The Discourse Structure and Linguistic Features of Research Articles and Thesis Abstracts in English by Indonesian Academics

Alek[1]
(UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia)
Abdul Gafur Marzuki[2]
(UIN Datokarama Palu, Indonesia)
Didin Nuruddin Hidayat[3]
(UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia)
Fahmi Fauzji[4]
(UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia)

*(gbudiperwira@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

Scholars and practitioners should be aware that writing a good and eye-catching abstract is significant but tough work. Scholars and researchers are challenged to produce an informative and persuasive abstract to be accepted then published in either national or international publication and they should know the current characteristics of abstracts written by the students or apprentice writers. The study aims at examining the comparison of discourse structure and linguistic features between English abstracts of research articles by Indonesian researchers and English abstracts of the thesis by Indonesian scholars. The corpus data were taken from 10 research articles abstracts of Indonesian researchers concerning English education published in ERIC and 10 thesis abstracts of the graduate program of English Education in UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. Thus, a genre-based analysis proposed by Bhatia's move structure and Swales' and Feak's move structure will be used to investigate the discourse structure and Paltridge & starfields will be used to investigate linguistic features. The results indicated that 60% of abstracts published in the international journal were organized well while 40% of thesis abstracts were not organized well. Furthermore, past tenses were frequently used in both article abstracts and thesis abstracts in terms of aim, method, and result move. While present tense was still used in aim and result move in article abstracts. In conclusion, most abstracts published in international publications used well organizational move. While most abstracts published in local ones are not used well organizational move.

*Corresponding author's e-mail address

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1980s, genre-based approaches appeared as an interesting discussion in written and spoken discourses among scholars and researchers. This interest in the class investigation has, to a bigger degree, been persuaded by the instructive objective. With worldwide acknowledgement in different fields, it is obvious that English has turned into the most regularly utilized language in logical and specialized exploration (Swales et al., 2014; Albana et al., 2020; Alek et al., 2020).

Researchers and professionals overall are often tested with the requirement for perusing and composing scholarly distributions in English to stay informed concerning the most recent improvement in their fields, which will at long last help them to distribute in English (Chen, 2010). Therefore, since the need for publishing research articles in either national or international publications for Indonesian researchers, lecturers and scholars, they sought to produce a good and worth research article to be published. The contribution of Indonesian researchers in publishing the article or academic writing reports in international journals is still more worried than other ASEAN countries, such as Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore. However, in terms of quantity of the academics and researchers, Indonesian is better than previously stated countries (Ariwibowo, 2008). In addition, the number of articles published by Indonesian researchers in international journals has not significantly increased (Arsyad, 2016).

The researchers should include the structured parts of the research article such as abstract, introduction, literature review, methods, results and discussion, conclusion, and reference in their writing. Although abstract is not placed in the body of the research article and is usually written last after all of the parts have been completed, since it is located before introduction, it has a significant role in writing a research article.

Unfortunately, many academics consider that producing abstracts is a simple and worthless job, so they do not need to spend more of their time, energy, or effort to write a good abstract. Consequently, abstracts are often full of errors (i.e. using an inappropriate writing style, using inappropriate tense of verbs, grammatical mistakes) and are not exactly appropriate to the original text of the article (Jalalian, 2012). By reading an abstract, what the study discussed, why the review was led, what the discoveries of the review were and how the discoveries can be applied should be known by the readers. Furthermore, the research abstract is considered as the important section in a research article or thesis since it could attract readers' attention to read and understand the whole article willingly. If readers (including journal editors and reviewers) are not impressed or attracted to this part of the article, they might stop reading and even decline it for publication (Arsyad & Arono, 2016).

In the Indonesian context, almost all scholastic texts composed dependent on an exploration task like theories, research reports, research articles, workshop or gathering papers, etc., should have a theoretical written in English (Yuned, 2016) albeit the remainder of the text is written in Bahasa Indonesia. This is executed to have a bigger extent of readership when it is distributed in a journal or online media in either national or international. Therefore, Indonesian scholars and researchers have to be able to produce abstracts written in English in their academic reports for several practical reasons.

First, the research article has to include an abstract written in English to be published, otherwise, the majority of Indonesian journal editors will reject from publication. Second, Indonesian academics especially university lecturers are promoted by the government to write and publish their writing in an international journal where the language used is English. Last, Indonesian academics are also highly recommended to take part as speakers in international seminars or conferences in which the paper must have an abstract written in English (Burrough-Boenisch, 2003). Thus, abstract written in English by Indonesian academics should be provided in a worthwhile way as readers coming from various countries could understand and comprehend the general description of the article through abstract.

The rhetorical style and linguistic features of the RA abstract published in the international journal may have differed from those published in a local or national journal, even though it is written in the same language. It happens because of the different fields of study they conducted. Furthermore, the local variation of English abstract by Indonesian academics must have been developed and it can be ignored (Mete, 2011).

In the previous research about The Discourse Structure and Linguistic Features of Research Article Abstracts in English by Indonesian Academics conducted by Arsyad (2014), it was found that 1) the greater part of English RA abstracts composed by Indonesian scholastics had just three actions (for example reason, strategy, result), and 2) the modified works are for the most part written in a functioning sentence utilizing current state barring move 3 (technique) in which a big part of them utilizing past tense. The corpus of the review comprised of thirty chosen RA abstracts distributed essentially in college-based diaries in Indonesia in sociology and humankind disciplines (for example training, economy and the board, and humankind). The information was examined by utilizing a kind-based method with a statement or straightforward sentence as the littlest unit of investigation.

Also, another past research named "Classification Analysis of MA Thesis Abstracts by Native and (Iraqi) Non-Native Speakers of English" led by Jawad (2018) uncovered that the Iraqi Arab scholarly authors don't know about the typical request of move structure (M1M2-M3), since no MA proposal unique follows the ordinary request. There are two corpora comprised of fifteen MA theories composed by American locals and fifteen others by Iraqi Arab non-local speakers of English. The review utilized subjective and quantitative information examinations strategies. To begin with, the two arrangements of information were analyzed quantitatively by the method for counting each case of moves. Then, at that point, the capacity of each move in Swales' (1990) model was outlined subjectively.

Based on the above previous problems, most Indonesian researchers have not applied good abstracts required by international journal publications. In addition, thesis abstracts written by Indonesian scholars for their requirements of graduate program was not mostly written in international publication standard. Based on the previous studies, moreover, this study aims to examine and describe the difference of discourse structure and linguistic features of English abstracts between research articles by Indonesian researchers and English abstracts of theses by Indonesian scholars. Thus, a genre-based analysis will be used to analyze the discourse structure and linguistic features. The corpus will be taken from 5 research article abstracts of Indonesian researchers concerning English education published in ERIC and 5 theses abstracts of the graduate program of English Education in UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta.

To address the aim of the study, answers to the following research questions are sought:

1. What communicative moves are mostly found in research article abstracts and linguistic features characterize RA abstracts written by Indonesian researchers published in an international journal?
2. What communicative moves are mostly found in thesis abstracts and linguistic features characterize thesis abstracts written by Indonesian scholars published in local or university publications?
3. Are there any differences in rhetorical and linguistic features between the English abstracts by Indonesian academics published in international journals and local or university publications?

METHOD

This study used a qualitative case study as it analyzed the genre or generic structure of research article abstracts and thesis abstracts. It is by Hyland (2004) who states that "information about genre practices is best approached using small-scale research and qualitative methods."

Ten (10) English abstracts, consisting of 5 research article abstracts published in international journals and 5 thesis abstracts published in local or university publications, were selected randomly for this analysis. 5 research article abstracts of Indonesian researchers concerned English education and were published in ERIC. However, 5 thesis abstracts focused on the graduate program of English Education in UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta. Both of the collected academic writing were published no older than 2013. They were taken due to their up-to-date condition of English abstracts written by Indonesian students and were analysed from rhetorical and linguistic features. They were adopted from the concept of Bhatia (2014) four-move pattern and Swales & Feak (2004) five-move pattern. In addition, Bhatia (2014) offers the four-move pattern of RA abstract; they are purpose, method, result, and conclusion. Moreover, Swales & Feak (2004) suggest a five-move pattern of RA abstract, they are background, aim, method, results, and conclusion. Those two types of abstract move patterns are called conventional move structures (Alhuqbani, 2013)

Recorded as a hard copy of RA abstracts, Paltridge and Starfield (2007) feature that there are two different ways the understudies can perceive the theoretical. In the first place, the RA unique is perceived as the rundown of their postulation, or second; it very well may be seen as the outline of their review that has been led before. Besides, they explain and give models that assume the theoretical is considered as the outline of their postulation, so the theoretical uses current state; in case the theoretical is considered as examination exercises that have been finished, the theoretical utilize straightforward past tense.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
RESULTS

As the answer to the first and the second research question of this study, Table 1 shows the move structures of Indonesian research article abstracts published in international journal publications and Indonesian thesis abstracts published in local or university publications.

Table 1. The Move Structures of Indonesian Research Article Abstracts Published in International Journal Publication and Indonesian Thesis Abstracts Published in Local Or University Publication

Number of Abstract	International RA Abstract	Local/ University Thesis Abstract
1	A-M-R-C	A-M-R-C
2	A-M-R-C	A-M-R-C
3	A-B-M-R-C	A-M-R
4	A-M-R-C	A-M-R
5	B-A-M-R	A-M-R

*B = Background, A = Aim, M = Method, R = Results, C = Conclusion

Table 1 in a roundabout way presents the most favoured theoretical move structure in both international RA abstracts and local or university thesis abstracts. In international RA abstracts, the most preferred move structure is A-M-R-C with a proportion of 60% followed by A-B-M-R-C with a proportion of 20% and B-A-M-R with a proportion of 20%. On the other hand, the most preferred move structure in local or university thesis abstract is A-M-R with a proportion of 60% and A-M-R-C with a proportion of 40%.

Concerning the two styles of RA dynamic move structures proposed by Bhatia (2014) and Swales and Feak (2004), the information of this concentrate additionally shows that out of 5 digests gathered from ERIC diary distribution, there are 3 (60%) abstracts who's the move structures are in agreement Bhatia's (2014) four move structure. There is 1 (20%) abstract that is not exactly in line with Swales & Feak (2004) because there is a disordered placement of background and aim of the study. And there is 1 (20%) abstract that is not really in line with Bhatia's four move structure because it did not include a conclusion in its final abstract but it included a background in its initial abstract.

Conversely, the data shows that out of 5 abstracts collected from university theses, there are only 2 (40%) whose move structures are in line with Bhatia's (2014) four move structure. And most of them followed neither Bhatia nor Swales & Feak because they just included three-move structures namely aim, method and result. It means that more than 50 % of abstracts written by Indonesian researchers and published in international journal publications are in line with conventional move structure. On the other hand, less than 50% of abstracts written by Indonesian scholars and published in university publication are by conventional move structure.

In composing an English abstract, two tenses are feasible to apply by scientists. Paltridge and Starfield (2007) express that the current state ought to be utilized when the theoretical is considered as an outline of a proposal and past tense ought to be utilized when the theoretical is considered as a report of examination that has been done before. Table 2 presents discoveries of how action word tenses are utilized in the worldwide RA abstracts and local or university thesis abstracts.

Table 2 Verb Occurrence in each Move-in international RA Abstract and Local or University thesis abstracts

Move Tenses		International RA Abstract		Local/University Thesis Abstract	
		N	%	N	%
Background	Present	2	40	-	0
	Past	-	0	-	0
Aim	Present	3	60	-	0
	Past	2	40	5	100
Method	Present	-	0	1	20
	Past	5	100	5	100
Result	Present	3	60	-	0
	Past	5	100	5	100
Conclusion	Present	4	80	2	40
	Past	-	0	2	40

The data in Table 2 shows that present tense is more used with a proportion of 40% in a background of international RA abstract than past tense with 0% percentage. In the part of the aim, present tense is also more used with the proportion 60% than past tense with the proportion 40%. In the part of the method, none of the abstract used present tense but all of them or 100% used past tense. In the case of result, just over half of the corpus (60%) used present tense while past tense was 100% used. Then, in the conclusion move, 80% used present tense however none of them used past tense.

Finally, the data shows the verb occurs in the local/University thesis abstract. There was neither present tense nor past tense that occurred in the Background move. In aim and result move, none of the present tenses was used while past tense was used with 100% proportion. In the part of the method, 20% used present tense and all of them (100%) used past tense. Last, both present tense and past tense have a 40% proportion in conclusion move.

The results of the present study show that over half of the abstracts published in the international journal have the consideration of following Bhatia's model of the rhetorical move, while the minority of them followed neither Bhatia's nor Swales' and Feak's rhetorical move. Those who did not have well-organized abstract moves have only one missing move.

Then, less than 50% of the abstracts published in local or university journals followed Bhatia's rhetorical move and none of them followed Swales' and Feak's one. It is similar to the finding of a study by (Luthfiyah, Alek, & Fahriany, 2015). The abstracts tended to have no well-organized moves. While most of them followed neither Bhatia's and Swales' nor Feak's move. Furthermore, they miss one move in Bhatia's, i.e., conclusion, and two moves in Swales and Feak's, i.e., background and conclusion.

DISCUSSION

Based on the result, A-M-R-C is the most commonly used move structure in international RA abstracts, accounting for 60% of all moves. There are three (60%) abstracts whose move structures correspond with Bhatia's (2014) four move structures out of five digests retrieved through ERIC diary distribution. Less than half of the abstracts authored by Indonesian scholars and published in university publications follow a traditional move format. This means, students usually write using the A-M-R-C pattern for the completion of their abstracts, thus it will affect the number of abstracts that can be published.

In addition, in the background of an international RA abstract, the present tense is utilized 40% more than the past tense, which is used 0%. The present tense and past tense both have a 40% share of the conclusion motion. Less than half of the abstracts published in local or university journals used Bhatia's rhetorical move, and none used Swales' and Feak's. As a reason, people who use the present tense are more likely to be accepted in international publications than those who use the past tense.

CONCLUSION

Provide the conclusion to your study, and final words on the value of your analysis, research, or paper. Limitations of your study should be addressed. Or you can mention the summary, restatement, comment, or evaluation of the main findings. Recommendations for future research related to your topic should also be mentioned.

REFERENCES

Albana, H. H., Marzuki, A. G., Alek, A., & Hidayat, D. N. (2020). Cohesive Devices in Student's Writing (A Discourse Analysis on Argumentative Text). Jurnal Pendidikan Humaniora, 8(1), 6-11.

Alek, A., Marzuki, A. G., Farkhan, M., & Deni, R. (2020). Self-Assessment in Exploring EFL Students' Speaking Skill. Al-Ta'lim Journal, 27(2), 208-214.

Alhuqbani, M. N. (2013). Genre-based analysis of Arabic research article abstracts across four disciplines. Journal of Educational and Social Research, 3(3), 371.

Ariwibowo, A. A. (2008). Publikasi internasional penelitian Indonesia rendah.

Arsyad, S. (2014). The discourse structure and linguistic features of research article abstract in English by Indonesian academics. Online Submission, 10(2), 191–223.

Arsyad, S. (2016). Writing international journal articles using English rhetorical style. Jakarta: Halaman Moeka Press.

Arsyad, S., & Arono. (2016). Potential problematic rhetorical style transfer from the first language to foreign language: a case of Indonesian authors writing research article introductions in English. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?q=genre-based+analysis+in+indonesia&pg=2&id=ED566896.

Bhatia, V. K. (2014). Analysing genre: Language use in professional settings. Routledge.

Burrough-Boenisch, J. (2003). Shapers of published NNS research articles. Journal of Second Language Writing, 12(3), 223–243.

Chen, J. (2010). Generic analysis of English research article abstracts and the use of modal verbs for financial economics (Vol. 7). Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?q=rethorical+moves+of+research+article+abstract&id=ED514815.

Emilia, E. (2009). Menulis tesis dan disertasi. Alfabeta.

Hyland, K. (2004). Genre and second language writing. University of Michigan Press.

Jalalian, M. (2012). Writing an eye-catching and evocative abstract for a research article: A comprehensive and practical approach. Electronic Physician, 4(3), 520–524.

Jawad, F.-M. (2018). Genre analysis of MA thesis abstracts by native and (Iraqi) non-native speakers of English. Journal of the University of Babylon, 26(1), 37–50.

Luthfiyah, L., Alek, A., & Fahriany, F. (2015). An investigation of cohesion and rhetorical moves in thesis abstracts. IJEE (Indonesian Journal of English Education), 2(2), 145–159. https://doi.org/10.15408/ijee.v2i2.3086.

Mete, D. E. (2011). EIL and intercultural communicative competence: Two sides of a coin. Asian EFL Journal Press for the EIL Journal. Asian EFL Journal Press, 45–50.

Ning, Z. (2008). A genre-based analysis of English research article abstracts and the linguistic feature of personal pronouns for financial economics (Vol. 5). Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?q=discourse+structure+and+linguistic+features+of+abstract&id=ED502582.

Paltridge, B., & Starfield, S. (2007). Thesis and dissertation writing in a second language: A handbook for supervisors. Routledge.

Suharno, S. (2001). Abstract for journal articles. Kajian Sastra, (3), 115–125.

Swales, J. (1990). Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings. Cambridge University Press.

Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2004). Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills (Vol. 1). University of Michigan Press Ann Arbor, MI.

Swales, J. M., Heritage, M. R., Cotrell, S., Amani, P., Joy, H., Nyongesa, B., Mwangi, P. N. (2014). Genre analysis. Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 5.

Wannaruk, A., & Amnuai, W. (2016). A comparison of rhetorical move structure of applied linguistics research articles published in international and national Thai journals. RELC Journal, 47(2), 193–211.

Yuned, R. O. (2016). Coherence analysis of the 2015 international conference article abstracts in applied linguistic. Proceedings of ISELT FBS Universitas Negeri Padang, 4(2), 199–209.