The Rhetorical Structure of Abstracts Written by International Authors in Reputable International Journals in Applied Linguistics

[1]Tiara Azzahra Marpaung, [2] Ruwaiza Sasmita, [3] Anggun Citra Sari Dewi

[1,2,3] English Education Study Program
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
University of Bengkulu
*Corresponding e-mail: *tamarpaung@unib.ac.id*

ABSTRACT

In research articles, abstract was defined as a mini-article because it consists of summary of the study. Abstract was a very important part because abstract used to encouraged the readers to saw the other sections of the article. It was because in general the abstract was the first part that readers would read. This present study conducted to investigate the rhetorical structure used in abstract of research articles in applied linguistics written by international authors and published in reputable international journals. This study used content analysis method with the abstract framework that purposed by Swales and Feak (2009). The data were collected from 20 research articles from reputable international journals in applied linguistics. The findings showed that from five moves, there were two moves which were Move 3 (Methods) and Move 4 (Results/findings) are categorized as obligatory. Meanwhile for other moves, which are Move 1 (Introduction), Move 2 (Purpose/aim), and Move 5 (Conclusion/suggestion) are categorized as conventional. This reasearch provided the knowledge about the rhetorical structured of the abstract in research articles written by international authors and published in reputable international journals to increase the national author's awareness of the importanced of the five moves that purposed by Swales and Feak (2009) in conducting the abstract.

Keywords: Rhetorical structure, abstract, research article, applied linguistics

ABSTRAK

Dalam artikel penelitian, abstrak didefinisikan sebagai artikel mini karena terdiri dari ringkasan penelitian. Abstrak merupakan bagian yang sangat penting karena abstrak digunakan untuk mendorong pembaca melihat bagian lain dari artikel tersebut. Hal ini karena secara umum abstrak merupakan bagian pertama yang akan dibaca oleh pembaca. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk menyelidiki struktur retorika yang digunakan dalam abstrak artikel penelitian dalam linguistik terapan yang ditulis oleh penulis internasional dan diterbitkan dalam jurnal internasional terkemuka. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode analisis isi dengan kerangka abstrak yang ditujukan oleh Swales dan Feak (2009). Data dikumpulkan dari 20 artikel penelitian dari jurnal internasional terkemuka dalam linguistik terapan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dari lima langkah, ada dua langkah yaitu Langkah 3 (Metode) dan Langkah 4 (Hasil/temuan) yang dikategorikan sebagai wajib. Sementara itu untuk langkah lainnya, yaitu Langkah 1 (Pendahuluan), Langkah 2 (Tujuan/sasaran), dan Langkah 5 (Kesimpulan/saran) dikategorikan sebagai konvensional. Penelitian ini memberikan pengetahuan tentang struktur retorika abstrak dalam artikel penelitian yang ditulis oleh penulis internasional dan diterbitkan di jurnal internasional bereputasi untuk meningkatkan kesadaran penulis nasional tentang pentingnya lima gerakan yang dimaksudkan oleh Swales dan Feak (2009) dalam melakukan abstrak.

Kata Kunci: Struktur retorika, abstrak, artikel penelitian, linguistik terapan

INTRODUCTION

The use of language in discourse aims to convey the ideas, thoughts and intentions of the writer to the reader in the right context of communication (Tantri et al., 2019). In journal article, there is rhetorical structure that consists of genre move. Richard & Schmidt (2002) state a move as an element with a determined purpose that presented in the form of written text. Meanwhile, Santos in Zamani & Ebadi (2016) mentions move as a stage in specific genre with particular communicative objective that serves the communicative objective of certain genre.

In addition, Vukovic & Bratic (2015) defined genre analysis as one of the youngest linguistic disciplines that deals with how certain texts were written and the reasons why they were written. A genre is described as a group defined based on external criteria such as the intended audience, purpose, and type of activity, i.e. referring to a culturally recognized conventional grouping.

The rhetorical structure discusses the types and parts of the text. In research article, it consists of genre moves that divided based on the section of the journal article, which are abstract, introduction, methodology, discussion, and conclusion. According to Amnuai & Wanaruk (2013), the objectives of genre analysis is to describe how the text is constructed and used in certain context. The genre move is also as the marker guidance for the readers and as a guide for writing the content of research articles for writers.

Abstract can be described as mini-article because it summarizes the entire of research study. Shah (2017) describes the abstract presents about the background, objectives, methods, participants, research design and variables of the study. According to Arsyad et al. (2021), abstract is a very important part because abstract use to encourage the readers to read the article. In addition, the abstract section has a very important role because even though it is written last by the author, in general, this section is the first thing that readers will see (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007).

Lores (2004) argues that the level grade of the article also depicted on the abstract. If the author writes an abstract with good quality, the reader will be interested (Belcher, 2009). That is one of the reasons why abstracts serve to promote articles to readers. When the reader does not understand and is not interested in reading the abstract section, then the explanations in other sections will not be useful because they will not read further. Therefore, the abstract should provide as much information as possible in a shorter form (Shah, 2017). In addition, good quality abstracts have possibility to be published in accredited local and international journals (Arsyad et al., 2021).

In recent years, the study about rhetorical structure of journal articles attract the interest of many people. It makes the awareness of structural genres from the journal articles also increase (Amnuai & Wannaruk, 2013). In addition, Aslam & Mehmood (2014) state that move analysis that used to recognized the discourse structure of research article, recently become the important area of research.

One of popular topic that analyzed in previous studies is the rhetorical structure that used in abstract section. Study from Amalia et al. (2018) investigated the rhetorical structure used in thesis abstract written by Indonesian. They found that mostly Indonesian thesis have applied the five moves that proposed by Samraj (2002) in writing abstract. The results of five of the eight abstracts written by students with low GPA applied all moves, while those written by high GPA students were only found in three of the five abstracts. Tocalo (2021) discussed about the discourse structures and rhetorical verbs used in abstract in English research article. The purpose of this research is to find out the rhetorical structure used in research article abstracts in three different English concentric circles. This study uses the model from Santos (1996) which consists of five moves. The results show that the PTR and DTM moves are in the obligatory category for research articles in inner and outer circles. In addition, PTR, STF, and DTR moves are also categorized as obligatory in the outer circle. Meanwhile, the other moves are optional for three circles. Meanwhile, Alek et al. (2022) analyzed the abstract written by Indonesian in research articles and thesis. They focused on the discourse structure and linguistic features used by the authors. They found that more than half of the abstracts published in international journals used the proper structures, while most of the abstracts contained in thesis were not well organized. In addition, they also found that most of the authors used the Past Tense to indicate the objectives, the methods used and the findings of the study.

There are also some previous studies comparing the two types of journals. Arsyad et al. (2021) discussed comparative study about rhetorical structure and linguistic features of abstract in national and International Journal written by Indonesian authors. The results showed that the international journal

mostly applied the five moves of abstract. Meanwhile the articles that published in local journal have only three moves. Kurniawan & Sabila (2021) comparing the international and Indonesian journals in tourism research article. They used Hyland's (2000) model to analyzed the rhetorical structure in abstract. They revealed that there are the similarities in the used of the abstract moves in two corpora. Both in national and international journals are categorized Move 2, Move 3 and Move 4 as the most occurring moves.

In addition, Nurcik et al. (2022) also compare the research article conducted by Indonesian national and international authors. They studied about rhetorical moves on scopus-indexed of abstract in hard sciences field using Hyland's (2000) model. The results showed the two different kind of journals similarly more often state the methods and the findings of the study. It also showed that there are significance differences in term of the frequency of the introduction and method used. The moves and steps in international journals are categorized as conventional and optional.

Based on previous studies above, it can be seen that many studies examined the rhetorical structure of abstract. Most of them analyzed the abstract of research articles conducted by Indonesian authors that published in national and international journals. However, there is no previous researchers analyzed the moves used in abstracts written by international authors in reputable international journals. Considering this gap, hence, this study aims to investigate the rhetorical structure of abstract in research articles written by international authors in reputable international journals.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a content analysis of qualitative method. According to Kheryadi & Suseno (2017) this method is used to analyze the existing data from the text and draw conclusions from it. According to Shava et al. (2021) using qualitative data analysis can help educational researchers collect their data with or without direct touch with the participants studied. In addition, Hsieh & Shannon in Shava et al. (2021) state qualitative content analysis can be useful to examine any kind of communication materials. This study analyzed 20 journal articles in applied linguistics composed by international authors published in reputable international journals. The details of the corpus of the research were presented in the following table:

Table 1. The Corpus of the Study

No.	Journals	Code	Sinta / Quartile Value / SJR	Average Length of Abstract	Number of Articles
1.	Journal of Asia TEFL	JAT	Q1 / 0.38	969	5
2.	Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics	RALS	Q2 / 0.16	1046	5
3.	World Journal of English Language	WJEL	Q3 / 0.1	1035	5
4.	Journal of Language and Education	JLE	Q4 / 0.21	1519	5
		Total			20

As showed in the table, the Quartile (Q) value was used to see the quality of international journals. To analyzed the data of this research, the researcher used the move theory in abstract that proposed by Swales and Feak (2009). The rhetorical structure of abstract section consists of five moves, there are: Move 1 – Introduction; Move 2 – Aim or purpose; Move 3 – Methods; Move 4 – Results; Move 5 – Conclusion or suggestions, as follows:

Table 2. The Rhetorical Structure of Abstract by Swales and Feak (2009)

Moves		Functions
Move 1	Introduction	The author states the scene, the general statement of the topic
Move 2	Aim/Purpose	The author states the objectives, research questions/ hypotheses of the study

Move 3	Methods	The author describes the methodology used such as research design, subjects, variables, instrument and procedures
Move 4	Results/Findings	The author reports the results that found in the study
Move 5	Conclusion/Suggestion	The author interprets the findings, provides the recommendations for future study and the implications of the research findings.

Below were the examples of the rhetorical structure as mentioned in Arsyad et al. (2021):

Move 1 Introduction
> Not all aspects of Western culture, reflected in the language used in Walt Disney's Donald Duck comics, were acceptable in Indonesia. So, in translating the comics, the translators had to manipulated the text for it to be acceptabled by the target readers and parents. (IJAL)

Move 2 Aim/purpose
> **This study investigates** teachers' viewed on the role of technology in building their creativity during teaching practiced within the context of Indonesian higher education. (TEFLIN)

Move 3 Methods
> **Quasi-experimental research 2x2 factorial design used in this research**, and all the computational procedured were run by using SPSS. (Edu-Ling).

Move 4 Results
> **The findings revealed** that teachers were aware of the importance of technology in creativity. Technology appeared to helped them explore their creativity and encourages learners' creativity in a way that it helped transfer their creativity into reality, made the activities more authentic, and provided teaching materials on various topics. (TEFLIN)

Move 5 Conclusion or suggestions
> **Further research to investigate** other elements censored, and compared with other translated comics **is recommended**. (IJAL)

The data collected from selected reputable international journals were classified using Swales and Feak's (2009) model of abstract, consists of five moves. For the frequency of moves occurrences were classified into three categories. If the move appears in 100% of the corpus of the study, it included in obligatory. If the move appears in range 60-99%, it classified as conventional. For optional, if the move appears less than 60% of the corpus of the study (Kanoksilapatham, 2005). Then the data were put into the checklist instrument table of each article as the corpus of the study. Finally, after analyzed the rhetorical structure of abstract in the selected research articles, then the results were graphed, the research questions were answered and the conclusion was made based on the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The rhetorical structure of abstract in reputable international journals were presented in the following table:

Table 3. Rhetorical Structure of Abstract in Reputable International Journal

Moves	JAT (n=5)	RALS (n=5)	WJEL (n=5)	JLE (n=5)	Total	Move Category
Move 1 - Introduction	5	4	3	5	17	Conventional
Move 2 - Aim/Purpose	5	5	5	4	19	Conventional
Move 3 - Methods	5	5	5	5	20	Obligatory
Move 4 - Results/Findings	5	5	5	5	20	Obligatory
Move 5 - Conclusion/Suggestion	4	5	4	5	18	Conventional
Total	24	24	22	24		

The table 2 above showed the rhetorical structure of abstract in four different international reputable journals. The important difference between them was there were several moves that included

in obligatory and conventional. However, there was no optional category from five moves conducted. For Move 3 and Move 4 were classified in obligatory category because it appears in all selected articles as the corpus of the study. Meanwhile, the other moves were majority used by the authors. Below are the examples of rhetorical structure of abstract that were found in this study.

Move 1 – Introduction
Example 1

Education had been proposed to be the best approach to advance world citizenship and to resolve conflict. Critical literacy was a strategic instructional practice which aimed at raising citizens' critical and social consciousness. (JAT-1)

Example 1 above taken from The Journal of Asia TEFL titled "Fostering University Students to Deal with Conflict through Critical Literacy in EFL Reading Class" in the first and second sentences. The authors gave the general information regarding the topic. Phrases such as **Education has…** and **Critical literacy is a strategic …** were stated by the authors present the introduction of the study.
Example 2

A critical review is one of the text types (i.e., genres) assigned for academic writing in Australian universities; yet, the study of this genre remains underexamined in academic discourse. (RALS-1)

Example 2 above taken from Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics titled "A Genre and Appraisal Analysis of Critical Review Texts in Academic Writing from a Systemic Functional Linguistic Perspective" in the first sentence. The authors gave the general information about critical review in academic writing.

Move 2 – Purpose or aim
Example 3

This study aimed to examine the effects of the STAD method in students" motivation towards learning English communicative competence. (WJEL-3)

Example 3 above taken from World Journal of English Language titled "The Effects of STAD Method on Chinese Students' Motivation in Learning English Communicative Competence" in the second sentence. The phrase **This study aimed to examine …** was stated by the authors to indicate the aim of the study.
Example 4

This study explored and analysed the communicative intents of the discussion sections in research articles in two different contexts to investigate the effect of nativeness on the structural organisation in this genre. (JLE-1)

Example 4 above taken from Journal of Language and Education titled "Rhetorical Structure of Applied Linguistics Research Article Discussions: A Comparative Cross-Cultural Analysis" in the second subtopics. The phrase **This study explored and analysed …** was indicated the aim of the study.

Move 3 – Methods

Example 5

A method of genre teaching and learning was adopted from the Sydney school genre. There are major stages in this method such as deconstruction, joint construction, and independent construction. The focus of this study was on independent construction in which the students produced their independent texts. (RALS-5)

Example 5 above taken from Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics titled "Exploring

Nominalization use in EFL Students' Argumentative Writing Over a Genre-Based Teaching and Learning Approach" in the second until fourth sentences. The authors used **A method of …. Was adopted from …** to inform the methodology that used in the study. In addition, the phrase **The focus of this study was ….** was used by the authors to indicate the limitation.

Example 6

> Twenty-one EFL college students in an advanced reading class participated in the study. Conflict in society was addressed in class through group dialogue and problem-posing. Open coding was used to analyze the qualitative data from class observation, students' writing assignment and interviews. (JAT-1)

Example 6 above taken from The Journal of Asia TEFL titled "Fostering University Students to Deal with Conflict through Critical Literacy in EFL Reading Class" in the fourth until sixth sentences. The author showed the methodology used in the study by indicating the subjects, instrument and research design.

Move 4 – Results

Example 7

> The study found significant differences not only in terms of natural and social sciences but also in terms of L1/L2 distinction. In addition, a secondary purpose of the study was to see whether writers in social and natural sciences differed in terms of empiricist and interpretive rationality. The results indicated that writers in social sciences tended to use more status and cognition nouns, indicating that they tend to be more interpretive. (JLE-5)

Example 7 above taken from Journal of Language and Education titled "Nominal Stance in Cross-Disciplinary Academic Writing of L1 and L2 Speakers in Noun + that Constructions". The authors revealed the results with **The study found significant differences …**. In addition, the phrase **The results indicated that …** was also used by the authors to indicate the findings of the study.

Example 8

> The findings of this study revealed that the students in the Experimental Group showed significantly higher motivation in learning English communicative competence than the Control Group in their overall motivation and in all the ARCS components (Attention, Relevance, Confidence and Satisfaction). (WJEL-3)

Example 8 above taken from World Journal of English Language titled "The Effects of STAD Method on Chinese Students' Motivation in Learning English Communicative Competence" in nineth sentence. The authors indicated the findings by using **The findings of this study revealed that ….**.

Move 5 – Conclusion or Suggestion

Example 9

> Thus, it can be concluded that action research may potentially serve as a venue to change the ESP teachers' selves and, consequently, develop their professional identities. (RALS-4)

Example 9 above taken from Journal of Research in Applied Linguistics titled "Role of Action Research in ESP Teachers' Professional Identity Development" in the last sentence. The authors concluded the study based on the findings by using **Thus, it can be concluded that ….**.

Example 10

> The study has its own implications for writing instructors and researchers. Novice researchers should not use some research verbs interchangeably as they require different collocates of adverbs. Further, future research should address the relationship between word's etymology and semantic prosody … (JLE-2).

Discussion

Example 10 above taken from Journal of Language and Education titled "Semantic Prosody of Research Verbs: A Corpus-Informed Study" in the last subtopic. The author provided the implications of the study by using **The study has its own implications for …**. In addition, the author also gave the recommendation for future researchers that interested to conducted similar study by using **Further, future research should address …**.

The objective of this study was to found out the rhetorical structure of abstract in research articles written by international authors in reputable international journals. The results showed that the majority, the international authors had implemented the rhetorical structure of abstract purposed by Swales and Feak (2009). From five moves, there were two moves which are Move 3 (Methods) and Move 4 (Results/findings) are categorized as obligatory. Meanwhile for other moves, which are Move 1 (Introduction), Move 2 (Purpose/aim), and Move 5 (Conclusion/suggestion) are categorized as conventional. It also revealed that all of the moves in abstract section have above 85% for the frequency of percentage.

If we look at the table 1 about the corpus of the study, it can be seen that from the selected journals, they have different scopus-index. In addition, each journal also had different average of words in abstract. From the table, it showed that Q1 as the highest index of reputable international journals had fewer words than Q4. However, in table 2 the results revealed there is no significance different between each journal. Even though they have significance differences in terms of average of words, but each journal shows the similarity in terms of the total of the move occurrences. It can be concluded that the average of words is not influence the scopus-index and the move occurrences of abstract in research articles.

The results that obtained in this study were probably because the international journals had stricter requirements and editor reviews than the national journals. In addition, mostly of research articles published in reputable international journals written by native speakers. So it can be supported reason to state the international authors were more aware of the importance of five moves to conduct the abstract section in the research articles. This is in line with the study from Arsyad et al. (2021) that revealed the international journal authors more often apply the moves in abstracts than national and local journals, although not all of them. Similarly, Kurniawan & Sabila (2021) also stated that the move occurrences of the articles published in international journals written by international authors tend to have higher frequencies than the articles that published in national journals and written by Indonesian. In addition, study from Tocalo (2021) also investigated the moves structures of abstract of inner, outer and expanding circle. The results showed that in international journals, the majority of the moves are categorized as obligatory and conventional.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, this study found there were two moves (Move 2 – Method, Move 3 – Results/findings) that categorized as obligatory in reputable international journals written by international authors. Meanwhile for others (*Move 1 – Introduction, Move 2 – Purpose/aim, Move 5 – Conclusion/suggestion*) were categorized as conventional. The results indicated that the international authors are already aware of the five moves of the abstract. In addition, the study revealed that there was no relation between the average of words in abstract with the the scopus-index and the move occurrences of abstract in research articles. The limitation of the study had several limitations. First, this study was the limited of sample. The findings revealed only based on analyzing the rhetorical structure in the conclusion section of four selected reputable international journals that written by international authors. This study only used 20 research articles in applied linguistics field. The future study should included more journals from each range in the study. Second, there are several frameworks of the rhetorical structure of abstract, however, this study only used the model purposed by Swales and Feak (2009). Therefore, the future study can analyzed the rhetorical structure of abstract with different framework. This study also provided the implication for this research. Based on the findings, it was suggested that the postgraduate students who were going wrote the articles in reputable international journals should more aware with the five moves of the abstract section because all moves were important to emphasized the entire study in the abstract of the research articles.

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