Research Title: A Comparative Study of Research Paper Title in Educational Administration and Business Administration

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Abstract

The title of a paper is the first message that an author uses to communicate with their audience. Thus writing appropriate title is very important to convey the message and even to attract the reader’s attention. In this sense, research paper title is also the first message where a researcher presents their findings to the academic world. However, the study of research paper (RP) title is scarce and limited in some disciplines and genres.

The purpose of this research is to examine the most recurrent structural construction of social science RP titles in two fields, namely, Educational Administration (EA) and Business Administration (BA). The questions concerned are whether the structural construction of titles is a key distinctive feature between these two disciplines and how the structural construction and the length, affect the way of communication by the author in each discipline. This study was based on a corpus of 200 titles, of which 100 were RP titles in EA and the other 100 were RP titles in BA, all covering the period 2000-2008. The amounts of words per title were firstly counted to measure their length and then all structural constructions were detected, namely, nominal, compound, full sentence and question constructions, were registered and discussed in detail. This paper finds interesting different features between RP titles of these two disciplines in both terms of the structural construction and the characteristic of communication. In the results it is evident that most EA researchers usually use the nominal group construction to convey their message through titles directly, while the business researchers always use compound titles. In addition, the question construction is only detected in BA’s RP titles while there is no evidence of question construction in any of EA’s RP titles. The findings also reveal that the titles in BA field are more concise and have more flexibility in term of communication style and construction used. These results provide more understanding for the researcher to write RP titles appropriately and can increase learners’ academic writing ability.