

Conference Paper

A Structural Move Analysis of Abstracts in Undergraduate Theses: A Case Study at Universitas Kristen Indonesia

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Abstract

Writing the abstract of a final project or undergraduate thesis can be difficult for undergraduate students due to the lack of awareness of writing in academic genres, particularly the moving structure of each section of a research work. To overcome this issue, the writer attempts to analyze the rhetorical structure of undergraduate students' research papers in the abstract section. The aim of the research is to find out the rhetorical moves in the abstract section and whether or not this study was similar to the study by Bhatia [1]. To analyze the data, the writer followed Bhatia's move analysis [1]. The results found that the majority of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' abstracts confirmed Bhatia's findings. It is highly recommended that faculties and/or teachers should provide fixed structural move guidelines to assist students in writing their final project.

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Received: 6 April 2018

Accepted: 3 May 2018

Published: 26 July 2018

Publishing services provided by
Knowledge E

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Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the ISLLE 2017 Conference Committee.

Keywords: rhetorical steps or moves, undergraduate theses

1. Introduction

Like other sections of research papers, the abstract may become the first thing that a reader or examiner will read before making a decision on the value of the whole research paper. Abstracts are categorized as an academically written genre containing the rhetorical structure or moves. In the context of academic, the writing of an abstract can be difficult and more challenging for students due to a lack of awareness of the steps or organization required to write scientifically. It should be more systematic and well organized. This is understandable because knowledge of the systematic writing of scientific papers in terms of the division into sections might not yet be fully grasped by the students even though they have the ability to use language to write a text. This

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is in line with Brown, who states that writing is not only a complex activity but also a process involving the whole competencies [2].

Since the writing of a final project or undergraduate thesis should be formal and academic, it is often viewed as being more crucial in a context where English is merely used in the academic setting, yet the skill of writing becomes more important [3]. Undergraduate students may encounter many problems in their writing project, such as problems with the use of grammar, word diction and style, while another problem could be that their writing is less systematic and poorly developed. They might come up against several obstacles when writing their undergraduate thesis. Some students finish writing their thesis on time, while others might spend a lot of time on their writing. Most of the problems that arise are due to a lack of language proficiency and rhetorical traditions seem to be among the major factors. One of the solutions offered by Brown is that learners must be frequently exposed to the four basic language skills so that they are able to write and improve other language skills as well [4].

In addition, these are one of the academic written genres that can be used as sources to be analyzed at the level of discourse [5]. In general, an undergraduate thesis consists of a number of main sections, e.g. Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Results, Discussion, and Conclusion. Over the last few decades, a number of scholars have given their attention to different kinds of academic genres, focusing on the main different sections of research papers. These include Swales, who focused on Introductions; Holmes, who conducted a study dealing with the Discussion section; Flowerdew and Forest, who carried out a study on the Ph.D. Literature Reviews; and Brett and Bruce, who focused on the Results section [6–10]. Other sections of research papers such as Acknowledgements were investigated by Hyland and Tse [11]. Their study focused on the moving structure of acknowledgments.

Therefore, to the best of the writer's knowledge, not many Indonesian scholars have conducted this kind of study. The writer thus decided to carry out a similar study focusing on the rhetorical move of abstracts written by the undergraduate students of the English Teaching Study Program of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training of the Christian University of Indonesia, Jakarta. The aim of this study was to find out whether or not the undergraduate students followed a common concession issued by their institution in writing their final project and it was expected that the students' final writing project would be more academic and systematic. The research questions were thus formulated as follows: 1) What are the rhetorical moves of the abstract section in undergraduate theses? 2) Are all the abstracts of undergraduate students sequenced and similar to the study by Bhatia [1]?

2. Methods

2.1. Research approach

Learning and analyzing the discourse of a language requires knowledge of how to analyze and comprehend the discourse itself. In doing this research, the writer used a qualitative approach. Nunan stated that a qualitative approach is concentrated on the process of a descriptive and examining the results of research findings [12]. The writer applied a descriptive research in analyzing the data with the purpose of describing in detail to the readers what the writer is going to analyze and the analysis follows the moves-analytic approach, which Connor and Mauranen define as *a move as a functional unit used for some identifiable rhetorical purpose* [13]. In terms of the usefulness of analytical moves, Henry and Roseberry (in Kautsantoni) stated that “[a] moves-analytic approach is a useful way of investigating persuasive discourse as a move is a specific part of the text which achieves a particular purpose of the genre” [14].

As stated in the Introduction, the writer is going to find out the rhetorical moves of undergraduates’ abstracts with respect to Bhatia [1]. Accordingly, the writer is going to follow this convention in conducting this study and he employs a textual approach, which according to Hyland, “focuses on language choices, meanings, and patterns in text including those based on genre, corpora, and multimodal analysis” [5].

2.2. Data collection

This study was carried out at Christian University in Indonesia between March and May 2017. Because the study aims to reveal the rhetorical moves in undergraduates’ theses, specifically the abstract section, the data used consisted of 18 abstracts from undergraduate theses written in the field of English Teaching Study Program students of Universitas Kristen Indonesia. The writer merely selected the abstracts of undergraduate students who graduated in the academic year 2015–2016.

2.3. Method of data collection

In terms of the method of data collection, this study employed a reflective inquiry as proposed by Connor [15]. She states that “reflective inquiry abounds in contrastive rhetoric” (p. 154). Bereiter and Scardamalia (in Connor) have shown that reflective inquiry identifies “problems and phenomena through observations, introspections, and

literature review" [15]. Hence, in doing the data collection, first of all, the writer collected the abstracts of the undergraduates' theses and then analyzed and categorized these based on the rhetorical moves found in Bhatia's study [1].

2.4. Data analysis

Since the writer wants to find out the rhetorical moves in undergraduates' abstract sections, after collecting the data, he identified each of the rhetorical moves found in the abstracts. This study also aimed to discover the results, whether or not they confirmed Bhatia's study [1]. Therefore, each of the paragraphs of the abstracts was scrutinized and then categorized based on the move developed by Bhatia, i.e. Purpose-Method-Result-Conclusion [1]. Eventually, having finished with the category of moves, he attempted to find out the similarities or differences in accordance with the research questions posed in the Research Questions section.

3. Results

As the research questions were aimed at finding out both the rhetorical moves in the abstract section and whether or not this study was similar to the study by Bhatia, the writer then discussed the results found in this study based on the most dominant moves that appeared [1]. The study shows that there are five moves used in the abstract section. They include 1) Purpose-Method-Result-Conclusion moves; 2) Introduction-Purpose-Method-Result move; 3) Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result-Conclusion move; 4) Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result move.

The study also shows the range of variation in the use of moves found in terms of the move sequence. However, the majority of the undergraduate students' abstracts confirmed the study by Bhatia, particularly in the first move – Purpose-Method-Result-Conclusion – found in this study [1].

The most dominant move found in this study is beginning with Purpose-Method-Result-Conclusion as shown in Table 1. This illustrates the rhetorical moves as well as their frequency found in the study, which the writer classified based on the most dominant one.

Table 1 shows that in terms of the move sequence, this first move shows that the majority of the moves are found in the Purpose-Method-Result-Conclusion move. In the second rank is the Introduction-Purpose-Method-Result move and last are

TABLE 1: The Overall of Rhetorical Moves and Frequency.

No.	Moves	Frequency (n=18)
1.	Purpose-Method-Result-Conclusion	11
2.	Introduction-Purpose-Method-Result	4
3.	Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result-Conclusion	1
4.	Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result	1
	Total	18

the Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result-Conclusion move and Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result move.

Next, the second research question attempts to find out whether or not all the abstracts of undergraduate students are sequenced and similar to those in the study by Bhatia [1]. This study points out that in terms of move sequence, the most dominant move found in the study is the Purpose-Method-Result-Conclusion move, as confirmed in the study by Bhatia, whereas the rest of the moves that emerged are not similar to Bhatia’s findings [1].

The following are the results and findings of the research classified by the researcher based on the most dominant order of occurrences, namely from the highest rank to the lowest one. Table 2 shows the most dominant move that emerged in this study.

TABLE 2: The Distribution of the Purpose-Method-Result-Conclusion Move.

No.	Move	Remark	Total
1.	Purpose-Method-Result-Conclusion	Abstract nos 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, 17, and 18	11

Table 2 indicates that the most dominant move is Purpose-Method-Result-Conclusion. The following are extracts taken from abstract no. 8.

The objective of this research was to investigate the use and the students’ responses on the use of English video in developing the fourth graders’ vocabulary. (Purpose)

This research used a classroom action research method in which the subject was the 24 fourth graders of SDN Menteng Dalam o8 Petang, Jakarta, consisted of 11 girls and 15 boys. To collect the data, the researcher used to test and non-test techniques, covering tests, observation, and questionnaires, and then qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed. (Method)

Based on the analysis results, the score means of the pre-test, post-test in cycle I and post-test in cycle II were respectively 59.79 and 71.60 and 84.25 points. The gain of pre-test to post-test II was 40.90%. (Result)

Based on the finding, it can be concluded that English video could develop the fourth graders' vocabulary at SDN Menteng Dalam 08 Petang. Besides, 82.50% of the students agreed that English video was helpful in developing vocabulary. It can be evidenced by the questionnaire analysis results of both cycles (78.25% and 86.75%). (Conclusion)

The above example shows that the move starting from Purpose-Method-Result-Conclusion. This first move found in this study is similar to the study conducted by Bhatia [1].

The next move found in this study is Introduction-Purpose-Method-Result. Table 3 shows the distribution of the move.

TABLE 3: The Distribution of the Introduction-Purpose-Method-Result Move.

No.	Move	Remark	Total
1.	Introduction-Purpose-Method-Result	Abstract nos 2, 3, 10, and 14	4

Table 3 indicates that the second move is Introduction-Purpose-Method-Result. The following are extracts taken from abstract no. 14.

This research is an experimental research. (Introduction)

It was aimed to investigate the effect of Graphic Organizers on the eleventh graders' reading comprehension at SMA Negeri 102 Jakarta. (Purpose)

To attain the aim, this research was conducted in two classes. Each class consisted of 30 students. The control class (XI Social 1) was taught using traditional method and the experimental class (XI Social 2) was taught using Graphic Organizers technique. The classes were held once a week and the research was conducted over a period of eight weeks.

Pre-test and post-test were employed to collect data. Both the pre- and the post-test were administered in the two classes. The quantitative data analysis was conducted with the SPSS 21 software, these tests were applied for analyzing the data obtained from four sets of tests. (Method)

Data analysis showed that there is a significant effect after using Graphic Organizers on the eleventh graders' reading comprehension to students' reading comprehension. It can be seen from the mean score of the post-test between control class and experimental class. The mean score of post-test in the control class is 56.33 and the mean

score of post-test in the experimental class is 84.66. Graphic Organizers give the effect in teaching reading to eleventh graders of SMA Negeri 102 Jakarta. It motivates the students to comprehend the reading texts. It also makes the learning process become more interest and create a new cheerful and relaxing atmosphere. (Result)

The next move found in this study is Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result-Conclusion. This move is similar to the previous move, i.e. the Introduction-Purpose-Method-Result move, in terms of occurrences. Table 4 shows the distribution of the move.

TABLE 4: The Distribution of the Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result-Conclusion Move.

No.	Move	Remark	Total
1.	Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result-Conclusion	Abstract no. 16	1

Table 4 indicates that the last move is Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result-Conclusion. The following are extracts taken from abstract no. 16.

The main objective of this research is to improve tenth graders' vocabulary mastery by using stories at VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (SMK) 17 Agustus 1945. (Purpose)

This study is a classroom action research in two cycles. (Introduction)

The research was done on 1st March 2015 until 31st May 2015. The subject of the research was the students of X Akuntansi class in VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (SMK) 17 Agustus 1945. There were 25 students (14 girls and 11 boys). The instruments of tests are pre-test and post-test. The noninstrument test is observation sheets and questionnaire. (Method)

The improvement of the tenth graders' vocabulary scores can be seen from the results of the pre-test and post-test. The average score of the students in the pre-test was 55.2 and in cycle I, the students' average score of post-test I was 69.28. So the increased between the two tests was 25.50%. In the cycle II, the average of students' score was 88.8. The result of the post-test I was 69.28, so the increase from post-test I in cycle I and post-test II in cycle II was 28.17%. The result shows that the students reached the criteria minimum achievement (75).

The data obtained from the questionnaire in cycle I and II revealed 100% of the students like English subject, feel comfortable and enjoy the learning of English using stories and they think that stories can stimulate and help them to increase their English vocabulary. In cycle, I and II 100% of the students also revealed stories is a good way to increase their vocabulary. There are 92% in cycle I of the students who revealed English vocabulary is difficult but in cycle II 0% of the students revealed English vocabulary is

difficult. In the cycle, I 32% of the students revealed after learning English using stories they still have difficulties in learning but in cycle II 0% of the students revealed after learning using stories they still have difficulties in learning. (Result)

Based on the result of the research, it can be concluded that the use of stories could improve the tenth graders' vocabulary mastery at VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL (SMK) 17 Agustus 1945. The writer suggests that stories are one of the effective learning techniques to improve students' mastery of English vocabulary. It can be an alternative way to teach the senior high school, especially in teaching English vocabulary. (Conclusion)

The next move found in this study is Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result. This move is similar to the previous move, i.e. the Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result-Conclusion move, in terms of occurrences. Table 5 shows the distribution of the move.

TABLE 5: The Distribution of the Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result Move.

No.	Move	Remark	Total
1.	Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result	Abstract no. 11	1

Table 5 indicates that the last move is Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result. This last move found is similar to the previous move in terms of occurrence. The following are extracts taken from abstract no. 11.

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether the implementation of Multiple Intelligences [MI] approach in English teaching can improve students' English achievement. MI suggested that all individuals have personal intelligence that consists of combinations of different intelligence types: verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial-visual, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalistic intelligence. (Purpose)

English teaching is not only for students who are highly linguistic intelligence but also for students with other intelligence. Implementing MI approach means making varied activities which give chances to students with various intelligence. (Introduction)

This study used experimental design and it involved one control group and one experimental group (33 students in the experimental group and 38 students in control group). To attain the purpose, data were collected by doing a pre- and a posttest. Both the pre- and the posttest were administered in the two groups. The quantitative data analysis was conducted with SPSS version 17. (Method)

The results of the data analysis showed that there is the statistically significant difference in students' English achievement between students with the implementation

of MI approach and traditional approach. In pretest, mean score of the control group was 55.58 and the experimental group was 58.85, but in posttest mean score of the experimental group was higher (77.12) than the control group (67.53). Since this study proved the effectiveness of MI approach in increasing fourth-grade students' English achievement, so it can be suggested to English teachers to apply MI approach in their teaching and to other researchers to conduct further studies. (Result)

Based on the results and findings of data analysis in the aforementioned, it can clearly be seen that the majority of abstract moves of the undergraduate students are similar to the findings obtained by Bhatia, while the rest are different [1]. Most of the abstracts contained four moves, Purpose-Method-Result-Conclusion, and contained no Introduction. The study also showed that there is only one move containing five items, i.e. Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result-Conclusion.

4. Conclusion

The results of the study showed that there are four moves found in this study: 1) Purpose-Method-Result-Conclusion move, 2) Introduction-Purpose-Method-Result move, 3) Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result-Conclusion move, 4) Purpose-Introduction-Method-Result move. However, among the four moves that emerged, one of them is in line with the study by Bhatia in terms of its sequence, i.e. the first move (Purpose-Method-Result-Conclusion) [1]. In addition, the study has also shown the range of variation in the use of moves found in terms of the move sequence. By analyzing the rhetorical moves in the abstract sections of undergraduates' theses, this study also looked at different practices of undergraduate students in fulfilling the rhetorical goal of their abstracts. There might be a tendency for the writers of undergraduate theses not to be selective in their use of the moves to best promote their papers. In addition, lecturers/faculties might need to raise students' awareness of the different practices between student writers and expert writers and guide them toward selecting the most appropriate rhetorical moves to fulfill their rhetorical goals in writing the abstract section. Due to the limited data of this study, the findings in the study need to be replicated in large-scale studies.

Acknowledgement

Author would like to thank English Teaching Study Program, Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Christian University of Indonesia for facilitated this research.

Conflict of Interest

Author declare that there is no interest in this research.

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