

## A move-based analysis of TESOL master's thesis conclusion chapters by Vietnamese postgraduates

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### Suggested Citation:

Nguyen, L., T., T. & Pramoolsook, I. (2016). A move-based analysis of TESOL master's thesis conclusion chapters by Vietnamese postgraduates. *Global Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*. 6(1), 02-12.

Received December 02, 2015; revised January 18, 2016; accepted February 20, 2016.

Selection and peer review under responsibility of Assoc. Prof Dr. Ali Rahimi, Bangkok University.

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### Abstract

Writing a thesis in English is challenging for non-native English speaking students, and it is not an exception for Vietnamese master's (M.A.) students. Despite this challenge, English writing was not formally taught at their elementary, secondary and high school levels until 2008. In their postgraduate programs, these students have little or no formal instruction on how to write each part of a thesis; but are provided with the guidelines and then tailor their own theses. This paper, therefore, explores how 24 Vietnamese teachers of English wrote their thesis Conclusion chapters. By employing the revised framework for analyzing the Conclusion chapters in Applied Linguistics by Chen and Kuo (2012), the study found Deductions from the study (Move 4) is present in every chapter while the other three moves (Introducing the Conclusion chapter, Summarizing the study and Evaluating the study) are conventional. Moreover, a new move (Chapter summary) and an infrequent occurrence of Summarizing previous chapter and a cycle of next section introduction-each section summary were identified. These findings indicate not only a linear structure in composing the concluding chapters by this group of Vietnamese writers but also the rhetorical influence of Vietnamese written discourse on their English writing. The results from this study have some pedagogical implications for teaching novice Vietnamese writers on how to properly compose this genre.

Keywords: Conclusion chapter, master's thesis, move analysis, TESOL, Vietnamese writer

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## 1. Introduction

Recently, genre analysis has become an important approach for text analysis, especially in the field of English for Specific Purposes (Dudley-Evans, 1994). The term 'genre analysis' was initially used in Swales' (1981, 1990) pioneering works on the Introduction of an academic article (Connor, Upton, & Kanoksilapatham, 2007). Genre analysis is the analysis of language use in a broader sense in order to account for not only how text is constructed but also for the way it is interpreted, used and exploited in specific contexts to achieve specific goals (Bhatia, 2002). One of the genre-based approaches used to identify the structure of research articles (RAs) is 'move analysis', which has recently become an important area of research. A 'move' means a discursive segment that performs a particular communicative function (Swales, 2004) and it represents semantic and functional units of texts that have specific purposes (Connor et al., 2007). Nwogu (1997) states that the focus of move-based analysis is on the hierarchical schematic structures of texts and with this in mind, it can be said that a move is a semantic unit that associates with the writer's purpose.

A move-based approach has been intensively used in investigating different conventional English RA sections (Brett, 1994; Holmes, 1997; Kanoksilapatham, 2005, 2007; Lim, 2006; Nwogu, 1997; Peacock, 2002, 2011; Posteguillo, 1999; Swales, 1990; D. K. Thompson, 1993; Williams, 1999; Yang & Allison, 2003). This approach has also been extended to compare the rhetorical moves used in English RAs and those of RAs written in other languages (Loi & Evans, 2010; Yakhontova, 2006). Although there has been a remarkable number of RA investigations employing the move-based approach, studies employing move-based approaches on doctoral (Ph.D.) dissertations (Bunton, 2002, 2005; Dong, 1998; Hyland, 2004; Kwan, 2006; Swales, 2004; P. Thompson, 2001, 2005) and Master's (M.A.) theses tend to be scarce. Some move-based research has explored the organization of certain chapters of M.A. theses, such as Acknowledgements (Zhang, 2012), Introductions (Nguyen & Pramoolsook, 2014b; Samraj, 2008), Literature Review chapters (Nguyen & Pramoolsook, 2014a), Introduction and Discussion sections (Dudley-Evans, 1986), Results and Discussion (Nguyen & Pramoolsook, 2015b), Conclusions (Hewings, 1993) and the overall thesis organization (Chen & Kuo, 2012; Paltridge, 2002). Although these studies have provided us with a general view of the generic structure of M.A. theses, no research focuses on Conclusion texts produced by non-native English writers. In fact, there is the scarcity of published studies on texts written by non-English writers, especially those by Vietnamese writers. This present investigation, therefore, continues to explore the generic move-step structures of the Conclusion chapters of TESOL M.A. theses written by Vietnamese students.

Writing a thesis in English poses difficulties for non-native English speaking students (Shaw, 1991). Despite these difficulties, as revealed in the informal conversations with thesis writers and their supervisors under the current investigation, TESOL M.A. students in Vietnam have little or no formal instruction on how to write each part of a thesis, but are simply provided with guidelines. These students consult with the guidelines, published books on thesis writing, or theses written by students in previous courses in their school library, and then format their own theses. Although the guidelines on thesis writing provided by each university are worded slightly differently from each other, they all include almost general identical required parts for each chapter of a thesis. Take the guidelines for the thesis Conclusion chapter provided by these universities as an example. This chapter should include a summary of the main findings of the thesis, a list of the contributions of the work, the implications of the research and recommendations for further research. Paltridge (2002) states that guidelines and handbooks which focus on thesis writing do not show students the range of thesis options nor do they provide the rationale for the various choices thesis writers make.

Conclusion sections are known to provide not only the outline of the study but also other important elements such as deductions, implications and recommendations (Morales, 2012; Peng, 1987). Despite their importance, Conclusion sections have been considered as a part of the discussion sections (Posteguillo, 1999; Swales, 1990). The only study that found and analyzed final sections called Conclusions and Pedagogic Implications is Yang and Allison (2003). To the researchers' knowledge, studies which aim to analyze the rhetorical structures of thesis conclusions are limited. As far as this study is concerned, the only study on the rhetorical organization of six MBA thesis Conclusion chapters

is conducted by Hewings (1993). His study shows that Reporting, Commenting and Suggesting are the three main functions of an MBA thesis Conclusion. Differently, Bunton (2005) found thesis-oriented and field-oriented types of Conclusions in his corpus of 44 Ph.D. dissertation Conclusions covering a wide range of disciplines. Besides, Bunton (2005) also indicates that there are disciplinary variations in terms of the move structure in the Conclusion chapters of Ph.D. dissertations between Science and Technology (ST) and Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) even though they both are thesis-oriented. In particular, ST Conclusions focus on work carried out while HSS Conclusions present research aims, research questions, or hypotheses. Similarly, there is a difference in their final moves where ST Conclusions finish with Future Research, but Practical Implications and Recommendations are offered in HSS Conclusions.

Combining the moves and steps in the framework of Conclusion and Pedagogical sections in Yang and Allison (2003), Chen and Kuo (2012) formed a framework with four main moves and an independent move of Referring to other studies for analyzing the Conclusion chapter of M.A. theses (Table 1). The first move in Chen and Kuo's (2012) model is different from Yang and Allison's (2003) because it has a communicative purpose of introducing the chapter structure and research purposes, designs, questions/hypothesis of the current study.

Table 1. Chen and Kuo's (2012) framework for the Conclusion chapter of Applied Linguistics M.A. theses (pp. 51-52)

Move 1: Introducing the Conclusions chapter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restating purpose, design, research questions/hypotheses, results, or indicating how conclusions are presented</li> </ul>
Move 2: Summarizing the study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summarizing the study briefly</li> </ul>
Move 3: Evaluating the study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicating significance/advantage</li> <li>Indicating limitations</li> <li>Evaluating methodology</li> </ul>
Move 4: Deductions from the (research) study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recommending further research</li> <li>Drawing pedagogic implications</li> <li>Making suggestions</li> </ul>
Referring to other studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing support or justification</li> </ul>

Only 10 out of 20 theses in Chen and Kuo's (2012) corpus had a separate Conclusion chapter. Their analysis of these 10 theses revealed that there was a linear structure of Summarizing the study briefly, Drawing pedagogical implications and Recommending further research. This finding also confirms Yang and Allison's (2003) that Conclusions concentrate more on highlighting overall results than commenting on specific results, leading to a low-frequency in steps compared with those in other sections. Moreover, Move 2 to Move 4 were confirmed to characterize the communicative purposes of Conclusion chapters in these theses. Summarizing the study briefly was found to be the obligatory step in their corpus while Drawing pedagogical implications, Recommending further research and Indicating limitations were conventional. Furthermore, their findings of no clear sequential relationships of moves and steps suggest that there is no fixed order of presenting the various moves and steps in the Conclusion chapters of M.A. thesis. Finally, the modified move-step framework for the Conclusion chapters by Chen and Kuo (2012) has a new independent move of Referring to other studies, which is absent from all previous move-step studies. Due to its completeness and being the result of the investigation of M.A. theses in Applied Linguistics, which is very close to TESOL, the field under this current study, this framework is chosen for the move-step identification of the corpus of 24 Conclusion chapters of TESOL M.A. theses in Vietnam.

## 2. Methods

The data consist of 24 TESOL M.A. theses written during the years 2009-2012 by Vietnamese students. These theses were randomly obtained with the writers' consent from the libraries of all three universities providing this M.A. program (eight from each) in the South of Vietnam. After permissions were obtained from the heads of the English departments, the researchers contacted thesis writers for their permission to use the theses. After receiving the thesis writers' permission, the researchers informed the librarians or the program coordinators and the electronic theses were sent to the researchers. To create a corpus, each Conclusion chapter of these theses was then copied and pasted onto a separate file and they were randomly coded from C1 to C24. The resulting corpus of these Conclusion chapters consisted of 47,053 words.

Move identification in this present research was based on the revised frameworks for analyzing the Conclusion chapters by Chen and Kuo (2012) (Table 1). Analyzing a genre in the ESP tradition, the researcher begins by 1) identifying the moves and steps, either compulsory or optional, in relation to the overall communicative purpose, and 2) investigating how these moves and steps are ordered. After the moves and steps were identified, their frequency in each chapter of theses was recorded in order to verify the extent to which a particular move or step is used. The criteria; namely "obligatory, conventional and optional" suggested by Kanoksilapatham (2005) were employed for classifying the frequency of the moves and steps found in this TESOL M.A. thesis corpus. It is possible to find new moves and steps; however, they are not considered as new move(s)-step(s) unless they are found with about 50% in the corpus (Nwogu, 1997). Since move analysis involves a certain degree of subjectivity (Crookes, 1986), an inter-rater, who holds a doctoral degree and specializes in corpus-based analysis, analyzed the texts in this corpus separately, yielding high inter-rater reliability rates (92%).

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Titles of the Conclusion chapters

Chapter headings are important because they give some indication of the role which the writer sees a chapter plays (Bunton, 2002). The preliminary examination of the current corpus of 24 M.A. theses written by Vietnamese revealed that the conclusion in a M.A. thesis has the status of a separate chapter, as confirmed by Paltridge (2002) and Bunton (2005). However, unlike the generic titles of their respective previous chapters, the titles of these concluding chapters varied considerably. As can be seen in Table 2 below, only three of the 24 theses are simply called "Conclusions" and six are named "Conclusions and Recommendations". The other 15 concluding chapters had different titles that combined various elements often seen as part of a concluding role. In addition, it is interesting to see that one Conclusion chapter was named "Recommendations" in the current concluding chapter corpus. A closer look at these titles showed that these writers have seen a conclusion of their thesis playing the roles of summarizing their findings, giving pedagogical implications, indicating limitations and making recommendations and suggesting areas of further research. Moreover, the titles of two chapters were found to include the discussions, but the discussions in these two theses were presented separately from the conclusions and they had subtitles; namely, "Discussion" and "Conclusions" for each in relation to their communicative purposes. Therefore, the conclusion parts of these two theses were separately examined.

Table 2. Generic chapter titles in 24 Conclusion chapters

Chapter titles	Total*	Chapter titles	Total*
Conclusions and Recommendations	6	Discussions of findings, Conclusions and Recommendations	2
Conclusions	3	Conclusions, Limitations, and Directions for Further Study	1

Conclusions and Implications/Suggestions	2	Discussions and Conclusions	1
Conclusions, Implications/Suggestions and Recommendations	2	Implications, Limitations and Further study	1
Conclusions, Pedagogical Implications and Limitations	2	Implications, Limitations and Conclusions	1
Summary of findings, Conclusions and Recommendations	2	Recommendations	1

\*The total number of sections with a particular heading in the data

### 3.2 Section headings

Section headings are also very helpful in showing what the writer is hoping to achieve in different parts of the chapter or the moves the writer has in mind. All these 24 concluding chapters in this TESOL M.A. thesis corpus were divided into sections with varied headings although they shared identical communicative purposes. This finding confirmed that of Bunton (2005) which found various patterns of section headings in the concluding chapters of Ph.D. dissertations in humanities and social sciences. As can be seen in Table 3 below, the headings are grouped according to their shared communicative purposes and they are sequenced in the table in approximately the order they appeared in the Conclusion chapters.

Table 3. Section headings in 24 Conclusion chapters

Section headings	Total*	Section headings	Total*
Introductions	3	Limitations of the study	8
		Limitations	7
Summary of findings	7	Delimitation of the study	1
Summary of the present study	2	Limitations of the study and suggestions for further study	1
General findings	1		
Major conclusions	1	Recommendation for further study	6
Conclusion(s)	5	Recommendations	6
Research questions explicitly answered	2	Further research	1
		Direction for further study	1
Pedagogical implications	5	Implications for further study	1
Teaching implications	1	A few further words	1
Implications	4		
Recommendations	5	Conclusion(s)	7
Recommendations for teaching and learning	4		
Suggestions	2	Chapter summary	7
Contributions of the study	1	Summary	3

\*The total number of sections with a particular heading in the data

It is clear from Table 3 that almost all of the headings used in these 24 Conclusion chapters of M.A. theses by Vietnamese writers are generic because they were used to indicate the functions of the sections. However, three Conclusion chapters in the corpus have sections headed with "Research questions explicitly answered", "Contributions of the study" and "A few further words" for the functions of summarizing the main findings of each research question, making pedagogical suggestions, and suggesting further research, respectively. They were, therefore, put in the respective group of these three communicative purposes. Furthermore, the heading "Conclusion(s)" was used

with two different functions, i.e. summarizing the main findings of the reported study and making an overall summary of the whole study. For the former communicative purpose, this heading was usually seen at the beginning of the chapter while the later was found at the end of the chapter. Similarly, "Recommendations" was found to refer to either further research as in Dudley-Evans (1986, 1994) or practical applications as well as future research as in Weissberg and Buker (1990). They were, therefore, classified into two groups according to their communicative purposes. In summary, there are seven functions that these writers had in composing their Conclusion chapters of TESOL M.A theses in Vietnam.

### 3.3 Findings on Move-Step structures

#### 3.3.1 Moves

As seen in Table 4, Move 4 (Deductions from the research study) was identified as an obligatory move in this Conclusion chapter corpus as each chapter contained at least one element of this move. The first two moves (Introducing the Conclusion chapter and Summarizing the study) were found in 22 and 20 of these 24 chapters, accounting for 92% and 83%, respectively while the third move (Evaluating the study) and the independent move of Referring to other studies were identified in 19 (79%) and 16 (67%), respectively. The prevalent presence of the first four moves in the Conclusion chapters of the current corpus is in line with the finding of Chen and Kuo (2012), but no obligatory moves were found in the M.A. theses written by international writers. The presence of Move 4 in all of these Conclusion chapters, however, could be explained by the complete absence of this move in the previous respective Results and Discussion chapters (Nguyen & Pramoolsook, 2015b). In other words, Deductions from the study, Move 6 of the Results chapters and Move 7 of both the Discussion chapters and the combined Result-Discussion chapters of the current thesis corpus were hardly found. The absence of this move in the previous concluding chapters tended to reflect the specific way that these Vietnamese writers organized these concluding texts from results to closure. In particular, it is likely that the Conclusion chapters are the only place where these thesis writers in Vietnam made recommendations and suggestions, based on the results of their studies, for students, teachers and administrators.

Table 4. Frequency of moves-steps in 24 Conclusion chapters

Moves & Steps	Total*	%	Frequency
- Summarizing the previous chapter	3	12.5	0.13
Move 1: Introducing the Conclusions chapter	20	83.3	0.91
- purpose	9	37.5	0.38
- method+ statistics	3	12.5	0.13
- research question	4	16.6	0.17
- how the chapter is presented	20	83.3	0.83
Move 2: Summarizing the study	20	83.3	0.83
Summarizing the study briefly	20	83.3	0.83
- next section introduction	2	8.3	0.08
- section summary	6	25	0.25
Move 3: Evaluating the study	19	79	0.79
Indicating significance/advantage	7	29	0.29
Indicating limitations	17	71	0.71
- time limit	6	25	0.25
- method (sample + instrument)	11	45.8	0.46
Evaluating methodology	2	8.3	0.08
Move 4: Deductions from the study	24	100	1
Recommending further research	22	92	0.92

Drawing pedagogic implications	22	92	0.92
Making suggestions	5	20.8	0.21
Referring to other studies	16	67	0.67
Providing support or justification	95	67	3.96
Providing background information	3	12.5	0.12
- Summarizing the chapter	14	58	0.58

\* The total of moves/steps in the data

\* The bold steps indicate the newly identified ones in the Conclusion corpus

Moreover, except for the first move (Introducing the Conclusion chapter) added by Chen and Kuo (2012), the high frequency of Moves 2, 3, and 4 occurrence confirmed Yang and Allison's (2003) which found Summarizing the study, Evaluating the study, and Deductions from the study the most frequent elements in the Conclusion sections of RAs. As asserted by Yang and Allison (2003) and Chen and Kuo (2012), these three moves sufficiently characterize the communicative purposes of Conclusions sections, which concentrate on highlighting overall results and evaluating the study.

In terms of move cycles, similar to Chen and Kuo's (2012) and Yang and Allison's (2003), the results of this study revealed that these Conclusion chapters had a linear structure. Moreover, these concluding chapters were organized in approximately the order of the section headings in Table 4, except for the independent move of Referring to other studies. In fact, while the majority of writers (83%) opened the last chapter of their theses with the chapter introduction (with or without section headings), as seen in Example 1 below, four began their chapters with summaries of main findings. Following the chapter introductory section were summaries of main findings, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, and recommendation for further study. They all ended the chapters with elements of Move 4 (Deductions from the study) and more than half of them (58%) closed with a chapter summary (with or without the headings) or a brief review of the whole study (Examples 2 and 3, respectively).

(1) "6.1 Introduction

*The English language plays an important part in Vietnam's development, as the country needs more and more people who can speak it to staff the development flowing from the open-door policy. One of the most significant factors that can contribute to the success of its teaching and learning is textbook. However, since its pilot application into high schools in 2006-2007, the English textbook for the 10<sup>th</sup> graders has not been systematically evaluated. Therefore, this study has been carried out to find out information to solve that problem, specifically with respect to reading skill. The discussion of data analysis and interpretation in the previous chapter makes it possible to organize the conclusion in four main parts: the research questions explicitly answered, strengths and weaknesses in the methodology of the study, recommendations for teachers and textbook designers, and suggestions for further research."* (C18)

(2) *"In brief, this chapter has helped to summarize the whole work of the thesis. This includes collecting the results in Chapter 4 to answer the wonders that stimulate the conduction of the study. Next, the chapter has also drawn out important implications for pedagogical issues in terms of teaching spoken discourse which can be applied in teaching practice afterwards. In addition, a discussion on the study limitations has also been withdrawn. Such limitations, on the other hand, urge new ideas for further research which has been also discussed in the final section of the chapter."* (C15)

(3) "5.5. Conclusion

*The purpose of this study was to examine and determine .... It also aimed at investigating.... In addition, the results of the study would aim at providing.... The study employed a survey research with the design of a mainly quantitative approach combined with additionally qualitative approach in order to gain..... Based on the results, this study briefly draws the following conclusions: 1)..... 2) ....There were no significant differences in.... However,....3) .... This study suggests that the ...."* (C17)

However, it is worth mentioning here that Move 4 (Deductions from the study) was found to be lengthily presented in nine chapters (38%), accounting for three quarters of the length of these chapters. Besides future research recommendations, its main communicative purposes were seen to provide detailed suggestions for teachers, students and administrators. The meticulous descriptions of what teachers, students and administrators at a particular educational setting should do for the improvement of the practice of learning and teaching English of their school were likely to make this move cyclical.

### 3.3.2 Steps

Frequency analysis of steps showed that How the chapter is presented, Summarizing the study briefly (20 instances each), Indicating limitations (17 instances), and Recommending future research, Drawing pedagogical implications (22 instances each) in Moves 1, 2, 3 and 4, respectively were five most frequent steps. However, these steps did not have frequencies as high as the high-frequency steps in other chapters, suggesting that cycles of steps rarely occur in Conclusions. In fact, as can be seen in Table 4, these five steps occurred only once in each Conclusion chapter. This finding confirms Yang and Allison's (2003) which states that Conclusions usually have a linear structure. In addition to their frequent occurrences, these steps also had high percentages (83%, 71% and 92%, respectively), making them conventional steps in this Conclusion chapter corpus (Kanoksilapatham, 2005). Although the findings on the most frequently occurred steps and their high percentages in these Conclusion chapters written by Vietnamese are in line with those in Chen and Kuo (2012), the high percentage and frequency of occurrence of the step How the chapter is presented are not. The prominent occurrence of this step at the beginning of the chapter tended to reflect the Vietnamese written pattern, which follows the three part structure of "Introduction-Body-Conclusion". In fact, in Table 4, the step of "Chapter summary" was found in 14 chapters, accounting for 58% of the Conclusion chapters. The presence of chapter introduction and conclusion/summary steps and elements of Moves 2 to 4 in these chapters is supposed to show the "Introduction-Body-Conclusion" written pattern by these Vietnamese writers. As discussed in previous studies (Nguyen & Pramoolsook, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a), this convention is a common practice in their universities despite the fact that it is not included in the guidelines. Furthermore, this finding is likely to confirm Moritz et al.'s (2008) claim on the influence of writers' first-language rhetorical conventions on their composition in another language. Due to its presence in more than 50% of the Conclusion chapter corpus, the step "Chapter summary" was classified as a new step as suggested by Kanoksilapatham (2005).

Besides the five conventional steps and the newly identified one, the other steps (Indicating significance/advantage, Evaluating methodology (Move 3), Making suggestions (Move 4), and Providing support or justification (Independent move) were found to be optional as they occurred in less than 50% of the Conclusion chapter corpus. However, it is also interesting to see how these Vietnamese thesis writers composed the first move through their employment of steps. As illustrated in Example 4, the chapter introduction (Move 1) started by briefly reviewing the previous chapter content, introducing the chapter structure and then briefly restating the research aims, subjects, and research methods, followed by the main findings (Move 2) and ended with a section summary. This common way of introducing the Conclusion chapters was identified in nine out of 24 chapters (38%) (Table 4). Furthermore, three chapters were found to contain background information, which indicates the importance of the research topic in the first move and this step of providing background is similar to "Consolidation of research space" found in thesis-oriented Conclusions in Bunton (2005) (Example 4).

(4) *"Based on the data analysis and discussion of findings in the previous chapter, this one draws main conclusions by first explicitly answering the research questions presented in Chapter 1. It then gives out some implications and recommendations for the use of games to enhance students' motivation in learning*



*lexis. It next includes some limitations in research methodology before it finally gives suggestions for further research.*

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

*Vocabulary plays an important role in .... Therefore, this research has been implemented to examine the educational value of games for students' performance and attitude towards vocabulary learning reflected via their motivation enhancement, language practice chances, cooperative learning, and difficulties of game introduction. Specifically, it has been prompted by the answer to the following main research question "...” and its two sub-questions:.... The findings, as discussed in the previous chapter, indicate that: ..... In conclusion, games were considered as a positive factor good for student motivation enhancement. They proved... Therefore, it is time games were used frequently ....” (C4)*

The step of *Indicating limitations* (Move 3) was found to mainly focus on the shortcomings of research time, research samples, and research instruments (Table 4). In fact, instead of making some general limitations of the reported studies, nearly half of these writers tended to show their awareness of their small sample sizes, seven indicated the weaknesses of research instruments while six mentioned the time limit in conducting their studies (Example 5). Similar to the findings of the previous chapters, the step of *Providing support or justification* was identified in 16 theses, making it a conventional step. Furthermore, two newly identified steps (*next section introduction* and *section summary*) were also found in Move 2 of two and four chapters, respectively. The occurrences of these two new steps were recorded when there were several main findings to be reported. However, as they were present in a few chapters of the corpus, they were not considered as new steps.

#### *(5) "5.3. Limitations*

*The current study has some limitations. Firstly, because of the time limit, the study only investigated the strategy use of the students through the questionnaire. Therefore, the actual use of the strategies of the students has not been observed. Secondly, as presented in literature review, 30 reading comprehension strategies in the questionnaire based on Fotovatian's (2006) and Marzban's (2006) couldn't reflect students' actual use of strategies. Thirdly, 59 second – year participants in this study could not generalize all English majored students at Vietnamese Universities.”(C11)*

## **4. Conclusions**

The present study explored the rhetorical structures of the Conclusion chapters of 24 TESOL M.A. theses written by Vietnamese students by employing the modified framework by Chen and Kuo (2012). The results revealed that Move 4 (Deductions from the study) is obligatory while Move 1 (Introducing the Conclusion chapter) and Move 2 (Summarizing the study) are conventional. The presence of Move 4 in all these Conclusion chapters could be explained by its complete absence in the previous Results, Discussion or combined Results-Discussion chapters. This finding tends to indicate that there was a linear structure in constructing each of these concluding chapters (Results, Discussion and Conclusions) by this group of Vietnamese TESOL M.A. students. Moreover, a new move (Chapter summary) and an infrequent occurrence of Summarizing previous chapter and a cycle of next section introduction-each section summary were identified. In addition to being cohesive among chapters and sections, this practice partly reflected the influence of Vietnamese written discourse on their writing in English although such information was not indicated in the guidelines provided by the universities with the TESOL M.A. program in the South of Vietnam. Despite a small corpus, this project identified some interesting features about the move and step structures in the Conclusion chapters written by a group of Vietnamese writers. Such an investigation will also respond to the need for more studies and investigation on the texts generated by students (Dudley-Evans, 1999; P. Thompson, 1999) and in particular, on those produced by non-native English writers. Besides this, findings from this study would have some implications for teaching a similar group of Vietnamese writers on how to properly compose this particular genre.

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