

Disciplinary Content Knowledge and Description: An Introduction to Golebiowski's Framework for the Analysis of the Relational Structure of Texts

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Introduction

All teachers (including English as a second/foreign language teachers) are trained to teach a specific subject to a specific audience, with expectations that they will possess both disciplinary content knowledge (knowledge of their field) and pedagogical content knowledge (knowledge of how to teach) (Richards, 2016). In the field of ELT, graduate qualifications (most often beginning at the diploma or master's level) train a prospective teacher in the teaching of the English language (an incredibly broad subject which includes language and culture) to adult learners who speak another language as their first language (an exceedingly broad target audience). There is an expectation that teachers know significantly more about their subject than their students, and also that they probably know more about the subject than they teach their students. In ELT, disciplinary content knowledge includes the ability to analyze language at a high level, both at the sentential level (language teacher trainees take courses in descriptive grammar that often assume prior knowledge of English language tense and aspect, and the ability to split the nominative from the predicate in English sentences) and at the discourse level (teacher trainees take courses in

discourse analysis, which is itself an extremely broad discipline, one that analyzes language in use). This paper seeks to introduce readers to Zosia Golebiowski's Framework for the Analysis of the Relational Structure of Texts (FARS) as an excellent tool for analyzing written academic discourse in English, because it allows the analyst to make descriptive analyses of what actually occurs in a particular introduction within this genre of writing. It thereby improves the applied linguist's/language teacher's disciplinary content knowledge of their area. This paper is structured into three parts: 1) Create a Research Space- a familiar, pedagogical discourse model, 2) Rhetorical Structure Theory- the basis from which Golebiowski developed her work, and 3) Framework for the Analysis of Relational Structures.

Create A Research Space (CARS) – A Familiar Pedagogical Discourse Model

Create A Research Space (CARS), developed by David Swales, is to discourse analysis what prescriptive grammar is for sentence level language. It gives instruction on how to write research paper introductions. It is particularly relevant in language teacher training programs because graduates can use CARS to help them write articles for publication in TESOL and Applied Linguistics journals. CARS is specific to research papers, and Swales teaches English for Academic Purposes. Swales' 1990 article, "*Create A Research Space*" (CARS) *Model of Research Introductions* gives an overview of the moves (the main sections of the introduction) and steps within each move that make up CARS. It seems to be a more advanced version of the type of introduction that is commonly taught to undergraduate students in academic writing classes. There are three moves in CARS, and steps are listed within them. Not all steps are necessarily followed. In Move 1 Establish a Territory, the author sets up the context for the research, the background:

Step 1 Claiming Centrality

Step 2 Making Topic Generalization

Step 3 Reviewing Previous items of research. (Swales, 1990, pp. 6–7).

Move 2 is Establishing a Niche. By niche, Swales means a research gap to be filled. It can be done in one of four ways:

- 1) Counter-claiming- challenging earlier research
- 2) Indicating a Gap- earlier research does not sufficiently address all questions
- 3) Question raising- additional research needs to be done
- 4) Continuing a tradition- it is the claim that this essay is a useful extension of existing research (Swales, 1990, pp. 7–8).

Move 3 is Occupying a Niche- how you intend to respond to Move 2. This is done in several steps only one of which (either 1a or 1b) is required.

1 a) Outlining purposes: “In this article I argue...” or “The present research tries to clarify”.

1 b) Announcing present research: “This paper describes three separate studies conducted between March 2008 and January 2009”.

2. Announce Principle findings- presenting main conclusions of the research. “The results of this study suggest...” or “When we examined x, we discovered...”

3. Indicating the Structure of the Research Article: “This paper is structured as follows...” (Swales, 1990, p. 8).

CARS is useful for people involved in language teaching at the tertiary level where it is common to publish empirical studies. It is commonly a part of MA TESOL programs because it is a formula for the type of writing that teachers may do after they graduate, especially if they go on to do doctoral studies. Therefore, it allows trainees to enter the applied linguistics academic community of practice.

Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST)

A brief overview of this theory is relevant to a discussion on Golebiowski's Framework in the Analysis of the Relational Structure of Texts (FARS)

because of the relationship it has with FARS. Golebiowski introduces FARS by acknowledging that it was developed out of RST, writing in 2006, “FARS, not unlike RST out of which it developed, provides a functional account of text structure in the form of coherence relations obtaining between conceptual entities represented by text segments” (Golebiowski, 2006, p. 261).

RST was developed as a real-world application of linguistics that would be the first step in creating computer-generated media-related genres of writing in English: advertising sales letters (direct mail letters), popular science magazines etc. RST was developed by William C. Mann, whose PhD was in artificial intelligence and computer science (Mattheissen, 2005, p. 162), and Sandra Thomas, a linguist who, according to her web site at the University of California, Santa Barbara specializes in interactional linguistics, conversation and grammar, cross-linguistic studies of morphosyntactic patterns and languages of East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Hmong). This marks it as significantly different than CARS.

RST is a tool for analyzing texts. In a 1989 article, *Rhetorical Structure Theory and Text Analysis*, William C. Mann, Christian M. I. M. Mattheissen and Sandra A. Thompson write that RST “describes texts in a rich and highly constrained way and thus predicts much about their character and effects. It describes functions and structures that make texts effective and comprehensible tools for human communication” (Mann, Mattheissen, Thomson, 1989, p. 6). RST, like FARS, describes texts rather than prescriptively listing requirements for a particular genre. Because it focusses on genres other than the academic essay, it is incongruous with ELT training, and therefore may not be included in training programs. Academic essays would not be compatible with the purpose of RST- to create computer-generated texts.

There are differences between RST and FARS beyond the genre that each it applied to. In this same article on RST, in a section called “underlying assumptions”, one assumption (number 7) is Asymmetry of Relations, in which RST

is set up through a nucleus and satellite. These authors describe asymmetry of relations as “the most common type of text structuring” (Mann, Mattheissen, Thomson, 1989, p. 7). Describing what they mean, they write, “one member of a pair of text spans is more central (the nucleus) and one more peripheral (the satellite)” (Mann, Mattheissen, Thomson, 1989, p. 8). This is one aspect of RST that is not continued in FARS.

Describing the steps taken in order to do an RST analysis, Mann, Mattheissen and Thomson write,

1. Divide into units: could be single word, through to paragraphs or longer. Often clauses, but also clauses plus restrictive relative clauses.
2. Identify spans and relations: either top down (progressive refinement) or bottom up (aggregation), or both (Mann, Mattheissen, Thomson, 1989, p. 16).

As far as this goes, it seems to be quite similar to the requirements of FARS. Soon after, the authors list sets of relations used in RST. These relations are not the same as FARS, but like FARS, are not considered to be finalized. These sets are what the authors describe as “[a]mong those which we have found useful” (Mann, Mattheissen, Thomson, 1989, p. 18).

Nucleus- Satellite Relations

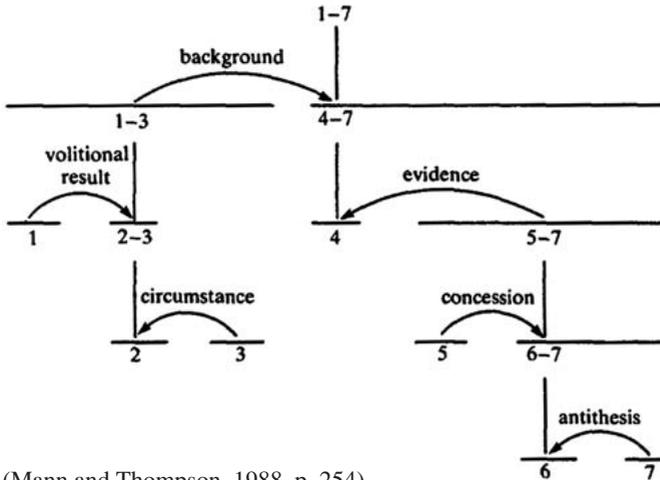
Evidence	Justify	Antithesis
Concession	Circumstance	Solutionhood
Elaboration	Background	Enablement
Motivation	Volition / Cause	Non-Volition Cause
Volition Result	Non-Volition Result	Purpose
Condition	Otherwise	Interpretation
Evaluation	Restatement	Summary

Multi-Nuclear Relations

Sequence	Contrast	Joint
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(Mann, Mattheissen, Thomson, 1989, p. 18)

The results of an RST analysis look quite different than a FARS analysis. An example for illustrative purposes shown in Mann and Thompson's *Rhetorical Structure Theory: Toward a functional Theory of Text Organization* is as follows:



(Mann and Thompson, 1988, p. 254)

Finally, Mann, Mattheissen and Thompson write,

If a linguistic theory of text structure is to be functional, judgements about the functions of texts and text parts must be made in the process of creating and testing a theory. In practice, such judgements are necessarily subjective, since they are made only by human beings who communicate, on the basis of what they know about their culture, their society and their language. (Mann, Mattheissen and Thomspon, 1989, p. 19)

This is important in FARS as well. In the case of RST, however, “[Judgements in RST] are used not only in evaluating an analysis, but in producing it” (Mann, Mattheissen and Thompson, 1989, p. 19), and that is not the case in FARS.

Framework for the Analysis of the Relational Structure of Texts (FARS)

FARS was developed out of RST and both are descriptive in their approach to language. CARS is prescriptive in its approach. Knowledge of both pedagogical and descriptive approaches to language mirrors the type of understanding of language at the sentence level that is typically required of language teachers graduating from training programs, and it increases an applied linguist's language awareness considerably.

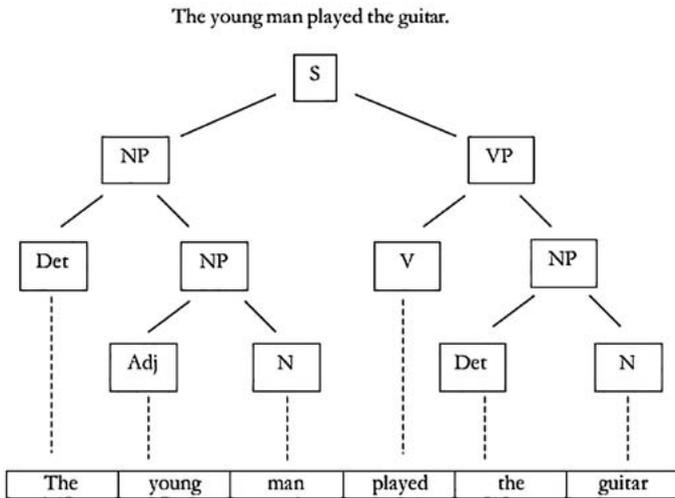
FARS analysis is built up on relations that can be articulated through seven different 'relational clusters' with multiple 'delicacies' within each. This is useful for language teacher training because learners of ELT can fairly easily decide what is occurring in a piece of discourse in a general way before being specific. The following chart is used in several essays to illustrate FARS subdivisions:

Relational Cluster	Delicacy within cluster
Elaboration	<i>Extension, Amplification, Explanation, Reformulation, Instantiation, Addition</i>
Digression	<i>Explanation, Instantiation, Addition, Extended Reference</i>
Causal	<i>Cause, Circumstance, Condition, Evidence, Means</i>
Assessing	<i>Conclusion, Evaluation, Interpretation</i>
Facilitation	<i>Framing, Advance Organisation, Introduction, Enumeration</i>
List	<i>Collection, Sequence, Disjunction</i>
Adversative	<i>Contrast, Concession, Collateral, Comparison</i>

(source: Golebiowski, 2009b, p. 11)

For the beginning analyst, FARS analysis can be done by defining the relations, and then picking what seems to the analyst to be most appropriate from their opinion of what the writer intended with each proposition. The relationships are displayed on a chart in the same way that a parse tree (commonly referred to as a tree diagram) is used in I-C (Immediate Constituent) Grammar and part of (P-S) Phrase Structure Grammar- Generative. The type of chart used in FARS is taught

as a space-saving alternative to a tree diagram in some English language teaching programs in North America. This shape of diagram is likely to be familiar to people undertaking, or having completed, graduate studies in language teaching. Following is an example to illustrate a sentence written in a tree diagram and the same sentence put into the kind of chart used in FARS.



The reader typically reads the full sentence, reading from left to right and top down the tree first the nominative (or noun phase), and then down through the tree on the predicate (or verb phase) in order to understand the analysis of the sentence section by section. The above chart shows the noun phase being broken into a determiner followed by a noun phrase. This last noun phrase is then broken into a determiner and a noun. The verb phase is broken into a verb and a noun phrase. The noun phrase is then broken into a determiner and a noun. Finally, the specific word is shown in the full sentence. The same information may be put into a chart to save space, as follows:

S = The young man played the guitar			
NP = the young man		VP = played the guitar	
Det = the	NP = young man	V = played	NP = the guitar
	Adj = young N=man		Det= the N= guitar

The purpose of this kind of representation is to achieve a quite precise description. It shows

- 1) linear order of elements
- 2) syntactic (or in the case of FARS, relational) category for each element
- 3) hierarchy category for each element
- 4) ambiguities

(source: lecture by Dr. Jaramira Rakusan at Carleton University, February 5, 2002)

The probable familiarity with the chart is a way that FARS is user-friendly to ELT programs. Teacher trainers (or applied linguists who are learning autonomously) can smoothly transition from sentence to discourse level analysis.

FARS Analyses: Native Level and Learner Level Texts

Following are two texts and analyses of them (see appendix for coding), first in a tree diagram form and then in a chart, the latter being more common in FARS. Both texts are expository in nature, the function of which is to “put forward a point of view or argument, for example an essay or letter to the editor. [They are l]ogical rather than temporal [in] sequenc[e]” (Taylor, 2007, p. 6). Bold and underlined typeface marks relatively important information. This means that in a relationship in which either A or B part is shown in bold and underlined, it functions as a hypotactic relationship with the bold part being the stronger. Where both A and B parts are in bold typeface and underlined, the relationship functions as a paratactic relation. The analyses of these texts was not done by a highly experienced FARS analysis but is illustrative of the kind of analysis that is done with FARS.

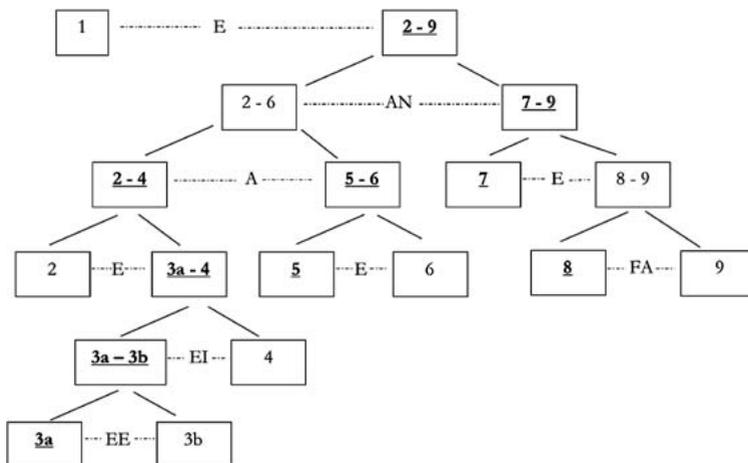
TEXT 1 Native Level Text

1. All writers use the language of their discourse communities, and communicate in ways deemed appropriate to and by their discourse

communities. 2. The rhetorical choices made by writers are influenced by cultural norms, values and belief systems prevailing in discourse communities which constitute social contexts of texts. 3a. Studies in academic rhetoric (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Berkenkotter, 1990) clearly show that epistemologies and ideological assumptions of academic cultures are firmly embedded in the conventions of academic genres, 3b. which reveal and signal the academic discourse community's norms, values and social ontology. 4. Research into the development of rhetorical conventions of scientific writing reveals close connection between the formation of scientific discourse community and the development of discursive strategies for making scientific claims and the appearance of genre textual features (Bazerman, 1988).

5. At the same time, the cross-cultural studies of academic text organization (eg Ahmad, 1997; Clyne, 1981, 1991, 1994; Cmejrkova, 1994; Duszak, 1994; Golebiowski, 1998, 1999; Gunnarsson, 1993; Mauranen, 1992, 1997; Markkanen & Schroder, 1992; Safnil, 2000) have shown that the rhetorical structure of research prose produced by a non-native English writer, similarly to rhetorical styles of other discursal domains, cannot escape being conditioned by cultural norms, traditions and conventions which underlie the discourse community into which the author has been socialised. 6. Neither can it totally disentangle itself from rules and systemic limitations of the author's mother tongue.

7. In this paper, we will therefore argue that the writers of specialist academic texts are not influenced entirely by their culture or by their speech community in their writing, but rather that each writer is located at an intersection between culture and discourse community. 8. This particular intersection of culture and discourse community has the potential to be resolved differently in different cultures and in different disciplines. 9. This study will review research in contrastive rhetoric to investigate the impact of cultural and disciplinary factors on text construction at a range of levels in a range of disciplines and across a range of languages. (Golebiowski and Liddicoat, 2002, p. 59)



In this chart, the type of relationship is shown between sections that are blocked off and with a dotted line. The top of the tree therefore shows 1 E 2-9. This shows that section 1 (the first sentence of Text 1) has a relationship with sections 2-9 (the rest of the text). The type of relationship is described broadly as a type of elaboration, and more finely as an extension (meaning the delicacy that is assigned to it). Sections 2-9 were considered more important than section 1. The same information in FARS is more commonly shown in the following chart:

1 E <u>2-9</u>		
2-6 AN <u>7-9</u>		
<u>2-4</u> A <u>5-6</u>		<u>7</u> E 8-9
<u>2</u> E 3a-4	<u>5</u> E 6	<u>8</u> FA 9
<u>3a-3b</u> EI 4		
<u>3a</u> EE 3b		

This is a text that follows the moves seen in CARS closely, and can therefore be seen as being highly acceptable as a piece of academic discourse in English. The tree diagram looks similar in shape to the tree diagram of a grammatical sentence in that it is easy for the reader to move from top to bottom, left to right and understand what is occurring. The chart also flows smoothly- there are no sections where it seems that a lower level does not connect to the level

immediately above it. This FARS analysis shows the following information:

1 E 2-9	Section 1 has a relationship with sections 2 through 9 that is described broadly as a type of Elaboration, and more finely as an Extension. Sections 2–9, the latter part, is the more important.
2-6 AN 7-9	Sections 2 though 6 have a relationship with sections 7 through 9 that is described broadly as Adversative and more finely as a Concession, with sections 7 through 9, the latter part, being the more important.

First, going through sections 2 through 6,

2-4 A 5-6	Sections 2 through 4 have a relationship with sections 5 through 6 that is described broadly as Adversative and more finely as a Contrast, with neither section being more important than the other.
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Within sections 2 through 4,

2 E 3a-4	Section 2 has a relationship with sections 3a through 4 that is described broadly as Elaboration and more finely as an Extension, with section 2, the former part, being more important.
3a-3b EI 4	Sections 3a though 3b have a relationship with section 4 that is described broadly as Elaboration and more finely as an Instantiation, with sections 3a though 3b, the former part, being more important.
3a EE 3b	Section 3a has a relationship with section 3b that is described broadly as Elaboration and more finely as an Explanation, with section 3a, the former part, being more important.

Looking back near the top of the chart at the line 2-4 A 5-6, within the latter part, sections 5–6,

5 E 6	Section 5 has a relationship with section 6 that is described broadly as Elaboration and more finely as an Extension, with section 5, the former part, being more important.
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Looking back near the top of the chart at the line 2-6 AN 7-9, within the latter part, sections 7–9,

7 E 8-9	Section 7 has a relationship with sections 8 through 9 that is described broadly as Elaboration and more finely as an Extension, with section 7, the former part, being more important.
8 FA 9	Section 8 has a relationship with section 9 that is described broadly as Facilitating and more finely as an Advance Organising, with section 8, the former part, being more important.

Overall, text 1 is marked by frequent use of elaboration cluster. It introduces two separate contrasting ideas, which means that they are described using the adversative cluster.

Following, is an advanced learner's text, and a FARS analysis in the form of a tree diagram:

TEXT 2 Learner's Text

1. Mt. Fuji is a most highest and beautiful mountain. 2. Mt. Fuji even has a majesty and elegance. 3. Its beauty of wide-flowing skirts and nearly perfect profile has known as a symbol of Japan throughout the world. 4. The time when its upper half is covered with snow is at its best. 5a. Not only viewing such a beautiful piece of scenery but also climbing up to the top and having experience of "goraiko", 5b. which is the name given to the ever-change phenomenon of the beautiful sunrise, is popular in summer time.

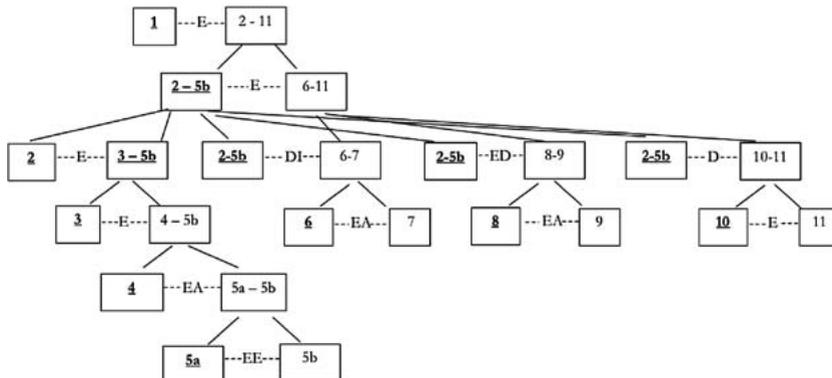
6. Hokusai Kastushika, traditional Japanese painter in Edo era, had drawn a lot of painting of Mt. Fuji as a strong image. 7. Those still have incorrigible popularity.

8. Japanese people have thought of Mt. Fuji as a () and ordered their life when they feel its existence from ancient time. 9. So people have a festival at the mountain for purifying and praying for climber's safety and flourish at the beginning of the mountaineering season.

10. By way of parenthesis, Mt. Fuji has been passed up to be a world heritage because of its environmental contamination problem. 11. Some people have had an activity for clean up Mt. Fuji strenuously.

(source: unpublished learner essay, used with permission)

[Note: said in a later interview, at () the learner meant ‘kami’ which translates as ‘god’, but did not want to use that word because of potential misunderstanding with an English audience.]



Immediately noticeable is that it is significantly more difficult to follow the tree diagram than in Text 1. Text 2 was written by an advanced though not fluent learner of English who spent six months living and working in western Canada before returning to Japan three years prior to writing Text 2. The appearance of the analysis is neater in the standard chart used in FARS, as follows:

<u>1</u> E 2-11			
<u>2-5b</u> E 6-11			
<u>2</u> E 3-5b	<u>2-5b</u> DI 6-7	<u>2-5b</u> ED 8-9	<u>2-5b</u> D 10-11
<u>3</u> E 4-5b	<u>6</u> EA 7	<u>8</u> E 9	<u>10</u> E 11
<u>4</u> EA 5a-5b			
<u>5a</u> EE 5b			

This FARS analysis shows the following information:

<u>1</u> E 2-11	Section 1 has a relationship with sections 2 through 11 that is described broadly as a type of Elaboration, and more finely as an Extension. Section 1, the former part, is the more important.
<u>2-5b</u> E 6-11	Sections 2 though 5b have a relationship with sections 6 through 11 that is described broadly as Elaboration and more finely as an Extension. Sections 2 through 5b, the former part, is the more important.

Within sections 2 through 5b,

2 E 3-5b	Section 2 has a relationship with sections 3 through 5b that is described broadly as Elaboration and more finely as an Extension. Section 2, the former part, is the more important.
3 E 4-5b	Section 3 has a relationship with sections 4 through 5b that is described broadly as Elaboration and more finely as an Extension. Section 3, the former part, is the more important.
4 EA 5a-5b	Section 4 has a relationship with sections 5a through 5b that is described broadly as Elaboration and more finely as an Amplification. Section 4, the former part, is the more important.
5a EE 5b	Section 5a has a relationship with section 5b that is described broadly as Elaboration and more finely as an Explanation. Section 5a, the former part, is the more important.

The analysis shows that the rest of Text 2 is made up of sections that each have a relationship with sections 2 through 5b as a whole. The first of these columns refers to the relationship between sections 2 through 5b and sections 6 through 7.

2-5b DI 6-7	Sections 2 through 5b have a relationship with sections 6 through 7 that is described broadly as Digression and more finely as an Instantiation, with sections 2–5b, the former part, being more important.
6 EA 7	Section 6 has a relationship with section 7 that is described broadly as Elaboration and more finely as an Amplification, with section 6, the former part, being more important.

The second of these columns refers to the relationship between sections 2 through 5b and sections 8 through 9.

2-5b ED 8-9	Sections 2 through 5b have a relationship with sections 8 through 9 that is described broadly as Elaboration and more finely as an Addition, with sections 2–5b, the former part, being more important.
8 E 9	Section 8 has a relationship with section 9 that is described broadly as Elaboration and more finely as an Extension, with section 8, the former part, being more important.

The third and final of these columns refers to the relationship between sections

2 through 5b and sections 10 through 11.

2-5b D 10-11	Sections 2 through 5b have a relationship with sections 10 through 11 that is described broadly as Digression and more finely as an Addition, with sections 2–5b, the former part, being more important.
10 E 11	Section 10 has a relationship with section 11 that is described broadly as Elaboration and more finely as an Extension, with section 10, the former part, being more important.

Text 2 uses only the elaboration and digression clusters. The distinction between elaboration and digression is often fuzzy and guided by culture.

As can be seen by a quick look at the shapes of the two FARS analyses, the proficient user’s text is structured so that each element subdivides neatly. In the learner’s text, items the writer used to illustrate a point are done in such a way as to create a somewhat disjointed text. This is not the kind of disjunction that could be remedied with discourse markers. 2-5b has three different sets of relationships. As previously mentioned, it is often difficult to decide between elaboration cluster and digression cluster. In this case, probably both could be applied, because to a native speaker of English, the text in 6–7 and 10–11 seem disjointed. These sentences come across as being a digression from the topic. However, it is possible that the writer thought of them as explaining the topic itself, particularly 6–7. In 10–11, the writer specifically marks the text as being ‘[b]y way of parenthesis’. Just as in any communication, the individual idiolect means that understanding another person’s communication is always a guess. FARS, like RST, is inherently subjective.

Conclusion

When combined with CARS, FARS allows for academic writing to be approached in a manner similar to other kinds of writing. For people who pursue academic programs in nonacademic macro-genres such as creative writing, nonfiction writing, journalism, and advertising/public relations, the learning of their craft

involves learning the theory (or structure) of a piece of writing, analyzing examples of the writing and practicing the writing through in-class assignments, the development of portfolios and their professional practice. The most important genre for most applied linguists/language teachers is the academic essay. ESL teachers prepare learners to do their degrees in English medium institutions in part by teaching them how to write academic essays, and language teachers also publish their own essays as articles in professional journals. CARS teaches these people how to structure the introduction to research essays, FARS gives them the tools to analyze introductions of research essays, and they practice through the writing of their own papers. When combined with CARS, FARS considerably increases a language teacher/applied linguist's disciplinary content knowledge of the type of writing they engage with, in a similar way that descriptive grammar increases their disciplinary content knowledge of sentence level grammar after learning prescriptive grammar. For applied linguists/language teachers who have experience with (or are involved in) studying other varieties of writing in English, FARS is a tool with which they can approach academic essays in a similar manner to their other genre(s).

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Appendix: Coding of the FARS Relations

Relational Cluster	Adversative	Assessing	Causal
Delicacy within cluster and symbol within chart	Contrast- A Collateral- AC Comparison- AM Concession- AN	Conclusion- Cn Interpretations- In Evaluation- Ev	Cause- C Circumstance- CI Condition- CD Evidence- CE Means- CM

Relational Cluster	Digression	Elaboration	Facilitating
Delicacy within cluster and symbol within chart	Addition- D Explanation- DE Reference- DR Instantiation- DI	Addition- ED Extension- E Amplification- EA Explanation- EE Instantiation- EI Reformation- ER	Framing- F Advance Organising- FA Enumeration- FE Introduction- FI

Relational Cluster	List
Delicacy within cluster and symbol within chart	Collection- L Disjunction- LD Sequence- LS