

Rhetorical Moves of Research Article Abstracts Written by American and Indonesian Authors : Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

As an indispensable part of the Research Article (RA), an abstract should be well written. The variability of information included in a research article abstract will likely vary because of different discourses among academicians worldwide. This paper compares the rhetorical moves manifested in research article abstracts written by American and Indonesian authors published in two reputable journals. Data presented are move sequences of 25 Research Article (RA) abstracts from the latest six years issue (2022-2016). The abstracts were selected from a particular discipline, English language teaching and learning, to control the variability. Each move was identified based on the lexical used. The findings revealed that Move 1-Move 2-Move 3-Move 4-Move 5 and Move 2-Move 3-Move 4-Move 5 were the most salient move patterns found in both groups. Interestingly, abstracts of American authors showed cyclicity patterns and had an additional Move. Move 3 and Move 4 were considered as obligatory Moves, while Move 1 and Move 5 could be positioned as optional Moves. The study also found that American and Indonesian authors' writing styles differed. The implication of this study is expected to strengthen the theory of rhetorical moves in the literature. Also, it can be scientific evidence for Indonesian scholars to get a reference of how native academicians write their abstracts in reputable international journals.

Keywords: comparison, moves, abstract, article.

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INTRODUCTION

This research was inspired by the status of English as an international language that affects the practice and policy of publication. A well-known phenomenon arose when there was a requirement from the journals for researchers to complete their articles with English abstracts if the Research Articles (RAs) were written in other languages. The policy may emerge the ‘variability’ of rhetorical moves in writing abstracts among researchers in inner, outer, and expanding circles who have different L1 backgrounds. The classifications have flourished since Braj Kachru introduced the terms. Tajeddin & Pakzadian (2020) had the same perspective as Braj Kachru that inner circle includes those who live and grow with English as their first language. Outer circle refers to the country or English users who use English as a second language and are members of former British colonies, while expanding circle users are associated with those who spoke English as a foreign language or international purpose only. The classification as aforementioned closely related to the native and non-native speakers, and broadly speaking, the term ‘native’ refers to people in inner-circle countries, while non-native refers to people in outer and expanding circle countries. Indonesia can be classified as expanding circle country since English is learnt as a foreign language. Therefore, they can be called as non-native speakers.

A number of comparative studies have been conducted to investigate whether there is variability of rhetorical moves in writing research article abstracts of researchers in different circles. For example, Li (2020) did a comparative analysis based on the framework of Hyland (2004) for RA abstracts written in English, Chinese, and Chinese abstracts translated to English. The English abstracts were written by wider authors in inner circle countries: USA, UK, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, while the Chinese abstracts were only focused on the abstracts written by Chinese author who is expanding circle author. It found that rhetorical patterns between those groups are different because abstracts of inner circle authors include more information about product and method than Chinese authors.

Using framework of Hyland (2000), Al-Khasawneh (2017) compared how native and non-native speakers of English wrote RA abstracts. The study found that both groups frequently follow the rhetorical structure (Purpose, Method, and Conclusion) to compose their abstracts. The authors only mentioned that the non-native speakers are Iranian, while there is no clear information about who the native speaker is. In a similar vein, Iranian (non-native) RA abstracts were analysed by Farnia & Barati (2017) based on the framework of Swales (2004). The study remains vague for the subjects of English native speakers. The finding showed that native English involves more moves than the non-native speakers.

A comparative study of Honami & Chalak (2018) investigated English RA abstracts section of native English and non-native English. The researcher did not mention specifically who the native English is or who the author of inner circle is. However, non-native English is clearly mentioned

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referring to Persian authors. Results of the study revealed that I-M-R-D (Introduction-Method-Result-Discussion) and I-M-R (Introduction-Method-Result) are the most frequent rhetorical moves pattern used in both of groups.

Indonesian scholars also conduct other comparative studies, but they have different concern. Andika, Safnil, & Harahap (2018) compared English RA abstracts from three groups based on Swales' (2009) model. The groups are Indonesian postgraduate students who published on their local institutional journal website, Indonesian authors who published on the Indonesia national journal, and international authors who published on international journals. Although the research highlighted the "international" term, the researchers did not clarify who the authors are. Based on the comparative analysis, it showed Move 1 (introduction/background/situation) is found fewer in the RA abstracts of postgraduate students than other two groups.

The study of Amalia, Kadarisman, & Laksmi (2018) did a comparison regarding to students' GPA with undergraduate and master thesis abstracts as the data. All of the participants in the study are Indonesian. Based on Samraj's (2002) framework, the study concluded: 1) some of the students with a low GPA involve five or complete moves; 2) not all students with high GPA write complete moves.

To the best of our knowledge, a comparative study on the rhetorical moves of RA abstract written by inner circle author (American) and expanding circle author (Indonesian) have not yet been explored. Thus, the present study is intended to analyse the difference and similarities of rhetorical moves manifested in research article abstracts written by American and Indonesian authors. Specifically, this study investigates the following question:

1. How do American and Indonesian authors variegate the rhetorical Moves pattern in composing the information of Research Article (RA) abstracts?
2. To what extent, do the Research Abstracts (RA) of two groups (American and Indonesian) show similarities and differences in terms of Move frequency and writing style?

METHODS

This research is qualified to be discourse analysis since it not only matches the lexical items for each Move (Move 1, Move 2, Move 3, Move 4, and Move 5) but also comprehends the intended meaning of the author before deciding that the lexical items are genuinely intended to represent the Moves. The method is in line with the following statement about discourse analysis that:

What is important is that the discourse analyst looks for patterns and links within and across utterances in order to form hypotheses about how meaning is being constructed and organized. (Gee, 1999: 99)

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1. Source of the Study

The data of this study were RA abstracts of a particular discipline, English language teaching and learning, for controlling the variability among disciplines. 25 abstracts were used in this study. Corpus A consists of 15 RA abstracts from TESOL Quarterly journal. Corpus B consists of 10 RA abstracts from *Cakrawala Pendidikan* journal. The RAs were published from the latest seven-year issues (2022-2016).

2. Unit of analysis

In this study, Moves of RA abstract were used as the unit analysed based on the framework of Swales & Feak (2009). A move refers to a functional term rather than the grammatical term as a stretch of text that has a particular job of revealing different information classifications inside it (Swales & Feak, 2009). The Moves were analysed based on the representative lexical resources used by the authors.

3. Data Collection Technique

There were some considerations for selecting corpora: the disciplinary, the prestige of the journal, the identity of the author, and the type of the articles. Each criterion is explained as follows.

This study took RA abstracts from a particular discipline, English language teaching and learning, for controlling the variability among disciplines. TESOL quarterly has a high quartile of Scopus, Q1, from Q4 to Q1 as how it is described in Scimago Journal Rank (SJR) website. *Cakrawala Pendidikan* also has a high score classification journal by *Sinta Indonesia*, S1, from S6 to S1. Thus, those considerations could be a fair criterion to select the reputation of the journals.

The researchers focused on RA abstracts written by Americans as corpus A because the availability of articles by American authors is larger compared to other inner circle authors. The identity of American authors was determined based on their name and the status of their affiliation. Although identifying American authors' names to determine their first language status is hazardous, the Indonesian author's name is quite indicative.

In this study, only RA abstracts from empirical studies were used either qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods. Non-empirical study articles mean that the articles contain concepts or further issue that should be finished for further research. It makes the structure of non-empirical study articles is different from the empirical study. So, a non-empirical study was eliminated.

The researchers used the snowball sampling technique to restrict the number of RAs used. The process of analysing data also became a part of the data collection process. The data collection process was stopped when the abstracts showed moves that were adequate to represent Corpus A and B. Thus, the number of the RA used in each corpus was different.

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4. Data Analysis Technique

In the analysis process, the researchers separated each sentence and classified them on which they represent rhetorical moves based on Swales & Feak (2009) framework in Table 1. Aarts (2014, as cited in Yin (2016)) defined a sentence as the main clause, including all its dependent clauses, that is recognised by orthographical cues; the orthographical cues refer to the presence of a capital letter at the beginning and a full stop at the end.

The abstracts were then analysed manually based on the lexical expressions manifested in each Move. Every vocabulary that represents Move 1, Move 2, Move 3, Move, and Move 5 were coded as M1, M2, M3, M4, and M5. When there was a new move found in the RA abstracts that was not covered on the framework of Swales & Feak (2009), the move was considered as additional move and coded as AM. With regard to lexical expressions, sometimes identical word of particular move is used by the author to support different kind of move. In this case, the move will be interpreted by considering which intended meaning that is wanted to deliver by the authors. The following excerpts (1 and 2) are sequence sentences found in one of RA abstracts of corpus B, while excerpt 3 is retrieved from Swales & Feak (2009):

- (1) This study examined individual differences in Spanish and English academic language skills and their contribution to English reading comprehension in a cross-sectional sample of DLI students in Grades 4–6 (N = 101).
- (2) Taking advantage of a recently proposed construct, the core academic language skills (CALs), and the CALs instruments available in Spanish and English, dual academic language skills were examined as predictors of English reading comprehension.
- (3) The object of this study was to examine postpartum women for psychiatric symptomatology including cognitive disturbances, anxiety, depression, and anger to better meet their needs for support and involve them in the care of their infants.

In the first sentence, the word *examined* tend to support Move 2 (purpose) after the sentence is read as a whole sentence. It has similar meaning with “The object of this study was to examine ...” as well as example (3) written by Swales & Feak (2009) to demonstrate Move 2. In the second sentence, the word *examined* becomes the signal of Move 3 when it is combined with the data, language skills.

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Table 1:
Rhetorical Moves classification of an abstract in the research article by Swales & Feak (2009)

Move	Typical Labels	Implied questions
Move 1	Background/introduction/situation	What do we know about the topic? Why is the topic important?
Move 2	Present research/ Purpose	What is this study about?
Move 3	Methods/ materials/ subjects/ procedures	How was it done?
Move 4	Results/ findings	What was discovered?
Move 5	Discussion/ conclusion/ implications/ Recommendations	What do the findings mean?

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Rhetorical Moves Pattern and Language Expression Used in Research Article Abstracts Written by American and Indonesian Authors

This study found that American authors (native speakers) had more varieties of rhetorical moves patterns than Indonesian authors (non-native speakers); Table 2 gives further details for the varieties. The finding is in line with what had been found in the study of Rania (2017) that English native speakers use more strategies (move steps and the application of the moves) than non-native speakers.

Table 2:
Rhetorical Moves Variation between Two Groups based on Global Rhetorical Moves Pattern

	Patterns of American authors	Total occurrence in the articles	Patterns of Indonesian authors	Total occurrence in the articles
1	M1-M2-M3-M4-M5	2	M1-M2-M3-M4-M5	4
2	M1-M3-M2-M3-M5	1	M1-M2-M3-M4	1
3	M1-M2-M3-M4-AM-M5	1	M2-M3-M4	2
4	M1-AM-M2-M3-M4	1	M2-M3-M4-M5	3
5	M2-M3-M4-M5	2		
6	M1-M3-M4	1		
7	M3-M4	1		
8	M3-M2-M3-M4	1		

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9	M2-M3-M4	1
10	M1-AM-M2- M3-M4-M5	1
11	M2-M3-M4-M3- M5	1
12	M3-M4-M5	1
13	M2-M3-M4-M5	1

The most salient rhetorical moves pattern found in Research Articles (RA) abstracts of American authors are M1-M2-M3-M4-M5 and M2-M3-M4-M5. Those patterns also become the most salient moves pattern found in the RA abstract of Indonesian authors. Another rhetorical moves pattern that Indonesian authors frequently use is M2-M3-M4.

From the table, some moves are missing. In other words, the authors do not involve all moves in writing the abstracts. The authors tend to focus on some moves rather than involve all of the moves because some of the moves are considered as the moves that cover more substantial information about their research (Li, 2020). Due to the maximum capacity of RA abstracts that is normally written in 150 to 200 words, particular moves are omitted (Asari, 2018).

The rhetorical moves pattern of American authors covered the rhetorical moves pattern of Indonesian authors, but the rhetorical moves pattern of Indonesian authors did not always cover the variety of American authors' pattern. For example, cyclicity pattern that is written in the following sentences:

- (1) This qualitative study applies Linguistically Responsive Instruction as a framework to understand corequisite instructors' beliefs about students' learning, knowledge of teaching language, and understanding of the broader contextual factors at community colleges, including institutional policies and definitions of students' readiness and success.
- (2) ... ongoing interviews conducted with faculty members throughout one semester ...

The first and second sentences are written consecutively in one of the American author's abstracts. The lexical phrase *qualitative study* in the first sentence represent Move 3 that shows kind of the study. The author also includes Move 2 (purpose of the study) begun with the lexical phrase *to understand*. In the second sentences, the author emerges another Move 3 by highlighting *interview* as process of data collection. The cyclicity pattern usually occurs in writing research background between Move reviewing items of previous research (Move 1) and indicating a gap (Move 2) (Swales, 1990); the cyclicity pattern in writing research background is: M1-M2-M1.

The varied expressions used to identify Move 1, Move 2, Move 3, Move 4, and Move 5 by American and Indonesian authors are explained as follows.

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The following examples (1 and 2) were found in RA abstracts of American authors, while examples (3-6) were written by Indonesian authors.

- (1) The critical importance of the second language ... is considered the most fundamental ...
- (2) Research over the past decade has demonstrated ...
- (3) The number of ... improves significantly ...
- (4) The urgency for developing students ...
- (5) Polytechnic has characteristic which prioritises the application of practical aspects supported by appropriate theory. Blended learning can be applied in Polytechnic, but a scheme is needed ... formulate correct instructional mode.

The underline lexical phrase in example (1 and 4) indicates there is a degree of importance for the topic investigated. Move 1 also occurs to indicate that the present research topic is well-established (example 2) or significant (example 3) to be conducted. In example (5), the writers claim that blended learning, the combination between online and offline learning, is applicable for Polytechnic major, although it prioritises the application of practical aspects, that means face-to-face learning. In other words, the authors want to convey that the situation of blended-learning research is still significantly conducted, although it is implemented in the Polytechnic.

Since presenting the purpose of the research is a must to avoid bias, either American or Indonesian authors included Move 2 in their RA abstracts. The following examples (1, 2) were written by American authors, while examples (3, 4, 5) were written by Indonesian.

- (1) This study examined ...
- (2) This article discusses ...
- (3) This research examines ...
- (4) The present study was aimed
- (5) This study attempted to investigate ...

Both of the groups write Move 2 with 'main verb' in the simple present or past tense. Also, Indonesian authors write Move 2 by using the 'to infinitive' pattern.

Move 3 also appeared in all abstracts of American authors and Indonesian authors. In general, the authors provided information to Move 3 by giving information about subjects involved in the study, kinds of study, materials (data source or kind of data collected), method, and procedure to establish the study. Some expressions of Move 3 below were written by American authors.

- (1) The study participants ...
- (2) A longitudinal 15 week ...
- (3) Data presented are from 2-year ethnography ...
- (4) Using content analysis ...
- (5) The reading project was carried out ..., and participants had the opportunity ...

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The underlined lexical in example 1-5 represents subject of the study, types of study, materials, method, and procedure respectively. The following expressions are also the same, but they were written by Indonesian authors.

- (1) Forty-five English Education sophomore students ...
- (2) This experimental study ...
- (3) The data are in the form of essay written by ...
- (4) This study employed a mix-method ...
- (5) Students descriptive were measured through ...

The crucial move, Move 4, were written in all abstracts of two groups. Example (1) and (2) were found in American's abstracts, while example (3-6) were found in Indonesian's abstracts.

- (1) Specifically, findings reveal changes in how educators ...
- (2) Result revealed that Spanish and English CALLS ...
- (3) The findings indicated that even though such framework triggers positive perception ...
- (4) The results reveal that (1)..., (2)..., ...
- (5) ...principal component analyses that..., positioning 31%, 27.3% ...
- (6) The result of data analysis showed no significant differences ...

The main verbs "reveal", "indicate", and "show" were frequently used to indicate Move 4. 'That clause' was found in all abstracts to introduce the results or findings. The word 'that' of 'that clause' may leave out as in example (1) and (6).

Not all of the American authors and Indonesian authors included Move 5 in their abstracts. The expressions of Move 5 written by American authors were in example (1, 2, 3, 4, 5); others were written by Indonesian authors. Overall, American authors includes contribution, implication, conclusion, and discussion to support Move 5. Indonesian authors also included implication and conclusion, but another information included was recommendation.

- (1) ... inform teacher educators ... who seek to improve ...
- (2) Implication for teacher education ...
- (3) The article concludes ...
- (4) ...indicating that DWCF may be an effective pedagogical ... to improve ...
- (5) The article discusses the importance of ...
- (6) Several recommendations ...
- (7) The interpretation of those components is coherent ..., in which the component 1 shows the positive effect ... component 2 ... indicates the negative affects item".
- (8) "The study had implications on the learning process ...
- (9) Some implications and recommendations are also discussed.

In example (1), the expression implies the contribution of the research to others. Example (2 and 8) states the implication explicitly. The underlined lexical in example (3) presents the conclusion in a quite obvious way. The use of adjective words in example (4) and (7) concludes implicitly the results of

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the studies. The word *discuss* in example (5) states explicitly for the Move 5 (discussion). Example (6) indicates explicitly for the recommendation of the study. Sometimes the author indicates implication and recommendation in the same sentence as in example (9).

Interestingly, some American authors provided information not only Move 1 to Move 5 but also another Move that was considered as an additional Move. The Move provided information of indicating research gap. However, there is no empirical data found in RA abstracts of Indonesian authors regarding to this move.

- (1) Yet little systematic research examines ...
- (2) This study addresses a gap in TESOL research ...
- (3) To date, scarce research has explored associations ...

The lexical words, such as *little*, *gap*, and *scarce* strongly indicative to present research gap. The move was considered as an additional move because the framework of Swales & Feak (2009) in writing Research Article abstract only cover: Move 1 (background/introduction/situation), Move 2 (purpose), Move 3 (methods/materials/subjects/procedures), Move 4 (results/findings), and Move 5 (discussion/conclusion/implications/recommendations). Asari (2018) also considered a move as an additional move when the move found is not covered in the framework that is used in the study. He considers 'recommendation' as additional move because it is not covered in the framework of Swales & Feak (2004), a framework that he used in his study.

2. The Proportion of Five Moves and Writing Style of American and Indonesian Authors

Based on five moves, the total occurrence of Move 3 and Move 4 in the RA abstracts of American authors was the same and become the highest number of total occurrences (27). Move 1 and Move 5 also has the same frequency of occurrence (11), and those moves are move with the least number of total occurrences. In RA abstracts of Indonesian authors, Move 3 dominates with 30 number of occurrence, while Move 4 is the second highest (22). Move 5 has the least number of occurrences (7) after Move 1 which appears 8 times. Table 1 and 2 in https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EfnACEA8ccKeLqECMW8cYy0QQDJRv-5e/view?usp=drive_link gives complete information for the total occurrence of each move. From the findings, Move 3 and Move 4 can be concluded as obligatory moves, while Move 1 and Move 5 are optional moves. A move can be classified as the obligatory or optional moves based on the total occurrence; the occurrence indicates the degree of importance for a move (Irawati, Saukah, & Ruslan, 2018). The study of Setyorini (2017) also proved that Method Move is never left out in writing abstracts, while Conclusion Move is 50% found in some abstracts.

In terms of writing style, American authors frequently combined some Moves. Hence, the information in a sentence is more complex as well as the

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structure. Complex sentences were also found in the RA abstracts of Indonesian authors, but they consistently wrote one sentence for one Move. Consequently, Indonesian authors tended to produce more simple sentence.

- (1) Drawing on data from interviews and students' online writing, this study suggests that, as students shared videos and “linguistic landscape” images and discussed language differences, the MA TESL students confronted linguistic and racial diversity in the United States, recognising the presence of dialects like African American Vernacular English and drawing on shared English as a second language status to gain confidence in communicating internationally.
- (2) This study employed a mixed method approach for the analysis of questionnaire data from 34 preservice teachers and qualitative data of open-ended questions. The findings revealed that after being enrolled in a collaborative course, preservice teachers' self-efficacy changed significantly ($t_{34} = -2.16$; $p < .05$), especially in efficacy for instructional strategies ($t_{34} = -2.73$; $p < .05$)

Example (1) is a complex sentence written by one of American authors. It is indicated with the use of *that-clause*. The author present Move 3 (research materials) from *interview* and *students online writing*. The sentence also indicates Move 4 (result) through the lexical *suggest that*. In the second example, Indonesian author separate Move 3 (type of study & research materials) in two different sentences. The underlined phrases *mixed method approach*, *questionnaire data*, and *qualitative data* closely indicates Move 3, while the word *findings* indicates explicitly Move 4 (result). *That-clause* written in the second sentence of example (2) shows that Indonesian author writes Move 4 within a complex sentence. The use of more complex sentence by native author than non-native speaker is likely affected due to the language proficiency level of the authors. The term of complexity flourishes among scholars concerned in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) study. Grammatical complexity becomes one of the aspects that predict writers' language proficiency. It has been confirmed through the studies conducted by Revesz, Michel, & Lee (2017), Haque (2017), and Calzada & Mayo (2021).

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CONCLUSION

The RA abstracts of American authors is more varied than RA abstracts of Indonesian authors in terms of rhetorical moves pattern used within 5 moves. However, both groups show that M1-M2-M3-M4-M5 and M2-M3-M4-M5 are the most frequently used pattern. The variation also occurs due to the emergence of cyclicity pattern and additional move (indicating research

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gap). Based on the total number of occurrences, Move 1 and Move 5 can be concluded as optional Move in writing RA abstracts, while Move 3 and Move 4 are obligatory moves. In terms of writing style, American authors tend to use complex sentence and sometimes combine some moves in the same sentence. On the contrary, Indonesian authors prefer writing in simple sentence and consistently separating each move in different sentence. In brief, representation of RA abstracts written by American and Indonesian authors is quite different.

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