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**MOVE ANALYSIS IN PH.D. THESES ABSTRACTS: COMPARING
NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE CORPORA**

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Abstract

Lack of awareness in crafting an abstract is regarded as the main factor for failing to engage researchers' interest since it serves as the initial contact of an augmented discourse. The current study aims to gain insights into abstract writing, contemplating the compulsion to assist novice postgraduate student-writers with their academic growth by investigating the differences between native and non-native authored PhD abstracts. The researchers opted for rhetorical move analysis to examine the Ph.D. abstracts between two corpora sets and adopted purposive sampling criteria in data collection. The genre-based approach was utilised through the 5-move Hyland model to determine these abstracts' move structures. The results revealed that not all the moves mentioned in the model were present in the abstracts. Whether the abstracts are almost complete or contradict the model, they are generally constructed in a parallel linear arrangement, depicting the rational structure of summing up research. The findings of this study would benefit postgraduate students in drawing the readers' attention through rhetorical moves and guide these writers to produce Ph.D. abstracts accepted by their discourse community.

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1. Introduction

The fascination of researchers in applied linguistics and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in probing the process underneath academic discourse conventions has greatly affected novice or students-writers' prospects in publishing their writings. For abstracts to be viewed as the initial stage that assists this conquest is not far from the right since studies have shown that one of the reasons a paper becomes a crowd-puller partly may be caused by its positive opening outcome (Acuna et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2013). This academic genre works with the sheer determination of persuasion at play, carefully crafted to create an awareness of what is written in the academic paper to the intended discourse community. Constant attempts have been made to instill awareness of fluent linguistic production through organisational structures and linguistic features in abstract writing (Liu & Huang, 2017). Lack of awareness in crafting an abstract is regarded as the main factor for a paper not to be read by researchers (Al-Ali & Sahawneh, 2011) since it serves as the initial contact of an augmented discourse. Researchers tend to be cautious in their language use for abstract writing, considering the huge impact the academic community has on their papers (Nivales, 2010).

An abstract is a point of engagement, and a vital first impression element. Researchers commonly refer to abstracts before deciding whether to continue reading the papers. The problem of rhetorical selection and choice of language in writing Ph.D. theses abstracts might deter readers' engagement or reading interest, particularly the non-native speaker. Rhetorical (move) structure is essential to the writing of abstracts for it caters as strategies for shaping the authors' claims, be it in terms of findings or arguments to reflect the worthiness of the research and to lead readers in the direction of conviction and agreement to it; hence, providing less room for doubts towards the writers' proposition. The current study aims to identify the rhetorical moves in the abstracts for effective abstract writing, considering the compulsion to assist novice postgraduate students-writers with their academic growth. This particular study is guided by answering this question; What rhetorical moves or structures do native and non-native speakers use in their abstracts for PhD theses?

The field of Economics was primarily chosen since it appeared that a lack of studies had been done on it in the context of Ph.D. theses abstracts (Al-Ali & Sahawneh, 2011; Al-Zubaidi, 2013; Badrani & Ebrahimi, 2017; Kondowe, 2014; Tavşancıl et al., 2011; Terzi & Arslanturk, 2014). Thus, further research must be conducted to contribute to a better understanding of it sufficiently. This study stems from a compelling need to produce skilled Ph.D. students who can communicate and manipulate language to present their sentiments professionally in abstracts. All the virtues of pursuing a Ph.D. are seen not solely for knowledge but also as a training ground for students to become researchers in upholding the name of their educational institutions and securing the nation with research and innovation in the future.

The present study deals particularly with Ph.D. theses abstracts, which can be viewed as a crucial genre of academic writing since it poses as one of the initial contacts with the examiner, thereby, its construction is significant to create a notion of a competent researcher who belongs as a member in an academic community. Scholars regard an abstract as a precise, independent text representing the actual piece in brief yet greatly benefits readers (Huckin, 2006). An academic abstract operates as a) the aim and statement of the chosen topic, b) a brief description of sample and materials utilised, c) methods and ways of analysing the data, d) the results in general, trend along with conclusion (Porte, 2018). According to

Hyland (2005), academic writing also presents the writers' views and manners apart from presenting facts.

Previous studies have shown that texts are not without any traces of the writers. In academic writing, for instance, authors have cautiously been projecting themselves through suitable authoritative roles within the limit of their discourse communities. Amidst the genres in academic discourse, abstracts have called the attention of many researchers (Bhatia, 1993; Hyland, 2000) since the growth of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and their promotional nature in considerably competitive academic settings.

The mastery of conventions in academic discourse is considered instrumental in Ph.D. abstract writing, for an abstract has a critical role in capturing the essence of the academic paper to be shared with readers. Consequently, student-writers need to be clear on the structural patterns needed to produce successful texts. This is consistent with Maswana et al. (2015), who stated that the genre-based method could be applied to comprehend academic writing by distinguishing its organisational structure and critical linguistic features.

The rhetorical structure is essential to the writing of abstracts given that it serves as strategies for shaping the authors' claims, be it in terms of findings or arguments to reflect the worthiness of the research and to lead readers in the direction of conviction and agreement to it; hence, providing less room for doubts towards the writers' proposition. While organisational methods can subsequently construct the impression of a competent writer, fit to be identified within a discourse community; insight pertaining to abstracts' communicative function seems to differ, diverging into its a) informative role and b) persuasive role.

On account of abstracts being viewed as possessing an informative role, Bhatia (1993) postulates that an abstract represents the condensed gist of a text and illustrates a 4-move model that represents its move structure. His claim supports Salager-Meyer's (1990) recommendation to fit the entire paper's organisational layout inside an abstract. Another view of abstract communication purpose comes from Hyland (2000), who claims that the text's influential role can be seen through vigorous screening done on behalf of readers, motivated by efficient rhetorical selection. Thus, for an abstract to be regarded solely as a means to enlighten others on the academic paper is no longer valid.

On top of that, Hyland (2000) claims that each move in the abstract has a specific cognitive structure to persuade readers. This is based on his study of 800 abstracts across eight fields, operated by categorising rhetorical structure by applying his 5-move model. Hyland (2000) then asserts that writers' meticulous ways of writing their abstracts through moves structure all come down to their beliefs on the best methods that should be applied to win over those within their discourse community.

In the present research, the researcher has identified three existing models specifically for abstract writing: the 4-move model by Bhatia (1993), the 5-move model by Santos (1996), and the 5-move model by Hyland (2000). Bhatia (1993) worked on a four-move model -the IMRC model in his study of move structure. This model represents intention, methodology, results, and conclusion. These moves are deemed vital for an abstract to be seen as organised (Salager-Meyer, 1990). The moves are made apparent in Table 1.

Table 1. The rhetorical moves described by Bhatia (1993)

Move Type	Explanation
Move 1: Introducing purpose	Goals of the research conducted
Move 2: Describing methodology	Research design, procedures or methods used in the study.
Move 3: Summarising results	Important findings of the research.
Move 4: Presenting conclusions	Results, implications and application of the findings.

The next model is the five-move Hyland (2000) model, which consists of an introduction, a purpose, a method, a product, and a conclusion. He states that the rhetorical moves represented by writers are mainly persuasive methods for the intended discourse community. The model is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The rhetorical moves described by Hyland (2000)

Move Type	Explanation
Move 1: Introduction	Prefatory background for the study
Move 2: Purpose	Goals of the study
Move 3: Methodology	Subjects and the research design, procedures or methods used in the study
Move 4: Product	The study results in general
Move 5: Conclusion	Restatement of aims, implication, and application of the findings

Santos' (1996) model similarly consists of 5 moves, which have remarkably comparable purposes to Hyland's (2000) model for abstract writing. Table 3 below summarises the moves.

Table 3. The rhetorical moves described by Santos (1996)

Move Type	Explanation
Move 1: Situating the research	The scene for the current research (topic generalisation)
Move 2: Presenting the research	The purpose of the study, research questions and/or hypotheses
Move 3: Describing the methodology	The materials, subjects, variables, procedures
Move 4: Summarising the findings	The main findings of the study
Move 5: Discussing the research	Interpreting the results/findings and/or giving recommendations, implications/applications of study

In deciding which model was most appropriate to be employed in the present study, all three models were tested with a typical abstract. It was discovered that Bhatia's model does not account for the context of the research, and it was eliminated as a result. The present study evaluated the viability and acceptability of Santos' and Hyland's models for analysing PhD abstracts. Santos' model, on the other hand, is based solely on 94 abstracts in the area of applied linguistics, which is why Hyland's 5-move model was picked. 800 abstracts from eight different disciplines—philosophy, sociology, applied linguistics, marketing, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, physics, and biology—were used to create Hyland's model. As a result, even if Santos' model does not concentrate on the research subject, Hyland's is thought to be more suited owing to its high coverage.

2. Research Methods

The researchers opted for rhetorical move analysis to examine the Ph.D. abstracts between two corpora and adopted purposive sampling criteria in data collection. The first corpora will represent

abstracts from a public university in Malaysia, representing non-native speakers (NNSU), while the second corpora will be from a university in the UK, representing native speakers (NSU) of the English language. Hyland's (2000) 5-move model was used to identify the move structures of these abstracts using a genre-based approach.

Five Ph.D. theses were compiled from the field of Economics published from 2016 until 2018 via the NNSU students' repository, and another five abstracts from the ProQuest dissertation and theses (PQDT) digital archive for NSU. To ensure solid ground for comparability, the criteria for data selection are based on its content, electronic availability, universities' credentials, and year of publication. Thence, the Ph.D. theses abstracts were restricted to the economics field and must be electronically available online. The universities chosen must have a postgraduate program of more than five years to qualify as active in the published field. Furthermore, only those published within four years from 2018 were utilised to avoid outdated abstracts. Finally, the data collected was analysed using rhetorical move analysis abiding Hyland's (2000) model.

The framework of move categorisation developed by Kanoksilapatham (2005) was utilised as one of the analytical tools apart from Hyland's (2000) framework of abstract construction. According to the study, a move is deemed obligatory when it occurs 100% of the time and regarded as conventional when it appears between 60% and 99% of the time. The move is optional if it happens less frequently than 60% of the time.

3. Findings

3.1. Move structure

The five-move Hyland (2000) model was used to analyse abstracts from the two universities and the results indicated that not all the moves mentioned above were present as illustrated in Table 4 below.

Table 4. The move structure of Ph.D. abstracts from NNSU and NSU

NNSU		NSU	
Abstract No	Structure	Abstract No	Structure
A1	M1> M3> M4> M5 (*almost complete)	A1	M1> M3> M4
A2	M1> M3> M5	A2	M1> M3> M4> M3> M4 (repetition)
A3	M1> M2> M3> M4> M5 (*straight forward)	A3	M1> M4> M3> M4 (repetition)
A4	M2> M3> M4> M5 (*almost complete)	A4	M1> M3> M4> M3 (repetition)
A5	M1> M3> M4> M5 (*almost complete)	A5	M1> M3> M1> M4 (repetition)

Based on Hyland's (2000) 5-move model, the rhetorical differences between the Ph.D. abstracts in the NNSU and NSU corpora were studied. The results are shown in Table 5:

Table 5. Rhetorical variations from the Ph.D. abstracts between NNSU and NSU

	Percentage	NNSU	NSU	Total	Conventionality
Move 1	90%	4	5	9	Conventional
Move 2	20%	2	0	2	Optional
Move 3	100%	5	5	10	Conventional
Move 4	90%	4	5	9	Conventional
Move 5	50%	5	0	5	Optional

Move 1, 3, and 4 are considered conventional since their occurrences of 90% or more in both corpora reflect significance for writers and readers to produce and apprehend an abstract. Meanwhile, move 2 is present only in 20% of the abstracts taken from NNSU and did not occur in NSU corpus, indicating the former's tendency to adopt a purposive writing style compared to the latter. This move is the least frequently used move type next to move 5, applied only in the abstracts from NNSU by 50%.

The findings revealed that the move structure from NSU corpus does not succumb to that of Hyland's (2000), e.g., M1-M2-M3-M4-M5, and involved only three moves, either with or without repetition taking place. 20% of the Ph.D. On the other hand, abstracts' move structure from NNSU followed Hyland's (2000) model, with another 60% of them having almost the complete structure by him. Only the remaining 20% appeared to not yield to the model. Both corpus also portrayed deviation from Swales' (1990) model, e.g., M1-M2-M3 by 90%, with only 10% following his move structure.

The repetition of move only appeared in the corpus, with moves 3 and 4 having the same number of frequencies, succeeded by move 1, which is the least repeated move. These repetitions implied the priority authors give in their studies which calls for the need to emphasise certain moves to persuade readers to their theses abstracts persuasively.

The current findings seem to conform with Hyland (2000), with differing move structures demonstrating the selectivity of the five basic moves. Furthermore, distinguishing differences in the two groups of abstracts also may indicate that those from NNSU tend to be playing it safe by including almost all the moves without involving repetition, indicating a lack of confidence in presenting the text in a creative way focusing on the informative task of abstracts, as opposed to abstracts from NSU.

Analysis of the rhetorical structure of these Ph.D. abstracts may even reflect some cultural nuances, with NNSU corpus appearing direct, following the guided steps within the model to persuade readers as opposed to demonstrating some textual complexity, revealing repetition as well as different ways in the articulation of moves. Whether the abstracts are almost complete or contradict Hyland's (2000) 5-move model, they are generally constructed in a parallel linear arrangement, depicting the rational structure of summing up research.

4. Conclusion

The present small-scale study reported in this article compared writers' rhetorical structure within Ph.D. thesis abstracts from the field of Economics from UNNS and UNS with the objective mentioned above. The findings add to a growing corpus of research, a further validation that non-native speakers of English and native speakers of English abstract writing affect their use of move structure. It is worth mentioning that the restricted size of the corpus confines this study, which may affect its generalisation,

and future studies could further explore this issue by expanding them on a larger scale to different academic disciplines. Awareness of the way abstracts can be operationalised using organizational structure could guide these writers to produce Ph.D. abstracts accepted by their discourse community.

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