A Textual Analysis of Literature Essays Written by First Year English Department Students of Dhaka University

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Abstract

This study attempts to examine novice students' writing of essays for English literature, a disciplinary context they have been inadequately exposed to. In order to do that, analysis of English literature essays written by First Year students using Swalesian Move strategy were done to see what structural patterns the essays possessed, what "tactical choices" the students took to express the moves and what was presented in terms of content matter within those moves. This text analysis enabled model development showing the "moves" students are expected to use. The model developed gives insights into the generic structure, that is, Introduction, Body and Conclusion, and content of the essays. The analyses of high and low grade essays explain how some features of writing are more valued than others within the context of the English department, which can eventually help improve students' writing proficiency.

Keywords: First year English literature essays; genre analysis; Move strategy; model development; structure; content

1. Introduction

Tertiary level writing is mostly content-based and not assessed on linguistic proficiency alone. It is not a "straightforward cumulative process, but more a matter of new starts and unexpected adjustments" notes Swales (2001, p. 52). Stylistic features, rhetorical structures, use of personal and authorial voice along with social and epistemological factors that may be valued in one discipline may not be welcome in another. Hyland (2000) asserts that "scholarly discourse is not uniform and monolithic" (p. 3). Perceiving academic writing skill as "universal and transferable" (p. 147) within the English for Academic Purpose (EAP) community is a misconception. This leads to complicate freshmen' participation or "membership", as Swales (1990, p. 104) puts it, within the specific discourse community.

Almost all university assignments involve a research component requiring students to use primary or/and secondary sources of information alongside analysis, synthesis and evaluation rather than simple description and restating of facts. According to Lea and Street (1998), "learning in higher education involves adapting new ways of knowing: new ways of understanding, interpreting and organizing knowledge" (p. 158). This practice takes into account the "cultural and contextual component of writing and reading practices" and the "conventions of academia" (p. 158). Academics working with university writing emphasize that it is a specifically disciplinary discursive practice. They argue that the higher one climbs on her/his educational ladder the more discipline-

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specific the writing becomes (Bizzell, 1982; Swales, 1990; Hyland, 2000; Woodward-Kron, 2002; Coffin et al., 2003; Hewings, 2007; Dressen-Hammouda, 2008). Individual disciplinary context requires different approaches and expectations and students belonging to these communities are expected to be aware of these requirements.

When students in the First year of the English Department, Dhaka University, begin attending English literature classes, they hardly know how to cope with the subject. Though there are literary texts in classes XI-XII (Higher Secondary Certificate level) English book, *English for Today* (session 2015-2016), published by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board, students are rarely taught these in classes. Previously, questions were never set on the literary texts for the board examinations. However, students from HSC 2017 session are required to answer one question of eight marks on the theme of a poem from their text book for English Paper-I examination. To prepare for this particular task what students commonly practise is they mainly regurgitate ready-made notes that are available in the market. As a result, when these students begin studying the literary canons at university they not only face challenges understanding the texts but also struggle with their linguistic incompetency. Moreover, they also face problems while preparing for written exams without having any working knowledge of how a literature essay should be written.

This paper attempts to demonstrate what my students are doing on the page by analyzing First Year students' literature essays in terms of their structure and content. The analysis is done by developing a model for writing literature essays and identifying "obligatory" and "optional" moves (Henry & Roseberry, 1997). On the basis of the findings, I provide insights and recommendations for improving First Year students' writing of English literature essays.

2. Writing for English literature

All kinds of writing is immensely text dependent where reading and writing work in tandem. When it comes to writing for literature, the process becomes all the more complex as it is source-text dependent, constricted and disciplinary in nature. Literary language possesses specialized lexis, rhetoric, implicature, deviations and inferences that complicate matters for an EFL/ESL student with inadequate linguistic competence. For a truly successful and aesthetic reading of a literary text, the student must enter into a 'dialogic' interaction with it (Farida, 2003). The reading must be "approached not efferently" (McKay, 1987, p. 198) but through acts of cultural and literary awareness along with linguistic competence (Roger, 1983; Isenberg, 1990). Hence, to write for English literature one has to first read, then decipher the "density of meaning" (Collie & Slater, 1987, p. 5), use her/his cognition and affect to engage with the text and then finally respond fulfilling the conventions of academic writing. Spiro (1991) provides a working model of literary competence for students with low linguistic proficiency who are reading literature in FL/L2 context. The model is divided into six levels: i) Understanding meaning of text, ii) Understanding context, iii) Learning to empathize, iv) Learning to appreciate the stylistic devices of the text , v) Learning to be creative and, vi) Learning the critical framework.

According to Canagarajah (2002, p. 30), in the First year, students are not familiar with the "nuances of its cultural practices and linguistic usage." On similar lines, Bartholomae (1986) also argues that when students enter university, they are expected to use a "specialized discourse" and "invent the university" (p. 4). The student is required to "learn to speak our language, to speak as we do, to try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the discourse of our community" (p. 4). It is extremely intimidating for the novice FL/L2 student with low linguistic proficiency to become literarily competent and acquire all the skills as stipulated by Spiro (1991). In the First year, the students not only need to be sensitized to the above skills, they must also be explicitly taught how to write their academic essays. These are not mature writers and we cannot leave them on their creative impulses to write the essays. Providing them with guidelines and "predictable patterns" (Swales & Feak 2004, p. 12) is an essential pedagogical requirement. Canagarajah's (2002) paper on multilingual student writers draws our attention to the fact that pedagogy relating to academic writing has become very sensitive to writers' relationship with their discourse community. This realization has led to the increase in designing content–based courses in academic writing hoping to enhance students' knowledge of their target discipline. It is a clear indication that writing should be developed from a more situated learning perspective if we want to gradually familiarize our students with the knowledge and conventions of the mainstream discipline. Flowerdew (2016) in his featured essay on ESAP (English for Specific Academic Purposes) emphasizes that to be successful writers students must go through the process of socialization within particular disciplines.

This is the reason why the English Department introduced the writing courses in the second and fourth semesters while revising the undergraduate curriculum in 2014 (Eng 104: Developing Writing Skills and Eng 201: Academic Writing respectively). One of the main focuses of the two courses is on the transferability of the skills. It was realized that what students needed from their present writing courses was not a completely "discipline-independent approach" (Becher, 1994, p. 158) but techniques and strategies that will help them write for their mainstream literature courses. When students write essays for their literature courses they, as novice authors, are expected to demonstrate knowledge by using jargon, specialist lexis, and particular constructs for an expert audience belonging to a specific disciplinary community. These characteristics make the literature essays different from general language topic essays or essays written for applied linguistics or ELT courses. Hence, the English literature essay written by the students in the English department can be termed as 'genre' because of the above mentioned specificities (Farida, 2008). In addition, these academic essays have the properties of 'exposition' text type in accordance to Paltridge's (1996) classification of students' essays as 'genre' with 'exposition' as their function. Accordingly, in this study I analyze first year students' literature essays as genre and identify what students are doing in terms of form, structure and content.

3. Genre studies and move analysis for written text analysis

Genre analysis is a dominant approach to text and discourse analysis specially situated within discipline specific environments. It allows an analyst to identify the characteristic

features of rhetoric and mechanics of writing. Studies (Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Swales, 1990, 2004; Hyland, 1990, 2000, 2003, 2007; Bhatia, 1993; Paltridge, 2001, 2002; Henry & Roseberry, 1999; Flowerdew, 2000; Santos, 2002; Derewianka, 1990, 2003; Johns, 2008; Cotos, Huffman & Link, 2015; Cheng, 2015; Gimenez, 2016) conducted have revealed how genre studies can help students raise their awareness and knowledge in essay patterns and the relationships between different parts of an essay. They showed how making students aware of different text patterns, text frames, text structure, and rhetorical organization could be a valuable starting point and useful instrument in facilitating students' comprehension of written texts and their development as writers. Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1988) contended that enabling students to get familiar with the description of the organization of particular kinds of texts could be a useful tool in ESP pedagogy. Similarly, Flowerdew (2000) also recommended teaching of organizational structure and ordering of move structures as a "starting point for helping students to acquire competence in a particular genre" (p. 375).

An important aspect in ESP genre analysis is to identify genre as possessing a set of planned moves (Swales, 1981, 1990, 2004; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Hyland, 1990; Bhatia, 1993; Henry & Roseberry, 1997, 2001; Huttner, 2005). The move-based approaches are widely used to identify patterns within a text. They not only identify general patterns within particular genre but also variations to the expected patterns. Henry and Roseberry (2001) defined 'move' "as a part of text, written or spoken, which achieves a particular purpose within a text…in some way to fulfilling the overall purpose of the genre" (p. 154). Hasan (1989) used the notion of the 'elements' which she identified as optional and obligatory; this has been echoed by almost all analysts because all moves do not and need not occur at all times. In addition to moves, Swales (1990) also used 'steps' or 'options' to express each 'move'. Bhatia (1993) and Henry & Roseberry (1997) termed these as "strategies" (pp. 31-32) or "tactical choices" (p. 481) respectively that a writer employs to fulfill the writing requirements.

With this view in mind, students' essays were collected to conduct analysis from the perspective of Swalesian genre analysis to identify the required structural moves and rhetorical strategies. It was expected that identification of obligatory and optional moves and strategies could potentially provide valid guidelines to structure literature essays appropriately.

3.1 The study

For this study, a total of seventy marked literature essays written under timed conditions during tutorial sessions were collected from First year English department university students who had completed twelve years of schooling before getting admitted. These First year timed tutorial examination scripts were marked by different tutorial teachers during 2006-2007 for my doctoral research. Moreover, for the purpose of writing this paper more tutorial scripts were collected again from First year students during the 2015-2016 sessions doing courses 'Introduction to Prose and Drama' and 'Introduction to Poetry'. Amongst these essays, forty were selected and divided into twenty high grades and twenty low grades. The thirty mid-range essays were not analyzed. This classification into two distinct groups was done to get a clear picture of the contrasting features present in the two sets. It was assumed that the essays selected from the two extremes would

exemplify what is valued in the genre. The essays were, therefore, classified under two major categories on rank order as, high and low grade essays (Farida, 2008).

The essays were analyzed on the basis of Move-Strategy structure to see what structural patterns the essays possessed and what tactical choices students took to express the moves and what students were presenting in terms of content within those moves. Move-Strategy method was used to analyze the students' essays. The explanation for this is quite clearly given by Henry and Roseberry's (1999) study on the features of essay introductions-- that 'steps' is an appropriate term in cases when there is a fixed order of 'tactical choices' being made. For the essay analyses, acronyms were used for both Moves and Strategies instead of just the Moves, to be able to see things more clearly as to what different choices the students take within the moves (Table 1).

Swales' genre based Move analysis proved very useful for this study as the purpose was to look closely into students' literature essay writing as "communicative events" situated within a "discourse community" characterized by their "communicative purposes" or goals exhibiting certain "patterns" in terms of "structure, style, content and intended audience" (Swales, 1990, p. 58). Though Swales' CARS (Creating a Research Space) model was consulted, the model was not completely suitable for my study as my data did not match the advanced level communicative purposes and did not fit neatly into the patterns suggested by the RA (Research Article) genre model. Moreover, I intended to study essays in their entirety instead of selective sections of the essays. Since no previous studies were conducted on all parts of complete literature essays, I had to depend on examining frameworks by Hyland (1990), Henry and Roseberry (1997) and Matsuzono (2004). In addition to these studies, students' written essays were also investigated to develop the analytical model. It must be emphasized that the collected data (essays) were in fact used both for developing the model as well as analyzing the essays in order to gain a finer understanding of what students write.

3.2 Model development for essay analysis

Although much research is carried out on analyzing different genres, student essays have not been extensively researched by genre analysts as they are seen to be "protean forms whose structure is hard to pin down" (Weber, 2001, p 20). Moreover, there were no previous studies available that analyzed literature essays written by novice writers. As a result, it was essential that a model be developed with the pattern of moves to suit my students' essays. The model was developed by combining different perspectives with modifications from the knowledge gained from previous models (Hyland, 1990; Henry & Roseberry, 1997; Matsuzono, 2004) in addition to the patterns that I found after analyzing my students' high grade literature essays (HGE). Low grade essays (LGE) were also studied to identify the inadequacies. Hyland's (1990) analytical framework to study general topic based argumentative essays was useful firstly because it looked at entire academic essays from the perspective of moves and rhetorical structuring and secondly because the essays were written under timed conditions and belonged to almost the same level as my students. Henry and Roseberry's (1997) investigation concentrated on the moves and strategies present in Introductions and Conclusions of expository text types. Matsuzono's study on TWE (Test of Written English) essays followed Henry and Roseberry's (1997) framework but included the Body section as well which was helpful

for my study. All the three frameworks had identical 'obligatory' and 'optional' moves and strategies that were identified in my model as well. Moreover, the three frameworks carried out analyses on expository text types which also matched the nature of the literature essay topics. In literature essays, students are not only expected to explain or describe concept/s in an extended form but are also required to state personal views, engage with the topic and argue their statements with logic and reason by citing evidences from the texts (Farida, 2008). It should be mentioned that although model development and text analysis went hand in hand, I present the development of the model before showing text analysis because I feel that it will be easier for readers to delve into the texts with the model in hand to understand what students are doing when the moves in the essays are discussed.

From an analysis of students' texts and previous studies (Hyland, 1990; Matsuzono, 2004) it was evident that all essays possessed the three part generic structure: Introduction, Body and Conclusion. Thus, in Edge and Richard's (1998) words, used to define qualitative studies, the model developed is not "so very original and distinct from what has gone before, but the search for it" (p. 348) has enabled me understand better the issues involved with First year students' English literature essays in the English Department, that is, what is being done, what is lacking, and how things can hopefully be improved. The model (Table 1) seemed to work well with literature essay topics possessing rhetorical functions of Evaluation, Explanation, Position-Reason, Argumentation, Exposition as well as Compare-Contrast. This modified model, a development from existing models, is termed 'Exposition-Discussion' model (Farida, 2008).

Table 1: Elements of structure in the 'Exposition-Discussion' based model. The bolded ones are the obligatory steps

Stage	Move (M)	Strategy (S)	Flexibility
Introduction	Opener (O)	Gambit (G) and/or Background Information (BI) and/or Definition (D) and/or General Statement (GS)	Optional
	Narrowing towards Proposition (NTP)		Optional
	Proposition (P)	**Stating Thesis (ST)** or **Stating Claim (SC)**	**Obligatory**
	Elaborating Proposition (EP)		Optional

Stage	Move (M)	Strategy (S)	Flexibility
	Plan of Development (PD)		Optional
Body Move pair SP^ESP is recursive. The strategies can take any order	**Supporting Proposition (SP)**		**Obligatory**
	Elaborating Supporting Proposition (ESP)	**Giving Evidence (Ev)** and **Explaining Evidence (Ex)** and/or **Giving Evidence & Explaining at the same time (EvEx)**	**Obligatory**
Conclusion The sequence of the moves and strategies is also not fixed	**Restating Proposition (RP)**	**Consolidation of Ideas (CI)** and /or **Confirming Proposition (CP)** and/or **Elaborating Confirmed Proposition (ECP)**	**Obligatory**
	Beyond Proposition (BP)	Personal Response (PR) and /or Making Suggestions (MS) and /or Making Predictions (MP) and /or Widening Proposition (WP)	Optional

4. The findings of literature essay analyses using Exposition-Discussion model

The analyses of both high and low grade essays using the modified Move-Strategy model was carried out that enabled me to see what students wrote, identify the lackings and understand what was considered valuable. The findings of the study are reported in two steps. I describe each move with its strategies within the three main stages, Introduction-Body-Conclusion, and demonstrate them with examples first from students' high grade essays and then repeat the same process for low grade essays for the readers to get a distinct contrastive picture.

4.1 High grade essay (HGE) 'Introduction'

Most Introductions (see Table 1) began with 'Opener' (O) moves, which were mostly relevant to the central idea and had a proportionate balance in the amount of information

provided in the rest of the essay. At times, students chose to use one strategy, only 'Gambit' (G) (Appendix) in form of a catchy quotation quite relevant to the topic before going into the thesis. At other times, some students used more than one optional strategies like, 'Background Information' (BI), 'Definition' (D), 'General Statement' (GS). This pattern coincided with Hoey's (1983) General-Particular matching relation pattern.

Even though the students were novice writers, they were able to have openers that created topic generalization in order to 'establish a territory' as seen in Swales' Move1of CARS model (1990) for article introductions. 'Narrowing towards Proposition' (NTP) move was rarely used by students, but when it was used its purpose was to bridge the broad opening with the central idea of the essay as in the following:

> **Q. Write an essay delineating the relationship between Aunt Jennifer and the tigers.**
>
> **{{ [** 'Aunt Jennifer's Tigers' is one of the most famous poems of Adrienne Rich**.] O-GS [**In this poem, a lady named Jennifer, has embroidered some tigers on a tapestry which represent her inner desires**.] NTP [**The relationship between the tigers and aunt Jennifer is intimate, contrasting and realistic.**] P-ST**

Excerpt 1

In most cases, 'Opener/s' (O) preceded 'Proposition' (P) as illustrated in Excerpt 1 and Appendix. Only one essay out of twenty literature HGE opened the Introduction with 'Proposition' directly. 'Elaborating Proposition' (EP) was seen to occur in seven essays. Most likely students felt there was a need to develop the thesis statement a little further which would act as a link with the consecutive Body paragraphs of the essay as in Excerpt 2.

> **Q. Discuss Matthew Arnold's poem as criticism of life.**
>
> **{{....O-G [** Arnold, in his poems, criticises modern life, and certainly his poems bear a mark of melancholy where despair and a sense of loss dominate.**] P-ST [** In his style of criticising modern life, he is never a bully, but interestingly is always ironic and courteous. To him, modern life is fatal and hopeless.**] EP**

Excerpt 2

'Plan of Development' (PD) move appeared only in one HGE which proved that students did not think it was necessary to explicitly provide a mapping of the essay to the reader or that they were simply unaware of it. Hyland (1990) also considered it an optional element in the structure of his argumentative essays but nevertheless identified it as important in "signposting its subsequent direction" (p. 71).

4.2 HGE 'Body'

One interesting finding was that in eleven of the twenty essays, the Body paragraphs began in a similar fashion, with linguistic features, like "In this story…" (Appendix), "As the title suggests" or "The poem starts dramatically" signalling their transition from Introduction to the main body by referring to the main text they were writing on. It

seemed students preferred to begin the Body, usually the first 'Supporting Proposition' (SP), generally on a wider landscape before moving in to give evidences and explanations. There were a number of ways by which SP was realized by students in the Body paragraph. Sometimes it would appear at the outset of the Body paragraph, or sometimes in the middle of the consecutive Body paragraphs. In the sample essay (Appendix) SP appears as the opening line of the first Body paragraph followed by 'Elaborating Supporting Proposition' (ESP).

'Elaborating Supporting Proposition' is the most important move in the Body paragraphs as it endorses the "validity of the proposition" (Hyland, 1990, p. 72). As seen in Appendix, 'Supporting Proposition-Elaborating Supporting Proposition' (SP-ESP) moves occurred together and often it was not possible to dissociate one from the other. SP-ESP sequence is recursive and students' essays had a number of rotations of these moves done in different paragraphs. Hoey's (1983) General-Particular or Preview-Detail pattern fits perfectly with SP-ESP move pair where SP corresponds with Preview or General functions and ESP with Particular or Detail functions.

ESP move realized by strategies of 'Evidence' (Ev) and 'Explanation' (Ex) were presented by students through different ways. Ev was displayed in form of detailing of events, recount, paraphrase, summary, quotations, historical background, cross referencing etc. Ex was in form of critical commentary, objective criticism, explanation of the evidence, personalizing the issue, discussion of events. A few of the essays presented explanation of evidences in form of personal engagement and personal insights (Excerpt 3):

> **Q. Consider 'The Garden Party' as a short story dealing with class discrimination and a society built upon it.**
>
> **[** Laura's family keeps servants while Jose loves "giving orders" to them. Thus, the servants just as in real life play the role of order takers so that even later when Laura wishes to carry some left-over food from the party to the poor, dead neighbour's family, death becomes occasion for "good work" and showing sympathy to the poor. This is much like in real life where rich people would not postpone a party just because a poor neighbour has died but then afterwards they would probably show their sympathy and make a visit to the neighbour's family.**] ESP-EvEx**

Excerpt 3

4.3 HGE 'Conclusion'

Most Conclusions were short and showed visible signs of students ending the essay in haste. Most frequently, students used 'Restating Proposition' (RP) move which I see as obligatory, mainly expressed by 'Confirming Proposition' (CP) as seen in Excerpt 4. Almost always, there would be a marker, a typical language feature signalling the end. For instance, the Conclusions would begin with sentences like, "Thus, in this way…" (Appendix), "Therefore, it is seen that" (Excerpt 5), "From the above discussion" etc. These markers followed on to RP move which confirm P or SP. The markers tried to introduce a cause-consequence relation making the conclusion seem inevitable. A few

essays also expanded 'Restating Proposition-Confirming Proposition' (RP-CP) with a short 'Restating Proposition-Elaborating Confirming Proposition' (RP-ECP) (Excerpt 5). Among the other RP strategies, some essays also possessed 'Consolidation of Ideas' (CI). Instead of just repeating Proposition, students also provided an overall summary of what was discussed in the essay and made a comment on that.

Q. Discuss the relationship between Aunt Jennifer and her husband.

{{ [To sum up, this relationship brought pathos to the readers and showed the vulnerable state of women in patriarchal society.**] }} RP-CP**

Excerpt 4

Although all HGE possessed conclusions, there were four instances when the students did not have separate paragraphs for conclusions and appeared at the end of the Body paragraphs. 'Beyond Proposition' (BP) was not a common move. Only one essay used BP move which used a 'Personal Response' (PR) strategy (Excerpt 5).

Q. Write an essay on the mother-child relationship in "My Oedipus Complex".

{{ [Therefore, it is seen that Larry's strong attachment to his mother and his willingness to remove anybody who comes in the way of their relationship is because he is going through the Oedipal phase of his life which most male children do and eventually outgrow.**] RP-CP [** Larry fails to understand that his mother is only directing her attention to those people who in her opinion need it the most which is why even his father feels neglected after the birth of Sonny.**] RP-ECP [** However, the mother's love for Larry is undimmed: it is just that she cannot afford to give him as much time as she initially used to when Larry was the only person that her world had consisted of.**] }} BP-PR**

Excerpt 5

4.4 Low grade essay (LGE) 'Introduction'

Students faced numerous problems with their Introductions. The Introductions of at least seven essays were not confined to a paragraph. It was sometimes difficult to understand the generic organization of these essays and understand as to where the Introduction ended and the Body started. The Introduction often moved into the second paragraph and merged with the Body paragraph (Excerpt 6). Hence, the rhetorical function of opening the essay and stating the main thesis mingled with other functions of explaining or giving evidence.

Not all essays possessed 'Opener' (O). The Introductions of a few essays had only 'Opener' and no 'Proposition' (P). In some essays, 'Opener' was there and would reappear after P and even 'Elaborating Proposition' (EP) and reappear later in the second paragraph with 'Proposition'. Students also had problems beginning the essay in terms of content. They did not know how to present their opening statements, and it was found that students would provide too much of irrelevant information that had little connection with the topic. For instance, the essay topic asked to compare Jane and Elizabeth from *Pride and Prejudice* and the student wrote about the title and provided details about

union of the hero and the heroine instead of focusing on the sisters. At times, students directly answered the question or started the essay with 'Proposition' and at other times 'Proposition' was nowhere to be found.

'Narrowing Towards Proposition' (NTP) was sometimes noticed (Excerpt 6). However, it seemed as though the student was arriving at 'Proposition' but again reverted to providing another irrelevant 'Background Information' (BI) and, thus, was not actually followed by 'Proposition'.

Q. Write an essay on the character of Bluntschli in *Arms and the Man*.

{{ [George Bernard Shaw is a dramatist who used his play as an instrument to critise the social norms and in consciousness.**] O-BI [** A writer conveys his idealogy or conception through the character. **] NTP**

[George Bernard Shaw, according to some critics is considered next to Shakespeare. He is fully liable to perform social responsibilities. It should be noted that though he has written a lot of dramas, his all dramas are comedies.**] O-BI [**In "Arms and the Man" we see Bluntschli as an intentional creation of the play wright.**] }} P-ST {{ [** We first see the presence of Bluntschli in the bed chamber of Raina, the heroine of the play. He was fighting on the side of Serb. But unfortunately he had to flee away from the battle fields. As enemy soldier chased him he took shelter in Raina's room dramatically.

Excerpt 6

Some essays took longer to arrive at 'Proposition' as the writers indulged in lengthy recounting with sporadic commentary. EP move was present which was often done in a brief manner. 'Plan of Development' was a rare strategy and done incorrectly.

4.5 LGE 'Body'

Identifying the Body moves was problematic and often perplexing. The Body did not provide the development of the argument stated in the Introduction through a logical progression with relevant substantiation. Moreover, 'Supporting Proposition-Elaborating Supporting Proposition' (SP-ESP) pair did not work in collaboration, rather in isolation. Many of the low grade Body paragraphs also began with linguistic features that signalled their transition from Introduction to the main body but the development of these markers was done incorrectly.

LGE had major problem realizing 'Supporting Proposition' move. There was either an overuse of SP or an underuse of it. Right after 'Proposition' students began to give evidences in form of recount, simply narrating the story. Many of the Body paragraphs, if at all they began with a paragraph, did not have a statement to support the claim made in the Introduction. They often began with the evidences right away. There were cases where there was a series of isolated SP with no elaborations (Excerpt 7). A typical feature of this move in the LGE was the overuse of Recount or detailing of events to elaborate SP or P in the Body of most of LGE. Students sometimes began elaborating SP but then left it incomplete and digressed to start elaborating on some other SP.

Q. Write on the Bennet sisters as you find them in the first 10 chapters of *Pride and Prejudice*.

[Elizabeth also very responsible**.] SP** [She always feel hesitated about her mother**.] SP** [She inherits the quality of her father.**] SP**

Excerpt 7

At times the content information with which students realized the 'Elaborating Supporting Proposition' was found incorrect proving students' inadequate reading of the subject and these were frequently found in the Body paragraphs. Often students did not answer the question, rather went about discussing other issues. In one question (Excerpt 8) students were asked to discuss sonnets with reference to Shakespeare's sonnets 18 and 130 and this particular student comparatively gave more information on Petrarchan sonnets than Shakespearean. Another problematic area with the LGE was the use and explanations of literary terminologies. In essays where students were required to use highly sophisticated literary terms, like in the essay on sonnets, it was found that students used terms like octave, sestet, quartet randomly without really understanding the use of the terms. Excerpt 8 shows that the student is providing an incorrect definition which s/he must have rote learned without understanding.

Q. What is a sonnet? Compare and contrast between Shakespeare's sonnet 18 and 130.

Petrarchan sonnet is conventional. His sonnets are divisioned into two parts as first eight lines are called octave and rest six lines are called sestet. His rhyme-scheme etc. is completely different from Shakesperean sonnet. According to his first eight lines rhyme scheme is ab, ba, ab, ba and last six lines rhyme scheme is cdc, dcd, ef, fe.

Excerpt 8

4.6 LGE 'Conclusion'

Like the literature HGE, most conclusions were drawn by 'Restating Proposition' move, mainly expressed by 'Confirming Proposition' (CP) strategy. Six essays were also found to have markers signaling the end. Some of these markers were wrongly used. Students felt that by using 'lastly' or 'finally' they concluded their essays, which in fact remained inconclusive for the readers. Fifteen conclusions were mainly realized by 'Restating Proposition-Confirming Proposition' (RP-CP) move by affirming 'Proposition'. The conclusion (Excerpt 9) showed that it confirmed 'Proposition', but in reality all the essay did was it narrated the whole novel in the Body and did not provide evidences as to what artistry Austen depicted in drawing Darcy's character. 'Beyond Proposition' (BP) move was not found at all in any LGE.

Q. Write an essay on the character of Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*.

{{At the end of story we can say Jane Austen has shown her artistic skill by sketching the character of Darcy as hero of the novel.**}} RP-CP**

Excerpt 9

5. Discussion: Literature essays in terms of structure and content

In terms of generic structuring, all HGE possessed the three parts that is Introduction-Body-Conclusion, while the LGE in some cases ended without conclusions. Most HGE showed noticeable evidences of students' ability to explore and analyze all sides of an issue, structure the different points in logical order, relate them to the central topic and offer an interpretation that may or may not require taking of a position in a relatively error free language.

Both HGE and LGE had openers, the former in most cases had appropriate ones relevant to the text or issue to be discussed, whereas the latter had information that had little or no relevance to the main issue. HGE would have a variety of 'Openers' (O), like using gambits or quotations, to grab the attention and interest of the reader, whereas LGE would most often open with a general statement or background context. HGE also gave background information in proportionate quantity that was relevant and directly related to the texts in question. On the other hand, when LGE realized 'Openers' with general background information, they ignored the text or issue and described author's details and tended to give an excess of irrelevant background information. Many of the LGE started with 'Proposition' answering the question at the very beginning which I felt was a better strategy for weaker writers to use, as Cowley (2002) suggested, because when they were using the Openers they were expressing them in all the wrong possible ways. Some LGE Introductions had Openers only and no Proposition, which were later located in the Body. Hence, Openers were inappropriately realized in LGE. It could be possible that students most probably felt that they should end their Introduction with Openers and begin the Body with the thesis or Proposition. Some high grade achievers deliberately chose not to reveal Proposition at the beginning.

'Narrowing Towards Proposition' was a rarely occurring move in both HGE and LGE. It was visible that although students could begin an essay with a focused 'Proposition', and move on to develop the idea further, students who were relatively performing well as writers felt that they needed to begin the essay with an 'Opener' before they could zoom on to the main topic, and hence, use the General-Specific pattern. LGE, on the other hand, did not have an organized General-Specific move structure. They were often observed to move from 'Opener' to 'Proposition' and then back to 'Opener'. It was common in LGE to begin with 'Proposition' in a new paragraph. A strong possibility for doing this could be that students felt that they should convey the central idea in a new paragraph. Once 'Proposition' was made, students elaborated 'Proposition' and this was found in HGE more than LGE. Most likely students felt there was a need to develop the thesis statement a little further which would act as a link with the Body of the essay. Like 'Narrowing Towards Proposition', 'Plan of Development' move was also a rare move in both HGE and LGE.

Interestingly, both HGE and LGE began their Body paragraphs in a similar fashion using transition frame markers to develop the essay. However, HGE used these frame markers or topic shifts (Hyland 2001, 2004, 2005) appropriately and went on to develop, 'Supporting Proposition-Elaborating Supporting Proposition' (SP-ESP) move pair, whereas when LGE used them they gave a chronological narration of the plot. It was evident from the data that when mature writers elaborated 'Supporting Proposition'

move they tended to blend Evidence and Explanation moves together. They analyzed an issue by consciously trying to balance reasoning with emotional involvement. On the other hand, SP-ESP moves caused major problems in LGE, as it was found that there were multiple isolated SP following each other without proper elaborations or ESP. It seemed that LGE students presumed if they displayed piles of new information they could impress the examiner better. When SP-ESP pair was found together, it often happened that they did not match the move pair sequence. ESP was not supporting its SP, rather was a continuation of some other SP. So, evidences of going off the topic was very common in LGE. As a result, most of the times the move pair proved dysfunctional, resulting in texts that were incoherent and replete with "patchwork", as was described by Hull and Rose's (1989) study of underprepared students' approach to writing of summaries.

On the other hand, HGE had appropriate 'Supporting Proposition', functioning as the topic sentences that would at times come at the outset of the Body paragraph, sometimes in the middle of the consecutive Body paragraphs and at other times in the end. The presence of transition frame markers in the Body was common, most likely because students felt the need to convince the reader that they read the whole text and were able to make connections between the text and the arguments of the essay. SP-ESP sequence was recursive mainly following General-Particular pattern and students' essays seemed to have a number of rotations of these moves done in different paragraphs. The HGE SP provided the topic sentence and ESP was realized by evidences from the text through different means. Students with LGE often did not understand the need to signal the reader of the thesis in the topic sentence and therefore, less SP were found in them. In LGE, SP was realized by repetition of the topic, and ESP was realized mainly by recounting or summarization of whole text which acted as evidences for low grade students. Most of the HGE had analytical depth to their essays, an essential feature in literature essays. There were a few essays with language problems but even these essays displayed proof of having logical progression between SP-ESP substantiated by evidences and explanations along with students' critical views on the issue or arguments. Very few instances of unnecessary summarizing of events occurred in HGE. In contrast, LGE seemed less interested in signalling the reader with the main focus, SP, and were trying more to regurgitate summaries of plots thoughtlessly and often provided incorrect information. Another problematic area with these LGE was the use and explanations of the literary terminologies. In essays where students were required to use highly sophisticated literary language, students instead used jargons randomly by rote learning their definitions without comprehending the real meaning and providing incorrect definition. Use of quotations, an effective way of textual illustration to emphasize one's interpretations and enhance credibility in literature essays was hardly found in LGE. Therefore, it was seen that although students' essays had Body there were several problems in terms of how students presented the structure of the essay and what information they provided within that structure.

Conclusions of literature HGE were done quite briefly by the obligatory retrospective 'Restating Proposition' (RP) move mainly expressed by 'Confirming Proposition' (CP) strategy and, in most cases, there was a marker to signal the end.

Similarly, LGE also concluded with RP-CP if conclusions were provided. Some LGE used linguistic markers signalling the end abruptly which in reality remained inconclusive. Most likely these students felt that once they gave their detailing or recounting in the Body the question was answered and conclusions were not required. Some conclusions were also seen to have a sudden return of unexplained SP (Supporting Proposition) after the conclusion. The 'Beyond Proposition' (BP) move was rare in both high and low grade literature essays.

Students rarely used their voices, 'I', 'we' and 'us' in their texts. This showed their lack of confidence in using "explicit author reference" or "author identity" (Hyland, 2005, p. 53). This is evident in students' handling of conclusions. Even the better writers hardly took a position strongly and concluded their essays with a mere restatement of what they expressed before. Most likely they were worried that their direct opinions may not be accepted by the examiners and they would be penalized.

Literature enables the mind to think by opening up avenues for emotions to play before it can come to take a firm position and be objective. Students who have not done literature at school are underprepared to meet the challenges at the university. Literature allows space for originality and echoing Dutta's (2001) words we should encourage our students to "make their individual investment to claim ownership" (p. 126). In order to claim ownership of texts, the student writer must become a confident user of her/his critical mind and voice. As it has been mapped by Moon (2008), critical thinking is the ability to evaluate and judge a piece of information deeply from all angles with academic assertiveness as well as emotional insight. This is clearly revealed in my findings from literature HGE analysis.

6. Conclusion

This paper has shed light on how students in Dhaka University majoring in English literature struggle with their writing competence because here they are required to produce written texts that are genre specific, culturally appropriate, linguistically accurate and generically correct. Students full of stress and anxiety realize that producing effective written texts is not possible at the tertiary level from formal instruction of arbitrary rules of the mechanics of writing, definitions, drill, or textbook exercises. It, therefore, becomes essential that our novice writers are helped to succeed in their writing performance. One way to ease students' problems is by making them aware that understanding text patterns, structure or frames enable the communicators (reader-writer/speaker-listener) to approach a text systematically which in essence eases communication. Structure is the matrix with which information or content is arranged for composing an orderly text (essay) realized by successive Moves with their strategies. Inappropriate use of the matrix or the Move-strategies generate difficulties for analyzing texts. Identification of obligatory and optional moves can potentially provide some valid guidelines to structure literature essays appropriately.

This paper has identified that though some novices have high levels of linguistic agility and well developed ideas, difficulties remain in producing texts with appropriate text structures in specific genres. In some cases, it was just the opposite. Students could come up with the three parts of an essay but could not organize the content properly.

With LGE, problems were there in both macro and mirco structural levels and because the moves were often realized by incorrect strategical choices, it was very difficult to make sense of the line of argument.

These findings, therefore, suggest that structure is important to organize information in academic settings. It is doubly important for students who attain mid-range or low grades because they commit more linguistic errors and present confused arguments. Learning to write in an organized manner using the right 'move' with the right information is pivotal to good writing. As I write this paper, I am also constantly thinking whether my 'moves' contribute to the fulfilment of their communicative functions, whether this paper possesses the recognizable features of its genre and would it finally meet the readers' expectations. As EAP practitioners, we should realize that it is the weak writers who precisely need more EAP in liaison with ESP input and assistance to improve their writing. Some may argue that literature writing should not be made so prescriptive and structured and should allow space for creativity. This is, in fact, an admirable quality for mature writers. However, for novice writers who are still unaware of the disciplinary practices, beliefs and values of the English Department, they must first be acclimatized into the new ways of academic writing. Therefore, I feel LGE writers during their beginner years should become all the more aware of the "predictable patterns" (Swales & Feak, 2004, p. 12) to organize their thoughts for readers' advantage as well as for themselves to be on track of what they are writing. This study, therefore, has pedagogical implications that can benefit students and teachers who would use genre-based approach to teaching literature essay writing.

Note: This paper is an updated version of a part of the doctoral research conducted by the author at Warwick University, UK.

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Appendix: HGE (extracts)

Q. Identify the conflict between Larry and his father and comment on its resolution.

{{ ["Story telling doesn't deal with problems; it doesn't have any solutions to offer; it just states the human condition," says Frank O'Connor himself.] **O-G** [In his largely autobiographical short story "My Oedipus Complex", Connor depicts the Oedipal problem faced by Larry Deleaney after his father returns home from the war.] }} **P-ST**

{{ [In this story, Connor made a humorous use of the twentieth century Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud's theory of the Oedipus Complex] **SP** [which stated that every male child at an age of about four or five undergoes through a phase in which he would compete with his own father over his mother's possession and would have his father dearly removed from the mother's life. In normal children, this Oedipal conflict would resolve as the children would reach maturity while in abnormal children, the conflict continued**.] ESP-Ex**

[The father-son conflict would have gone endlessly, if it was not for the birth of a second child Sonny.] **SP** [The birth of Sonny brilliantly contributed to the unraveling or denouement of the plot. Now, the mother had time neither for father nor for Larry. Instead all her time was taken up by the "poisonous pup" Sonny who "had never anything up with him" and "only cried for attention" according to Larry. So, instead of hating each other, Sonny now became presumably the object of mutual jealousy of the father and son.] **ESP- ExEv**

[Thus, Larry became prepared to settle for his father when he knew there was no more chance for him to regain his position as the centre of mother's universe- her attention**.] SP** [Therefore, to Larry, he was "very bony" but still "better than nothing". }} **ESP-ExEv**

{{ [Thus, in this way Connor brilliantly depicts the resolution of the story in his own humorous way and essentially saves the story from becoming a tragedy**.] RP-CI** [He keenly enters a child's mind to reveal his psychological ongoings and makes a perceptive use of Freud's theory to give it a comic aspect in "My Oedipus Complex" altogether. }} **RP-CP**