A Genre Analysis of Linguistics Research Article Abstracts: A Comparative Study with Hyland's Moves

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Abstract

Researchers publishing papers aim to disseminate new knowledge and establish themselves in academic society. To get their papers accepted for publication, composed abstracts are great tools of assistance. Moreover, abstract analysis aid writers in comprehending the elements of an abstract. The objective of this research article, therefore, was to report the results of an analysis of 100 research article abstracts in Linguistics using Hyland's model (2000). The researcher employed purposive sampling to choose the papers published between 2010-2017. The results showed that three moves (Purpose, Methodology, Result) were frequently used which are different from the model that proposed five moves (Introduction, Purpose, Method, Product, and Conclusion). However, they did share something in common. It was shown that Hyland's model was practical for analyzing moves of the abstracts even though some writers employed different kinds of moves.

การวิเคราะห์สัมพันธสารของบทคัดย่อภาษาอังกฤษจากบทความวิจัยทางด้านภาษาศาสตร์: ศึกษาเปรียบเทียบกับทฤษฎีต้นแบบของ Hyland

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บทคัดย่อ

นักวิจัยโดยทั่วไปตีพิมพ์บทความโดยมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อเผยแพร่องค์ความรู้ใหม่และเป็นการสร้างความเป็นนักวิจัยในแวดวงวิชาการ เพื่อให้ได้รับการตอบรับการตีพิมพ์บทความนั้น บทคัดย่อที่ผ่านการเรียบเรียงอย่างเป็นระบบเป็นเครื่องมือช่วยที่ดี มากไปกว่านั้นการวิเคราะห์บทคัดย่อยังช่วยให้ผู้เขียนเข้าใจในองค์ประกอบของบทคัดย่อ ดังนั้นงานวิจัยฉบับนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อรายงานผลการวิเคราะห์บทความวิจัยด้านภาษาศาสตร์จำนวน 100 บทคัดย่อและใช้ทฤษฎีต้นแบบของเฮแลนด์ (Hyland, 2000) มาวิเคราะห์ ผู้วิจัยใช้การสุ่มแบบเฉพาะเจาะจงในการเลือกบทคัดย่อที่ได้รับการตีพิมพ์ระหว่างปี ค.ศ. 2010-2017 ผลการวิจัยพบว่ามีอัตถภาค 3 อย่างในงานวิจัยประกอบด้วย บทนำ - ระเบียบวิธีวิจัย - สรุปผลการวิจัย ได้มีการนำมาใช้มากที่สุดซึ่งแตกต่างจากทฤษฎีต้นแบบที่กล่าวว่า บทคัดย่อมืององค์ประกอบทั้งหมด 5 อัตถภาคคือ บทนำ - วัตถุประสงค์ - ระเบียบวิธีวิจัย - ผลการวิจัย - ข้อสรุป อย่างไรก็ตามองค์ประกอบของบทคัดย่อทั้งจากทฤษฎีต้นแบบ และจากบทคัดย่อทั้งหมดมีความสอดคล้องกันในบางประการ ผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่าทฤษฎีต้นแบบสามารถนำมาประยุกต์ใช้กับการวิเคราะห์อัตถภาคของบทคัดย่อได้แม้ว่าผู้เขียนบางท่านอาจใช้อัตถภาคที่แตกต่างกันออกไป

คำสำคัญ ภาษาศาสตร์ บทคัดย่อ การวิเคราะห์อัตภาค ทฤษฎีของเฮแลนด์ การตีพิมพ์

1. Introduction

Writing is one of the most difficult skill of English especially for those who use English as a foreign language (Jalilifar, 2008, p. 14). In fact, writing in English is at the heart of an English-speaking background. As for non-native English speakers, they might have difficulties and challenges when attempting to write in English due to inadequate knowledge about the said language. In addition, knowledge of language has a great impact on academic writing (Tu & Wang, 2013, p. 102). Al-khasawneh (2017, p. 3) stated that the lack of structural knowledge often makes non-native English speakers use their own strategies in their writing. Some only use the translation method to translate information and ideas from their mother-tongue into English. When comparing native and non-native English speakers, there is inevitably some linguistic in equality that occurs. Non-native English speakers often think in their own language before conveying their thoughts and ideas into English. In contrast, not only do many native English speakers possess excellent language skills, they are also more likely to be familiar with language conventions (Marta & Ursa, 2015, p. 91).

Despite this challenge, English writing is still considered an essential skill for researchers who wish to publish their papers, especially at the international level. At the present, graduates and instructors in higher education are required to publish their papers (Kosasih, 2018, p. 9) in order to show learning, acquire new knowledge, and contribute to the latest developments in their fields. Given that most if not all academic fields require English abstracts at the beginning part of the paper (Keartikul & Wimonkasem, 2017, p. 1), novice writers often experience difficulties when it comes to writing a good abstract in English. As a result, their papers are often rejected by reputable journals. Additionally, most journals often require an abstract for their initial consideration as to whether a submitted research paper would be accepted or not. However, writing a good abstract is complicated as it plays an important role in conveying the core content of a research study. Hence, good abstracts must be clear, concise, and able to catch journal reviewers' attention. Abstracts help readers or any

interested person learn quickly about a particular paper (Swales, 1990). Huckin (2001, as cited in Ninpanit, 2017, p. 110) and Saeeaw and Tangkiengsirisin (2014, as cited in Ninpanit, 2017, p. 110) mentioned that the abstract is a quick summary and also an integral part of the decision-making process of the readers. Composed abstracts can draw readers' attention and enhance the opportunities of novice writers in getting their papers published and cited (Li, 2011, p. IV).

To achieve the goal of having a paper published in any journals, a writer needs to understand the differences of language structures, mastering written uses of that language, and also needs to be familiar with the language's structure. This can help academics who lack knowledge about writing structures publish their papers successfully (Amnuai, 2018, p. 50). Since, writing an abstract should cover all key components of the research, scholars have proposed 'abstract analysis' as a methodological tool for studying the patterns of structure in written abstracts. According to Santos (1996, as cited in Darabad, 2016, p. 129), abstract analysis can be divided into two components: macro and micro. As for the macro structure, general structures like the elements of the abstract will be analyzed. Conversely, language features such as tense, pronoun reference, voice, and collocation will be examined in the micro-structure. Hyland (2000) emphasized that the study of genre knowledge would help novice writers in promoting themselves in their disciplinary community. This might serve as a guideline for novice writers in writing their abstracts for a particular field. This could assist them to produce accepted works to be published (Ismail & Shah, 2014, p. 75). Hence, it is valuable to have some gauge for them. Most studies employing abstract analysis have focused on different discipline; very few studies have examined the field of Linguistics. More work on abstract analysis is still clearly needed (Pasavoravate & Wijitsopon, 2011, p. 45).

2. Literature review

2.1 Definitions

Many researchers have conducted studies in the field of genre/move analysis on research article (henceforth RA) abstracts over the past two decades (Behman & Zamanian, 2013, p. 42; Marefat & Mohammadzadeh, 2013, p. 37).

Genre analysis is considered as a tool for identifying the similarities and differences in the uses of purpose, form, audience, and language features (Ghasempour & Farnia, 2017, p. 740). It can be said that the definition of genre analysis is language usage. Moreover, Swales and Feak (2009, as cited in Al-Khasawneh, 2017, p. 1) defined genre as "a type of text or discourse designed to achieve a set of communicative purposes". If writers have a grasp of the different genres, they can use language features appropriately and can communicate effectively.

Swales (1990) is the father of 'move analysis'. His concept is one of the most important genre-based approaches (Wongwiwat, 2016, p. 15) and it helps novice writers and readers improve their academic writing. Its purpose is to analyze the structure of move and steps. The major reason for studying move analysis is the essentiality and the importance of the move (Can et al., 2016, p. 2). Move analysis examines the move from the beginning to the end of any structures.

Apparently, abstracts are a gateway for readers to get a glimpse of what they are looking for. In fact, abstracts are a brief description of all the content. They have their own rhetorical structures and they have become one of the most significant genres in academic discourse and considered as one of part-genre (Keartikul & Wimonkasem, 2017, p. 1). Hyland (2004, as cited in Piqué-Noguera, 2012, p. 217) proposed that a well-structured abstract consists of four units: introduction, methodology, results, and conclusions. All of the units must be arranged in order (linearity). Over time, there have been many researchers who have used abstract analysis to review Hyland's notion. Many different patterns have emerged; notably four, five, and six units. However,

those new patterns still featured Hyland's theory. Abstract analysis is very crucial for the novice writers in order to get better idea about writing patterns and how to follow those patterns. The reason why novice writers should follow the pattern is one of the most important sections of the RAs (Behman & Zamanian, 2013, p. 42). More effective abstract writing should mean that more papers are published.

2.2 Theory

There is no absolute model of move analysis, but the most well-known is Hyland's (2000) model. In Hyland's (2000) study on genre analysis with 800 abstracts, he proposed a five-move model. A large amount number of data were greatly reliable. Many subsequent studies employed his model because it was well-tested, easy to apply, and comprehensive (El-Dakhs, 2018, p. 53). Moreover, Hyland's study in each of eight disciplines was identified to be adapted to the universal disciplinary field (Lee, 2017, p. 113). His model was a leading model for further analyses of RA.

Hyland's (2000) model was employed in the current research in order to analyze the rhetorical structures of Linguistics RA abstracts. This model consists of five moves, each of which contains some particular functions. Hyland classified his move as Introduction (M1), Purpose (M2), Methodology (M3), Product (M4), and Conclusion (M5). Each move and function can be illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1

A Framework for Abstract Analysis

Moves	Function
1. Introduction	Establishes context of the paper and motivates the research or discussion.
2. Purpose	Indicates purpose, thesis or hypothesis, outlines the intention behind the paper.
3. Method	Provides information on design, procedures, assumptions, approach, data, etc.
4. Product	States main findings or results, the argument, or what was accomplished.
5. Conclusion	Interprets or extends results beyond scope of paper, draws inferences, points to applications or wider implications.

2.3 Related Studies

Previous studies on RA abstract analysis have been done in different kinds of disciplines for many years in both the soft and hard sciences. For the soft sciences, many fields have been covered such as psychology (Yamwong, 2018), library and information science (Lee, 2017), literature, tourism (Ahmed, 2015), law (Ghasempour & Farnia, 2017), marketing and management (Li & Pramoolsook, 2015), linguistics (Li, 2011), and applied linguistics (Santos, 1996; Tseng, 2011). For the hard sciences, research has been conducted in the fields of nature (Yathip & Soranastaporn, 2016), agricultural engineering (Gheinani & Tabatabaei, 2018), dentistry (Tangkiengsirisin & Vathanaloaoha, 2018), and sciences (Kanoksilapatham, 2005). In this study, the field of linguistics, a soft science, is specifically focused on. The summary of previous studies related to this current study are outlined in the following table.

Table 2

Findings on Moves in Abstracts from Previous Studies in Linguistics Fields

Author	Title	Results
Pasavoravate and Wijitsopon (2011)	Genre Analysis of Thesis and Dissertation Abstracts in Linguistics Written by Students in Thailand and Students in England	- Result and Methodology were emphasized by Thai students while English students focused on Result and Purpose. - Most Thai students followed Swales' model, but English students did not.
Suntara and Usaha (2013)	Research Article Abstracts in Two Related Disciplines: Rhetorical Variation between Linguistics and Applied Linguistics	- The most frequent preference pattern was Purpose, Methodology, Result, and Conclusion. - Purpose, Methodology, and Result moves were conventional moves.
Alhuqbani (2013)	Genre-Based Analysis of Arabic Research Article Abstracts across Four Disciplines	- Introduction was an optional move. - Purpose, Methodology, and Result were obligatory. - Conclusion was optional.
Li (2011)	A Genre Analysis of English and Chinese Research Article Abstracts in Linguistics and Chemistry	- Purpose, Methodology, and Result were obligatory.
Kearttikul and Wimonkasem (2017)	Analyses of Moves Structure, Tense, and Voice of Published Research Article Abstracts between Linguistics and Applied Linguistics	- The most frequent move pattern was Purpose, Methodology, Result, and Conclusion. - Purpose and Methodology were obligatory.
El-Dakhs (2018)	Comparative Genre Analysis of Research Article Abstracts in More and Less Prestigious Journals: Linguistics Journals in Focus	- Methodology and Result were mostly employed. - The most frequent move pattern was Purpose, Methodology, Result, and Conclusion.

Based on the literature review, the abstracts from different fields had the same results with respect to the macro structure. However, there were some differences in the micro-structure such as the language features. A study on linguistics analysis is needed and significant for reasons that are outlined below.

To date, there have been many recommendations made by previous researchers. El-Dakhs (2018, p. 61) said that prestigious journals were rarely found to analyze. Most abstracts were collected from theses and dissertations (Kosasih, 2018, p. 10; Malawi, 2017, p. 66; Nasseri & Nematollahi, 2014, p. 1364). Moreover, a lot of previous studies revealed that researchers collected data with a small sized sample (Can et al., 2016, p. 15; Krajňáková, 2015, p. 39). The studies should be conducted with a large sample size of sample in order to give more reliable results at both the microscopic and macroscopic levels (Malawi, 2017, p. 66).

In response to what other researchers have argued, the aims of this study are to analyze an average number of words and move patterns of research article abstracts in Linguistics.

3. Research Methodology

A dataset of the study was randomly chosen from one discipline. The journal employed in this study was the Journal of Linguistics. It was selected for the analysis because of two reasons. First, this journal is in the top rank and it is considered as one of the best journals in the linguistics discipline. Second, it has been ranked in Quartile 1 of SCOPUS database for almost 14 years (2006-2019).

Purposive sampling was used to choose the dataset. The researcher counted the number from one to one hundred. If an abstract was not in the period of a set time, the researcher chose other abstracts in sequence until the desired number was met. The total number of abstracts selected were 100 Linguistics RA. Reviews, forums, notes on contributors, and so forth

were excluded. The selected abstracts were all in English published between 2010-2017 and written by both native and non-native speakers. They were also available online. The size of the sample can be considered as sufficient for making some reasonable generalizations and to compare with previous studies.

Each of the abstracts was analyzed and labelled based on Hyland's model (2000) by the researcher. To analyze the moves, there were two levels: macro-structure and micro-structure. At the macro-structure level, the moves of research article abstracts in Linguistics were based on Hyland's model. Whereas in the micro-structure part, grammatical features such as tense, sentence, voice, and collocation were identified. After that, consistency was rechecked by an expert with a Ph.D. in English who has been teaching in one of the top-ten universities in Thailand for over 10 years. Inter-coder reliability was used in order to avoid any subjective interpretation. To maintain reliability, two-thirds of coders' agreement had to be satisfactory. Also, descriptive statistics were utilized to interpret the data.

4. Findings

The article presented only the moves of linguistics research article abstracts at the macro-structure level. In order to analyze this, the number of words, sentences, and move patterns were put into consideration.

Table 3

The Average Number of Words and Sentences in Linguistics' RA

Abstract	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Words	122	225	164.53	24.68
Sentences	3	9	6.33	1.40

According to Table 3, 100 Linguistics' RA abstracts are between 122-255 words per one single paragraph. The mean average number of words is 164.53. The minimum number of words used is 122 while the maximum is 225.

The number of sentences in each abstract is between 3 to 9 sentences. The mean of the number of sentences in the data set is 6.33. The minimum number of sentences used is 3 while the maximum of sentences is 9.

Table 4

Move Patterns

No.	Patterns	Frequency
1	P - M - Pr	35
2	I - P - M - Pr	26
3	I - P - Pr	8
4	I - M - Pr	7
5	P - M - Pr - C	7
6	P - I - M - Pr	4
7	I - P - M - Pr - C	3
8	P - Pr	2
9	I - P - M	2
10	I - P - Pr - C	2
11	M - P - Pr	1
12	I - P - I - P - Pr - C	1
13	I - P/M - Pr	1
14	I - M/P - M - Pr	1

To make it clearer, the researcher clarifies the abbreviations according to Hyland's model (2000) as follows; I stand for Introduction, P stands for Purpose, M stands for Method, Pr stands for Product, and C stands for Conclusion. As shown in Table 4, 14 different patterns in 100 abstracts were employed by the researchers. The top three most frequently used moves were P - M - Pr, I - P - M - Pr, and I - P - Pr, respectively.

The first most frequently used move pattern was P - M - Pr. Thirty writers out of 100 mainly focused on the purpose to provide the objective of the study, then they talked about the methodology in collecting the data

followed by the results. The second most frequently used move pattern was I - P - M - Pr. It is similar to the first one, although the writers added one more move: the Introduction. The purpose is to provide readers with the background of the study and to orient them towards the topics. The third most frequently move pattern used was I - P - Pr. The abstract began with the introduction, then expressed the aims of the study, before presenting what the writers found from the study.

As for the word count, some of the writers blended each move in a sentence. It meant that each sentence could be written with more than one move. This is known as 'move embedding'. From this study, it was found that there were only three abstracts containing move embedding. The patterns of move embedding occurring were I - P/M – Pr and I - M/P - M – Pr. It can be said that most writers employed a P move and an M move combination. Some examples are as follows:

> ... In this paper we empirically assess this claim by formally testing all 469 (unique, US-English) data points from a popular syntax textbook (Adger 2003) using 440 naïve participants, two judgment tasks (magnitude estimation and yes–no), and three different types of statistical analyses (standard frequentist tests, linear mixed effects models, and Bayes factor analyses). ...

As mentioned earlier, this study followed the notion of Hyland's (2000) model. In this part, it will be clarified whether each abstract has been arranged in a linear order. According to Malawi (2017, p. 47), there were four types of linearity: completely linear, semi-linear, non-linear, and cyclical patterns. Based on the results of this research, four types of linearity were found. The most frequently occurred linearity was semi-linear pattern such as P - M - Pr (35%). It meant that most writers started their abstracts with a P move. Interestingly, some of the writers started with D and then followed by an I move. It is not required to start with the I move all the time. Only five out of 100 abstracts

were found in a completely linear pattern. 'I - P - M - Pr - C' and 'I - P - M' patterns were considered because they followed Hyland's (2000) model steps by step. It meant that writers started their abstracts with I followed by P, M, R, and C, respectively while a cyclical pattern was found as well. The 'I - P - I - P- Pr - C' pattern was an example of a cyclical pattern. It appears that the writer wanted to separate two Is and two Ps.

In addition, a non-linear pattern; 'P - Pr' and 'M - P - R' were discovered. As for the 'P - Pr' pattern, it showed that there was no pattern in order to write abstracts. Two writers wanted to show their purposes and then followed by results without any information such as I, M and C included. The example excerpt is shown below:

> This paper investigates the properties of plural agreement that is triggered by collective nouns in British English. Both singular and plural agreement are able to appear with these collective nouns, which are shown to be morphologically singular but semantically plural. Plural agreement, however, is systematically more restricted than singular agreement, appearing in a subset of the environments where singular agreement is allowed. Restrictions on plural come from the nature of agreement; semantic agreement features can only enter into agreement when the controller of agreement c-commands the target of agreement, whereas morphologically motivated agreement is not subject to the same structural restriction. This asymmetry between the two types of agreement is shown to arise from the proposal that AGREE (Chomsky 2000, 2001) is distributed over the syntactic and post-syntactic components (Arregi & Nevins 2012).

As for the 'M - P - Pr' pattern, the writer wanted to show the way they collected the data first. After that, the writer talked about the aim of the study. And for the last part, he/she proposed the findings of the study. The excerpt is presented below:

Japanese has two peculiar types of relative clause (RC), *No*-RCs and *De*-RCs. In these types of relative clause, what looks like a (pivot) head noun appears at the left edge of the clause and is accompanied by *no* and *de*, respectively. This sharply contrasts with regular prenominal relative clauses in Japanese, which conform to the head-final word order pattern. The aim of this article is to investigate the syntax and semantics of these two types of relative clause in detail and reveal differences between them. Specifically, I will propose that (i) *no* in *No*-RCs is an appositive genitive particle licensed by a silent LINKER head, and (ii) *de* in *De*-RCs is a continuative/participial form of the copula *da*. Drawing a parallel with NP-*no* NP constructions and building on an idea from S.-Y. Kuroda's dissertation, it will be argued that *No*-RCs are derived by DP-internal inversion mediated by the linker. On the other hand, *De*-RCs will be shown to be relatives conjoined with the copula *de*. It will be further suggested that the fact that Korean and Mandarin Chinese lack equivalents of *De*-RCs is due to the absence of the appositive genitive particle and hence of DP-internal inversion.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

This research analyzed 100 Linguistics RA abstracts from the Journal of Linguistics. The researcher followed Hyland's notion of move analysis. The results revealed that the number of words used is about 164.53 per paragraph of an abstract. The sentence in each abstract is between 3 to 9 sentences. This result was quite similar to the results found by Li (2011, p. 31) and Tseng (2011, p. 31). Two results showed that abstract lengths were 163.68 and 164.7, the average numbers of sentences were 6.22 and 5.9, respectively. It can be implied that there is a difference between this research and the previous ones in terms of numbers of sentences. It is practical for researchers to hold this number in mind when writing his/her abstract article.

The top three move patterns that were most frequently employed by native and non-native speakers were P - M - Pr (35), I - P - M - Pr (26), and I - P - Pr (8), respectively. A new occurred pattern such as I - P - I - P - Pr - C, and some embedded moves like I - P/M - Pr, I - M/P - M - Pr were found. The

move patterns results were found to be convergent with those of previous studies (Al-Khasawneh, 2017; Can et al., 2016; Pasavoravate & Wijitsopon, 2011). However, the results of this study were noticeably divergent to the study of Hyland (2000). He proposed 95 percent of his 800 abstracts analysis have five moves (I – P - M - Pr - C) included in a single paragraph. From the data analysis, there were only three papers that followed Hyland's model. Some new interesting patterns were produced such as P - Pr, M – P - Pr, I – P – I – P – Pr - C, I - P/M - Pr, and I - M/P - M - Pr. It is clear that each native and non-native writer employed many styles of writing as above depending on their own background, information they wanted to convey, and word-count limitation in each abstract.

It was shown that his model was practical to analyze the moves of the abstracts. The moves still consisted of I - P - M - Pr - C. Although, some of the writers occasionally employed repeated embedded moves. Part of these results were found to support the findings of Can et al. (2016, p. 14) and Saeeaw and Tangkiengsirisin (2014, p. 85). They found that 'P + M' move is the most commonly discovered embedded move. However, it was not a must-followed model pattern. It depends on each writer in order to blend 'P + M' or 'P + Pr'. It was only the choice in writing within the limitation of the word count. On the contrary, Suntara and Usaha (2013, p. 97) found that 'I + M' was often embedded.

This study was dissimilar to Can et al.'s (2016) findings. They found that the most frequently occurring linearity was a non-linear pattern (30 out of 50 abstracts). Examples were 'P - I - P - M - Pr' and 'I - P - M - I - Pr - D'.

As mentioned earlier, non-English speaking academics have found that writing English abstracts is challenging and complicated because of language limitations. They can use the findings of this current research as guidelines in writing their papers appropriately. It may be great use to novice writers in terms of understanding the need of international level and applying the results in writing effective-English abstracts. It can be said that this research paper

contributes academic writing skills. It should help facilitate successful acculturation into the disciplinary community and to provide more opportunities for researchers to gain research article acceptance and publication.

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