The Rhetorical Moves and Verb Tense in Research Article Abstracts

Mufidah Yusroh,
Reeviedh@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to examine the rhetorical moves and explore the use of verb tense in research article abstracts. This study employs corpus based approach using a corpus toolkit AntConc 3.2.4w. The subjects of this study are 29 research articles. The findings reveal that the preferred rhetorical moves of the abstracts are Move 2-purose, Move 3-method, and Move 4-result. The use of present tense is dominant in all five moves. Additionally, past tense is mostly found in method move. In this case, the writers employ the preferred rhetorical move and different verb tense in each move to emphasize the writer's objectiveness.
Keywords: *rhetorical move, verb tense, research article abstracts*

INTRODUCTION

Recently, producing research article is a must for university students to fulfill the certain requirements. Publishing research article in research journals or conference proceeding prove that students are able to express their ideas and accepted by their discourse community. Additionally, it requires an abstract to give a brief summary to be attached in a research article.

Attaching English abstract in the research article is still challenging for writers particularly for publication. Therefore, to successfully write a good abstract, the writers have to be able to communicate the sufficient information of the research article in English. Zhang et al. (2012:127) states that the communicative purpose can be attained.

According to Swales (in Renkema, 2009:82) genre is categorized as a particular form of communicative event that has a particular communicative purpose recognized by the users in their discourse community. Besides, the rhetorical moves of the abstract are the study of genre analysis embodied by the organizational pattern of moves and steps realize communicative purpose that can be identified by discourse community.

Graetz (1987) is the pioneer who establishes the study of rhetorical moves and linguistic features of research articles abstracts in EFL context. Afterward, a large number of abstract rhetorical studies have emerged from the research articles in journal publication or conference proceeding (Basthomi, 2006b;Pho, 2008; Djuwari, 2009;Tzeng, 2011; Zhang, 2012; Vakili-Kazhani, 2012; Marefat-Mohammadzadeh, 2013; Behnam&Golpur, 2014; Esfandiari, 2014; Ismail &Syah, 2014; Safnil, 2014) in paper, theses,

or dissertation (Jalilfar, 2010; Ren& Li, 2011; San & Tan, 2012; Gaseri&Alavi, 2014; Nasseri-Nematollahi, 2014; &Sujiyani, 2015).

It is a challenge to investigate an abstract in different disciplines, different types of genre, or different discourse community since an abstract is an overview of a research article. Dealing with the structure of the abstract, Weissberg and Buker (1990:187) states that abstract is not only written in brief and concise as possible but also concerns on three elements, importantly highlighting the result of the study, presenting the purpose and method in the first, and taking into account of the conclusion and recommendation in the last paragraph. Rathbone (in Basthomi, 2006:179) also proposes that generic structure of abstract should be the replica of research article that contains a beginning, a middle, and an end highlighting on the result of research article.

Basthomi (2006) suggests that the guideline of writing a journal abstract needs to be developed particularly for non-native English writers. A guideline of writing research article abstract is also taken into account of Djuwari's dissertation (2009) which investigated the rhetorical moves of abstract and some linguistic features. The finding showed how linguistic and non-linguistic elements support how to write an abstract as additional information to construct an appropriate guideline of abstract writing. Furthermore, Sujiyani (2015) conducted a genre analysis of an abstract in master's thesis abstracts written by Indonesian EFL students at English Language Teaching, Palangkaraya University. The finding of this study showed that four moves are categorized as obligatory moves in the process function of every step. While the findings of linguistic and non-linguistic features in this study support the guideline of an abstract writing particularly on giving the improvement on the guide book for writing a thesis proposal or writer.

On the other side, some scholars have also investigated rhetorical moves and linguistic features of abstracts (Esfandiari, 2014; Chalak&Norouzi, 2013; & Zhang 2012). From those researches, the findings show that every research article has their characteristic in using tense, some of them use present tense as the common tense, however, others use past tense to emphasize the research had been conducted.

This current study adapts Samraj's model (2009) to examine the rhetorical move of JPH abstracts and to investigate the use of verb tense in each move. By conducting this study, it is expected to give contribution on the knowledge of writing an abstract in JPH.

Theoretical Review on Rhetorical moves of Abstract

Some frameworks of rhetorical moves of abstract has established by several authors. From Weissberg and Buker's model (1990) which establishes five-moves consists of background, purpose, method, result,

and conclusion. It is similar with Santos's framework (1990) also comprises five models. In the other hand, to Swales' model (1990) creates a Research Space (CARS) model which comprises three moves which are, establishing a territory, establishing a niche, and presenting the present work where each move consists of some steps.

In Pho's framework (2008) categorized moves into: situating the research, presenting the research, describing the methodology, summarizing the findings, and discussing the research. Similar with Hyland's Model (2000) establish the rhetorical moves of abstract into five moves consisting of introduction, purpose, method, product, and conclusion. Between Pho's and Hyland's model have identical structure but Hyland's model has been applied in a lot of inquiries in different genres, disciplines, and languages. In order to examine the rhetorical moves of the abstracts of JPH, Sujiani (2015) proposes the Move-Step(s) Model which is drawn based on some proponents' ideas (Hyland, 2000, 2002; Promsin, 2006; &Samraj, 2002).

Table 1 A Move Step(s) Model for Abstract Analysis

Move	Function	Rv as the Lexical Signal
Move 1 Situating the research	Introducing or opening the current research by establishing the interest or importance of the research topic	*Discuss, hypothesize, state, report*
Move 2 Purpose	Outlining the main purpose of the research	*Investigate, report, study, examine* Or by using the purposive lexical items such as *the aim/purpose/objective*
Move 3 Method	Providing information of how actually the research was conducted	*Analyze, employ, obtain, observe, calculate, etc*
Move 4 Result	Announcing the principal findings or the result of the research	*Show, discover, notice, establish, etc*

Move	Function	Rv as the Lexical Signal
Move 5 Conclusion	Presenting the	*Conclude, summarize, imply, suggest, etc*

RESEARCH METHOD

To investigate rhetorical moves structure and verb tense of research article abstracts The subject of the study is 29 abstracts written by English language teaching students published in Jurnal Pendidikan Humaniora (JPH).The objective of the study, the researcher employs corpus linguistics as research method with corpus based-approach (Baker, 2010). This study employs corpus based approach. The approach of this genre study applies both qualitatively to investigati the lexical signals and verb tense by using a corpus toolkit AntConc 3.2.4w and qualitatively to describe how the writers construct the rhetorical move of the abstracts.

In this data analysis, the researcher conduct the analysis either manually based on the theoretical basis or utilize the software in order to easily examine the corpora. Firstly, to answer the first research question on examining the rhetorical moves structure of the research article abstracts, the researcher identify by adopting Samraj's Model (2002). The model consists of five models; Move 1-Situating verb, Move2- Purpose, Move 3-Methods, Move 4- Results, and Move 5-Conclusion. To examine the moves structure of each abstract with the linguistic realization on each move is conducted by examining phrases, clauses, and sentences which deliver the realization of communicative purpose. The researcher uses a corpus toolkit AntConc 3.2.4w to find out the lexical signal to identify the movement of the rhetoricalabstract.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, it discusses the moves employed by the rhetorical moves English language teaching students in constructing research article abstract. By adopting Samraj's Model (2002) which consists of five models; move 1-situating verb, move2-purpose, move 3-methods, move 4- results, and move 5-conclusion to examine the moves structure of each abstract with the linguistic realization on each move. The rhetorical moves can be found by identifying the linguistic realization from the verbs, phrases, clauses, and sentences of the abstracts. The researcher identified the moves of abstract by giving checklist of the moves. There are some patterns found in twenty nine abstract of research article. From this analysis, the most frequent move of the abstract is also found. To give more detail of the move sequence in each abstract based on the frequency of occurrences of each moves presented in Table 2

Tabel 2 The Frequency of Each Move Occurrence in Abstracts

Moves	Numbers of Abstracts	Frequency of Occurrence
M1-Situating the Research	3	10.34%
M2-Purpose	29	100%
M3-Method	29	100%
M4-Result	29	100%
M5-Conclusion	8	27.59%

According to Table 2, the investigation shows that Move 2, Move 3, and Move 4 are totally in one hundred percentages. Besides, Move 1 and Move 5 are investigated from twenty nine research article abstracts which Move 1 only shows in 10.34% or only 3 research article abstracts which involve in this move. Move 5 has greater result that shows in 27.59%. After analyzing the occurrences of each move, the frequency of occurrences of moves pattern are classified in Table 3.

Tabel 3. The Occurrence of Moves Pattern Employed in Abstracts

Move Patterns	Numbers of Abstracts	Percentage
M1-M2-M3-M4-	1	3.45%
M1-M2-M3-M4	2	6.89%
M2-M3-M4-M5	7	24.14 %
M2-M3-M4	19	65.52 %
TOTAL	29	100%

In table 3, the result of identification shows that the most preferred rhetorical moves are M2-M3-M4 pattern. Nineteen of twenty nine abstracts follow this pattern as the moves often sequence occur in the abstracts. Other sequences implemented in the abstracts are M2-M3-M4-M5 pattern, M1-M2-M3-M4 pattern, and M1-M2-M3-M4-M5 pattern respectively.

The findings are presented show that five moves are implemented in research article abstracts written by English language teaching students. However, they are in different percentage which can be categorized as conventional and optional moves. Based on Kanoksilapatham in Esfandiari (2014:567) proposes that a move can be optional or conventional from the frequency of a particular move, the conventional move should occur 60%, while the frequency of a move fell below 60%, the move was considered as an optional move. According to the frequency of occurrences of each move, the conventional moves of the abstracts are Move 2- purpose (100%), Move 3- method (100%), and Move 4-result (100%). Meanwhile, Move 1-situating the research or introduction (10.34%) and Move 5-result (27.59%) are categorized as optional moves.

Most of the abstracts of research article written by English language teaching had three to five moves. According to the frequency of

occurrences of moves patterns, the findings show that the research article writers mostly implement three moves in their abstracts. It can be seen from nineteen abstracts of research article (65.52 %) employed this particular move pattern (M2-M3-M4). The present study deals with Pho's study schematize three move (M2-M3-M4) are applied in three journals while it occurs because the linguistic features such as grammatical constructions affect the use of certain move pattern in the abstract. Nasseri- Nematollahi, (2014) also find out three moves as the conventional move in investigating theses abstract which that the writers tend to compose relative short abstract regarding the writing convention of their discourse community.

The other patterns also found in the research article abstract. Four moves (M2- M3-M4-M5) employed in the abstract (24.14%) which highlight that Move 4-purpose is an important section to draw the interpretation of the results. It is considered as the moves frequently found in this present study which has middle frequency while seven of 29 abstracts adopt this pattern. These findings agree with the Li's study (2011) that the moves pattern M2-M3-M4-M5 as a conventional schema. Li argues that this pattern include M5-conclusion in conventional move is a way to express the significance of the study or deliver the implications of the results. Tseng's study (2011) also find out this pattern commonly implemented in applied linguistic article abstract frequently closed by M5-conclusion. Nasseri-Nematollahi, (2014) state that M5-conclusion is categorized the vacillated move of their findings due to the disagreement on the percentage. Therefore, three conventional moves are required in constructing a brief research article abstract.

The other four moves (M1-M2-M3--M4) were also employed in two abstracts positioning Move 1- situating research to establish the importance of current topic. In the other hand, five moves are infrequently found in the research article abstracts.

Two abstract compose the abstract based on this pattern, although some findings of previous researcher investigate this pattern as the conventional moves. According to Esfandiari's work reveals that M1-M2-M3-M4 pattern as the most frequently found in the science article due to the disciplinary variations. The variations happen because the researcher states current knowledge based on their own different interpretation in writing an abstract particularly by carrying out some findings truthfully. Only one abstract (3.45%) applied M1-M2-M3-M4-M5 pattern. It is uncommon convention in writing a research article abstract composing five moves due to the different requirement by the publishers to construct a shorter abstract.

Thus, in the term of the rhetorical moves structure of each abstract is examined by finding out the linguistic realizations of each move based on

verbs, phrases, or sentences compose by the readers in order to gain the communicative purpose of research article abstracts. Meanwhile, the use of present tense frequently used in all moves especially in purpose, result, and conclusion. But the use of past tense commonly found in method and result. For more detail information of the use of verb tense in each move can be seen in Table 4.

Tabel 4 The Use of Verb Tense

Verb Tense	I	P	M	R	C	Total
Present tense	3	50	45	56	19	173
Past tense	1	16	96	46	3	162

Interestingly, the findings of the use of tense can be seen from the frequency of occurrences of each move which show that present tense and past tense are commonly found in all five moves. However, present tense is dominantly found in the abstract moves. It is frequently used in four moves which are introduction, purpose, result and, and conclusion. According to Esfandiari (2014) in his research findings show that all move of applied linguistic abstracts employ present tense in all five moves. It is influenced by the procedure of displaying the findings in the abstracts. In the other side, past tense is mostly found in Method move.

In M1-situating the research, present tense and past tense were employed but in small number due to the limited introduction move in the abstracts. There are no significant findings of this move, the researcher compose opening statement to strengthen the purpose of the study. However, present tense was significantly employed rather than past tense in Move 2-purpose. It happens. The total number of present tense counted 50 words while past tense only 16 words. Move 2-purpose is to outline the aims of the research. Therefore, the purpose move conveys relevant statement based on the intentions of the study. This present findings are in line with of Tseng's study that Move 2-purpose uses present tense while the realization of present tense and past tense perhaps occurs because of the disciplinary variations emphasizing on the use of verb tense.

Otherwise, the use of past tense was commonly used in M3-method. It is the only move which frequently employed past tense in the research article abstracts. This study has similar findings with Chalak&Norouzi (2013) that reveal Move 3- method typically used past tense. The usage of past tense in method move is influenced by the researcher's objectiveness of the study.

Moreover, the use of present tense and past tense were not significantly different in Move 4-purpose. The total numbers of present tense words were 56 than past tense were 46. Surprisingly, non-native writers employed present tense in product move because they prefer to use past tense. In this case, non-native writers have followed native writing convention in the research article abstract. They are willing to show current

applicability of the findings (Chalak&Norouzi, 2013). The writers use present tense in product move that the function is to give a broad view of the findings. Pho's study (2008) also finds out that present tense employed in product move proposed to make the finding as objective as possible.

In Move 5-conclusion, the use of present tense was often used than the use of past tense. Although, a small number of past tense words found in conclusion move but there is a significant difference of the total number of words which present tense words counted 19 words then past tense counted three words. Move 5 aims to interpret the results to widely apply to further research.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Per This study which concerns on the rhetorical movesand verb tensein the research article abstracts of JurnalPendidikanHumaniora (JPH) written by English language teaching students varied in the result of the study. The preferred rhetorical moves in the abstracts are M2-purpose, M3-method, M4-result moves pattern. Those three moves are classified as conventional moves. Meanwhile, introduction move and conclusion move are defined as optional moves of the abstracts. The other patterns found in the abstracts are M2-M3-M4-M5, M1-M2-M3-M4, M1-M2-M3- M4-M5 respectively. Present tense is significantly used in all moves particularly in four moves in high frequency which are introduction, purpose, result, and conclusion. However past tense is commonly found in method move.

The analyses of rhetorical moves of research article abstracts provide the rhetorical writing convention particularly in constructing the research article abstracts published particularly in Jurnal Pendidikan Humaniora (JPH). This study is the empirical data for lecturers who teach the students to constructs researcharticle abstracts. The results can be considered for further researchers who are willing to conduct a study of genre analysis in different field even in differentgenre.

REFERENCES

Baker, P.2010.Corpus Method in Linguistics. In L. Litosseliti (Ed), *Research Method Linguistic* (93-116).London: Continuum

Basthomi, Y. 2006. The Rhetoric of article abstracts: a sweep through the literature and a preliminary study. *Journal of BahasadanSeni*.retrieved at http://sastra.um.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/2009/10

Behnam, B., and Golpour, F.2014. A Genre Analysis of English and Iranian Research Articles Abstracts in Applied Linguistics and Mathematics.*International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature. 3*(5).173-179

Djuwari. 2009. *Genre Analysis of International Conference Paper Abstracts. Unpublished Thesis.*Malang: Graduate Program in English Language Teaching, State University of Malang

Esfandiari, R. 2014. Realization of Rhetorical Moves and Verb Tense Variation In Two Subdisciplines of Computer Sciences: Artificial Intelligence and Architecture. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World.5*(3).564-573

Graetz, N. 1987.Teaching EFL students to extract structural information from abstracts. In J. M. Ullign& A. K. Pugh (Ed.), *Reading for professional purposes: Methods and materials in teaching languages* .123-135. London: Heinemann Educational Publishers

Marefat, H., and Muhammadzadeh, S. 2013. Genre analysis of literature research article abstracts: A cross-linguistic, cross-cultural study. *Applied Research on English Language.2*(2).37-50

Nasseri, D., &Nematollahi, D. 2014. A Contrastive Genre Analysis of Abstract of Master of Arts (Ma) Theses in Applied Linguistics Written by Native And Non-Nativespeakers of English with Respects to Moves And Move Markers. *Indian Journal.7*(1)

Pho, P. D. 2008. Research article abstracts in applied linguistics and educational technology: A study of linguistic realizations of rhetorical structure and authorial stance. *Discourse Studies, 10*(2), 231-250

Ren, H., & Li, Y. 2011. A Comparison Study on the Rhetorical Moves of Abstracts in Published Research Articles and Master's Foreign-language Theses. *English Language Teaching.4*(1).164-166

Renkema, J. 2009. *Discourse of Course: An Overview of Research in Discourse Studies.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company

Sujiani, E. 2015.*The Rhetoric of Thesis Abstracts Written by Indonesian ESL Graduate Students.Unpublished Thesis.*Malang: Graduate Program in English Language Teaching, State University of Malang

Swales, J. M., & FEAK, C. B. 2004.*Academic Writing for Graduate Students*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press

Tzeng, F. P. 2011. Analyses of Move Structure and Verb Tense of Research Article Abstracts in Applied Linguistics Journals.*International Journal of English Linguistics, 1*(2), 27-39

Vakili,E. Z., and Kashani, A. F. 2012. The Contrastive Move Analysis: An Investigation of Persian and English Research Articles' Abstract

and Introduction Parts. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences.3*(2). 129- 137

Weissberg. R., Buker, S. 1990. *Writing Up Research: Experimental Research Report Writing for Students of English.* NJ: Englewood Cliffs

Zhang, B., Thuc, T.B.Q., &Pramoolsook, I.2012. Moves and Linguistic Realizations: English Research Article Abstracts byVietnamese Agricultural Researchers. *The Asian ESP Journal.8*(3).126-149