Rhetorical Moves in Students' Abstracts

Herlyna[1]
Herlyna@pertiwi.ac.id
English Literature Department, Faculty of Tourism and Language, Universitas Pertiwi
Universitas Pertiwi

Retno Ramadhina
retno.ramadhina@pertiwi.ac.id
English Literature Department, Faculty of Tourism and Language, Universitas Pertiwi
Universitas Pertiwi

Romla

190350003@pertiwi.ac.id
English Literature Department, Faculty of Tourism and Language, Universitas Pertiwi
Universitas Pertiwi

Abstract: Abstracts of research article are essential for increasing the visibility of the research endeavor. Creating a well-written abstract in terms of both content and rhetorical moves will ensure readers to read the entire article. Hence, the ability to write in a high level of accuracy for the production of quality abstracts is imperative. This study aims to explore the moves employed in the abstracts of Pertiwi University students majoring in Literature and English language. The data were taken from the research article abstracts of the students' thesis. A total of thirty abstracts were randomly selected and analyzed. The study applied the five-move model for abstract analysis by Hyland (2000) to examine the occurrence and pattern of the rhetorical structures of the abstracts. A qualitative descriptive approach will be utilized in this research. The result of the study confirmed that all of the research abstracts have the first move which is the introduction, and as for the rest of the moves were applied variedly among the sample abstracts. This study suggests that, pedagogically, a more thorough effort be made to prepare the students in writing their abstracts.

Keywords: *research article abstract; rhetorical moves; structured abstrac*

INTRODUCTION

A research article is a published paper in which the writers convey the findings of their research. It is the final, complete package of a scientific study. A research article publishes the findings of original research so it is always taken from primary sources. The ability to write an eligible research article has been more definitive than ever in line with the growing increase of academic seminars, workshops, discussions, and publications (Setiawati et al., 2021).

Previous Studies are one of the most important parts of Scientific Research, and there is no complete Scientific Research without containing previous studies. So, in previous studies, the writers analyzed several references that have similarities

---

[1] Corresponding author

with the findings to be studied, Previous Studies are an essential component of Scientific Research. By reviewing previous studies, the writer gives context and background information as well as identifies the research gaps on the topic. This part examines five previous research that has been done regarding this subject.

The first one is the research titled "Analyses of Move Structure and Verb Tense of Research Article Abstracts in Applied Linguistics Journals" written by Fan-ping Tseng, Department of English, National Taiwan University. The result of this study was published in the International Journal of English Linguistics. This study examined 90 abstracts of research articles from three applied linguistics periodicals (TESOL Quarterly, TESOL Journal, and TESOL Journal). The findings revealed that the abstracts examined generally used a four-move structure rather than the five-move structure described in the literature. The favoured pattern for verb tense in each move was as follows: the present tense was generally used in the first, second, and fifth moves, while the past tense was frequently used in the third and fourth moves. It was also discovered that there were some differences between the abstracts authored by native English speakers and non-native English speakers.

This research is similar to the study done by the writer in terms of the movement pattern. Both are looking at the rhetorical moves in students' abstracts. The difference lies in the analysis of linguistic features. While the above study observes the verb tense in the abstracts, the writer focuses on the grammatical complexity observed in the abstracts.

The second one is the research done by Fanny Putri, Budi Hermawan, and Rd. Dian Muniroh titled "Rhetorical Move Analysis in Students' Abstracts Across Degrees" published in the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Conference on Applied Linguistics (CONAPLIN 2020). This research looks into rhetorical movement patterns in abstracts of theses and dissertations in Indonesian and their English

translations. This study concludes that differences in education level may affect move and step realization in a thesis or dissertation abstract.

The similarity between the above research and the study done by the writer is that both studies look into students' abstracts and examine them using Hyland's (2000) five-move analysis model. The difference can be observed in the abstracts used in the research. While the study above looked into the abstracts of the thesis and dissertation, the writer only looks at the abstracts of students' thesis.

Referring to the guidelines for writing a thesis for English literature students, Faculty of Tourism and Culture, Pertiwi University, common components of research articles are as follows: title and abstract, introduction, literature review, research methodology, results and discussion, conclusion and suggestion, and references. This paper will focus on the abstract, since it is the first feature that the reader will peruse, in addition, the readers are likely to form an opinion about the research project based on the abstract. An effective abstract completely summarizes your paper within a single paragraph and highlights why the results are novel (Carter, 2020).

An abstract is a crucial part, the gist, of a research article. It should give enough information that the readers find the research is interesting. It is considered as the part that is read by most people, even by those who will, ultimately, not read the whole paper (Lövei, 2021). As people read the abstract, a decision on whether the article is worth reading is opted. An abstract without clear and pertinent message will likely hinder the readers in perusing the whole article. On the other hand, a well written abstract shapes the perception of value a reader attaches to your article and the consequent decision to read (Kumar, 2018).

Looking at the importance of an abstract, it is understandable that a lot of research has been carried out in regard to the writing of a good and well-structured abstract. A structured abstract is a

formal and compact summary of an article's main features and findings (Mosteller et al., 2004). If the text is accurate in terms of content and structure, readers can follow it, moving easily from one sentence to another and from one paragraph to the next (Viera, 2019). In an organized abstract the sentences can be categorized into certain moves/steps. Despite the many models of rhetorical move, this study utilized Hyland's (2000) five-move analysis model as the main instrument. Hyland's model was chosen because it provides a more precise definition of each move, for example, in move 5, the Conclusion, this model includes both the discussion and the recommendation or implication. On the other hand, the other models either emphasizes only on the discussion of the results or combines the introduction and purpose moves. Another reason for choosing Hyland's rhetorical moves was that Hyland's model has been examined on 800 abstracts from diverse fields to determine its general patterns, and it was discovered to be the most commonly used analytical framework in recent research.

The texts evaluated in this paper are the abstracts of students' thesis in the English Literature study program of Pertiwi University. By utilizing Hyland's five rhetorical move model, two research questions are addressed in this paper: (1) What are the rhetorical moves used in the abstracts written by the literature and English language students? (2) What are the rhetorical moves sequence pattern used by the students of literature and English language in Pertiwi university? The findings of this study were expected to offer a better understanding of the rhetorical stages employed by the students in their abstracts in order to produce a well-structured abstract that can be accepted in reputable journals.

Rhetorical moves

The publication of research articles has increased rapidly. The common standard for publishing an international research article includes several parts, including a title, abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology, findings and discussion, and a conclusion part. Each component serves a specific purpose in explaining the research as a whole. Nonetheless, due to its function, the abstract received the most attention when compared to the other sections. Any paper's publication is dependent on the judgment of journal article reviewers. The first part that the reviewers read in research is its abstract, the rhetorical pattern found and the language used in the abstract are two main aspects they put into consideration (Al-Shujairi et al., 2016). Therefore, writers should exert attention to the writing of the abstract. It should be able to provide concise and clear information about the research that has been conducted.

Rhetorical moves have been described by many writers in various fields. Move analysis can be described as a textual analysis of the communicative goals and their constituent steps to explain how the discourse pattern is manifested in the writing being investigated (Pratiwi & Kurniawan, 2021). A rhetorical move is a unit that relates to both the writer's purpose and the way in which the writer's c message or meaning is conveyed (Nikpei, 2016). A rhetorical move is a discourse or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse (Swales, 2004). Moves are semantic and functional units of texts, which can be distinguished due to their communicative purposes and linguistic boundaries (Ding, 2007). Rhetorical move analysis can be interpreted as a textual analysis of communicative objectives and their constituent steps to understand how the discourse pattern is manifested in the writing that is being analysed (Zamani & Ebadi, 2016).

In recent years, writers have paid attention to the rhetorical devices and numerous studies have been conducted concerning the rhetorical patterns in abstract. Doro (2013) examined the rhetorical moves in Linguistics and literature which revealed that only five out of 52 abstracts included all five moves. Suntara and Usaha (2013) investigated rhetorical patterns in 200 abstracts from linguistics

and applied linguistics. In both disciplines, the findings revealed three different moves: the purpose move, the method move, and the findings move. The introduction and conclusion, on the other hand, were discovered to be optional. Tocalo (2021) made a linguistic analysis of abstract moves that uncovered lists of rhetorical verbs in each move when writing a research article

METHODS

This study utilized a descriptive-qualitative design. Qualitative research is concerned with structures and patterns, and how something is (Litosseliti, 2010). It involves discussing the sample for the study and the overall data collection and recording procedures (Creswell, 2014). The instrument used in this study is a list of movement pattern under which all sentences in the abstract would be categorized. Regarding this research, the samples to be discussed were taken from the thesis abstracts of undergraduate students from the faculty of tourism and culture with the English study program as the major. This discipline was explored because it is linked to the viable publication of the research paper in journal of humanities and social sciences. With the rapid development and globalization of science and technology, it is important for researchers to participate actively in the international academic discourse community (Chang & Kuo, 2011).

Fifteen abstracts of Pertiwi University undergraduate students majoring in literature and English language study were used as the primary data. These abstracts were chosen randomly from the data in the university library. The samples have complied with all relevant criteria regarding the number of samples in relation to the research method. In determining the sample size, the researcher referred to the necessary requirements as suggested in the method of research in education. If the research has a relational survey design, the sample size should not be less than 30. (Cohen et al., 2000).

In analyzing the data, thirty research article abstracts of students' thesis were prepared. This research applies Hyland's rhetorical moves model since it has been widely utilized for abstract analysis in a variety of research endeavors. Utilizing Hyland's (2000) theory as the framework, the data were examined (see Table 1). The data are taken from the sentences written by the students in their abstracts.

All the sentences in the abstract served as the analytical units, so they were categorized into a certain move (Table 2). The occurrence of each move was calculated and converted into percentage to see the highest and lowest occurrence of each move. It will serve as the ground in determining the moves that the students considered were obligatory and the moves that they thought were optional. In Table 3, the data was analyzed according to the move pattern. There were certain patterns that appeared frequently, and others that were hardly chosen by the writers. The sequence pattern analysis started with the abstract that have at least three steps pattern since an abstract with less than three move pattern was regarded unclear and will be eliminated from this study.

Move 1, the introduction, establishes the stage for the reader by emphasizing the importance of the research topic and the understanding of the writer regarding the topic. Move 2 is the purpose statement which is followed by the next move, a general description of the process. Move 3 sees that participants/data source, instruments and procedure/context are described accordingly. In move 4, the researcher describes the major findings as the product of the research. Move 5 draws conclusion, evaluates the significance of the research, states limitations and presents limitation or implication. The acquired data is converted into percentages. It would be described in the form of tables, and additional explanations. The results of the data analysis would be presented under findings and discussion.

Table 1: A classification of rhetorical moves in article abstracts (Hyland, 2000)

Move	Function
Introduction	establishes context of the paper and motivates the research or discussion
Purpose	indicates purpose, thesis or hypothesis, outlines the intention behind the paper
Method	Provides information on design, procedures, assumptions, approach, data, etc
Product	states main findings or results, the argument, or what was accomplished

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The result of the analysis using Hyland's rhetorical structure model is shown in Table 2 below

Table 2: The rhetorical moves in research abstracts

Rhetorical Moves	Move 1	Move 2	Move 3	Move 4	Move 5
Number of occurrences	30%	24%	29	14%	5%
Percentage	100%	80%	97%	47%	17%

Notes: Move 1: Introduction; Move 2: Purpose; Move 3: Method; Move 4: Product; Move 5: Conclusion

As can be seen in Table 2, the most dominant move found in the abstract is the first move, the introduction. All of the abstracts (100%) have the introduction move. Amnuai (2019) and Tamela (2020) confirmed that the first move, the introduction, was the part that utilized the most by all writers in their abstracts. The second position is move 3, which is the method. There is only one abstract that neglects to explain the method used. The purpose is next, making up for 80% of the abstract being analyzed. Thus, 24 abstracts have the purpose explained. As for move 4, fewer than half incorporate the product in the abstract. Only 14 out of 30 abstracts explain the result or the accomplishment of the research. Lastly, the majority of the abstracts lack a conclusion. Move 5 is only applied in five abstracts. From the data above, it can be concluded that students in the Literature and English language department of Pertiwi University found that move 1 until move 3 are mandatory while move 4 and move 5 are optional.

The Introduction move defined the setting of

the paper as well as the motivations for the research or discussion. It could be implied that the writers felt it was necessary to contextualize their discourse with the Introduction move, which suggested writers' efforts to familiarize readers with the context of their research. The Introduction move set the tone for the paper and motivated the research or discussion. The appearance of the Introduction move in abstracts provided writers with the chance to familiarize readers with the context of their research. The Method and Purpose moves also displayed a high percentage following the introduction. The high frequency of these three moves in the datasets suggested that the writers were aware of their significance.

While there were three moves with high occurrence, the rest of the moves have low percentage. product move and conclusion move seemed to be overlooked by the students during the writing of their abstracts. The Product move explained the result of the research while the Conclusion move was used to describe or expands outcome further than the scope of the paper, to make conclusions, or to point to implementations or broader implications.
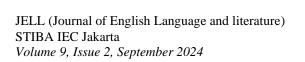
In regards to this matter, of course there would be some consequences. Abstracts that failed to provide clear information about the findings in move 4 may entice readers to read the paper by filling an information gap, but they may also risk losing potential readers due to a lack of conciseness. Readers may prefer to read other articles that clearly state the outcome of the research in the abstract.

This tendency could possibly be triggered by the absence of result in the humanities discipline compared to the other disciplines. As a result, an abstract could also be scrutinized based on various disciplines; for example, there were some studies conducting the research in Applied Linguistic. Safnil (2014), have examined thirty abstracts in three disciplines written in English

by Indonesian writers. These three disciplines comprised humanity economics, management, and education. First and foremost, he noticed that the bulk of the research paper abstracts written in English by Indonesian academics in this study's corpus contain only three steps, namely the purpose, method and results. After that, the English abstracts identified in the data of this study are mostly written in active sentence in the present tense, with the exception of step 3, the methods, where half of them are written in past tense.

The next result analysis was the move pattern, as shown in table 3. As seen in table 3 below, there were three structures found in the abstracts, namely the three-move pattern, the four-move pattern and the six-move pattern. The abstracts that had less than three steps pattern were deemed ambiguous and were excluded from this study. It was obvious that the standard five move model was not favored by the students. Based on the move pattern analysis, it could be inferred that some rhetorical moves sequence pattern seemed to have higher level of occurrences than the others.

The result of a move pattern analysis in research article abstracts revealed that the three moves pattern seemed to be the preferred pattern. The I-P-M pattern was the most common chosen pattern. It was employed by 12 writers out of 30 and reached the share of 40%. The four-move pattern came second with 10 abstracts (33%). The least favored one was the standard five-move pattern; only 1 student out of 30 (3%) chose this pattern. The inclination of these move pattern preferences was explained by Hyland (2000). Soft knowledge domain authors found the need to place their work beginning with an introduction, while writers in the hard knowledge field saw a greater need to omit it in favor of the method. Thus, the three-move model was in favor among the humanities and social science writers. Essentially, these preferences are obviously tied to disciplinary differences.

Table 3: Rhetorical Moves Sequence Pattern

Sequence Pattern	Frequency	Percentage
I - P - M	12	40%
I - P - M - Pr	8	20%
I - M - Pr	4	13%
I - M - C	2	7%
I - P - M - C	2	7%
I - P - Pr	1	3%
I - P - M - Pr - C	1	3%

Notes: Move 1: Introduction; Move 2: Purpose; Move 3: Method; Move 4: Product; Move 5: Conclusion

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to answer the research questions regarding the rhetorical moves employed by the students of Literature and English Language in Pertiwi university. This study's findings may be summarized as follows. The occurrence frequency of each move revealed that the Introduction move, Method move, and Purpose move were prevalent abstract moves. In addition, a review of the rhetorical structure of thirty research paper abstracts indicated that the most common choice patterns among writers were I-P-M and I-P-M-Pr. Rhetorical moves in writing a research abstract are valuable in academic writing instruction. Abstracts that contain less than three moves are often felt to be vague, especially for a reader who is an outsider to the close academic discourse community of the specific field of research (Doro, 2013).

The recent findings, pedagogical wise, indicate that the rhetorical structure research article abstracts should be included in the undergraduate academic writing classes. Students in these classes should be aware of rhetorical structure of research article abstracts in their disciplines. Such skills are essential for them to succeed in their studies. Since many research paper writing instruction manuals only provide a very general description of an abstract and a sample abstract, it is imperative to illustrate how to structure an abstract in the abstract writing instruction to novice writers. The findings of this study can be used as the cornerstone to examine other language aspects, such as the grammatical complexity or lexical cohesion in undergraduate thesis abstracts.

REFERENCE

Amnuai, W. (2019). Analyses of Rhetorical Moves and Linguistic Realizations in Accounting Research Article Abstracts. International and Thai-Based Journals, 1-9. doi:10.1177/2158244018822384

Al-Shujairi, Y. B. J., Ya'u, M. S., & Buba, J. A. (2016). Role of Moves, Tenses, and Metadiscourse in the Abstract of an Acceptable Research Article. Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 7(2 S1), 379. Retrieved from https://www.richtmann.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/view/8913

Carter, M. (2020). Designing Science Presentations (Second Edition). Academic Press. doi:10.1016/C2017-0-03057-4

Chang, C-F., & Kuo, C-H. (2011). A corpus-based approach to online materials development for writing research articles. English for Specific Purposes, 30, 222-234. doi:10.1016/j.esp.2011.04.001

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). Research Methods in Education (5th ed.).

Routledge. doi:10.4324/9780203224342

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Research design (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Ding, F. (2007). Genre Analysis of Personal Statements: Analysis of Moves in application Essays to Medical and Dental Schools. English for Specific Purposes, 26: 368-392. doi:10.1016/j.esp.2006.09.004

Doro, K. (2013). Selling Their Research: The Linguistic Realization of Rhetoric Moves in English Thesis Abstracts Written by Hungarian Undergraduates. Romanian Journal of English Studies, 10(1), 181-191, doi: 10.2478/rjes-2013-0016

Doro, K. (2013). The Rhetoric Structure of Research Article Abstracts in English Studies Journals. Prague Journal of English Studies, 2(1):119-139, doi: 10.2478/pjes-2014-0013

Guimarães, C. A. (2006). Structured abstracts: narrative review. Acta Cirúrgica Brasileira, pp.

263-268. doi:10.1590/S0102-86502006000400014.

Hartley J. (2004). Current findings from research on structured abstracts. J Med Libr Assoc. (3):368-71. PMID: 15243644; PMCID: PMC442180