English Language to write their abstracts. What underpins the study is the assumption that the distribution of international metadiscoursal markers devices differs in the abstracts produced by each group of scholars. Relying on the theory of Hyland's (2005) taxonomy of international metadiscourse markers, the findings indicate that Spanish scholars leave more traces of themselves in their writing and take more explicitly involved positions than Russian scholars. For pedagogical implication, the study concludes that aside from course designers and instructors, it can enhance non-native English writers of the discipline's culture-specific and international academic writing conventions.

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This exploration of the literature on disciplinary diversity in academic writing reveals that successful academic communication is contingent upon the language writers and speakers use to communicate with each other, their subject matter, and their audience. Further, drawing on analyses that reveal how students adeptly customise their expression style; restructure arguments; utilise rhetoric ploys intelligently, this research opens vistas across fields into potential disciplinary inconsistencies in approaches to constructing cogent arguments via language arts. It remains relevant not just among pedagogical practitioners but also among learners, who stand to gain much from curricula informed with the latest trends and strategies to adapt writing skills across disciplines.

**1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Since Swales's (1990) famous work, extant scholarship has emphasised the need to investigate, explain and describe organizational pattern (moves) of introduction across fields (Gross et al., 2002; Miller, 1984; Hyland, 2004). For instance, Gross et al. (2002) examine the genres and rhetorical strategies used in scientific writing; Miller (1984) explores the relationship between discourse communities and genre; Hyland (2004), genre analysis in second language learning and teaching, examines how genre-based pedagogies can enhance second language writing development.

Academic writing is an essential aspect of education, and it is widely accepted that writing is a fundamental tool for learning in higher education. As such, academic writing is an essential skill that students must develop to excel academically. Nevertheless, it remains one of the many challenges confronting students, especially in secondary schools in Ghana.

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Generally, an examination essay comprises three parts: the introduction, the body or middle part, and the conclusion. During my internship at West Africa Senior High School, it became apparent that a significant number of final year students lacked the necessary skills for effective essay writing. This was particularly evident when reviewing their final internal mock examination papers, which often exhibited inadequate coherence and poorly-formed structures. Further, as an English teacher, the researcher encountered various writing challenges faced by students. These challenges encompassed grammatical inaccuracies, discoursal problems, rhetorical obstacles, and not achieving coherence.

Also, the researcher observed that a chunk of the students needed a clearer understanding of what the essay questions (Question words/prompts) require of them and, for that matter, their inability to apply the appropriate essay structures. For instance, critical question words include analyse, evaluate, discuss, and examine, and descriptive question words define, describe, explain, summarise, compare, and contrast. Question words are usually used in essay titles, which indicate how one's essay should be structured. Nevertheless, students often need to pay more attention to them and answer their essay questions correctly. Lack of understanding of these 'question words' is a huge obstacle for many students sitting for their final examination, making their essays irrelevant and causing them to score poorly.

Even though the first two identified problems above merit attention in academic writing, the weak structuring of examination essays is an aspect of writing that students could quickly tackle to improve their writing. Since the English Language composition aspect ought to orient students on all writing features, such as paragraphing, coherence,

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and genres of academic writing, I wonder why the weak structuring of essays persist as a source of difficulty for students in Ve Senior High School.

My interaction with colleagues from other departments and the marking of other departments' English Language papers suggests that students' inability to structure their essays, especially examination essays correctly is a common phenomenon in other departments. The interaction also exposes the notion that students from different disciplines (departments) attach different levels of importance to organising their essays. As a result, it is necessary to examine how students from different disciplines (departments) tackle their essays.

Recently, there has been growing interest in genre analysis, focusing on the rhetorical features that make up effective academic writing. For instance, Falconer (2017) looks at the Genre and the writer's invention: Reconsidering the place of invention in composition. Blümel and Schniedermann (2020) also examine the often-neglected genre of review articles in scholarly communication and propose a research agenda for studying them. Linguistically, Pearson (2021) investigates the use of quoted speech in research article titles in linguistics and its effects on scholarly impact. Adding to the field, Wakeling et al. (2019) explore the role of journals and open-access mega-journals in scholarly communication and highlight the importance of understanding the role of specific genres, such as journal articles, within academic communities.

The study therefore sees the need for more research on the rhetorical analysis of students' examination essays in Ghanaian high schools because it hinders students' understanding of the rhetorical features that make up effective academic writing. In addition, this lack of understanding of rhetorical features in Ghanaian high schools contributes to the student's poor academic writing skills, which can have long-term

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adverse effects on their academic and professional careers. Furthermore, it is difficult for teachers to develop effective writing programs that can enhance students' academic writing skills.

### 1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to conduct a rhetorical analysis of poor essay structuring and misinterpretation of examination prompt of Ve Senior High School students in three disciplines (literature, business management and biology). The study explored how essays are structured, compared similarities and differences in two key rhetorical features (introduction and conclusion) and examined how examination prompt influence essays.

### 1.4 The Objectives of the Study

As objectives, this study hopes to identify, analyse, and compare the rhetorical features present in examination essays across three different disciplines in Ve Senior High Schools. Thus, the objectives are as follows:

1. analyse the organisational structure of examination essays in literature, Business Management, and Biology written by final-year students of Ve Senior High School.

2. identify noticeable similarities and differences in the introduction and conclusion of Ve SHS students' literature, Business Management, and Biology examination essays.

3. investigate examination prompts used in SHS students' examination essay questions.

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## 1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions guide the objectives of the study:

1. How do Literature, Business Management, and Biology students structure their examination essays?
2. Which similarities and differences are noticeable in the introduction and conclusion of students' examination essays in literature, Business Management, and Biology?
3. How do examination prompts influence the structure of SHS students' essays?

In order to find answers to research question two, the study will rely on three parameters:

- Frequency of moves in the introduction and conclusion
- Textual space allotted to moves in the introduction and conclusion
- Sequence of moves in introduction and conclusion

## 1.6 Significance of Study

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the field of rhetorical analysis in academic writing, specifically in the context of Ghanaian high schools.

Moreover, this study's findings can inform pedagogy in Ghanaian high schools. By identifying the rhetorical features that are most effective in persuading readers, teachers can help students to develop their writing skills and produce effective essays. By improving students' writing skills, this study can contribute to their academic success and prepare them for the demands of higher education and the workforce.

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Additionally, the study has practical implications for teachers and curriculum designers. By identifying the rhetorical features that are most commonly used in examination essays, teachers can design writing assignments that promote the development of these features. By providing insights into the rhetorical features that are most effective in academic writing, this study can inform the design of writing assignments and promote the development of practical writing skills in Ghanaian high schools.

Exceptionally, discipline-specific teachers can interact with the empirical literature to assist SHS students in acceptable examination writing in the three disciplines. Additionally, since the theory in this study exhibits rhetorical practices in departments, this research may aid English Language teachers in teaching English Language in SHS in Ghana. The study brings about a collaborative exchange of ideas between the Department of Languages and others.

This study has significant implications for rhetorical analysis in academic writing and can inform pedagogy in Ghanaian high schools. By contributing to developing rhetorical analysis as a research tool, informing pedagogy, and providing practical insights for teachers and curriculum designers, this study will contribute to improving academic writing in Ghanaian high schools and preparing students for success in higher education and the workforce.

### 1.8 Delimitation

The study is focused on the rhetorical analysis of mock examination essays in three disciplines; the case of Ve Senior High School in the Afadzato South District of the Volta Region. Although there are several senior high schools in Ghana and various subject repositories, this study mainly focuses on Ve Senior High School because it is

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the researcher's institution of employment. The study also focuses on Literature, Business Management, and Biology.

### 1.9 Organisation of this Study

This study is divided into five chapters, the first of which provides an overview of the study's rationale, statement of problem, objectives, and research questions, as well as its significance and scope. Chapter Two delves into related literature and academic works pertinent to the study. In contrast, Chapter Three focuses on the methodology, research approach, design, sampling methods, data collection, and data analysis. Finally, Chapter Five provides a conclusion to the study and its recommendations.

### 1.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the pertinent concepts that formed the basis of the study. It also addressed the main topics the study aims to address by formulating the problem. Additionally, the catalyst for the study was outlined, including the research questions and objectives, as well as the significance and scope of the study.

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# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature relevant to the topic under study. The researcher organized the review under the following themes: overview of rhetorical analysis, Swales move analysis, genre and academic writing, genre and examination essays, and genre and examination prompts.

## 2.1 An Overview of Rhetorical Analysis

Rhetorical analysis is essential to literary scholars, writers, and critical thinkers. This method aims to understand how language and discourse create meaning, persuade and influence audiences. The definition of rhetorical analysis has come under debate. However, most scholars agree that this involves examining the elements of a text, including its audience, purpose, and context, to determine how the author uses language to achieve their goals.

One of the earliest and most influential definitions of rhetorical analysis is Aristotle's rhetoric. He defines rhetoric as "the faculty of discovering in any case all the available means of persuasion" (Aristotle, 1926, p.1355b). This definition emphasizes the importance of understanding the audience, context, and available persuasive strategies. Burke (1969) argued that rhetoric is not just about persuasion, but also about identification. In his essay "Identification: A Problem in Rhetorical Criticism," he writes, "Rhetoric is rooted in an essential function of language itself, a function that is wholly realistic and is continually born anew; the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols" (Burke, 1969, p. 21). Similarly, Wayne Booth defined rhetoric as "the art of exploring, explaining, and defending ideas" (Booth, 1968, p. 1). Booth's definition emphasises the creative and

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interpretive aspects of rhetorical analysis. He argues that rhetorical analysis involves examining the techniques used by authors and understanding the ideas and values underlying their work.

The definition of rhetorical analysis has evolved as scholars have continued to explore the role of language in communication and persuasion. Aristotle's emphasis on understanding the audience and available persuasive strategies, Burke's emphasis on identification, Booth's emphasis on exploring ideas all contribute to our understanding of this essential analysis method.

The components of rhetorical analysis encompass various elements, including the identification of rhetorical strategies, analysis of persuasive appeals, and examination of linguistic and discursive features. For instance, Erkama and Vaara (2010) highlight the three classical dynamics of logos (rational arguments), pathos (emotional moral arguments), and ethos (authority-based arguments) as essential components of rhetorical analysis.

Additionally, Taboada and Mann (2006) emphasized the importance of rhetorical structure theory in understanding the organization and persuasive strategies embedded within discourse. Connor (2002) explored new directions in contrastive rhetoric, emphasizing the evolving nature of rhetorical analysis and its relation to changing directions in linguistics. This study highlights the dynamic nature of rhetorical analysis and its relevance in understanding communicative practices and persuasive strategies across different linguistic contexts.

Rhetorical analysis also involves the examination of genre-specific rhetorical features and identification of persuasive appeals within different communicative contexts. Daly and Davy (2016) conducted a rhetorical analysis of the structural, linguistic, and rhetorical features of the entrepreneurial pitch, highlighting the application of rhetorical

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analysis in understanding persuasive strategies within specific genres. Zhang and Liu (2023) explored the intersection of neurolinguistics, cognitive linguistics, and semantic rhetoric, emphasizing the interdisciplinary applications of rhetorical analysis in understanding language and cognition. Their study showed the versatility of rhetorical analysis in understanding the cognitive and linguistic dimensions of discourse.

The methodologies of rhetorical analysis encompass various approaches, including move, genre, and discourse analysis. Move analysis involves the systematic examination of rhetorical moves and steps within different genres, as shown by Darabad (2016), who conducted a move analysis of research article abstracts. Genre analysis, as highlighted by (Pérez-Llantada, 2015), involves an examination of rhetorical and contextual sophistication within different genres, contributing to a deeper understanding of communicative practices.

This comprehensive overview of rhetorical analysis explored definitions, components, methodologies, and applications of this critical method in different instances. The rhetorical analysis framework has been widely applied across diverse research domains, contributing to a deeper understanding of persuasive strategies and communicative functions within different disciplines.

### 2.2 Genre and Swales Move Analysis

Swales' move analysis is an analytical text approach first developed by John Swales to investigate the underlying generic structure of research articles (RAs) in terms of moves and steps for pedagogical purposes. According to Cotos (2018), move analysis is a genre analysis approach that focuses on communicative purposes, referred to as moves, and rhetorical strategies, called steps. The definition of a move in genre analysis was proposed by Swales as a discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse (Fazilatfar & Naseri 2014;

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Alharbi1, 2021). Swales's approach has stimulated substantial research on the rhetorical structures of academic and professional texts, contributing to a deeper understanding of communicative functions and conventions within different disciplines.

Given that a considerable of genre studies have used Swales move analysis, the researcher review these first set of literature: Alsharif, (2022); Yasmin et al., (2021); Rustipa et al., (2023), and Alharbi, (2021).

Alharbi (2021) used Swales move analysis to investigate the move-step structure of two sets of English-medium research article introductions (RAIs) in the field of applied linguistics using Swales' (1990, 2004) "*Create a Research Space* (CARS)" model of move/step analysis. After analysing a corpus of 30 RAIs from two English–medium research articles (15 international and 15 local), the study's findings indicated that although the three moves suggested by the CARS (Swales, 1990, 2004) model appeared in the two subcorpora, the study observed some variations concerning the range of moves 1 and 2 employed in each subcorpus. It is worth mentioning that the study was a comparative genre-based analysis of the move-step structure of RAIs in two different publications. This scholarship's comparative nature and consideration of 'introduction' is considered relevant.

Similarly, Alsharif's (2022) examination of the rhetorical structure of research article introductions has given rise to Swales' (1990) genre analysis, a method of discourse analysis developed in the English for Specific Purposes field. To that end, the researcher conducted a genre-based investigation of the rhetorical move structure of research article introductions in a particular academic discipline – (business management). Alsharif's (2022) demonstrated that academic business management writers deployed

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research article introductions that follow Swales' "CARS model (M1-M2-M3)", and a deviation from the model constituted a slight number of the examined articles. Alsharif (2022) attributed the deviation to the cyclical nature of the moves, namely, Move 1 and Move 2. Analysis of the steps within each move has shown a variation in the frequency of their use, which provided a significant insight for the current study due its consideration of business management (at the SHS level).

Using a stratified random sampling technique, as Biber (1993) recommended, 32 introduction chapters of Pakistani research theses from the Humanities and Sciences faculties were selected for the study. Deploring both qualitative and quantitative methods, coupled with the online software Compleat Lexical Tutor (Cobb., 2015), Yasmin et al. (2021) disclosed that Pakistani authors follow their pattern of Move 1 (Establishing the research territory) along with the variation in the frequency of its constituent steps across two faculties. A demarcation between the two faculties has revealed a more substantial use of topic generalisation in the sciences than in the humanities. Moreover, the inter-textual links to prior research in the sciences are provided more frequently than in the humanities. The study further concluded that scholars from the faculty of Humanities represent their stance by claiming the relevance of the field.

As a drift from the widely researched introduction of Research Articles, Rustipa et al. 2023 combined rhetorical structures, strategies, and linguistic features to investigate the problem statement section of RA written by undergraduate students, which aimed to contribute to the teaching model in teaching academic writing of RA problem statement to promote a teaching writing model. Thirty undergraduate students' problem statement texts were explored, and interviewers were further conducted to supplement the data.

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The results indicated that nine types of rhetorical structures were employed, most of which needed to be completed

The above studies reviewed thus far, even though mainly concerned with undergraduates and graduates RAs as against high school or examination essay genres being considered in the current study, their various manipulation of Swales move analysis provided insights, which the current study can draw from. Secondly, Alharbi (2021), Yasmin et al. (2019), and Alsharif (2022) are the most relevant for their investigation of "introduction" as a rhetorical feature, the same as the current study. Alsharif (2022) looked further at Business Management, one of the disciplines that form part of the current study.

Swales' move analysis has been applied across various academic disciplines, including sociology, linguistics, computer science, and engineering. For instance, Moreno and Swales (2018) explored the strengthening of move analysis method towards bridging the function-form gap in biology and computer science. The study describes and discusses a method for analyzing the various RA sections for their generic structure from the step level in two languages and across a wide range of disciplines, using the discussion section as a test case to illustrate that method. Among the topics treated were establishing criteria for choosing a suitable sample of comparable RA discussions across the two languages, designing a model for annotating the section's moves and steps, creating an accessible computer-assisted coding scheme, achieving good levels of inter-rater reliability, and getting validation from expert informants and writers. This methodology in addition to the selection of biology (one of the current study's disciplines) offers the current researcher insights into a working model for ESP studies. Cotos et al. (2015) further applied move/step constructs, marshalling the Swalesian genre theory for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) pedagogy. This study

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highlighted the practical applications of Swales's move analysis in EAP pedagogy, emphasizing its relevance in language teaching and curriculum design. Overall, this paper makes the relationships between genre theory, genre analysis, and genre instruction explicit; demonstrating that move analysis is a powerful and promising theoretical, analytic, and teaching construct.

Ahmad (1997) examined research article introductions in Malay and highlighted the rhetorical functions of different moves in an emerging research community. The study provides insights into the rhetorical structures of research articles and the rhetorical strategies employed in an emerging research community. Yoon and Casal (2020) conducted a move analysis of applied linguistics conference abstracts, showcasing the application of Swales' move analysis to understand the rhetorical structure and variation in academic conference abstracts. Following Moreno and Swales's (2018) advocacy for step-level analysis, this study presents a move-step framework and systematic rhetorical move-step analysis of 625 conference abstracts accepted by the 2017 American Association of Applied Linguistics Conference. Findings reveal that five of the seven moves in the resulting framework were highly frequent, and two dominant move-sequence patterns emerged. As this study is rooted in ESP, Yoon and Casal (2020) provide valuable insights into discursive and rhetorical practices associated with the genre.

Zare and Valipouri (2022) investigated rhetorical functions and their associated linguistic realizations in English review article abstracts. The analysis was based on a corpus of English review article abstracts from linguistics and applied linguistics disciplines, and followed a corpus-driven discourse analytic top-down approach. MAXQDA and WordSmith were used to code the moves and analyze their associated sub-corpora. The results of calculating range and frequency distributions showed that

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English conceptual review article abstracts use a rhetorical structure that differs from that of research paper abstracts. This rhetorical organization is realized through a different set of moves: (1) establishing the territory or area of study, (2) identifying the problem, (3) introducing the present research, (4) organizing the paper, and (5) concluding or reflecting. The application of moves in Zare and Valipouri (2022) is similar to some in the current research.

With a corpus of 8,500 RA abstracts sampled from five disciplines of economics, law, political sciences, psychology, and sociology in social and behavioral sciences, Khany and Malmir (2020) only linked lexical sequences to the rhetorical moves in research articles (RAs). In doing so, three-to nine-word ngrams were generated using AntConc 3.4.4, which is a freeware corpus analysis toolkit, all of which were studied in their contexts through concordance analysis and classified based on the rhetorical moves in which they occurred using the move structure taxonomy suggested by Hatzitheodorou (2014). Khany and Malmir (2020) offer understandings into the linguistic realizations of moves in RA abstracts and introduces the concept of move-marker structures.

To investigate rhetorical aspects of texts used for creating different discourse types, Noorizadeh-Honami and Chalak (2018) looked at abstract sections of the articles written by English and Persian authors to explore whether they followed a similar structural pattern. To this end, a corpus of 60 English and Persian abstracts, thirty each, randomly selected from English ISI journals and Iranian scientific journals and analyzed based on the IMRD framework introduced by Swales (1990). The findings of this study revealed that most English and Persian authors used the IMRD model in the structure of their abstracts, although the frequency of occurrence of each move differed. In terms of the sequence of moves, all the used patterns were analyzed, and I-M-R-D and I-M-R were identified as the most frequent patterns used in both groups. The

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findings of this study may have implications for Iranian authors seeking to publish their studies in reputable international journals.

The literature review in this section shows Swales moves analysis has been used in studies to understand communicative functions and conventions within different disciplines. However, while some have used Swales move to look at rhetorical structure and variations (Yoon & Casal, 2020; Zare & Valipuri, 2022), others have found that Swales move analysis is useful in enhancing rhetorical methodology (Moreno & Swales, 2018) and pedagogy (Coros et al., 2015).

### 2.3 Genre and Academic Writing

Scholars define academic writing as encompassing a diverse range of perspectives and considerations. A genre-based approach that emphasizes questioning and the negotiation of interests, demands, and rewards characterizes it, particularly for multilingual scholars (Hyland 2002; Curry & Lillis, 2004). According to Åberg (2022), in both secondary and tertiary education, students are taught to compose essays within the academic genre to demonstrate their ability to process various forms of knowledge. When students handle different types of knowledge, such as factual knowledge, conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge, and meta-cognitive knowledge (Krathwohl, 2002) and then translate them into written products, it is often described as academic writing (Lea & Street, 1998; Ivaničč, 2004).

Although the following literatures (de Oliveira and Lan 2014; Ramos, 2014; Huang & Zhang, 2020; Zhang & Zhang, 2021) as part of the first series differ from the research under study based on their use of SFL as against ESP (current study's), they however converge on the grounds that they are concerned with high schools.

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Based on teaching procedural recounts in the context of science, de Oliveira and Lan (2014) have explored the implementation of a genre-based pedagogy informed by systemic-functional linguistics (SFL) in a 4th-grade classroom with English Language learners (ELLs). The study displays the progress of one ELL student because of the genre-based approach, highlighting the impact it had on their writing development. The article addresses the need for effective instructional practices in teaching upper elementary ELLs to write school-based genres. It emphasises the importance of genre-based pedagogy informed by SFL in supporting ELLs' writing skills in specific content areas. This literature agrees with the overall goal of the research at hand to investigate rhetorical features in mock examination essays which ultimately improves student's writing skills (in the case of the current study at SHS level).

Ramos (2014) focuses on an eight-week instructional unit in a US urban public high school, where the genre-based reading-to-learn approach was employed to teach 20 adolescent ELs how to write academic-style persuasive essays. The results showed a significant improvement in the participant's ability to effectively use linguistic resources to create persuasion academically, indicating the potential effectiveness of the Reading to Learn approach in supporting ELs' development of academic literacy practices. Ramos' (20I4) forms the foundation for measuring instructional methods in the current scholarship, which informs discussions on pedagogical inferences of rhetorical analysis in mock examination essays.

These two scholarships, Huang and Zhang (2020) and Zhang and Zhang (2021), are relevant to the current study because they inquire about structure as part of the many things they were concerned with. In a study conducted by Huang and Zhang (2020), two English classes at a university in China were involved, where one group received instruction through the process-genre approach and the other through a conventional

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approach. Pre-test, immediate, and delayed post-test measures assessed the student's writing performance. Whereas, Huang and Zhang (2020) showed that the intervention group outperformed the comparison group in terms of overall score and the components of content and organization, Zhang and Zhang (2021) indicated that the genre-based approach positively impacted the experimental group's understanding and production of argumentative writing. The current study draws on the experiences and outcomes of both study's content and organization (main concern of current study) to inform its theoretical foundation.

Academic genre is typically characterised by subject-oriented concepts and standards for the structure of texts, where specific linguistic characteristics and semantic-functional structuring are present to varying extents (Levin, 2001). In line with the arguments above, (Ray and Graham (2020); Khairuddin et al., 2021; Undarmaa Maamuujav, 2021) are herewith reviewed.

To start with, Maamuujav's (2021) study examines the lexical features of text-based analytical essays written by adolescent second language (L2) students. It explores the relationship between lexical characteristics and the quality of their writing. The researchers used computational tools to measure lexical density, diversity, and sophistication in 70 essays. The findings reveal that the essays generally exhibit low lexical density, limited lexical diversity, and a higher proportion of essential words than academic ones. Notably, academic vocabulary emerged as a significant predictor of writing quality. Despite the divergent focus and context of the two studies, that is Maamuujav's (2021) premium on lexical features as predicators of quality writing and the current study's emphasizing rhetorical analysis hinged on organization; both concern advancing students written essay and by extension, the features that donate quality writing.

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A similar investigation found that high school students with high-incidence disabilities and struggling writers face considerable challenges when taking writing assessments designed for college entrance. As a result of this, Ray and Graham (2020) examined the effectiveness of a writing intervention for improving students' performance on a college entrance exam, the writing assessment for the ACT. Students were taught planning and composing strategies for successfully taking this test using the self-regulated strategy development (SRSD) model. Ray and Graham (2020) found that SRSD instruction statistically enhanced students' planning, the quality of their written text (including ideas and analysis, development and support, organisation, and language use), including argumentative elements in their compositions, and using transition words in written text. A blend of insight from both studies is a sure way of understanding writing difficulties of students in different disciplines.

With a qualitative research design, Khairuddin et al. (2021) tasked two groups of writers to undertake the writing of an essay. After, a writing technique analysed the essays. Since the study aimed to identify the rhetorical strategies used by good and poor writers, it found that both writers utilised logos, ethos, and pathos differently. This literature not only relates with the current study based on their qualitative research designs, but also the exploration of rhetorical strategies.

Amiri and Puteh (2017) examines writing errors among 16 international postgraduate students enrolled in an Intensive English Course at a Malaysian public university. These students were required to complete a 3-5 page term paper before starting their academic programs. A mixed methodology was used to analyze the papers, which revealed that sentence structure, articles, punctuation, and capitalization were the most prevalent errors. The study also emphasized how students' native languages affected their understanding and use of English language rules. The literature is relevant because it

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considered the analysis of written assignment (term paper) as a means to evaluate writing capabilities of students. Hence, it provides the context and acknowledges research area regarding student's writing.

The Studies such as (Ana et al. (2018), Rodrigo Tovar-Viera (2018), and Cao et al. (2018) have looked at moves in sections of research articles of abstracts, introduction, among others. Rahuyu et al. (2020) conducted research to investigate the rhetorical moves found in vocational college students academic writing, particularly in the background section. In order to identify the rhetorical moves and patterns, the study analyzed 29 background sections from the final project reports of vocational college students enrolled in the English study program of one of the state polytechnics in Indonesia. Swales CARS model was used to analyze the data. This research revealed that Move 1 and Move 3 occurred in all background sections. However, Move 2 was not used in several background sections, although Step 1 in Move 2 is obligatory. Seven rhetorical patterns were found at different frequencies. The most commonly used pattern was M1-M3S1. This research revealed that Move 1 and Move 3 occurred in all background sections. However, Move 2 was not used in several background sections, although Step 1 in Move 2 is obligatory. Regarding the rhetorical patterns, seven patterns were found with different frequencies. The most used pattern was M1-M3S1. While the study sheds light on rhetorical moves in academic writing, Rahuyu et al. (2020) concluded that the study have implications for pedagogical settings related to the emphasis on establishing a niche in the background section.

While the genre-based approach (GBA) (Tripp et al., 2020; Fernando et al.,2020) has assumed increasing prominence in discussions of writing pedagogy in diverse classrooms, little is known about how secondary school student teachers understand and adopt genre pedagogies in English as a foreign language (EFL) writing classes. In

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order to fill this research gap, Liu and Chen, (2022) based on the data from semi-structured interviews and teaching materials, to examine Chinese EFL student-teachers' knowledge and use of genre-based writing instruction (GBWI) during the teaching practicum and explored the challenges they encountered in enacting it. Liu and Chen, (2022) found that teacher informants showed some familiarity with genre pedagogies, especially to scaffold the linguistic features and semantic patterns in the focused genres. However, they were generally confused about the connection between language, content, and context, and their GBWI practice scarcely involved the explicit teaching of linguistic and semantic choices for a specific audience and context, which gave rise to some perceived tensions in the teaching reality. Further probing revealed the complex interplay between Chinese EFL student-teachers' professional knowledge, perceived difficulties, and genre instructional practice in secondary school writing classes. The study by Liu and Chen (2022) is valuable because it looks at teacher-student knowledge of genre.

Similarly, (Pujianto et al. (2014) and Wardani et al. (2021) also examined academic writing through a genre lens. According to Hyland (2003), at the heart of the approach, therefore, is the view that writing pedagogies should "offer students explicit and systematic explanations of the ways language functions in social contexts" ' (p. 18), which is an essential part of genre-based instruction. Pujianto et al., (2014) has showed the effectiveness of a process-genre approach in teaching writing report text to senior high school students, emphasizing the incorporation of genre-based teaching steps. On the other hand, Wardani et al. (2021) concluded that integrating genre-based pedagogy with technology in EFL classrooms plays a significant role in improving students' writing skills, highlighting the relevance of technological tools in genre-based

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instruction. Both scholarships' focus on high school and genre based approach pedagogy is worthy for consideration.

The impact of academic writing on the evaluation of student writing and the development of writing competence has also been highlighted (Perrodin, 2021; Gamazo et al., 2022). For instance, Gamazo et al., (2022) conducted a study where 30 participants were administered with an independent pre-test. After obtaining the information, a didactic guide was developed, and the students could learn and practice discourse connectors for two months. Finally, a post-test from the same university was conducted to measure the relationship between discourse connectors and the improvement of writing competence. After comparing the statistics of the pre-test and post-test, Gamazo et al. (2022) found that students use correct punctuation and spelling and choose the correct DCs. Moreover, they chose the correct place for the DCs within the sentence. Participants' paragraphs contained topic sentences controlling ideas, supporting ideas, and conclusions. Consequently, their writing competence improved. The current scholarship and the cited literature are related as both look at assessing evaluating writing competences.

Perrodin (2021) determined if given to new information progression can be significantly identified, and explored the possibility of such topic progression being utilized as a practical form of academic writing assessment by experienced Thai tertiary teachers of academic English. Perrodin (2021) employed Multiple Linear Regression to determine the relationship between Thai writing teachers' identification of the flow of given to new topic information and a preliminary analysis of topic information flow by a qualified native English writing teacher. The insights gained from this study show that Thai academic English writing teachers cannot detect new topic information progression within academic texts. This study suggests that progression analysis in not

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a good way of evaluating academic writing of Thai students. Perrodin's (2021) focus on academic relates with the current research under study.

This section of the review of literature show that scholarly perspectives collectively illustrate academic writing as a multifaceted and dynamic domain that encompasses linguistic, disciplinary, and professional dimensions. The reviews characterized genre-based approach, language proficiency considerations; interdisciplinary relevance that can be adapted to high school level writing instruction and its impact on scholarly communication.

### 2.4 Genre and Examination Essay

The examination essay is an assessment that has been extensively researched in educational measurement and language testing. Various studies have been conducted to explore different aspects of essay assessment.

According to Devitt et al. (1996), to understand how writing works, theorists argue, we must understand how genre works. As a result, successful writers embed genres to support not only their written arguments but to review and build up their developing disciplinary knowledge (Woodward-Kron, 2005). For, Hounsell, (2005) students should write in a scholarly manner, suitable to the language of their discipline, and the marker should value argument and critical thinking over the volume of facts.

It seems anachronistic that we expect students to handwrite essay examinations when computer mediates almost all their other work (Mogey & Fluck 2014). To demystify the assertion of (Mogey and fluck, 2014), two universities, one in the UK and one in Australia, explored the use of computers in free text response examinations. The paper compares both the attitudes and the behaviours of their students concerning the use of computers in essay examinations, and contrasts the responses from the two cohorts.

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During the process, Mogey & Fluck (2014) observed that most of the students have confidence in their typing skills and report typing at least as fast as they can handwrite. The study's analysis showed that although students recognised that examination essays should have good structure and argument, when under the pressure of an examination, it is all too easy for them to be more concerned with the sheer amount of text they can write. Although automated marking continues to develop (ETS Research, 2013) globally, marking senior high school level scripts remains a human mediated task, and seems likely to remain so for some time. The focus of the current study is in tandem with the admission and recognition of examination essays having good structure by participants in Mogey and Fluck (2014).

However, Moore, (2018) seems to disagree with observations made by Mogey and Fluck (2015) who found in a comprehensive study of factors affecting student preferences to paper versus online exams that although students were aware of the importance of editing in structure, they seemed more concerned with the volume of text they could get down. Moore (2018) posited that feedback provided after the exam suggested the longer timeframe provided the opportunity to better evidence and edit their work, improving the readability and professional quality of their submissions significantly. They maintain that originally, the longer duration of the exam was set to allow for variations in typing speed among the cohort, an impact on writing quality observed by Connelly, Dockrell, and Barnett (2005).

Structuring of examination essay (concern of current study) has been identified in (Ndoricimpa ,2019) as one of the problems students face when negotiating academic writing. Ndoricimpa, (2019) draws from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to scaffold students' challenges in meeting the expectations of essay genre. Dreyfus et al's (2010) 3 x 3 linguistic toolkit was used to analyze essays written by postgraduate

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students in the department of English at one university in India. The 3 x 3 linguistic toolkit was used to zoom in student's challenges in controlling the resources of SFL's three metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal, and textual) at the level of whole text, paragraph, and sentence. After the analysis, the findings revealed that students face challenges controlling the resources of the three modes of meaning at all levels. These challenges include difficulties in grammar, lexical choices, punctuation, following expected organization, answering the question, the use of signposts to create a coherent text, and the use of engagement resources to develop a consistent argument. The cited literature is aligned with the currents' because of their consideration for structuring of examination essays.

Jiyoung and Min (2020) conducted a genre-based analysis of syntactic complexity in L2 college students' writing, revealing genre-specific features among narrative, expository, and argumentative genres. Using 14 syntactic complexity measures as indices of L2 language development of writing, this study investigates how syntactic patterns are different among four different genres and English proficiency levels. This study investigates how syntactic patterns are different among four different genres and English proficiency levels. Base on sixty-one population and 244 essays, the study's results have shown that genre difference impacts syntactic complexity in Korean students' English written products. The exploited genre features (narrative, expository) in the cited literature forms part of Horowitz's taxonomy, which the current research considered as a theory.

Various studies have been conducted to explore different aspects of essay assessment, including the measurement of essay features (Barkaoui, 2010). The study utilized a multilevel modeling (MLM) approach to investigate the contribution of rater and essay factors to variability in ESL essay holistic scores. Barkaoui, (2010) identified

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significant differences in scoring patterns between experienced and novice raters. Experienced raters assigned lower scores and prioritized linguistic accuracy, while novices gave more importance to argumentation, resulting in increased score variability. The findings revealed associations between essay features and holistic scores, illustrating the impact of rater experience on both essay scores and these associations. The research concluded that MLM is a valuable tool for exploring essay score variability, offering insights into the distinct contributions of individual, textual, and contextual factors in the rating context. Understanding the complex interplay of factors influencing ESL essay scores is important for the current study. The current study's aim of conducting rhetorical analysis of mock examination essays derived benefit from this reviewed literature relative to essay assessment.

These studies collectively contribute to a deeper understanding of the examination essay genre, encompassing student preferences, challenges faced by ESL tertiary students, pedagogic scope, and genre-specific characteristics in writing.

### 2.5 Genre and Examination Prompt

This section synthesized empirical literature review on examination prompt interpretation and response.

Furtak and Ruiz-Primo (2008) aims to assess the effectiveness of four formative assessments prompts in eliciting middle school students' ideas about sinking and floating. The study involves analyzing students' written responses and statements in classroom discussions related to each prompt. Furtak and Ruiz-Primo (2008) suggest that the success of prompts in eliciting varied student conceptions depends on their openness and familiarity. Prompts with fewer constraints and unfamiliar settings elicited diverse written responses. However, in classroom discussions, these prompts

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were more likely to yield expected level ideas or no student ideas at all. In conclusion, the scholarship stated that Open-format formative assessment prompts might be more effective for teachers to elicit a range of student ideas in writing. On the other hand, constrained-outcome space prompts might be more suitable for whole-class conversations focusing on scientifically appropriate responses. This research is relevant in understanding how prompts can elicit and assess student responses in examinations.

In relation to performance, Hayes et al. (2021) identified a dissonance in communicated versus expected cognitive complexity, with rubric complexity being higher on average. This incongruence negatively affected reliability but did not influence task difficulty. According to them, both task prompts and rubrics' cognitive complexity significantly influenced task difficulty based on Bloom's taxonomy, with a slightly stronger effect for rubrics over task prompts. The study's results highlight the need for alignment between task prompts and rubrics. While the complexity discrepancy affects reliability, adjusting task difficulty based on cognitive complexity enhances the understanding of the difficulty levels. The current draws inspiration from the interpretive nature of examination prompts in Hayes et al. (2021) because of the aim to understand how expected communications through examination prompts link with expected rhetorical feature responses.

Ertmer et al. (2011) investigated the role of question prompts in facilitating high-level engagement with course content in online courses. This study provides valuable insights into the use of prompts to enhance student-content interactions, which can apply to understanding how prompts influence examination performance and engagement. In the same disposition, Collins et al. (2018) discussed response prompting as an instructional approach for teaching students with disabilities, highlighting the importance of different prompts in guiding student behavior. This

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study's focus on using prompts for instructional purposes contributes to understanding the potential impact of prompts on examination performance, particularly for students with diverse learning needs. The mentioned literatures adds to the knowledge of how prompts influences learning outcomes, and by extension, expected responses.

Online methods of teaching and assessing communication skills meet not only the need for remote education during the COVID-19 pandemic but also future demand for flexible training methods. It is to this end that Lowe, Setzer and Roter (2021) explored the utility of standardized video prompts intended to elicit samples of genetic counselors' (GCs') interpersonal, psychosocial, and counseling skills by describing variation in GCs' socioemotional communication during their responses to a series of videotaped communication challenges. After analysis, Lowe, Setzer and Roter (2021) found that across the two scenarios, two of 10 matched prompts showed significant differences in the proportion of GCs' socioemotional content of the prompt responses ($p < 0.001$). Setzer and Roter (2021) concludes that these differences appear related to differences in the socioemotional nature of the prompts. The literature provided gives credence to how prompts influence students' association with academic content, hence relevant to the research under study because looked at how examination prompts influence answers of students.

Fifteen writing tasks, designed to elicit persuasive essays, were administered to 34,200 students in Georgia where approximately half the students received an assigned task, whereas the other half were presented with a choice of two tasks. Gabrielson, et al., (1995) used four independent variables (gender, race, writing tasks, and choice condition) were through the lens of a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Gabrielson, et al., (1995) found that female students wrote essays of higher quality than male students did and White students wrote essays of higher quality than Black students

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did. Although the cited literature and the current study has different context, that is persuasive essays as against mock examination in three disciplines, their connection is highlighted in the examination and analysis of student-written essays.

While Teasdale et al. (2023) conducted an empirical study on the values advanced by seasoned evaluators, shedding light on how values influence evaluation practices. This study provides insights into the underlying factors that may influence the interpretation and response to examination prompts. Davis (2003), on the other hand explored the use of prompts to facilitate productive reflection among middle school science students. The findings suggest that prompts can be effective in eliciting verbal self-explanations and encouraging students to elaborate on their ideas, which applies to understanding how prompts can shape examination responses. This conclusion of the study offered valuable insight into the current study's research question 3 (how do examination prompts in influence the structure of essays?).

Wilson et al. (2011) examined the use of prompts to engage young students in scientific investigations and found that prompts reliably induced reflection. This study's focus on prompting for meaningful reflection aligns with the broader theme of understanding how prompts can shape examination responses and foster deeper engagement with academic content. From the foregoing, these set of studies collectively contribute to understanding the various aspects of prompt performance (Ertmer et al. 2011; Hayes et al. 2021); prompt interpretation and response (Furtak and Ruiz-Primo 2008; Teasdale et al. 2023); encompassing training practices (Lowe, Setzer and Roter (2021); formative assessment prompts, communication skills, cognitive complexity (Davis (2003; Wilson et al. (2011), and skill acquisition in response to prompts.

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## 2.6 Analytical Framework

In order to understand the issues raised in the research question and provide detailed discussions, this section discusses key approaches used in rhetorical studies followed by a brief on the three-genre theory. The section equally discusses the following frameworks: Swales move analysis, Hewings 1993, and Horowitz (1986, 1989).

### 2.6.1 Approaches to Rhetorical Analysis

Rhetorical analysis has produced some paradigms, ranging from surface-level to functional-level language description (Bhatia, 1993). The Swalesian rhetorical approach was chosen for this study, and in the following paragraphs, I briefly discussed other rhetorical analysis approaches.

Kinneavy's (1971) Theory of Discourse, Polanyi's (1985) Linguistic Discourse Model, and Meyer's (1975, 1985) Discourse Structure Analysis were the first to be taken into consideration when looking for an acceptable analytical strategy. In Meyer's rhetorical approach, there are three fundamental levels of organisation: (1) the overall organisation of the text; (2) the macro propositional level, which deals with logical organisation and argumentation; and (3) the micro propositional level, which is focused on the coherence and arrangement of sentences within a text. In contrast to Meyer's method, Polanyi's (1985) model uses parsing as an analytical tool to break down discourse into salient components on a clause-by-clause basis, providing insight into the linear and hierarchical links that underpin language. Kinneavy's (1971) model, which is focused on the result like in the first two methods, is most known for emphasising purpose. Kinneavy states that a text's authorial aim can be descriptive, narrative, explanatory, or argumentative. Authors can utilise various additional modes in plain discourse to best achieve their overall goals.

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The researcher previously believed the above rhetorical strategies relevant considering the widespread belief that text structures underpin the knowledge that students receive and expect to create (Carrell, 1984, 1988). Nevertheless, a closer examination of each revealed that they were inappropriate for the study's purpose for various reasons. For instance, the number of examination essays examined made Polanyi's (ibid) rhetorical model seems too cumbersome to be applied, and it was determined to be acceptable only in evaluating disjointedness in a few texts as evidenced by research by Gupta (1995) and Wu (1997). The rhetorical tactics taken by Meyer (ibid) and Kinneavy (ibid) did not align with the current study.

Also considered was the rhetorical strategy developed by Lackstrom, Selinker, and Trimble in 1973. These researchers showed an interpenetration of grammar and rhetoric as found in the organisational units of scientific reports, mainly in response to the growth of text linguistics and the demands of non-native English speakers working in science and technology (introduction, method, results, and discussion). This grammatical-rhetorical approach identifies discrepancies in grammatical categories like tense, definite vs indefinite articles, and choices involving adverbs, aspect, agent phrases, and nominalisation as rhetorically motivated.

Selinker and Trimble (1974). Swales (1974), Selinker, Todd-Trimble, and Trimble (1976), as well as Taylor (2001) all highlight the value of using such an approach to look into how rhetoric and language choice interact. The significant and secondary focus of the current study would have been inverted if Lackstrom, Selinker, and Trimble's method had been used. Backstrom, Selinker, and Trimble emphasise grammatical difficulties more than the current study emphasises functional issues, with lexico-grammatical considerations coming in second.

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Reader orientation, subject formation, topic support, and meta-discourse comprised the third group of rhetorical strategies that demanded attention. Given that they could be applied to the two organisational units, the inquiry on these seemed appropriate (introductions and conclusions). The fact that they had been used in many research involving test essays made them even more alluring: reader orientation (Scarcella, 1984), subject growth (Lautamatti, 1986), topic support (Connor & Farmer, 1990), and meta-discourse (Vande Kopple, 1985). Given its broad concerns with reader orientation, Scarcella's (ibid) framework seemed the most fitting of these rhetorical methods. Her method, however, provided little insight into the general arrangement of student assessment essays and was therefore rejected by the current study.

That notwithstanding, the researcher found genre rhetorical method appropriate. In the subsequent paragraph, the researcher expatiates, and gives credence to the particular genre methods of analysis used in the study.

### 2.6.2 Genre Theory

Within the last two decades, genre has become a popular framework for analysing the form and function of scientific discourse, as well as a helpful tool for developing educational practices in fields such as rhetoric, professional writing and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Genre theory, a prominent framework in discourse analysis, has been explored widely in various research domains. There are three schools of genre, namely New Rhetoric (NR) (Miller (1984/1994); Bazerman (1988), Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL)–(Michael Halliday, Martin, 1985), and English for Specific Purpose (ESP)–(Swales, 1981, 1990; Bhatia, 1993).

Hyland (2004) delves into the application of genre theory in second language writing, emphasizing the role of genres in shaping academic and professional communication.

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This work provides a foundational understanding of genre theory's significance in language learning and communication.

Additionally, Master (1992) contributes to the discourse by focusing on genre analysis in academic and research settings, shedding light on the linguistic and rhetorical features of genres. This study offers valuable insights into the application of genre theory in understanding the conventions and communicative purposes of academic genres.

Bhatia (2010) explores interdiscursivity in professional communication, redefining genre as a configuration of text-internal and text-external factors. This work expands the scope of genre theory, emphasizing the dynamic interplay between genres and their broader communicative contexts.

The versatility of genre theory is further exemplified by (Hyon, 1996), who discusses the implications of genre theory for English as a second language (ESL) learners. This study highlights the potential of genre theory to inform language teaching practices and curriculum development.

Moreover, Johns (2008) reflects on the pedagogical implications of genre theory for novice academic students, emphasizing the ongoing quest for a pedagogy drawn from genre theories. This work underscores the practical applications of genre theory in educational settings, particularly in developing students' genre awareness and writing competence. Troyan (2014) emphasizes the relevance of genre theory in the era of the Common Core State Standards, highlighting its focus on authentic language use and its potential for language learning. This study underscores the adaptability of genre theory in addressing contemporary educational standards and language learning objectives.

(Pérez-Llantada 2015), who discusses the scope of genre analysis in language-related scenarios further, shows the interdisciplinary nature of genre theory. This work

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emphasizes the comprehensive insights provided by genre theory into discourse communities, genres, and language learning tasks. Furthermore, Clynes and Henry (2004) explore the effectiveness of genre-based pedagogy, highlighting the need for research to determine the impact of genre-based approaches on language learning and teaching. This study underscores the practical implications of genre theory in educational contexts, particularly in informing language pedagogy and curriculum design.

In conclusion, the current study settles on the ESP tradition, influenced by the educational stances of genre theory traditions. It distinguishes ESP and Sydney Schools for their robust educational structures, while the American School leans towards explicit instruction. This contrast arises from their views on teaching genre: Sydney and ESP consider it stable and teachable, while the American School sees it as disorderly and challenging to teach.

The study prioritizes pedagogical and theoretical focus, prompting exploration of Sydney and ESP. The ESP tradition, known for teaching generic conventions, notably aids non-native English speakers in integrating into discourse communities. Consequently, the research predominantly concentrates on the ESP tradition because of its adaptable approach in guiding students to understand the conventions of different genres. In that context, Swales approach, Hewings approach and Horowitz approached are selected and explained in the subsequent paragraphs.

#### 2.6.2.1 Swales' (1981, 1990) Approach to Genre Analysis

The genre analysis framework proposed by Swales has indeed been influential in shaping our understanding of communicative events and rhetorical structures in various discourse communities. Swales' seminal work, "Genre and the New Rhetoric" Swales et al. (1995), has been pivotal in establishing the theoretical foundations of genre

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analysis, emphasizing the communicative purposes and rhetorical strategies that characterize genres.

Hyon's study, "Genre in Three Traditions: Implications for ESL" (Hyon, 1996), highlights Swales' significant contributions to genre theory in English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts, emphasizing genres as "communicative events" characterized by their "communicative purposes" and various patterns of "structure, style, content, and intended audience."

Furthermore, Freedman and Medway, (2003) delves into the interdiscursivity in professional communication, redefining genre as a configuration of text-internal and text-external factors. This study expands the scope of genre theory, emphasizing the dynamic interplay between genres and their broader communicative contexts.

Moreover, Master, (1992) provides valuable insights into the application of genre theory in understanding the conventions and communicative purposes of academic genres, showcasing the relevance of Swales' genre analysis framework in academic and research settings. The adaptability and relevance of Swales' genre analysis framework are further exemplified by Pérez-Llantada, (2015). This study emphasizes the comprehensive insights provided by genre theory into discourse communities, genres, and language learning tasks, showcasing the versatility of Swales' genre analysis framework in diverse language-related scenarios. Pérez-Llantada, (2015) underscores the adaptability of genre theory in addressing contemporary educational standards and language learning objectives, highlighting its relevance in educational settings.

Zhu (2000) refers to Swales' techniques for genre analysis in developing knowledge structures in teaching cross-cultural sales genres. Zhu (2000) highlights the pedagogical implications of Swales' approach in language teaching and genre-based pedagogy.

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For further reading, the following scholarships can be consulted. RA (Swales & Najjar, 1987; Kavanoz,& Simsek, (2013); Zhang & Wannaruk, 2016); abstract (Swales, 1990a; Doro, 2013; Karmil & Laila, 2020), dissertation/thesis (Arizavi, 2013; Kakh et al., 2014; Pujiyanti et al., 2018); as well as spoken academic genres such as conference presentation (Carter-Thomas and Rowley-Jolivet (2003), and non-academic genres such as job application (Thumnong & Patanasom, 2017) and legislative instrument (Bhatia, 1993).

The above notwithstanding, the critical point here is why genre studies should apply to a curriculum genre like the examination essay in the current study, given the pedagogical justification ( Sánchez Cuervo, 2016). First, Swales' genre approach, in the researcher's opinion, offers the best fit for the description and analysis of the texts that the study wishes to investigate, namely the introduction and conclusion sections written by high school students in their examination essays. It shows a nexus of socio-cognitive explanations, linguistic and rhetorical insights. Second, using Swales' move analysis in the study of examination essays could have pedagogical value in raising high school students' rhetorical awareness of their writing. Finally, in this spirit, the study's findings may improve communication across departments and disciplines and for students and teachers at the research location.

#### 2.6.2.2 Hewings 1993 Approach

Hewings' conclusion move analysis is a rhetorical move analysis that focuses on the conclusion section of academic papers. The analysis aims to identify the rhetorical moves that are commonly used in the conclusion section and to examine their functions and structures (Bunton, 2005; Nguyen and Pramoolsook, 2015). Hewings' conclusion move analysis is part of a larger genre analysis approach that emphasizes the communicative purposes and rhetorical strategies of academic writing (Sidek et al.,

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2016; Kanoksilapatham, 2007). According to Hewings, the conclusion section of academic papers typically includes a statement of the main findings, a discussion of the implications of the findings, and a summary of the paper's contributions to the field (Bunton 2005; Nguyen and Pramoolsook, 2016). The conclusion move analysis can help writers to understand the rhetorical functions of the conclusion section and to structure their papers effectively (Nguyen and Pramoolsook 2015). The analysis can also help readers to identify the main findings and contributions of the paper and to evaluate its significance and relevance to the field (Bunton, 2005).

Although mainly used at the conclusions of research articles, the researcher has modified it in the current study because of the level of students (Senior High School).

**2.6.2.3 Horowitz (1986, 1989) Approach**

In relations to examination prompts, many theories can assist in the analysis of examination prompts. Some include 1. the Constructivism theory associated with scholars such as Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky (which can explore how prompts activate prior knowledge, prompt critical thinking, and guide students in constructing responses); 2. Sociocultural Theory of Lev Vygotsky (which seeks to explore how prompts draw on cultural practices, values, and norms and how they negotiate the interactions between students and the academic community); 3. Cognitive Load by John Sweller (It can explore how different prompts may affect cognitive load and subsequently affect student performance); and 4. Self-Determination Theory developed by Edward Deci and Richard Ryan (which can explore how prompts provide meaningful choices, challenge students' abilities, and foster a sense of connection to the task, influencing students' motivation and engagement).

The above notwithstanding, the researcher finds Horowitz's (1986b, 1989) taxonomy helpful in analysing examination prompts.

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Horowitz (1989) proposed a taxonomy of examination prompts that classifies essay examination prompts into four categories based on their function and form (Horowitz, 1986). The four categories are:

1. Informational prompts: These prompts ask students to provide information about a topic or concept. They may ask students to define a term, describe a process, or summarize a theory.
2. Analytical prompts: These prompts ask students to analyze a topic or concept. They may ask students to compare and contrast different theories, evaluate an argument, or apply a theory to a case study.
3. Argumentative prompts: These prompts ask students to take a position on a topic or concept and support their position with evidence. They may ask students to argue for or against a particular policy, defend a particular theory, or propose a solution to a problem.
4. Creative prompts: These prompts ask students to use their imagination and creativity to respond to a topic or concept. They may ask students to write a story, create a dialogue, or design an experiment.

**2.7 Key Concepts**

The previous section outlined the analytical framework on which the study rests, throwing up concepts, some of which are key terms in the title of the present thesis, and which need further explication. To provide the reader with a general orientation on the 34 conceptual terrain of the research study, three key terms, namely “disciplinary variation”, “rhetoric" and “examination essay” are discussed.

**2.7. 1 Disciplinary Variation**

Disciplinary variation encompasses the differences and unique characteristics observed in academic practices, research methodologies, and knowledge production across

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different fields of study. The concept of disciplinary variation has been widely explored in diverse research domains, shedding light on the distinct patterns and practices that characterize different disciplines.

Rijnsoever and Hessels (2011) investigate the factors associated with disciplinary and interdisciplinary research collaboration, shedding light on the unique characteristics of researchers and the rewarding collaborations in different scientific disciplines. Rijnsoever and Hessels (2011) emphasize the diverse research practices and collaboration structures that are influenced by disciplinary contexts. Jacobs and Frickel (2009) critically assess interdisciplinarity, highlighting the differences in academic fields and the endurance of the current disciplinary structure. This research underscores the varying aims, values, and norms across different academic cultures, highlighting the disciplinary variation in academic orientations and practices.

Moreover, Barjak (2006) explore the role of the internet in informal scholarly communication, emphasizing the productivity and disadvantaged aspects of the internet in academic communication. This study highlights the disciplinary differences in utilizing digital resources and the impact of the internet on scholarly communication practices. Additionally, Yan (2015) examines the patterns of dynamic disciplinary knowledge production and diffusion, displaying the variations in knowledge dissemination and production across different scientific fields. This scholarship provides insights into the diverse patterns of knowledge creation and diffusion influenced by disciplinary contexts.

The interdisciplinary nature of disciplinary variation is further exemplified by Desanto and Nichols (DeSanto & Nichols, 2017), which surveys faculty knowledge, use, and opinions about scholarly metrics. This work highlights the diverse perspectives and opinions on scholarly metrics across different academic disciplines, displaying the

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disciplinary variation in the use and perception of scholarly metrics. Furthermore, Rostan and Ceravolo (2015) explore the internationalization of the academy, emphasizing the convergence and divergence across disciplines. This study underscores the varying degrees of internationalization and the influence of disciplinary contexts on the global engagement of academic fields.

The reviewed studies collectively highlight the significance of disciplinary variation in shaping academic practices, research collaborations, knowledge dissemination, and internationalization efforts across diverse academic disciplines. These studies provide valuable insights into the diverse research practices, collaboration structures, and knowledge production influenced by disciplinary contexts.

### 2.7.2 Rhetoric

Rhetoric, as a concept, encompasses the art of persuasive communication and the strategic use of language to influence, persuade, or inform an audience. The study of rhetoric involves the examination of how language is used to shape perceptions, construct arguments, and convey meaning. For instance, Jackson (1987) delves into the persuasive strategies employed in economic discourse, highlighting the role of rhetoric in shaping economic arguments and influencing decision-making.

Similarly, Devitt (2015) emphasizes the intersection of genre analysis and rhetorical-linguistic genre studies, highlighting how rhetorical strategies embed within specific genres to achieve communicative purposes. Disciplinary variation plays a crucial role in shaping the application of rhetoric across different fields of study. Kuteeva and Negretti (2016) explore how disciplinary contexts influence genre knowledge and practices, highlighting the diverse rhetorical strategies employed across disciplines, such as computer science and medicine. This underscores the impact of disciplinary

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variation on the rhetorical practices and communicative norms within specific academic fields.

Rhetoric also extends beyond traditional academic disciplines. Whereas (Zarefsky, 2004) examines the persuasive strategies employed in political discourse. This highlights the interdisciplinary nature of rhetoric, highlighting its relevance in political communication and public discourse. Moyo (2014) emphasizes the role of rhetoric in shaping poetic expression, underscoring the significance of rhetoric in literary and artistic domains.

In conclusion, the concept of rhetoric encompasses the strategic use of language to persuade, inform, and influence, and its application extends across diverse academic disciplines and communicative contexts. The study of rhetoric provides valuable insights into the persuasive strategies embedded within language and the diverse communicative practices across different fields of study.

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# CHAPTER THREE

# METHODOLOGY

## 3.0 Introduction

This chapter operationalises the research approach, the research design, sampling techniques, data collection, and data analysis techniques as methodological strategies deployed in the study.

## 3.1 Research Approach

Given the focus and objectives of this study, a qualitative research approach is employed. Scholars such as Braun and Clarke (2013) and Creswell (2014) posit that qualitative research deals primarily with meanings. Also, qualitative research has been recognised for providing an in-depth understanding of research subjects. For instance, according to Creswell (2014), "Qualitative research is designed to explore the human elements of a given topic, while quantitative research is concerned with quantifying the data collected to test hypotheses and generalise results" (Creswell, 2014, p. 3). Invariably, qualitative research allows researchers to explore complex and nuanced aspects of the research subject that cannot be captured through quantitative research methods.

Drawing on these arguments, the qualitative approach was adopted to examine the disciplinary rhetorical features used in three disciplines, English Literature, Biology, and Business Management, through examination essays. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), this kind of study makes it easier to examine the meanings that are ingrained in texts; as a result, the researcher used this method to investigate and examine the meanings that are embedded in texts (pictures, written texts, and videos),

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in the current study, mock examination essays of students. Instead of subjecting data to mathematical transformations, as with a quantitative study, this research method enables the researcher to make pertinent linked interpretations concerning social actions (Braun & Clarke, 2013). These arguments were supported by the fact that the study did not involve any mathematical calculations and instead required the researcher to immediately participate in interpreting the data collected (interviews, and examination essays).

### 3.2 Research Design

A research type of inquiry that gives clear guidelines for the tactics and techniques to be used in conducting a study is known as a research design (Creswell, 2014). In essence, the research design affects all data-gathering methods and sample strategies. Therefore, the research design broadly explains how the researcher plans to conduct a study. According to Creswell (2014), the nature of the research topic, the issues to be addressed, the study's participants and audience, and the researcher's personal experiences all influence the choice of research design. Based on this argument and given that the study primarily involves textual analysis, a textual cum rhetorical analytical framework is chosen following the research design. To that end, unedited samples of students' writing are provided, along with quotes and paraphrased comments from the interview and survey data. However, because the rhetorical analytical framework frequently yields quantitative results, descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and means are employed when appropriate. Descriptive statistics are primarily used to identify trends and patterns in the frequency of moves, the textual space allotted to each move, and the sequencing of moves in the selected rhetorical features.

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The second critical reason for using an analytical framework for the study was to operationalise the study's two key variables: "introduction" and "conclusion" on the one hand and "move" on the other. The "introduction" was regarded as a text opener with a cataphoric connotation, an essay section that provides information pointing to its full development in the body (Lawe-Davies, 1998). Readers are thus placed in anticipation as they attempt to reconcile this preparatory textual segment with what is provided in the essay's "body." As a front device, the introduction provides readers with their first accurate contact with a text and impressions of what will come. In contrast, the "conclusion" is a recognisable part of a text (consisting of at least one sentence) with a broad anaphoric orientation and signals closure. Unlike the introduction, the conclusion is a segment in an essay that generally points backwards to the fully developed body. However, as Hyland notes, it could also have a "prospective focus" (Hyland, 1990, p. 74) in highlighting a future action. In short, the essential function of a conclusion is twofold: a) to signal a sense of closure after leading the reader through one or more arguments, and b) to make one final attempt to persuade the reader. Before attempting the sample size, the study would focus on the institution and disciplinary context.

### 3.2.1 Institutional context

As a member of the research's site community, the reason for selecting Ve Senior High School for this study is that, no research has been conducted there before, making it an ideal candidate for investigation. Secondly, VESHS was selected due to the researcher's membership in that community which could afford the researcher accessible rooms to operate in getting data, among others, done on time. In furtherance, it also has the potency to expand the scope of studies on secondary school students writing in Ghana. Ve SHS is a senior high school in the Afadjato South District of the Volta Region of

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Ghana. The school operates seven departments: Languages, Sciences, Social Sciences, Agric Science, Home Economics, General Arts, and Visual Science.

**Table 3.1: Distribution of Final Year Students and Tutors, VE SHS**

| DEPARTMENTS | Gender | SHS 3 | TUTORS |
|---|---|---|---|
| **LANGUAGE** | Male | 20 | 4 |
| | Female | 16 | 0 |
| | Total | 36 | 4 |
| **SCIENCE** | Male | 4 | 4 |
| | Female | 1 | 0 |
| | Total | 5 | 4 |
| **SOCIAL SCIENCE** | Male | 12 | 3 |
| | Female | 4 | 2 |
| | Total | 16 | 5 |
| **AGRIC** | Male | 5 | 4 |
| | Female | 1 | 0 |
| | Total | 6 | 4 |
| **HOME ECONOMICS** | Male | 1 | 0 |
| | Female | 90 | 4 |

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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | 91 | 4 |
| **GENERAL ARTS** | Male | 40 | 5 |
| | Female | 28 | 2 |
| | Total | 68 | 7 |
| **VISUAL ARTS** | Male | 59 | 5 |
| | Female | 21 | 0 |
| | Total | 80 | 5 |
| **Total** | Male | 123 | 25 |
| | Female | 162 | 8 |
| | Total | 285 | 33 |

As shown in table (3.1), the Department of Home Economics is the largest, with a student population of (91) followed by the Department of Visual Arts (80). On the other hand, the science department is the smallest, with a population of (5). Regarding tutors, General Arts have as much as (7) while others such as Home Economics, Agriculture, and Languages had (4). The departments have various elective subjects run under them.

### 3.2.2 Disciplinary context

The disciplinary context refers to the particular academic field or discipline where a research study is situated. It is crucial to consider disciplinary context when conducting research because different disciplines have varying research traditions, methods, and expectations. Knowing the disciplinary context can assist researchers in developing

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appropriate research questions, choosing suitable methods, and interpreting their findings in a way that is significant within the context of the discipline.

The document, which contains the subjects/discipline pathed at the senior high school, is the syllabus. A syllabus is an organised document of instruction (Chandler, 1985). It organises, and structures intended learning, communicated from teacher to pupil (Eash, 1991). It is under the auspices of the Ghana Education Service (GES) of the Ministry of Education (MoE) that the National Council designs the syllabuses for the seven programs of the senior high school for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA), formerly the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD). It is then handed over to the classroom teacher for implementation after the syllabus has been designed.

The programs have seven disciplines: Agricultural, Social Science, Technical Drawing, General Science, General Arts, Home Economics, and Visual Arts. Since the study concerns three disciplines under General Arts, Business, and General Science, the researcher herewith delimits the three. The General Arts program offers a wide range of courses, including a focus on studying Christianity, French, geography, Ghanaian languages, government, history, Islamic religious studies, Literature in English, economics, and West African traditional religion. The Business program includes the following areas: Business Management; Cost Accounting; Typography; Office Duties; and Financial Accounting. The General Science program includes Chemistry, elective Biology, elective Physics, and elective Mathematics.

The study selected Literature, Business Management, and Biology based on their possible extensive writing nature across disciplines. As a powerful tool for teaching and learning, literature is chosen because it ascribes importance to language in general and writing. Moreover, being part of this department will provide me with the opportunity

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to interpret data with ease. Similarly, from conversation held with other colleagues, Business management, which is one of the disciplines in the social sciences, recognizes the importance of extended writing skills. For the sciences, Aside from chemistry and physics, which are mathematically inclined, biology is the only aspect that allows for extensive writing. It must add that each of the disciplines chosen for this study has its philosophical disposition and rhetoric. Another reason for the selection of these three disciplines is in line with a scholarly reseach conducted by Kaidan et al. (2021). The study's findings revealed that in looking at cross-disciplines, potential similarities tend to be greater across the disciplines within one area than those across four areas. Alternatively, they believe that differences tend to bend towards the disciplines across areas than within one specific area. In effect, looking at examination across disciplines will offer us a better view in understanding how and why they orient their readers in the manner they do.

#### 3.2.2.1 Literature in English (LIT)

Senior high school Literature in English is an essential subject that aims to develop students' critical thinking, analytical skills, and creativity by studying literary works. According to the Ghana Education Service (GES) curriculum (2010), studying Literature contributes to our comprehension of human nature and our capacity to respond to life's difficulties in different cultural contexts. It further suggests that the subject offers a variety of responses to human difficulties, thus increasing our comprehension of life through the Literature we read in various genres, eras, and cultures. The English literature syllabus (2010) opined that the knowledge and experience acquired through literature study help us address our diverse human issues. Literature thus fosters an individual's capacity to comprehend any literary work, whether in prose, drama, or poetry. The subject fosters a desire and love for reading for

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enjoyment and knowledge, increasing our English proficiency. Below are reasons for its selection:

Firstly, literature is a discipline that requires students to analyze and interpret texts, which involves the use of rhetorical strategies. Therefore, analyzing literature essays can provide insights into how students use rhetorical strategies to convey their ideas. Secondly, literature essays often require students to analyze the author's use of language and literary devices, which can provide a rich source of data for rhetorical analysis.

Overall, Literature in English is a vital subject in senior high school education, as it provides students with the necessary skills and knowledge to appreciate and analyse literary works and to communicate effectively through writing.

**3.2.2.2 Biology (BIO)**

According to (The teaching syllabus for Biology, 2010), the long-term survival of humanity and the growth of nations will always be contingent upon the advancement of science and technology.

Biology is a discipline that requires students to communicate complex scientific concepts in a clear and concise manner, which involves the use of rhetorical strategies. Therefore, analyzing biology essays can provide insights into how students use rhetorical strategies to convey their ideas in a scientific context. It essays often require students to analyze and interpret scientific data, which can provide a rich source of data for rhetorical analysis.

Biology is a discipline that is becoming increasingly important in today's world, and analyzing biology essays can provide insights into how well students are learning and applying rhetorical strategies in a scientific context.

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Writing plays a critical role in Senior High School Elective Science, allowing students to communicate their ideas and findings clearly and concisely. These assignments develop students' writing skills and encourage them to think critically and analytically about scientific concepts.

#### 3.2.2.3 Business Management (BM)

According to the Ghana Education Service, the Senior High School Business Management course aims to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become influential entrepreneurs and managers in their future careers (Ghana Education Service, 2010).

Effective communication skills are crucial in the field of business management, and students are required to develop these skills using rhetorical strategies in a professional setting. By analyzing business management essays, we can gain valuable insights into how students apply these strategies to convey their ideas effectively. These essays typically involve the analysis and evaluation of business strategies, making them a valuable source of data for rhetorical analysis. In today's global economy, the importance of business management as a discipline has significantly increased, and analyzing business management essays can help determine how well students are learning and applying rhetorical strategies in a real-world context.

### 3.3 Pre-field Work

Concerning the pre-field work, two main activities: first, a preliminary survey of the research site-Ve Senior High School, and the construction of secondary research instruments, that is, interview questions for HoDs, teachers and students. Through a close survey, the three departments – Languages, Science and Business- were visited,

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and HoDs, teachers and students were interacted with. During the visit, samples of written assignments were collected.

The two essential activities above psyched the researcher ahead of the fieldwork. The survey of the research site gave the researcher room to learn more about the hierarchical structures of the three sub-disciplinary departments.

### 3.4 Field Work

At this stage, the sampling of participants and text and the collection of actual data were addressed.

#### 3.4.1 Sampling of participants and texts

The sampling process involves selecting a limited number of individuals or groups from a larger sample for study or analysis (Creswell, 2014). Lindlof and Taylor (2017) add to this when they say that sampling techniques direct researchers to know the individuals to interview and things to observe for a study. Another scholar, Given (2008), suggests that the sampling technique of a study should primarily be selected based on the research objectives. In line with the stand of Given (2008), the purposive and census sampling method were adopted, which means that the samples are selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research question or objectives and selecting of entire population under study, respectively. The purposive criteria included the year group of students, the three disciplines, subject-specific teachers, and HoDs.

For this study, the researcher has chosen to sample teachers and students interviewees from three Ve Senior High School departments (languages, social sciences and general sciences). By selecting specific subjects from different departments, the researcher can ensure that the sample is more representative of the larger population of Ve Senior High

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School students. Literature, business management, and biology are the subjects chosen for examination essays (see 3.2.2 to 3.2.2.3)

Daymon and Holloway (2011) posit that the most suitable number of participants selected for qualitative research largely depends on the type of research questions, the type of approach, and the time resources available to the researcher. They added that sometimes a small sample size allows the researcher to capture relevant specific responses and interpretations of the participants concerning the issue. Their position has been collaborated by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) when they postulate that in undergoing qualitative research, it is advisable sometimes to rely on small sample sizes to give detailed and comprehensive attention to the phenomenon being studied.

Subject to these arguments, combined with the position of Baum (2002), that there are no stringent directives for settling on a sample size for qualitative research. To choose whom to interview from the group of final-year students, the researcher purposively, based on academic achievement asked the subject-specific teachers to provide the two best–performing students from their classes (literature, science, and business management). Going by this, two (2) students for each subject totaling six were sampled. The study's interviewed participants were selected because of the knowledge they have gained regarding their specific disciplines for the period they were in school.

Unlike the selection of student interviewees, that of teachers was done first by selecting those who prepared the final-year students. To have a possibly varied view, one (1) more, each from the three departments, was selected in addition to those who prepared the students. In all, it gave six (6) teacher interviewees.

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Owing to the relatively small student populations offering the three disciplines, the researcher used a census sampling method to select the examination scripts subject to their various discipline population. This enabled a quick access to the texts and their promise for answering the research questions investigated in this study. The exam scripts as obtained are as follows: Literature (LIT): 30, Science (SCI): 5, and Business Management (BM): 15. Because there were no mandatory essay examination questions in the three disciplines and students had answered various questions, I had to go through all of the scripts to determine which essay questions students had answered. Thirty (30), fifteen (15), and five (5) scripts were chosen from the three disciplines, respectively, as a sample for analysis. Considering the challenge encountered while sorting the scripts, the selection was based on the number deemed enough for analysis. In addition, how the scripts ascribe to the definition of an essay was considered.

### 3.4.2 Collection of data

The written examination essays of the sampled students were collected, and the interviews, the secondary instrument used in this study, were administered. This section focuses on the study's textual data, examining the answer scripts and examination prompts.

**Table 3.2: Distribution of Essays According to Disciplines and Examination Prompts**

| Examination Prompts | Literature Essays | Science Essays | Business Management Essays | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Prompt 1 | 30 | 5 | 15 | 50 |
| **Total** | **30** | **5** | **15** | **50** |

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The primary texts for this study were selected from the 2023 final-year student mock examination. The texts were examination essays that the students were required to write. As such, different times were allocated based on the subject involved. In addition, the number of essays required to be written varies from one department to the other. Immediately after each paper, the question paper and students' answer scripts of the three disciplines were requested and photocopied for analysis. The examination prompts shown in figure 3.1 represent those answered by most students.

| **Disciplines** | **Examination Prompts** | **Wording** |
|---|---|---|
| **Literature** | LITP | 1. How does Heathcliff's introduction to the Earnshaws affect the family?<br>2. Examine the significance of Mr Lockwoods second visit to Wuthering Heights. |
| **Biology** | BIOP | 1a. What is a protein<br>1b. Explain three functions of protein |
| **Business Management** | BMP | Discuss four functions of money**.** |

**Figure (3.1): Essay Prompts in the Disciplinary Texts**

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Aside from the primary textual data, a self-designed semi-structured interview was constructed to elicit Heads of Departments, Teachers, and Students' insight into writing.

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), interviews can be used in various research designs, including exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. As such, interviews can provide in-depth insights into individuals' experiences, attitudes, and behaviours and help researchers understand the research topic better. As said, semi-structured interviews are commonly used in qualitative research to gather participant data in a natural and conversational setting. As Creswell (2014) notes, the semi-structured interview "is instrumental when the researcher wants to obtain more detailed information than a survey can provide, but also wants to maintain some consistency across respondents" (Creswell, 2014, p. 187). This method allows for flexibility that can lead to more in-depth and nuanced responses from participants while still providing some structure and comparability across interviews. Another scholar Patton (2015), supports Creswell's (2014) position by saying that "the semi-structured interview combines the strengths of standardised survey questions with the flexibility of open-ended questions that allow for a rich and detailed exploration of the research topic" (p. 329).

In support of the above arguments, a semi-structured interview was exploited in this study. By way of structured form, the two sets of groups - HoDs and teachers and final-year students were administered with questions in the same order. On the other hand, the unstructured part allowed the researcher to probe more in-depth and nuanced participant responses. The sampled interviewees comprised six (6) students, six (6) teachers, and three (3) HoDs.

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The study used diverse set of questions. That of heads of departments rested on students' writing in the departments, interpretations of the quality of students' examination essays, evaluation, and what is expected of the students. The subject teachers (who are examiners in Literature, Biology, and Business Management) focused on the nature of the course, the teaching and learning of the course, the importance of writing in the course, and the teacher's expectations of the answers to the examination pointers. The students' depended on their use of language in their discipline, the teaching and learning of the courses in question, their awareness of disciplinary differentiation, and their discernment of the quality of their writing. Throughout the interviews, the researcher played the role of a detached listener. According to Gersons and Horowitz (2002), the detached listener is "the person who listens empathetically, without imposing his or her values or judgments, and who can understand and appreciate the client's point of view" (Gersons & Horowitz, 2002, p. 275). Assuming the role of a detached listener is an essential skill for qualitative researchers conducting semi-structured interviews, as it allows them to maintain a neutral and objective stance, avoiding potential biases and ensuring the validity of the data collected.

With the help of a Tecno Spark 8pro recorder, subject to the consent of participants, the students were interviewed in the school's library, and both heads of departments and teachers were interviewed under a tree. The interviews lasted 20 minutes and 40 minutes, respectively.

### 3.5 Post-Field Activities

One key issue addressed in this section is labelling the moves in the introduction and conclusions. Also, in order to aid interview transcriptions and easy identification of participants (HoDs, teachers and students), as well as examination prompt, codes are

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assigned as follows: Heads of Department are coded as HoD1; teachers are herein coded LITT as Literature teacher, BMT for Business Management teacher and BIOT representing the Biology teacher. Concerning the examination prompts, LITP, BMP and BIOP shall stand for Literature prompt, Business Management prompt and Biology prompt, respectively.

### 3.5.1 Labelling the moves

The study is considered a qualitative analytical framework because the study involves textual analysis. As a result, samples of students' writing were relied on, as well as quotes and paraphrased comments from the interviews. Another critical issue in this section was briefly explaining what constitutes the introduction and conclusion.

The introduction plays a crucial role in setting the tone and providing essential information to the reader. According to Oshima & Hogue (2007, p 150), "The introductory paragraph, or introduction, is the first paragraph of an essay. It has two functions: (1) It attracts the reader's interest, and (2) it introduces the topic of the essay". The introduction usually aims to grab the reader's attention and give them a sense of what to expect from the essay. In addition to providing background information and introducing the main argument, the introduction provides any necessary context or background information.

Conversely, a conclusion is an integral part of the overall structure. "The concluding paragraph is the last paragraph of an essay. It has three purposes: it signals the end of the essay, reminds the reader of the main points, and leaves the reader with final thoughts on the topic" (Oshima & Hogue, 2007, p. 153). The conclusion helps reinforce the essay's main argument and remind the reader of its significance. They further postulate that, in the concluding paragraph, the main points of the thesis statement are

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summarised, or the thesis statement is repeated in various words and may be accompanied by one or more sentences. A final comment may be included in the second part. To them, this section is the appropriate place to express an opinion, state a point of view, or provide advice. However, it is essential to note that the concluding paragraph should not contain any new ideas; instead, it should simply reflect what has already been discussed.

### 3.6 Ethical Consideration

The importance of adhering to ethics in research cannot be overstated (Creswell, 2013). The University of Education, Winneba, has established standard ethical research codes for its faculty and students. One of the most relevant ethical codes states that before being studied, participants must be appropriately informed by the researcher and willingly make themselves available to participate in the study. Thus, the researcher attempted to meet this stipulated principle in this study. Before beginning the study, the researcher contacted and informed the Head of the Institution, Heads of Departments, and Subject Teachers of the study's intentions.

Creswell (2013) and others, such as Croucher and Cronn-Mills (2014), have identified some critical ethical needs, which this study has confirmed. According to Croucher and Cronn-Mills (2014), relevant principles such as informed consent, participant privacy, and debriefing must be considered when conducting ethical research. One of the most critical ethical issues in research is informed consent. According to Greenstein & Davis (2013), informed consent must include an introduction to the study and its purpose, an explanation of the research subjects' selection, and the procedures that will be followed. However, Hesse-Biber (2016) suggests that informed consent does not necessarily imply handing a form to the participant to approve but rather that the researcher has

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well-educated the participant regarding the study and the potential consequences of the findings.

As a result of the preceding arguments, the researcher contacted the participants and thoroughly explained the nature of the study. The researcher also assured the participants that they would remain anonymous.

### 3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter mainly focused on the techniques and approaches adopted to gather the data for the study. It expanded the selection of qualitative approach and Swales (1990) move analysis as a framework used in the data analysis.

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# CHAPTER FOUR

# DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

## 4.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the findings of the study based on data drawn from examination essays and interviews. The data gathered are discussed in line with Swales' move analysis. The data were obtained from three departments in Ve Senior High School: Languages, Business, and Science. Codes were ascribed to the participants to address ethical anonymity issues, referred to as interviewees. After analysing the examination essay data, emerging themes were interpreted to answer the research questions that guided the study.

Although the researchers expected that there would be extended writing in the subjects selected, in which students ideally needed to write introductions and conclusions to their essays, it was prudent to find out whether or not students introduced or concluded their essays. If they do, how much textual space is given to the introduction and conclusion subject to the whole essay?

To find answers to the research questions, Swales's move was used in the introduction and conclusion of essays among the disciplines. Of course, the Swales moves are modified in line with the apparent reason that, unlike its application in research articles, this study considers it for examination essays at the high school level.

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| **Rhetorical Unit** | **Swales (1990a)** | **Okor (2023)** |
|---|---|---|
| **Move 1** | Establishing a territory | Backgrounding |
| **Move 2** | Establishing a niche | Engaging closely with the issue |
| **Move 3** | Occupying a niche | Intent of essay |

**Figure (4.1): Comparison of the Framework of Analysis of Moves in Introductions in the Present Study and that of the Previous Study**

Move 1 (backgrounding) in the introduction highlights the issues captured in the examination prompt. Move 2 (Engaging closely with the issue) deals further with the issue raised in the exam prompt through explanation and definition, among others. Move 3 (intent of the essay) tells what is expected in the essay's body. Due to the difference in genre, it can be seen that although the number of moves in the current study and Swales's (1990) revised CARS model, the difference comes in such that. In contrast, this study's Move 1 only background the issues raised in the exam prompts, while Swales' (1990) Move 1 relies on existing Literature to state the importance of the research. Move 2 also differs due to the data involved in the current study being examination essays against Research Articles. Move 3 is similar to that of Swales, such that it tells the intent of the essay's body.

On the other hand, a cursory look at the conclusions showed patterns that can be compared with Hewings' 1990 conclusions, as shown in figure (3.3) below, but are modified for the current study.

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| Rhetorical Unit | Hewings (1990) | Okor 2023 |
|---|---|---|
| **Move 1** | Summarising | Summarising through repeating of issues raised in exam prompt. |
| **Move 2** | Evaluating | Offering recommendations/ highlighting the significance of issue(s) in the prompt |
| **Move 3** | Recommending | |

**Figure (4.2): Comparison of the Framework of Analysis of Moves in Conclusions in the Present Study and that of the Previous Study**

Move 1 (summary) summarises the points in response to a prompt. To reinforce the central concept, this move typically results in a list of points, which focus on the key terms used in the prompts or assess the issue raised. Move 2 expands the issues summarised in the prompt, either by providing recommendations/s or emphasising the importance of the issue raised.

This study's framework is similar to Hewings' (1993) in that it uses summarising as a critical rhetorical tool to emphasise the points already discussed and to guarantee that the reader has followed the exposition throughout the essay. The main distinction between the two frameworks is the number and type of specific movements. The first observation was that the data set followed a two-move pattern instead of Hewings' three-move pattern. As an example of the nature of particular Moves, whereas in this

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study Move 1 (Summarising through repeating of issues raised in exam prompt) of this study permits the listing of items either worldly or sententially, in Hewings' framework, summarising can only be done at a sentential level due to the length of the text and the genre in question. Lastly, it is essential to note that there is a distinction between recommending move 2 in this study and Hewings' (1993). In other words, Hewings' recommendation emphasises the need for additional research in light of the findings and limitations of the current study. Meanwhile, this move is absent in an examination essay, as it is not considered a research genre. Broadly, both frameworks are similar except for the use of the moves.

### 4.1 Results from Corroborating Data

This section presents relevant corroborating interview data premised on two reasons. One, they offer insight into each of the department's academic norms, methodologies, and accepted practices. Two, they offer us the opportunity to understand the background from which these senior high school students deployed the two key rhetorical features (introduction and conclusion) in their essays.

#### 4.1.1 Department's Interview Data

Coming first is the data obtained from the HoDs, followed by the data obtained from the subject teachers who teach these three subjects in the departments.

At the interview with HoDs and subject teachers, one of the key topics discussed was the concept of "good writing" in student examination essays. They all acknowledged that the student's ability to exhibit knowledge and mastery in correctly answering the questions constitutes good writing. For instance, the Sciences emphasised the importance of "well-written" essays as the student's ability to write complex scientific

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concepts in a clear and concise manner. The language's use of terms such as "persuasive writing" coupled with "reasonable balance" between content, language, and structure, in contrast to the Business' emphasis on "rich content," emphasises the rhetorical element of effective writing.

Interviews with subject teachers focused on the questions as follows:

1. What constitutes good writing in an examination essay in your department?
2. Which of the three criteria - content, language, and organisation- does your department focus on?
3. What answers did you expect from students in the paper you last set?

In response to the first question, the subject teachers generally agreed with the stands of the HODs on the necessity of the student's ability to answer the questions. For example, the literature master mentioned the following;

> *Well, well, umm, in any good writing, well, the writing must convey the intended message; in an examination, the essay needs to be focused on the demand of the question with relevant textual evidence or support, and also, the essay becomes exceptional if it is well organised I mean good introduction, well-linked point, and conclusion. LITT1*

Teachers in each discipline also highlighted other elements that reflect their disciplinary approach to good writing. For instance, inferring from the above, the Literature teacher (LITT 1) sees a "relevant quotation." According to him, since the subject deals with text, it is required that students cite relevant portions in support of their answers. The Business Management teacher (BMT 1) cited a clear "presentation of argument/points" and the use of "appropriate terminology." For Biology, the teacher (BIOT 1) said: "The

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focus is on precise and accurate scientific facts." It is evident from the responses that the quality of writing in particular disciplinary communities is determined by both general and context-related criteria, such as citations, tables, and numerical values.

Regarding the second question, this is what both Literature and Biology teachers had to say:

> *I must focus on content, eh; in studies like this, we need to know whether you have read the text and understood the text, so I am focused on content than language and organisation. The reason is that language and organisation are special skills, some might have excellent language, but if the person does not read the book, he might not give us the necessary things to show that he/she read the book. In that vein, content is preferred. Nevertheless, the candidate should get excellent marks or scores if all these things I indicated are shown in the paper. (LITT 1)*

> *When it comes to content, language, and organisation, our primary focus will be on the content; as for language not mostly into that but with content and organisation, you know, mostly some of our topics you will be asked to talk about some steps. For that one, you will have to organise it well. As for content, it is indispensable for us. (BIOT 1)*

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To the third question, "What answers did you anticipate from students in the paper you established last year?" the subject teachers generally assumed that students would provide answers according to the schemes demonstrated during the revision period, based on the successful completion of previous examination questions. These responses highlighted disciplinary expectations for all three disciplines in line with the earlier comments. However, all three of the groups' subject teachers unanimously agreed that the answers provided by the examinees were relevant.

From the data, aside from the literature teacher, other teachers from Business Management and Biology said very little about the organisational features of examination answers. Business Management teachers, on their part, said that they anticipated a clear understanding of the main issues through adequate engagement of the topic while deploring relevant terminologies.

The departmental data reveal disparities and commonalities in how the department perceives the content of the discourse and the epistemology of the text in very general terms. The following section, which provides information on students' views on various elements of writing, is a means of determining the degree to which the student's perception of the content of the text converges or diverges from the perception of their subject teacher.

### 4.1.2 Student interview data

As this study focuses on student-authored texts, the opinions of six students, two from each of the three departments were essential for the successful completion of the study. The students' responses to four essential questions were the focus of this study. These four vital questions are as follows:

1. What constitutes good writing in your department?

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2. Out of three criteria, content, language, and organisation are considered necessary in writing in your department.
3. Which of the three criteria – content, language, and organisation – would you prefer teachers to comment on most extensively in your examination essays?
4. Are you aware of the subject-specific requirements of other subjects in your school?

Owing to the first question, where students were asked to tell what constitutes good writing in their various departments, according to them, good writing depends mainly on the extent to which a student can satisfy an examiner's mark scheme by providing answers correctly.

For the second question, Business Management and Biology students were close in their position in their answers. One Business Management student and another Biology student indicated that content was essential to good writing. Literature students (2/2) differed from the other two groups in mentioning "expression" as the most measure contrary to the position of their

Similar to their earlier answers, the two literature students surveyed indicated that they would prefer to have their lecturers comment on "expression" in their answers to the third question. All the Biology students and three of the Business Management students preferred to have their content commented on. However, "organisation" did not appear in the responses of any student from any of the three disciplines. The overall consistency of the literature students' responses to the third question is unsurprising, as students are expected to demonstrate proficiency in language use. It is possible that literature students meant "expression" to include rhetorical organisation.

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Just as was seen in the student's response to question one, the final question, which seeks to know the disciplinary awareness had the students responded that this has never crossed their minds before and therefore are unaware. After explaining further, they concluded that they only consider what their subject teachers instruct them to do while answering exam questions. The following quotations are provided to indicate how students view disciplinary distinctions.

Literature

> *Our teacher always asks us to begin our essays with a catchy introduction and conclude too. He also asks us to quote as much as possible to support our answers. We should also mind our language and express ourselves well. (LITS 2)*

Biology

> *My teacher tells us that when it comes to science, we should write precise answers or give precise information to the questions to avoid possible mistakes. (BIOS 1)*

From the above responses, one could agree that the students unknowingly communicate their disciplinary awareness. All of this suggests that there may be observable distinctions and similarities between the three participants in the current study regarding their rhetorical behaviour. I now turn to findings and discussions.

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### 4.2 Research Question 1. How do Literature, Business Management, and Biology students structure their examination essays?

The first research question explored how Literature, Business Management, and Biology students structure their examination essays. It further zeroed in on whether the students employed the two rhetorical features- introduction and conclusion- in their essays.

It was identified that, generally, the students used a five-paragraph type of essay structure. The five-paragraph essay is a format of essay writing that is ordinarily utilised in schools when teaching students how to write a proper essay (Nafees, 2018). At the most basic level, the structure of the essay consists of five paragraphs: one in the opening paragraph, three in the body paragraph, and one in the conclusion paragraph. The opening paragraph introduces the essay's main topic, followed by a topic sentence and supporting sentences within each body paragraph to support the main topic. Finally, the concluding paragraph summarises each topic sentence (Nunes, 2013).

A comprehensive coding of the examination essays showed that aside from Biology students who explicitly did not introduce their essays, the other two groups of students introduced their essays, notwithstanding to different extents. Not all students used these two rhetorical features, introduction, and conclusion, in their examination essays.

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**Table 4.1: Occurrence of Introduction and Conclusions in Disciplinary Texts**

| | **Literature** | **Business Management** | **Biology** |
|---|---|---|---|
| | (n=30) | (n=15) | (n=5) |
| **Introduction** | | | |
| Present | 26(87%) | 10 (67%) | 0 |
| Absent | 4(13%) | 5 (33%) | 5 (100) |
| **Conclusion** | | | |
| Present | 10(33%) | 8 (53%) | 0 |
| Absent | 20(67%) | 7 (47%) | 5 (100%) |

From the table, the results demonstrate that 67% of Business Management students introduced their essays, as did 26 (87%) out of 30 literature examinees. Conversely, none of the 5 Biology students used introductions in their essays. Similarly, 8 (53%) of 15 Business Management examinees and 10 (33%) Literature examinees presented their conclusions, while no Biology essays contained a conclusion.

The absence of these two rhetorical features (introduction and conclusion) in the essays on Biology was not surprising. The reason is that, from the corroborated interview data, the HoDs and teachers alike did not associate with organization of essay, therefore reflecting that position in their student's essays. Another possible reason the researcher found to have contributed to the low number of students who were able to conclude as against those who in introduced (see table 4.1) was that, in as much as some of these

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students may wish to conclude, exam time constraint makes it difficult for them to do so. This relates with a research conducted by Mogey & Fluck (2014). The study investigated and compared both the attitudes and behaviours of students during an essay examination held in two universities. Mogey & Fluck (2014) findings revealed that although the students acknowledged that examination essays should have good structure (introduction, body, and conclusion) and argument, however when under the pressure of examination (including time allotted), they become too concerned with the amount of text they can write (thus, neglecting elements of structure).

In furtherance, the study found that the structure of the examination questions was also a contributing factor, the reason why they were unable to either introduce or conclude their essays. The structuring of the examination in that particular department limits the student's ability to offer extensive writing (see 4.4.1).

### 4.3 Research Question Two: Similarities and Differences

What similarities and differences are evident in the introduction and conclusion of student examination essays in Literature, Business Management, and Biology?

#### 4.3.1 The introduction

To assist us in getting an answer to this research question, a modified version of Swales' (1990) "rhetorical move" analysis is used in arriving at the similarities and differences in the introductions among the three disciplines (Literature, Business Management, and Biology). The following parameters were vital in arriving at answers: frequency of occurrence of each move, textual space occupied by each move, and the sequencing of moves.

Below are the key findings of the above research question:

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1. Aside from Biology, which has an introduction conspicuously missing in the examinees' examination essays, there was a similarity between the other two groups (Literature and Business Management), with Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s) taking the maximum space.
2. There came a difference in terms of the sequence of moves. Literature with (50%) ascribed to a 2-Move sequence, while Business Management (53%) prefers a 3-Move pattern.
3. Literature and BM had Move 2 as the most frequent move in their introduction. Literature (54%) and BM (87%) respectively.

#### 4.3.1.1 Frequency of occurrence of moves in the introduction

This part looks at the mathematical representation of the occurrence of each move, discussions, and illustrations of moves. As already mentioned, the introduction is made of three moves: Move 1 (backgrounding), Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)), and Move 3 (intent of essay).

I hoped all three disciplines would have introduced their examination essays, with all three moves present in the students' examination essays among the three disciplines. However, biology, which the research thought would offer a small quantity of extensive writing aside, say, chemistry and physics, could not live up to expectations. Nevertheless, the researcher expected Move 1 (backgrounding) to be the most frequent, as it suggests an easy way for the students to introduce their essays and deal with the examination prompt. Table 4.2 displays the frequency of occurrence of each of the three moves in the introductions.

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**Table 4.2: Frequency of Occurrence of Moves in the Introduction**

| Rhetorical Unit | Literature (n=11) | Business Management (n=8) | Biology |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Move 1** | 4/11 (36%) | 6/8 (75%) | - |
| **Move 2** | 6/11 (54%) | 7/8 (87%) | - |
| **Move 3** | 0/11 (0%) | 5/8 (63%) | - |

As shown in table (4.2), even though both Literature and BM used Move 1 (backgrounding) and 2 (engaging closely with the issue(s)), only BM, with much more consistency, used all three moves. Literature candidates used Moves 2 (engaging closely with issues) more than Move 1, while BM used Move 2 (engaging closely with issues) followed by Move 1 (backgrounding) more than Move 3 (intent of essay).

As previously said, the variation in move frequency is intriguing for various reasons. First, for Literature, which constantly requires students to provide a thesis/purpose statement (intent of essay in the current study), it is surprising to note that Move 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) appeared most frequently, while Move 3 is completely missing. That notwithstanding, the difference in frequency between Moves 2 (engaging closely with issue(s)) and 3 (intent of essay) is negligible, as shown in Table 4.2. The second intriguing aspect is the parallelism of Literature and BM introductions in move frequency, given that both disciplines employ Move 2 more frequently than the other moves. Move 2 helps the student to offer more explanation of the state of issues raised in the examination question. It is difficult to speculate on any conceivable meaning for

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this similarity except to state that both fields prioritise conciseness, which students may understand as interacting explicitly with the issues in the prompt rather than any contextualisation devices.

#### 4.3.1.2 Textual space occupied by the moves in the introductions

As an English teacher, who teaches Senior High School students across departments, this is my experience, coupled with my engagement with other teachers and students, and it was expected that candidates in the three disciplines would allocate more textual space to Move 1(backgrounding). In addition, it was believed that the frequency of occurrence and the textual space allotted to a move would influence students' relative priority on a specific move.

Table 4.3 displays the textual space allotted to each of the three moves in the introduction by students of the three disciplines.

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**Table 4.3: Textual Space Allocated to Moves in the Introduction**

| Rhetorical Unit | Literature | Business Management | Biology |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Move 1** | | | |
| Number of words | 9 | 17 | 0 |
| T-unit | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| **Move 2** | | | |
| Number of words | 73 | 40 | 0 |
| T-unit | 4 | 3 | 0 |
| **Move 3** | | | |
| Number of words | 0 | 8 | 0 |
| T-unit | 0 | 1 | 0 |

From the table above, and using a raw counted number of words, it can be seen that Literature students associated the most space to Move (2) (73) followed by Move1 (9). In the same vein, Business Management candidates allotted the most space to Move 2 (40), followed by Move 1 (17) and then Move 3 (8). Therefore, in terms of the textual space provided to each move, we may conclude that Move 2 is essentially more to the examinees in all three disciplines than Moves 1 and 3; in other words, Move 2 can be considered the core move in all three disciplines in terms of textual space.

Another important thing worth mentioning is that contrary to the researcher's expectation that the candidates would allocate more space to Move 1, it showed clearly

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from the two disciplines that the candidate preferred Move 2 (engaging closely with the issue) and thus gave more space to Move 2. As indicative of Move 2, it exposed the candidate's eagerness to commit themselves more engagingly or provide more or better particulars to support the exam prompt.

The following sub-sections goal is to verify the quantitative data by providing cases that exemplify this preference and those that deviate from it. Examples in Literature are given first, followed by examples from Business Management. The following are unedited instances of Literature introductions in response to examination prompts LITP1 and LITP2, which allotted the most space to Move 2 (intense engagement with issue(s)). The various moves are exhibited differently: Move 1 is bold; Move 2 is underlined; Move 3 is italicised.

> **Wuthering Heights is a novel written by Emily Bronte** - Move 1. It was first published in 1847 in the Victorian Era. It is considered one of the most remarkable of all English stories. It is a gripping story of passionate love and cruel revenge. Wuthering height is a farmhouse on top of a small hillock on the outskirt of the Yorkshire moors, which is open to all the elements of wind and weather and hence synonymous with passion and violence. Move 2 (LITST 3)

> **Wuthering Heights is a novel written by Emily Bronte** – Move 1. The novel was written in the Victorian era when love, courtship, and marriage were concerned. Some laws were that a man would not go out to see or marry a lady unless his parents accompanied him. Wuthering Heights is a

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farmhouse on a small hillock on the outskirts of the Yorkshire moors. Wuthering height is a dwelling place of the Enshaw family. – Move 2 (LITST 8)

To summarise, regarding textual space allocated to each Move, Move 2 consumes the most space and can thus be defined as the typical rhetorical behaviour of the English examinees. However, a few overdid it, considering the length of their essays.

Now, I illustrate examples of Business Management. In all, BM students tended to be the only group that allocated textual space to the three moves, backgrounding, engaging closely with issues(s), and intent of the essay. Unlike the Literature students, they allocated lesser spaces.

**Money is any item or verifiable record generally accepted as payment for goods and services**- Move-1. As a concept in economics, it plays various roles in our daily life, such as buying food and books. The four functions of money include the medium of exchange, unit of account, store of value, and medium of deferred payment. –Move-2. *The following paragraphs discuss the above in detail.- Move 3. (BMST 2)*

**Money is any commodity generally acceptable as a medium of exchange or in debt settlement.** Move-1 Money has solved many problems in terms of trading. In the olden day, when the use of money had just replaced trade by barter, the medium of exchange had to be something in everyday use that was considered valuable for its own sake,

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> either for use or generally acceptable. Some of the things they considered as money were sheep, cattle, and tobacco, but now money has done it all. – Move 2. *The following are some functions of money in Ghana or a country.-Move 3 (BMST 1)*

There were other instances in the Business Introduction that showed either Move 1 (backgrounding) or Move 3 (intent of essay) were allocated more textual space, as shown in the two examples below:

> **Money is generally accepted as a medium of exchange for goods and services and to settle a debt**. –Move 1. Before money has been introduce, they used to exchange goods for goods. *–Move 2. The following are features of money.-Move 3 (BMST 5)*

> **When we talk about money, we say that money is anything that is legally accepted as a medium of exchange of goods and services and settlement of debt.** – Move 1. *Money has so many functions which I would like to highlight on.-Move 3 (BMST 6)*

The examples above exhibit the similarity of the three disciplines, Literature, Business Management, and Biology, as more space is allotted to Move 2 (engaging closely with issues(s)) than the remaining moves in all the examples, except (BMST 5 and 6). The general trend can be attributed to the written task that the students were engaged in. As peculiar to Move 2, which allows examinees to demonstrate comprehension and impress readers from the outset, it is not unexpected that all groups of students preferred

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this move. Students become specific in their answers by referring to the names of authorities and terminologies in their respective fields. They are cognizant of the need to demonstrate outstanding dedication to responding to examination prompts and their understanding of the conceptual landscape outlined in their courses or disciplines. Therefore, they take the time to define key terms and demonstrate their comprehension of the exam prompt.

Aside from the department's implicit opinions on the amount of space allotted to the various introductory paragraphs, most Literature and Business Management students acknowledged the necessity of introductions. However, they could not comment on their introductions, likely due to a lack of metacognitive knowledge, as the teachers in their departments do.

From the above discussion, the amount of textual space allocated to specific moves could be a significant factor in student introduction writing. However, the overall picture for Move 2 (closely related to the issue (s)), which occupies the most significant amount of textual space across the three disciplines, brings about a noticeable differential evident from the comments made by students and department –HoDs and teachers regarding textual space, both in the textual data and in the interview data. While the interview data provides minimal information regarding the relative amount of textual space for each move, the overt references to the Conciseness and Simplicity of the Introduction and Topic Statement, as discussed above, demonstrate the significance of textual space for the introduction of students' essays.

#### 4.3.1.3 Sequencing of moves in the introductions

Regarding move sequencing, I expected a three-move pattern that systematically progressed from backgrounding to the essay's intent to be required for an excellent

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essay across the three participating fields in this study. Furthermore, the English Language topic, paragraphing, would have given these students the rudiments of adequately composing essays. The actual sequence of moves in the current investigation is shown in table 4.4 below.

**Table 4.4: Sequencing of Moves in the Introduction**

| **Pattern** | **Literature (n=30)** | **Business Management (n=15)** | **Biology (n=5)** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **3-Move Sequence** | 10 (33%) | 8 (53%) | |
| 1>2>3 | -8 (80%) | 8 (100%) | - |
| 1>3>2 | - | - | - |
| 3>1>2 | -2 (20%) | - | - |
| **2-Move Sequence** | 15 (50%) | 5 (33%) | |
| 1>2 | 15 (100%) | 3 (60%) | - |
| 1>3 | - | 2 (40%) | - |
| 2>1 | - | - | - |
| **1-Move Sequence** | | 2 (13%) | |
| 1 | 3 (10%) | 2 (100%) | - |
| 2 | - | - | - |
| 3 | - | - | - |

From the table, the sequence of moves in both Literature and Business Management introductions appeared to take a linear Move 1>2>3 patterns. The two groups of students had different perspectives regarding the kind of movement sequence. The table

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showed that Literature candidates (100%) preferred a two-move- sequence, while Business Management (100%) preferred a three-move-sequence. Regarding the one-move-sequence, the two groups were less regular than their two-move and three-move patterns.

The study finds the literature students' utilization of a two-move pattern shocking. This is due to the contrary position of their teacher (see corroborating interview data), who believed that a good essay in Literature is supposed to have an introduction that should touch on the message in the books or poems read, identify the theme (message) and introduce what the essay intends to achieve- Move-3 (intent of essay). It is concluded, therefore that, while the 8/10 representing (80%) took their teacher's instructions and directive in terms of the mode of answering questions thoughtfully, the majority of them 15/15 representing (100%) did not, hence denying their readers the part of the entire essay that prepares their mind regarding what to look out for.

The 3-Move scoring highest in BM is equally surprising. According to their teacher, they are expected to build good points, subject to definition if needed. He added that notwithstanding, some could go the way of an essay (involving introduction, body, and conclusion) provided they have their points. The credence given to a 3-Move sequence is interpreted as a good transfer of knowledge about essay writing from the core English course into their disciplines. The Move-3, as part of the string of moves (intent of the essay), according to Brew-Daniels (2023), plays a significant role in the introductory essay. It helps both the writers and the readers. It restricts the writers from going overboard or swerving from the given topic. The Move directs readers of the essay to identify the points to be discussed in the essay. Academic writing has its own peculiar

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rules to be observed, and it is expected that final-year senior high school students master some of these norms and apply them in their write-ups (Brew-Daniels, 2023).

The researcher demonstrates the sequence of actions across the three disciplines, beginning with the Literature Introductions.

> **Wuthering Heights is a novel written by Emily Bronte** - Move 1. It was first published in 1847 in the Victorian Era. It is considered one of the most remarkable of all English stories. It is a gripping story of passionate love and cruel revenge. Wuthering height is a farmhouse on top of a small hillock on the outskirt of the Yorkshire moors, which is open to all the elements of wind and weather and hence synonymous with passion and violence. Move 2
>
> **Wuthering Heights is a novel written by Emily Bronte** – Move 1. The novel was written in the Victorian era when love, courtship, and marriage were shared. Some laws were that a man would not go out to see or marry a lady unless his parents accompanied him. Wuthering Heights is a farmhouse on a small hillock on the outskirts of the Yorkshire moors. Wuthering height is a dwelling place of the Enshaw family. – Move 2

When all three of these moves are employed, as indicated by the table above, Business Management students typically begin with Move 1 for (backgrounding), Move 2 for (close engagement with the issue(s)), and Move 3 for (the intent of the essay). These are illustrated below marked as BMST 2 and BMST 1:

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**Money is any item or verifiable record generally accepted as payment for goods and services**- Move 1 As a concept in economics, it plays various roles in our daily life, such as buying food and books. The four functions of money include a medium of exchange, a unit of account, a store of value, and a medium of deferred payment. –Move 2. *The following paragraphs discuss the above in detail.- Move 3. (BMST 2)*

**Money is any commodity generally acceptable as a medium of exchange or in debt settlement**. –Move 1 Money has solved many problems in terms of trading. In the olden day, when the use of money had just replaced trade by barter, the medium of exchange had to be something in everyday use that was considered valuable for its own sake, either for use or generally acceptable. Some of the things they considered as money were sheep, cattle, and tobacco, but now money has done it all. – Move 2. *The following are some functions of money in Ghana or a country.-Move 3 (BMST 1)*

The evidence above illustrate what the Business Management students typically did; that is, they began from backgrounding through to the intent of the essay anytime the three-move sequence was deployed. There are a few instances where they have resorted to a two-move sequence comprising 1>2 and 1>3. These are illustrated below:

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**Money is anything accepted as a medium of exchange of goods and services.** –Move 1. Money can be into two, from which note and a coin. – Move 2 (BMST 14)

**When we talk about money, we say that money is anything that is legally accepted as a medium of exchange of goods and services and settlement of debt**. – Move 1. *Money has so many functions which I would like to highlight on.-Move 3 (BMST 6)*

**Money is a legal tendency generally accepted as a medium of exchange.** Move 1. *These are some four functions of many in an economy. - Move 3 (BMST 11)*

As exemplified above, the study showed the typical and abnormal move-sequence of the introductions of Literature and Business Management students.

Students from all three disciplines preferred the Move 1>2>3 sequences in their moves introductions. This sequence can be attributed to two main factors. As mentioned above, the first is a "cultural explanation," which is the institutional requirement that students are exposed to English rhetorical conventions as part of their education in the core English Language. My knowledge of the nature of the core English Language is derived from my five years of experience teaching the course, as well as informal conversations with other English Language colleagues. Mostly likely, the student's preference for the Move 1> 2>3 sequence is due to the teaching in the English Language, which explicitly encourages students to include backgrounding, get close to the issue(s), and provision

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of intent in their essays. It also enables them to arouse interest in their readers (teachers) and show them that they have a grip on the demand of the questions.

### 4.3.2 The conclusion

To answer the question mentioned earlier, which is what noticeable similarities and differences exist in the conclusions of examination essays of the three disciplines in question, it was essential to consider how writers negotiate the exit of a text compared to how they negotiate the entry of a text.

#### 4.3.2.1 Frequency of occurrence of moves in the conclusions

The conclusion of the essays follows a two-step structure. Move 1 (summary) involves reciting previous points or topics discussed in the essay body. In contrast, Move 2 (extension) allows examinees to propose either steps or actions related to issues raised in the essay body or to emphasise the importance of the issue(s).

It was anticipated that the first move would be present in students' conclusions in Literature and Business Management. The table below shows the frequency of these moves across Literature and Business Management conclusions, except Biology, as no Biology examination essays had conclusions.

**Table 4.5: Frequency of Occurrence of Moves in the Conclusions**

| Rhetorical Unit | Literature (n=5) | Business Management (n=7) |
|---|---|---|
| **Move 1** | 4/5 (80%) | 5/7 (71%) |
| **Move 2** | 1/5 (20%) | 2/7 (29%) |

Table (4.5) shows three primary findings. Firstly, Literature and Business Management candidates utilised all two moves. Secondly, Move 1 occurred more frequently in

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Literature than Business Management conclusions. The predominance of Move 1 across both disciplines is surprising, as interview data in both departments suggest that students are encouraged to go beyond summarising. Lastly, despite the similarity in the frequency of Move 1, especially concerning Move 2, the Business Management conclusions had a higher frequency of Move 2 at (29%) compared to the Literature conclusions at (20%).

#### 4.3.2.2 Textual space occupied by the moves in the conclusions

**Table 4.6: Textual Space Occupied by the Moves in the Conclusions**

| Rhetorical Unit | Literature | Business Management |
|---|---|---|
| **Move 1** | | |
| Number of words per conclusion | 43 | 33 |
| | 40 | 23 |
| Number of words per Move 1 | | |
| **Move 2** | | |
| Number of words per conclusion | 19 | 33 |
| | 6 | 10 |
| Number of words per Move 2 | | |

Table (4.6) shows that, in the absolute total number of conclusions as completely as against the total number of words per either Move 1 or Move 2, Literature students allocated the most space (40/43) to Move 1, followed by Business students at (23/33). The only distinction between the two was that Literature students allocated significantly less space (6/19) to Move 2 than Move 1 (40/43). On the other hand, Business

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Management students allocated slightly more textual space (10/33) to Move 2 than to Move 1, equating to slightly more than half of the allocated space for Move 1. As a result, literature conclusions were biased towards Move 1 regarding textual space.

The researcher now provides examples of space distribution across Literature and Business Management conclusions, beginning with Literature, demonstrating how they correspond to this preference, i.e., allocating more space to Move 1. It is important to note that the examples presented are unedited. Additionally, the various moves are highlighted in bold (for move 1) and underlined (for move 2), as indicated by the examples below. These examples - LITST 3 and LITST 8 illustrate the greater allocation of space to Move 1 in Literature conclusions.

> **To sum up, Heathcliff being introduced to the Enshaws family was hatred created among the family Earnshaw, misunderstanding between Mr and Mrs Earnshaw, a fight between the children Hindley and Heathcliff, and also leads to the death of Mrs Earnshaw**.- Move 1 *(LITST 3)*
>
> **In conclusion, this is how Heathcliff's introduction to the Earnshaws affected the family**. – Move 1. <u>It was negative and not good. – Move 2</u>

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Business Management conclusions primarily allocated more textual space to move 1 (summarising), as shown in the examples below.

> **The above points are the functions of money, the definition of money, and how money has helped solve a lot of problems**.-Move 1. Money is significant in our day-to-day activities. – Move 2 *(BMST 14)*
>
> **These are some of the meanings of money and its features.** *–Move 1 (BMST 6)*
>
> **In conclusion, these are some vital functions of money. –** *Move 1 (BMST 11)*

#### 4.3.2.3 Sequencing of moves in the conclusions

Due to the examination prompts and interviews with teachers and Core English writing, both Literature and Business Students were expected to lean towards a two-move (Move 1> Move 2) to attract good scores.

**Table 4.7: Sequence of Moves in the Conclusions**

| Pattern | Literature (n=30) | Business Management (n=15) |
|---|---|---|
| **2-Move Sequence** | **6 (20%)** | **5 (33%)** |
| 1>2 | 4 (67%) | 3(60%) |
| 2>1 | - | 2 (40% |
| **1-Move** | **24 (80%)** | **10 (67%)** |
| 1 | 21(88) | 8(80%) |
| 2 | 3 (13%) | 2 (20%) |

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The results of table (4.7) demonstrate that Literature candidates preferred the one-move sequence (80%) to the two-move sequence (20%). The same was true for Business Management, with a one-move pattern preferred by 67% compared to a two-move pattern by 33%. Therefore, the one-move sequence was the preferred sequence for both examinees. Furthermore, in cases where multiple moves were used, the usual sequence of Move 1 followed by Move 2 was observed for both disciplines.

I now turn to the illustration of the sequence of moves in both disciplines, starting with Literature.

> **In conclusion, this is how Heathcliff's introduction to the Earnshaws affected the family**. – Move 1. It was negative and not good. – Move 2
>
> **In conclusion, the introduction of Heathcliff's introduction to the Earnshaws has affected the family negatively.** – Move 1. It brings hatred, misunderstanding, jealousy, and fights among the family. This negative effect leads to even the death of their mother. Move 2

Illustrations for Business Management are as follows:

> **I will conclude by saying these are some of the meanings of money and its features**.- *Move 1*
>
> **The above points are the functions of money and the definition of money.** – Move 1. Money is significant in our day-to-day activities. – Move 2

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> **To conclude, we discussed the various functions of money, and I discussed earlier that they are the medium of exchange, the standard for deferred payments, the store of value, and the unit of account.** – *Move 1*

Some Business Management examination essays also show the use of move-2 only:

> To conclude, I may say that money is the most valuable thing in the world; without money, nothing can be done. – *Move 2*

> To conclude, I would like to say that money has solved so many problems in our country. – *Move 2*

> In conclusion, Money help in solving system the problem of better trade. – *Move 2*

The likeness identified in the conclusions of Literature and Business Management essays can be attributed to instructions received in the core English language essay topic, which demands students to go beyond just a summary to take their stance on issues addressed in their essays (particularly Literature).

After discussions, the following key findings emerged in response to the research question as mentioned above:

1. Only a few of the students could conclude their essays.
2. Regarding the use of moves, both disciplines opted for a two-move structure.
3. Regarding similarities, the two disciplines allocated more textual space to the move-one.

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4. Their difference arose due to their use of Move 2. While Literature students offered recommendations, Business Management students leaned toward the importance or significance of what was discussed.

Details of the above are discussed below in terms of the frequency of occurrence of each of the moves, the textual space allocated to each of the moves, and the sequencing of the moves.

### 4.4 Research Question 3

How do examination prompts influence the structure of SHS students' essays? The study provides the following as critical findings:

1. Literature prompts influenced a narrative and argumentative discourse structure.
2. The Business Management prompt influenced an explorative discourse structure in an essay form.
3. Biology prompts influenced a descriptive and explorative discourse structure, limiting the students' provision of essays and therefore could not introduce or conclude.

#### 4.4.1 Analysis of the Examination Prompts

To facilitate the discussion of the findings related to the third research question, the following four examination prompts are re-introduced for this analysis: (LITP 1 and 2, BMP 1, and BIOP 1) respectively. The Literature LITP prompts are presented first, followed by the Business Management BMP and Biology BIOP prompts.

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1. How does Heathcliff's introduction to the Earnshaws affect the family? (LITP 1)

2. Examine the significance of Mr Lockwood's second visit to Wuthering Heights. (LITP 2)
3. Discuss four functions of money. (BMP 1)
4. 1a. What is protein? 1b. Explain three functions of a protein. (BIOP 1)

This analysis is based on the observation that examination responses (i.e., examination essays) are formed due to expected responses to specific examination prompts.

From the table above, exam questions LITP1 and LITP2 require students to analyse a literary work. Typical of such questions, students must exhibit their knowledge and understanding of the book under study to construct a well-structured essay, which will accommodate an introduction and conclusion while providing evidence and examples to support their arguments. It can be further established that while LITP1 expected students to explore the impact of Heathcliff's introduction to the Earnshaw family with its accompanying consequences of his presence and interactions, LITP 2, on the other hand, the examination of the importance of Mr Lockwood's second visit to Wuthering Heights.

The Business Management question, although appears short, it requires the students to offer a comprehensive discussion of the various functions money performs in the economy. The students must identify and develop four points using paragraphs engrossed in principles and terminologies. For Biology, question 1a calls for a concise definition while 1b calls for an elaboration of three functions of the protein.

From the preceding, pedagogical materials and empirical studies have enabled us to gain a better understanding of the role examination prompts play in student writing and

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how they are used to enhance the exam-taking abilities of native and non-native students (see Kember & Leung 2008).

After applying Horowitz's taxonomy to the examination prompts of this present research, the study found that the Literature, Business Management, and Biology examination prompts require different rhetorical structures for their questions, namely, narrative, argumentation and expository, as is evident in the disciplines prompts.

The researcher argues that the Literature examination prompts keywords such as "how" and "examine" call for a narrative and argumentative discourse structure. Students must present a claim or position on a specific issue and provide supporting evidence and reasoning to persuade the reader.

Business Management examination prompts allow students to provide a clear and accurate explanation of the concept, its characteristics, and its significance within the context of the given prompt.

The use of "what" and explain in the Biology 1a prompt, coupled with the segmentation of the question, not only demands that students be concise and precise but also limits how their essays are structured.

### 4.5 Chapter Conclusion

Chapter Four discussed the results of the research questions, particularly researcher question two. The results demonstrate a disparity between the three disciplines in the frequency of occurrence for the three moves (backgrounding, Engaging Closely with Issue(s), and intent of essay) and the particular sequence patterns. On the other hand, in general terms, there was a similarity between all three disciplines as regards the textual space allocated to the moves. The conclusion, on the hand, examined the similarities

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and differences between student examination essays from the point of view of move analysis. The conclusion is one of the most apparent similarities between the two disciplines, as they adopt a two-move sequence, allocate an enormous amount of text to Move 1 (summary), and prefer a one-move conclusion. The exact nature of Move 2 (expansion) is different, as literature students offer opinions based on their book analysis. In contrast, Business Management students prefer to emphasise the importance of the issues in the prompt. Other factors such as the writing tasks, prompts, teacher expectations, and student preferences may contribute to this disciplinary difference in Literature and Business Management.

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# CHAPTER FIVE

# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

## 5.0 Introduction

The core of this study was to explore disciplinary variations in the use of two rhetorical features – introduction and conclusion- in the examination essays written by final-year students of Ve Senior High School in three disciplines: Literature, Business Management, and Biology. The focus was to ascertain whether these important rhetorical features were used in the three disciplines and their similarities and differences based on their frequency of occurrence moves, the textual space allocated to each move, and the sequencing of moves.

## 5.1 Summary of Findings

The results of the first research query reveal a fascinating yet complex pattern attributed to the moves used in introducing the three disciplines studied. As for the use of moves, the similarity was observed across all three groups (Literature, Business Managemen and Biology) in terms of the allocation of textual space to each move compared to the others and the order of moves. Specifically, all groups allocated more space to the second move (engaging closely with issue(s). All three groups also preferred the 1>2>3 mover sequence and did not ascribe to any variants (1 >3, 2 >3). This similarity is not unexpected, as it is due to institutional factors and the requirement of examination prompts, as discussed previously.

The frequency of moves was the most common difference between the three student groups. Move 2 (closely addressing the issue(s)) was most commonly seen in

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introductions to literature and Business Management, while Move 3 (intent) was common in introductions to Business Management only. However, this difference is more likely to be a matter of degree than type. The missing introduction and conclusions in Biology are likely because neither students nor teachers in Science placed any importance on structure and were more concerned with content and illustrations, among others. Another contributing factor is the examination prompts of Biology. As for the space allocated to the moves and the sequence of moves, all two groups were similar.

A look at the second part of research question two presented similar results. First, the Literature and Business Management conclusions analysis revealed a similar pattern in the moves, with most of the moves being two-move patterns, Move 1 being used more frequently, and a preference for Move 1 over the other one-move patterns. Unsurprisingly, the general adoption of two-move patterns for conclusions and the subsequent preference for Move 1 patterns in this study are not unexpected. The two-move approach is interesting for three reasons. Firstly, it stands out in contrast to the traditional three-move approach in introductions. The second consideration is the potential impact of time pressure, which may cause students to concentrate on what they view as an essential part of the essay – the body; those who attempted to write conclusions completed them quickly. The third consideration is that concluding essays do not provide a sense of satisfaction, challenge, or interest once the topics discussed have been satisfactorily addressed. Also, the frequency and textual space allotted for a particular move can indicate the rhetorical importance being assigned to that move. If this is anything to go by, then it can be argued that both Literature and Business Management students esteemed Move 1 as against Move 2.

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The third research question revealed that the two disciplines – Literature and Business Management used different exam prompt rhetoric. While the literature candidates were argumentative, Business Management candidates, on the other hand, were expository.

### 5.2 Implications of the Study

As a result of the study findings, the following addresses two main sets of implications - theoretical and pedagogical.

#### 5.2.1 Theoretical Implications

At this point, the study highlights the significance of the theoretical framework used in the current study and the theorising of the two rhetorical units (the introduction and conclusion in examination essays.

Addressing the theoretical framework used in the current study, the study confirms that language adapts to the various contexts presented by disciplinary departments through Swales' (1981a, 1990a) move analysis as the primary rhetorical approach. The genre theory can also be essential in investigating SHS examination essays, though the theory has been mainly applied to expert academics and professional discourse (Bhatia, 2004). It is evident from the results of this study that students from all three fields are observed to have made significant efforts in the orientation of their readers, even though they may not be aware of these changes in the moves of their metacognitive awareness.

The second theoretical consequence of the study concerns the theorisation of the two critical rhetorical units looked at in this study: the introduction and the conclusion. As far as the introductions are concerned, empirical research and writing guidelines suggest a well-defined structure for the introduction in academic writing. While the Swalesian introduction model is widely recognised and accepted in academia,

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participants in this study showed evidence of not strictly following the moves in the Swales model. The study confirms that SHS examination essay introductions and conclusions vary from expert (graduate) and professional introductions and conclusions due to the basis of the exploited genres and their knowledge of academic writing. In addition, the study contributes to the existing move at theorising rhetorical structures in the writing of students by positing that in the three disciplines Literature, Business Management and Biology (which neither introduced nor concluded their essays), SHS students deployed primarily the engaging closely with issues-intent of essay pattern in orienting their readers with a mix of similarities and differences. Concerning conclusion, it can be deduced that while students preferred to use the 2-Move pattern, their option to foreground a 1-Move pattern was because of time limitations due to examination situations.

The third implication can be seen in the description of SHS writing. From the literature explored in chapter two, most of the scholarly, works on rhetorical features have focused on SHS writing outside Ghana. The few regarding SHS in Ghana addressed grammatical, cohesion and discoursal-related issues. The importance of this study revolves around contributing to SHS writing, disciplinary rhetoric, and the structuring of exam essays. Also, a keen distinguishing feature was the descriptive and interpretive nature of the Literature introductions as againts the explorative business management introductions. Regarding conclusions, textual data points to the student's dominant option for a 1-Move pattern and the use of summarising as a rhetorical device.

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### 5.2.2 Pedagogical Implications

Although this study has been limited to three disciplines, it brings about two crucial pedagogical issues these departments at Ve Senior High School may consider.

In the current study, the awareness of structuring an examination essay, the move patterns and the examination prompts analysis present useful pedagogical tools for disciplines-specific teachers. These tools would enable them to produce tailor-made instructional guides to assist students in advancing their disciplinary writing. This approach is equally beneficial to the students as it makes them conscious of the various steps required in championing the communicative purposes of their essay, for that matter, introductions and conclusions.

The next thing has to do with raising students' consciousness about the link between exam prompts and the content of examination answers and the structuring - (requency of moves, textual space allocated to each move, sequencing of moves. The corroborated interviews exposed the fact that although the students unconsciously used rhetorical features in orienting their audiences, they were oblivious to its existence. Also, the incidents of students omitting certain moves across the three disciplines are enablers for the discipline-specific teachers to create exercises and assignments to improve the use of moves in the introductions and conclusions by students. SHS students in the various department can be motivated to make time to revise the writing of their introductions and conclusions.

The study has implications for policymakers and curriculum experts. From the corroborated interviews with HoDs, subject teachers, and students, it is evident there is limited knowledge of the genre, least, to talk of its use in teaching instructions. Liu and Chen (2022) revealed that teachers are familiar with genre pedagogies such as

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scaffolding linguistics features and semantic patterns. However, when it comes to language, content, and context, they become confused over their connection. In lieu of that, policymakers and curriculum developers can consider curriculum change towards the accommodation of the genre, precisely the genre-based approach (GBA) in teaching at the SHS. This way, the students at this level become conversant with the genre before they proceed to tertiary and beyond. For instance, product-oriented approach accentuates students' accurate use of vocabulary, syntax and cohesive in writing (Jiang et al., 2021). The process-oriented approach, on the other hand engages students with a recursive process of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. But what Genre Base Approach does is that it assists students not only notice the linguistics features and rhetorical structures of a particular text, but also understand why they are writing (purpose), whom they are writing for (audience), and how to write (organisation) in order to realise particular communicative purposes of the text (Chen & Su, 2012).

### 5.3 Conclusion

The study undertook a rhetorical analysis of examination essays in three disciplines – Literature, Business Management, and Biology. With the focus on two crucial rhetorical features – introduction and conclusion.

The study investigated how Ve Senior High School students construct their examination essays. In addition, the study investigated the similarities and differences noticeable in their introduction and conclusions. The study further examined how examination prompts influenced how the students constructed their examination essays.

The study's results indicate that the students generally used a five-paragraph essay (which contains an introduction, three body paragraphs and a conclusion). From the data, it is evident that not only were there students who did not follow the five-

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paragraph essay type but biology student students, for instance, could not deploy it at all; hence neither introduced nor concluded their essays. Concerning the use of moves, coupled with differences, while literature candidates deployed a two-move sequence in the introduction and conclusions to orient their readers, Business Management, on the other hand, gave prominence to a three-move for the introduction and a two-move for the conclusion. Regarding similarity, the study's data indicated that Literature and Business Management allocated more textual space and frequently used Move-2 in the introduction and Move-1 in the conclusion. It implies that both disciplines ascribed to the use of introduction and conclusion and gave prominence to Move-2 and Move-1 over the rest in their introductions and conclusions, respectively. In furtherance, the nature of the examination prompt in Biology contributed to why the students were unable to introduce or conclude their essays. Additionally, the study found that Biology candidates did not introduce nor conclude their essays.

### 5.4 Recommendations

The research recommends the following:

i. The first recommendation is to explore the impact of introductions and conclusions. Conducting a dedicated investigation into the impact of introductions and conclusions on the quality of writing within disciplinary groups will be of great value.

ii. Expand the scope of future studies by incorporating examination essays that respond to a broader range of prompts. This approach will enhance the generalizability of findings not only within a single discipline but also across multiple disciplines. Including different prompts and exploring essays from

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various senior high school year groups would contribute to insights that are more comprehensive.

iii. Delve into sub-disciplinary variations in rhetorical practices within the three disciplines studied. Explore whether different sub-disciplines exhibit distinct rhetorical features in terms of generic structure and language realizations in their introductions and conclusions. This would contribute to a deeper understanding of disciplinary diversity in academic writing.

iv. Extend the research beyond organizational units to explore additional rhetorical features such as voice, paragraphing, topic development, and more. Investigate these features under different conditions, writing purposes, genres, and proficiency levels. This would provide a more comprehensive picture of the rhetorical characteristics of student writing.

### 5.5 Suggestions for Future Studies

This scholarship provides the following suggestions for consideration by future researchers:

- Develop and apply a modified Swales' genre analysis approach to examine examination essays at the senior high school level. This approach has shown promise in understanding how students use rhetorical units like introductions and conclusions. Expanding this methodology to a larger context could yield valuable insights.
- Explore different rhetorical elements by assigning the same task to students in two formats: as a take-home assignment and a sit-in assignment. This comparative study can shed light on how varied rhetorical features employed under different conditions. It would provide nuanced insights into the impact of assignment format on student writing.

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- Advocate for the expansion of studies on disciplinary diversity to include various linguistic and rhetorical characteristics of student writing in diverse contexts. This approach would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how disciplinary communities influence the broader landscape of academic writing.
- Encourage and support further research in genre studies and disciplinary discourse especially at the senior high level. Foster investigations into how different disciplines shape various aspects of student writing beyond introductions and conclusions. This could lead to a richer understanding of the complex interplay between disciplinary communities and rhetorical choices in academic writing.

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# APPENDIX

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**Heads of Department**

**Section A: Student Writing Generally**

1. What are your expectations of student writing in your department?
2. What kind of writing do you assign in your courses?
3. Can you tell me how you have changed your assignments over time?
4. Are your expectations of students in class-timed and outside-classroom assignments the same? Please clarify your answer.
5. What is the central problem you see in SHS writing?
6. What can be done for students to improve their writing skills?
7. Do you offer students the opportunity to rewrite their assignments?
8. Do you encourage or require students to use the core English language essay writing and paragraph development? Can you clarify your position?

**Section B: Student Writing in the Disciplines**

9) Are your expectations of students in your department and students who offer similar disciplines in your department the same?

10) Do you see this distinction between the two categories reflected in students' examination essay answers?

11) What are some of the noticeable features expressed in the examination essays of these three groups of students?

12) Can you comment more specifically, on how students organize their written examination essays?

13) Can you comment on how senior high students achieve coherence?

14) Are you satisfied with how students structure their essays in the department?

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15) How do you intend to help teachers and students address this issue, especially in writing assignments and essay examinations?

16) How would you, in your present capacity, help students write effectively across the curriculum?

**Subject Teachers**

Below are the questions used in the semi-structured interview on the view of subject teachers on senior high student writing in their courses?

**Section A:**

1. Could you describe the subject that you teach at form three?
2. How do you teach this particular subject?
3. What instructional orientation or values would you say influence your mode of delivery of the content of this subject?
4. How do you expect the students you teach this subject to learn it?
5. What logistics or materials are needed to teach and learn these subjects? Do you have them?
6. Are there any factors against this course's practical learning and teaching?
7. What is the importance of writing in this particular subject?
8. What specific reason do you have for giving written assignments? Exploring one's idea, demonstrating knowledge, proving a point about something, convincing someone, parroting back something.

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**Section B: Evaluation of Student Writing**

1. Over the years that you have taught this subject, how would you assess the performance of students-stagnation, improvement, or deterioration?
2. What constitutes good writing when it comes to students writing in your subject?
3. Do you pay attention to the introduction and conclusion of the student's essay?
4. Out of these three- content, language, and organization, which one do you focus on?
5. What answers did you expect from students in the last mock exam?
6. What are the strengths of students in their written examination essays?
7. Are there any significant weaknesses you would like to comment on?
8. To be more specific, does structuring students' essays play a part in their obtaining good marks?
9. Do you expect any particular structuring of this paper?
10. How can we help students to produce excellent examination answers?

**Final Year SHS Students**

This interview is designed as a guide in eliciting information on the topic mentioned above. The interviewee is expected to be as frank as possible.

**Section A: Student's Use of English**

1. What languages do you use in your interaction on campus?
2. Please comment on your use of English on campus. Consider the aspects of life in which you use English.
3. Has this subject benefited you in the field you are studying now in senior high school?

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**Section B: Student's View on Quality of Writing**

5) If you were asked to choose between in-class timed essay assignments and take home untimed as a student, which would you prefer?

6) Do class-timed essay assignments and end-of-term essays feature prominently in the total number of assignments given for each course you take each semester?

7) Do you take subjects from other departments? Have you noticed some differences in the various disciplines? Mention some of the noticeable differences.

8) Do these differences translate into the writing you are called upon to write? Explain your position.

9) Were these differences made known by your teachers, or did you have to find these yourself?

10) What will you say makes a good examination essay in each subject you are studying? Are the criteria for all the subjects you are studying the same?

11) Considering elements of writing such as clarity of thought, presentation of ideas or content, appropriate use of terminologies in the discipline, coherence (organization) and originality, which ones would you say apply most to the disciplines you are offering?

12) Supposing your teacher is marking your class-timed or examination essay, after which he/she would bring them to class to comment on, which content, language/expression or organization would you prefer that he/she comment on?

13) What do you think you must do to write effectively in your respective courses?