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GENRE-BASED ANALYSIS OF ANBAR EFL POST-GRADUATE
STUDENTS' M. A LINGUISTICS THESIS ABSTRACTS

*Marwan Salah Abbas*¹, *Assit. Prof.Dr. Juma'a Qadir Hussein*²

^{1,2} College of Education for Humanities, Department of English, University of Anbar

Email mar20h1012@uoanbar.edu.iq, ed.juma.qader@uoanbar.edu.iq

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the rhetorical moves (move-step analysis) of abstract section of MA theses in linguistics. Genre-Based analysis has been approached from different perspectives. However, to the researcher's best knowledge, no study to analyze Iraqi MA thesis abstracts in University of Anbar, department of English, according to rhetorical moves. The current study aims at analyzing the rhetorical move structure of Anbar MA English linguistics thesis abstracts by post-graduate students. To this end, ten abstracts have been purposively selected. The data were qualitatively analyzed based on Swales' CARS (2004) model of rhetorical moves. Based on the analysis, some similarities and differences were found regarding cyclicity (move structure) and move-step frequency of occurrence. The findings of the present study are useful for Iraqi non-native writers by presenting the important factors that make them familiar with rhetorical move-step structure of MA thesis abstracts.

INTRODUCTION

Discourse and genre analysis, have recently gained popularity-in the discipline of linguistics, particularly in the fields of language teaching and learning, as well as other areas of professional and academic communication (Bhatia, 2002). As the one of the most effective ways of exchanging knowledge among readers is written discourse, linguists, educators, and professional researchers have recently focused on analyzing written academic language in terms of rhetorical moves. Furthermore, Larabee (2009) states that academic writing differs from non-academic writing in several ways. Academic writing is thesis-driven, follows academic conventions, and demonstrates complexity and higher order thinking, in addition to a precise and accurate use of language

and well-planned and organized writing. The development of English in academic contexts, and the increasing number of university graduates, are the two key factors that have inspired this interest. These and other essential considerations are in parallel with the fact that the majority of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers around the world are non-native English speakers, and that content in EAP and teacher training courses must be updated to suit the modern development (Hyland, 2006). Thus, such importance given motivates researchers to conduct studies on written discourse.

Accordingly, the abstracts are the key point for readers to accept or reject what they read as it is mentioned by (Lores, 2004) that abstracts are considered portal for readers, conference organizers, and journals to select contribution to accept or reject." Doró (2013), in the same side, describes research abstracts as "a lens through which research becomes available to larger audiences" to emphasize their importance. In addition, many researchers have been persuaded to conduct various investigations into research abstracts because of their unique function (Doro, 2013). Therefore, an abstract is frequently defined as "a description or factual summary of a much longer report, intended to provide the reader with a precise and concise knowledge of the whole article" (Bhatia, 1993, p. 78). They may assist readers in deciding whether or not to read the entire thesis. Given this, the value of analyzing rhetorical moves in research thesis abstracts is undeniable (Hyland, 2000; Pho, 2008). Abstracts, as defined by Ventola (1994a, p. 333), have "become a tool for mastering and managing the ever-increasing information flow in the scientific community." Walter (2008) adds that an abstract is "a shortened form of a speech, article, book, or other document that contains only the most important facts or ideas."

However, some writers face difficulty in writing an abstract. This causes challenges to writers, EFL learners are no exception. Several studies have been conducted on abstract section (Afzaal, 2020; Derakhashan, 2019; Suryani and Rismiyanto, 2019; Amnuai, 2019; Ebadi, Rawdhan Salman 2019; Jawad and Saleh ,2018).

Furthermore, previous researchers have not combined the CARS and SFG models to investigate the frequencies and the lexico grammatical features of moves and steps. Hence, the main objective of this study is to analyze and investigate the move structure of abstract sections written by TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) students from specific Iraqi universities. In other words, this study deals with this problem from different perspective. Although many researches have been conducted for genre-based analysis of abstract, the Iraqi EFL students have not been addressed adequately. Writing an abstract is a must in every thesis due to its significance in summarizing the whole thesis. It is argued that through genre one could express his/her own ideas in a well-organized communicative purpose.

GENRE ANALYSIS: AN OVERVIEW

Recently, many researchers have worked on the genre method, particularly in language teaching and learning. It is for the purpose of examining a variety of

academic genres. Genre analysis, according to (Bhatia, Flowerdew, and Johnes, 2008), provides a grounded description and explanation of language use in academic and professional contexts. From a historical point of view, the term 'genre' may be traced all the way back to Aristotle, who used it to refer to three primary genres of writing in his *Poetics*: poetry, drama, and the epic. These divisions have grown significantly. On the contrary, the concept of genre as a distinct sort of literature has persisted into the modern day. Simultaneously, it came to designate to more popular cultural genres such as soap operas, film noir, westerns, and thrillers (Flowerdew, 2013).

In line with its appearance, genre was firstly appeared to specify different types of literature; poetry; drama; movies; etc. It has been a popular paradigm for analyzing the form and purpose of scientific discourse in the last two decades, as well as a useful tool for establishing instructional methods in domains like rhetoric, professional writing, and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Genre-based methods have had a significant influence by building a philosophy of language and education based on research into the linguistic structures of texts and the social settings in which they arise. (Genre analysis may be defined as a broad phrase that encompasses a variety of methods and approaches to texts, ranging from extensive qualitative examination of a particular book to more quantitative counts of linguistic elements (Hyland 2009). Martin (1985) mentioned that “Genres are how things get done, when language is used to accomplish them.” (p.248).

Nonetheless, understanding the relationship between language and its context and applying this understanding to language instruction is the main goal of genre research (Hyland, 2004). Genres are regarded as language-based activities that individuals participate in. Spoken genres include academic lectures and informal discussions. Written genres include newspaper reporting and scholarly articles. A genre's variants frequently share a number of characteristics. They can be spoken or written in a variety of ways, some of which are traditional. They frequently have a same role and goal (or set of functions and purposes). Genres are usually performed by a single individual (Paltridge, 2012).

Approaches to Genre-based Analysis

Recently, genre has made inroads within the discipline of linguistics. Halliday (1978) and others like: Levinson (1979), Saville-Troike (1982), Miller (1984) have been interested in genre analysis linguistically. Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) are considered the leading figures since they proposed the most influential definitions of genre. There are three methods to modern genre studies that are considered as a key concept for genre analysis.

English for Specific Purposes Approach (ESP)

Swales creates the Swalsean method, known as the ESP Genre analysis approach (1981). It is a method of text analysis that investigates the structural regularities that identify one form of a text or genre from another (Dudley-Evans & St-Jon, 1988). Such a method is not intended to construct a system

for identifying genres, but rather to examine how a book achieves its communication goals (Dudley-Evans, 1994 a). Thus, it was created to make students aware of various texts, particularly academic texts like university lecture and academic essays, in order to improve non-native students' capacity to comprehend and write academic writings effectively.

Systemic Functional Linguistic Approach

Over the last three decades, systemic functional approaches to genre have made significant contributions to how genre is understood and utilized in textual analysis and language education. J. R. Martin, Frances Christie, Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis, Gunther Kress, Brian Paltridge, Joan Rothery, Eija Ventola were influenced in large part by the work of Michael Halliday (Halliday and Hasan) at the University of Sydney, and applied to genre in particular in the work of J. R. Martin, Frances Christie, Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis, Gunther Kress (Bawarshi & Reff, 2010).

Thus, the idea of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is that language structure is inextricably linked to social function and environment. Language within a culture is arranged in the manner it is because it serves a social purpose within that culture (2010). Eggins, (1997) admitted that the link between language and its functions in social environments is the focus of Systemic Functional Linguistics.

New-Rhetorical Approach

North American academics such as Miller (1984/1994), Bazerman (1988), Bizzell (1992), and Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) are part of the "New Rhetoric" school, which takes a distinct approach to the conception and study of genre. The key goal for this school is to pay attention to the socio-contextual features of genres and how these components evolve through time, rather than focusing on the formal qualities of the texts in isolation. They also lay a strong focus on the social functions, or activities, that these genres serve in various contexts (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Hyons, 1996; Paltridge, 1997a), as cited (Martin-Martin, 2003).

Thus, genre knowledge is essentially social, placed in the community and context of the writer and audience, according to the New Rhetoric method, which focuses on the north American group. This approach has emerged in the 1960s in a deep commitment to provide a powerful theoretical and historical foundation for the teaching of writing. to all undergraduate students. Flowerdew (2002) divided genre theorists into linguistic and non-linguistic camps, identifying the New Rhetoric group as a non-linguistic group that views genre as "social action" in its obsession. (1994 a, 1994 b, Freedman & Medway). Carolyn Miller's key work "*Genre as a Social Action*" (1984/1994) was the first to introduce New-rhetorical or rhetorical genre studies to contemporary studies. According to Gruber (2013:31), the rhetorical genre study was primarily founded on the work of a group of researchers, including Bazerman 1988, and Freedman and Medway 1994, who combined ideas from classical rhetoric, literary studies, and communication studies. The relevance

of historical contingency, as well as the cultural and historical situatedness of genre, is emphasized in their work.

Swales' Rhetorical Moves and Steps

During the period from 1981 to the present, the notion of rhetorical moves has grown in relevance in English for Specific Purposes. There was a shift away from a focus on technical and scientific lexicon and toward rhetorical uses of language. Swales' Creating a Research Model (CARS) has had a significant impact on genre studies in English for Specific Purposes and the instruction of academic writings. This effect extends not just to foreign or first-language students, but also to professional writers with the goal of publishing in international magazines (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2015).

The use of rhetorical movements in genre analysis dates back to Swales' (1981, 1990) work, which described the rhetorical organizational patterns of research papers. The basic objective of rhetorical moves is to categorize discourse units according to their communicative or rhetorical moves in order to characterize the communicative purposes of a text (Biber, Douglas, Ulla Conner and Thomas A. Upton, 2007).

However, Swales (2004) defines move (henceforth, M) as "discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse." (p 288). In addition, Bhatia adds that (1993) a move is "discriminative elements of generic structure...[depending] upon the communicative purpose (s) that it serves in the genre and that is why it varies from one genre to another". (p 32). Text-internal content elements are studied either in regard to rhetorical moves and steps, or in reference to language structures that are connected to these moves and steps, according to Bruce (2008: p 32).

Criteria for Data Selection

The study's data were purposively copied from university's library and online database which are considered as authentic data. The researcher chose 10 abstracts from university of Anbar so as to be analyzed. He, then, identified the related abstracts that are in a harmony with title as well as with objectives of the study. The data were selected from 2021 deliberately. The data are restricted to the field of linguistics and language.

Table 3.1 The revised CARS Model by Swales (2004)

Move 1 Establishing a territory	
Step1	Via Making a topic generalization of increasing specificity
Move 2 Establishing a niche	
Step 1A	Indicating a gap or
Step 1B	Adding to what is known
Step 2 (optional)	Presenting positive justification
Move 3 Presenting Present research	
Step 1 (obligatory)	Announcing present research purposively/descriptively
Step 2 (optional)	Presenting research questions/hypotheses
Step 3 (optional)	Definitional clarification
Step 4 (optional)	Summarizing methods
Step 5 (PISF)**	Announcing principal outcomes
Step 6 (PISF)*	Stating the value of present paper
Step 7 (PISF)*	Outlining structure of paper

***Step 2- 4** in move 3 are not only optional but less fixed in their order of occurrence than the others.

****PISF**: Probable in some fields, but unlikely in others.

The Create a Research Space (CARS) model by Swales (2004)

The CARS model is used to analyses the rhetorical moves or the structure of the abstracts in this research. It is an updated version of Swales’ (1990) Model. This model proposes a set of moves and steps that go into creating a well-structured written content. Furthermore, this model consists of three mandatory moves, each of which is composed of sub-moves or steps. It goes like this:

Data Analysis

To determine the similarities and differences between moves and steps in MA thesis abstract parts The technique of qualitative data analysis is used in this research. Swales' (2004) model's function of each motion was qualitatively shown. The cyclicity (move structure) was first determined. The frequency of moves and steps was analyzed in the second stage to find similarities and differences in the data.

Model of the Analysis:

The adopted model in the present study is Swales' (1990) model. This model consists of three major moves. Each move in Swales (1990) model consists of optional steps.

Move 1 Establishing A Territory

This move aims to create a research project for the appropriate discourse community in the subject of study. As a result, its primary function is to draw the reader's attention to the subject at hand. One thing you can do to make this happen is:

Step 1 Making Topic Generalizations of Increasing Specificity

Making a subject generalization is one of the obligatory steps or the only step of move one. It is defined according to Biber and Thomas (2007), making topic generalization is accomplished by using a neutral type of broad statement that presents a more general notion or knowledge about the issue that the study works with, such as:

1- "There is now *much evidence* to support the hypothesis that...
(Swales (1990): p 144)

Move 2 Establishing A Niche

This move is used to establish the intended niche for the study. Thus, it is accomplished by researchers to present that the previous studies have some kind of incompleteness and limits that need to be investigated. Therefore, this move is achieved the by one of the three steps. According to Shehzad (2008), researchers strive to persuade their readers of the need for their study by pointing out a gap. It's one of the following options:

a) **Step 1A Indicating a gap:** is utilized to introduce the study's problem, such as:

7) "A key problem in many...is..." (Swales, 1990: p 147).

8) The application presents a problem ... (p. 156).

b) **Step 1B Adding to what is known:**

c) **Step 2 (optional) Presenting positive justification:** This step is used by researchers so as to highlight the need for their research in relation to real

world problem.

It is, according to Samraj (2002), illustrated as follows:

There have been relatively few investigations whose purpose has been . . .

One reason to take such an approach is that . . .

Another reason for determining the complete repertoire of chemical signals used for any particular communicative function is that . . . (p. 9)

Move 3 Presenting Present Research

Move 3 Occupying the niche is the most complex one since it is much elaborated. Thus, in order to justify the current investigation, it is utilized, according to Swales, by seven possible steps. They are as follows:

Step 1 Announcing Present Research Descriptively And/or Purposefully: it is the obligatory one. It is maintained to explain the research's goals in terms of what it intends to do or achieve, for example:

12) "This paper evaluates..."(1990).

Additionally, Chu (1996) suggests the following example:

13) The purposes of this paper are the following a) to classify verbal report data into two types . . . and to describe . . . b) to summarize . . . c) to methodologically review introspective studies . . . and d) to discuss . . . (p. 27)

Step 2 Presenting research questions or hypotheses: it an optional step. It is used to present briefly the research questions or the hypotheses proposed by the researcher in order to be answered or verified depending on the research design. Swales (2004) states that step 2 is not only optional, but its order of occurrence is less definite than the others.

Step 3 Definitional clarifications: it is an optional step that can be used with specific context, experimental research. Thus, definitions are used to provide a description or explanation of terminology.

Step 4 Summarizing methods: it is an optional step by which the researchers give a brief explanation about the methodology used in the study.

Step 5 Announcing the principal outcomes: This step is used to show readers the main results or findings that the researcher has reached at the end of the study. It is probable in some fields, but unlikely in others.

Step 6 Stating the value of the present research: it can be done in some fields than other. It is context determined.

Step 7 Outlining the structure of the paper is a term that is used to characterize the study's organization, such as:

14) "The structure of this paper is as follows..." (1990).

RESULTS

M&S (Anbar)	Ab1	Ab2	Ab3	Ab4	Ab5	Ab6	Ab7	Ab8	Ab9	Ab10	Freq.	%
M1	P	P	P	P	P	P	NP	P	P	P	9	90%
S1	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	9	90%
M2	NP	P	NP	NP	NP	NP	P	P	P	NP	4	40%
S1A	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	4	40%
S1B	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0%
S2	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	0	0%
M3	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	10	100%
S1	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	9	90%
S2	-	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	5	50%
S3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0%
S4	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	8	80%
S5	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	7	70%
S6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0%
S7	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	20%

Move 1 Establishing the Research Territory

Table 2 shows that the first move that occurred by 90 % of ANB data is establishing a territory. This move is employed by making a topic generalization of increasing specificity. It is the typical move that is observed in all the data analyzed. Researchers are interested to establish the field of discourse to get the reader’s attention. Thus, step 1 is considered as the conventional step that frequently used or employed. The following examples show this step:

(S1) “Headlines are discourse units which comprise some functional parts of the topic where they provide a summary of the news article”.

Move 2 Establishing A Niche

This move is achieved by the writer so as to point out that the previous research has not been completely investigated or to identify the gap investigated. As it was mentioned previously, this move consists of three steps. However, this move occurred by 40% of the corpus analyzed. According the corpus, step 1A, indicating a gap is seen with 40% while the other two steps have not been employed. The following example illustrates the step:

6. *(S1A) “A traditional way cannot stimulate the students to interact with the material and due to the educational findings, which clearly show that there are some weaknesses of learners' ability in most of the academic stages (including the preparatory stage). It is necessary, therefore, to use a technique*

which is more effective in teaching English skills in order to encourage the students to think and make use of their background knowledge”.

Move 3 Presenting the Present Research

Almost all the corpus analyzed encounter a good application of this move. Depending on the data, this move, presenting the present work is the most prominent move in the abstracts. In coincide with Swales (1990), who admits that since move 2 is used, then move 3 should follow in the abstract. However, in ANBU corpus, the seven steps appear as follows: S1 (announcing the present research) has been used in most of the data. It occurs with 90%. On the other hand, step 4 (summarizing methods) has got 80%. Step 5 (announcing principal outcomes) is observed in the data with 70%. Besides, step 2(Presenting RQs or hypothesis) is used 50%. Furthermore, the other three steps (Step 7(outlining the structure of the paper), step3 (definitional clarifications), and step 6 (stating the value of the present research) are considered the minority due to their appearance in the data analyzed that have been shown 20%, 0%, 0% respectively. For example:

(S1) “This study investigates one of the cultural and linguistic phenomena which is found in many societies. This phenomenon is taboo words and uses of offensive language in everyday speech. Taboo is the use of words that cause embarrassment and shameful to the hearer when said. This phenomenon is a form of vulgar and slang variety of language”.

CONCLUSIONS

- 1.it seems that only three MA thesis abstracts follow the typical sequence of move structure (M1-M2-M3), indicating that Iraqi Arab academic authors are unaware of it.
- 2.Iraqi Arab academic authors have a propensity to employ broad concepts or facts about the issue excessively.
3. The Iraqi Arab academic authors do not know how to identify the study's gap or problem.
4. From a pedagogical standpoint, Iraqi Arab academic writers should be aware of how to utilize Move 2 Establishing a Niche, which is used to identify the study's difficulty.

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