Comparative Genre Analysis of Research Abstracts: Philippine Versus International Colloquia

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Abstract—**Abstract is the gateway to whether the intended audience reads the rest of the research article or not. This is one of the many reasons why, across disciplines and cultures, the rhetorical structure of research article abstracts has been explored. Taking a different approach, this comparative genre-based study, which employed a hybrid method, investigated the rhetorical structure of research abstracts of non-native English-speaking undergraduate students in Philippine and international research colloquia. A corpus of 116 research abstracts, 58 from each group, in the field of education was purposively selected and explored using Hyland's model of five-move abstracts. Categories of move occurrence along with the frequencies were utilized to compare the move use of the two groups. Findings indicated that the three moves which are purpose, method, and product frequently occurred in local and international writers' research conference abstracts. The number of words was also recorded through frequency and average. The local conference abstracts were lengthier than the international ones. The findings can have some pedagogical implications for the academic writing professors and assist novice writers or undergraduate students, primarily those in the field of teacher education in organizing their abstracts for the international audiences.**

Index Terms—**genre analysis, corpus, move structure**

I. INTRODUCTION

There has been a significant number of studies on abstracts in comparison to other sections of scholarly texts (e.g., Lorés, 2004; Pho, 2008; Tseng, 2011; Alhuqbani, 2013; Doró, 2013; Zanina, 2017; Majid & Omid, 2018; Amnuai, 2019; Alyousef, 2021) over the years. It is conceivable that the fascination with abstracts in academic writing stems from the fact that they have a big effect in demonstrating the importance of the ongoing study to previous work in the field (Bhatia, 1993). Therefore, unlike the title that, for example, only gives the reader a few details about the work, the abstract provides the audience with a quick overview of the work's major points.

Swales and Feak (2004) mention that abstracts are useful for reviewing new research, because abstracts are the first to introduce new research to readers, and they serve a crucial role in academic knowledge-making. Hyland (2000) claims that abstracts serve both informative and persuasive purposes, with the latter being especially tied to disciplinary

conventions. Furthermore, Flowerdew (2008) also points out that abstracts can be troublesome for non-native speakers of English, L2 writers, for instance, to compose. These writers have difficulties in writing academic texts for an international readership (Hyland, 2016), which is very intimidating as they described it (Li & Pramoolsook, 2015; Al-Khasawneh, 2017; Javadi-Safa, 2018).

Thus, Hyland (2000) suggested a five-move framework to analyze research abstracts, which anchors in a principle that abstracts are made up of different activities for each move. Move in genre analysis is defined by Santos (1996, as cited in del Saz Rubio, 2019) as a genre stage that has a specific minor communicative purpose to achieve that, in turn, contributes to the major communicative goal of a genre. Swales (2004, as cited in Amnuai, 2019) also termed move as a discursive section that serves a specific communicative purpose.

From Swales' (1990) perspective, a genre is a collection of communicative occurrences that all have the same set of communicative goals. These goals are recognized by expert members of the parent discourse community, and they serve as the genre's foundation. This foundation determines the discourse's schematic structure and influences the content and stylistic choices. Aside from the communicative goal, exemplars of a genre share a number of characteristics in terms of structure, style, substance, and intended audience. The parent discourse group will see the exemplars as prototypical if all high possibility expectations are met. The genre names obtained and produced by discourse groups and brought by others create important ethnographic information, but they usually require further validation.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Genre encompasses not just different forms of literary texts, but also predictable and recurrent patterns of everyday, scientific, and literary texts that occur in a given society (Vogler & Schwaiger, 2021). A genre, either articulated or printed, is usually identified based on its communicative function or role in a discourse community. Genres, as stated by Swales (1990), that share the same societal goals belong to a certain text type. Genres are increasingly viewed as providing unique communicative goals in contemporary linguistics and pedagogics and looked into rhetorical and communicative move frameworks (Swales, 2004).

According to Derewianka (1990), there are six genres based on their societal goals. First is the narrative that narrates a story and is usually just for entertainment. Second, the recount genre describes what occurred. Third is information reports that give accurate facts. Fourth is the instruction genre that instructs the audience on what they should do. The explanation is the fifth one that elucidates how or why something occurs and finally, the expository texts that offer or defend a perspective.

The linguistic inputs of the text, for instance, the rhetorical structures and grammatical realizations of language, are determined by the social aims of the text genres.

Rhetorical structures refer to the text's internal structure or text arrangement (opening, body, and ending), while grammatical realizations comprise linguistic features like tense, voice, associativity, grammar, among others which the writers must employ in order to transfer information into comprehensible texts.

Revisiting Genre Analysis

In the field of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), genre analysis has become a popular approach to textual analysis. It is a critical assessment of discourse that takes into account the underlying social and cultural elements. The connection of text genres and their contexts had been a major focus of a genre-based approach (Nagao, 2019). As a result, its goal is to assist students, teachers, and researchers in becoming productive members of their academic and professional communities (Hammond & Derewianka, 2001).

In some ways, genre-based methods to the second language are an outgrowth of past product approaches that prioritized linguistic expertise, vocabulary, and grammar (Badger & White, 2000). Hyland (2003) discusses three key schools of genre that have embraced the genre-based approach: The New Rhetoric; The Systemic Functional Linguistics, and The English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

The New Rhetoric focuses primarily on the rhetorical context of genre and its interrelationship with the texts rather than text elements and textual qualities, and it mostly employs ethnographic research techniques. The Systemic Functional Linguistics has its origins in linguistics, emphasizes regular connections between grammatical and rhetorical patterns and the context, and focuses primarily on pre-genres in a broad cultural framework. The English for Specific Purposes, finally, emphasizes how discourse communities shape and their unique communication aims rather than the wider and broader culture.

Even though the three schools differ in some ways, there are some common threads that run through them. All three approaches, according to Hyland (2003), share the goal of contextualizing regularities of meaning, structure, and situated social action whereby the ESP, in particular, has likely the largest impact on L2 writing. Within the ESP genre paradigm, genre is seen as having a standard structure that consists of a defined set of moves. Moves, in this framework, are viewed as communicative or rhetorical tools that accomplish a subset of communicative aims linked with a genre's overarching generic communicative structure (Bhatia, 2001).

To explore the rhetorical structure of research abstracts, embracing the ESP approach in genre analysis, Hyland (2000) introduces a five-move framework as a coding model, which is: 1) Introduction that establishes the context of the paper and motivates the research; 2) Purpose that indicates and outlines the aim behind the paper; 3) Method which

provides information on design, procedures, data analysis, etc.; 4) Product that indicates results and the argument; and 5) Conclusion which points to applications or wider implications and interpretation scope of the paper.

Hyland (2003) further emphasizes the need for L2 language learners to be acquainted with written genres as this may help them gain access to different discourse communities locally and internationally.

Within this perspective, determining the communicative role of text units is considered as one of the ways to divert the attention of both teachers and students from the text structures to the usage of texts in a social setting or discourse community (Ren & Li, 2011; Zhang et al., 2012; Darabad, 2016; Tnako, 2017; Amnuai, 2019).

By focusing on the communicative functions and structures of text units, writers' texts would be useful not only for reading but also for pedagogical implications. Thus, the study aims to investigate the move structure of research abstracts in the field of teacher education in two different discourse groups (local and international research conferences), drawing on Hyland's (2000) five-move model for research abstracts. Since no studies in the literature have ever tried to include the word count feature of research conference abstracts, thus this paper attempts to bridge that gap in the literature. The questions, therefore, are:

1. What is the move structure of local and international research abstracts?
2. Are there any similarities and differences between local and international research abstracts in terms of the employment of the five moves proposed in Hyland's (2000) move model?
3. What is the average word count of local and international research abstracts?

III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a hybrid method: qualitative for the move analysis of abstracts and quantitative for the move comparison, and word counts of the two corpora.

A. Corpus Management

The research abstracts as the main corpora are taken from the books of abstracts of four research conferences written by undergraduate students. The local research conferences were organized by the State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Cagayan Valley or Region 02 in the Philippines while the international conferences were sponsored by universities in Singapore and Thailand.
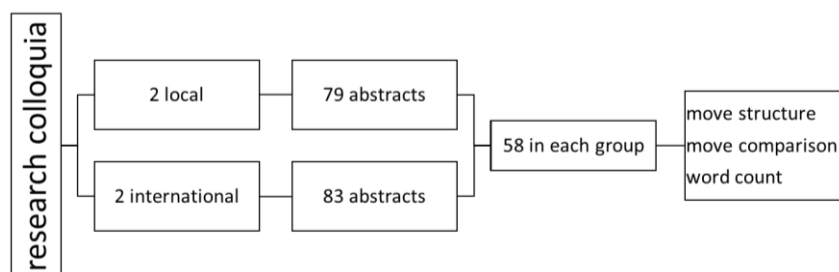

Figure 1. Corpus Management and Analysis Process

Figure 1 shows that there are 79 abstracts from the two local colloquia while 83 abstracts are from the two international colloquia. To prevent any analysis disparity, only abstracts on teacher education were considered, whereby 116 abstracts—58 in each group—were purposively selected.

B. Analysis Process

1. Move Structure

The study adapted Hyland's (2000) five-move model for research abstracts as a coding framework. In order to classify and compare the moves identified in the abstracts, the study followed the three categories of move occurrence introduced by Kanoksilapatham (2005), which are obligatory (if the move appears in 100% of the corpus), conventional (60-99% move appearance), and optional (less than 60%) moves. Figure 2 presents the model with excerpts from the corpus as examples.
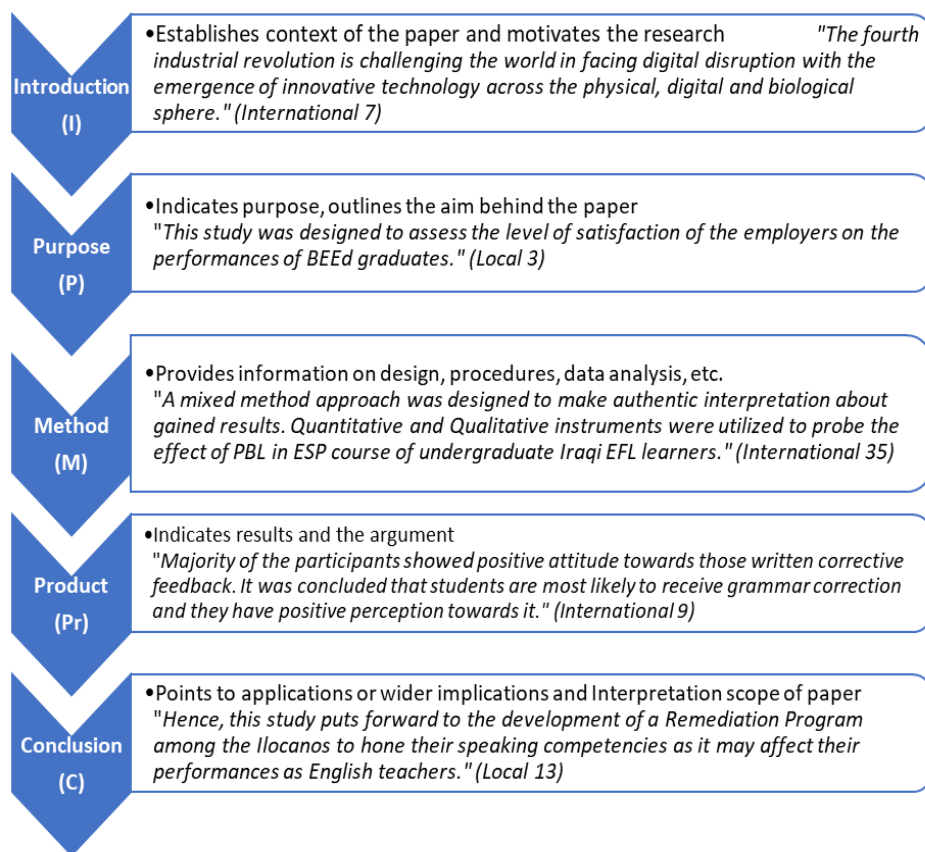
Figure 2. Hyland's (2000) Five-move Model of Research Article Abstracts

2. Move Comparison and Word Count

Two online tools were used: Mean Calculator, an online social science statistical tool, for the comparison in terms of move use and Easy Word Count, an online word count tool, for the number of words.

3. Intercoder Agreement

The services of two language professors with linguistic sophistication (Magday & Pramoolsook, 2021, 2020; Pramoolsook & Magday, 2019) were tapped to be the intercoders. The MAXQDA Intercoder Agreement (VERBI Software, 2019) was utilized to compare the findings of the researchers and intercoders using Intercoder Coefficient Kappa (Brennan & Prediger, 1981, as cited in O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). The agreement, in this study, was 95%, which is considered as high intercoder reliability.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the analysis of 58 local and 58 international research abstracts presented in four research colloquia in terms of the rhetorical move structures, difference of the employment of the moves, and abstracts' average word counts, as well as offers some explanations for the main findings.

TABLE 1
MOVE STRUCTURE

Move	Abstracts					
	Philippines/ Local (58)	Percentage	Classification	International (58)	Percentage	Classification
Introduction (I)	25	43.10	Optional	40	68.97	Conventional
Purpose (P)	58	100	Obligatory	58	100	Obligatory
Method (M)	58	100	Obligatory	58	100	Obligatory
Product (Pr)	58	100	Obligatory	58	100	Obligatory
Conclusion (C)	23	39.66	Optional	53	91.38	Conventional
New (N)	3	5.17	Optional	0	0	0

Table 2 shows that the international group has three Obligatory moves: Purpose, Method, and Product and two Conventional moves: Introduction and Conclusion. Meanwhile, the local group has also three Obligatory moves: Purpose, Method and Product and two Optional moves: Introduction and Conclusion.

The result of the obligatory and optional moves agrees with the study on Chinese and English research article abstracts in chemistry and linguistics of Yun (2011), which appeared that purpose, method, and product were also found to be obligatory moves while introduction and conclusion were optional.

Aside from the usual moves of research abstracts, a new move that occurred in three papers (Local 7, 19 & 43), which was labeled as the Limitation move by the researcher, was also recorded. This move was all identified in the last part of the three abstracts.

It is interesting to note that this move, along with structure and promotion moves, is also seen in the comparative study of Ren and Li (2011) on the rhetorical moves of abstract research articles and master's foreign-language theses. However, it is mentioned that the fact that no RA includes this move in the abstract, though every paper has its limitation, may suggest that it might not be a good idea to eagerly admit the limitation of the paper in the abstract before the actual presentation of the paper.

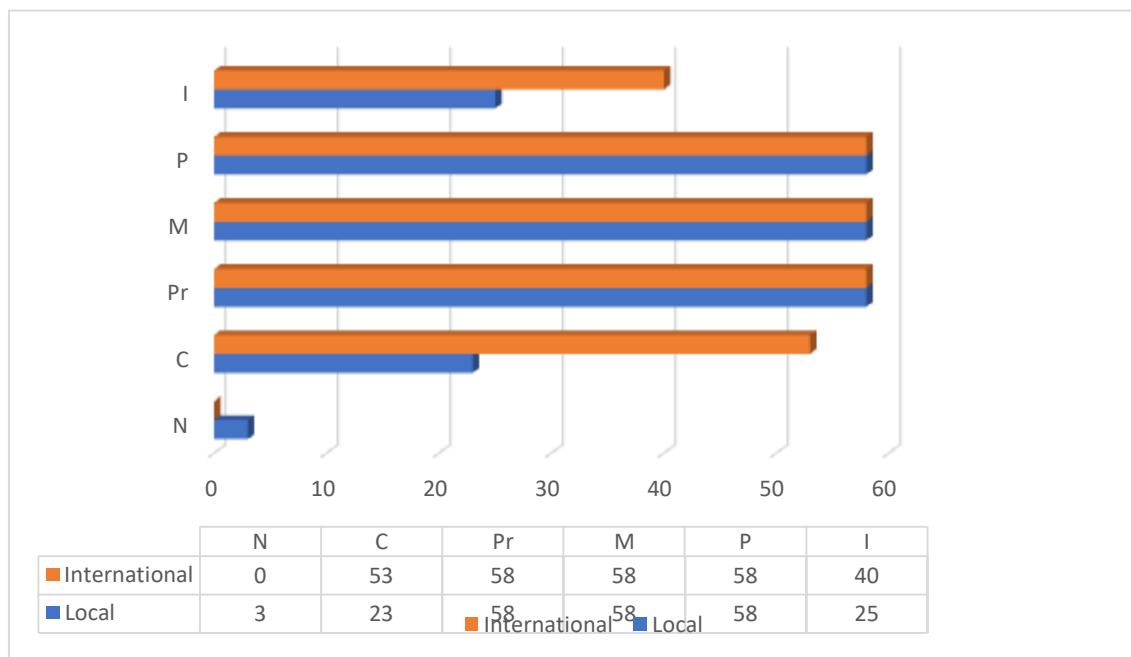|	N	C	Pr	M	P	I
International	0	53	58	58	58	40
Local	3	23	58	58	58	25

Figure 3. Move Similarities and Differences

Figure 3 displays the similarities and differences of the two groups in terms of move use following Hyland's five-move model. First, for the similarities, three moves: Purpose, Method, and Product were all present in the research conference abstracts (RCAs) of both groups. A similar result is shown in the study of Sidek et al. (2016) in their analysis of the move structure of conference proceeding abstracts in the field of linguistics. Their analysis findings reported that the most commonly employed moves were purpose, method, and product. The study of Zanina (2017) on move structure of management research abstracts also confirmed that these three moves frequently occurred in the corpora. Further, the study of Hwang et al. (2017) using move analysis for scientific abstract sections in nanoscience and nanotechnology revealed that authors often use the three moves: purposes, method and results in their abstracts.

Second, two moves: Introduction and Conclusion were also found in some RCAs of both groups. For the differences, first was the presence of a new move, which was identified by the researchers as Limitation move, in 3 RCAs from the local group while there was no recorded new move in the international group. Second, there were big gaps between the two groups' employment of Introduction and Conclusion moves. Twenty-five (25) RCAs from the local group had Introduction move while 40 RCAs from the international group had this move. Twenty-three (23) RCAs from the local group had Conclusion move while 53 RCAs from the international move had this move. An interesting difference was also observed between the two groups, that is in the local group, a new move (Limitation) was identified in the 3 RCAs. Another difference was noticed between the groups in terms of the occurrence of linear and non-linear move patterns as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
MOVE SEQUENCE

Group	Linear	Percentage	Non-linear	Percentage
Local	41	70.69	17	29.31
International	56	96.55	2	34.48

The occurrence of the linear pattern was more evident in the international group, 41 RCAs or 96.55% than in the local group, 56 RCAs or 70.69%. This finding may imply that international authors are more conservative in following the conventional standard linear sequence, as suggested by Hyland (2000) in his model, than the local authors.

This finding refutes previous results reported in the literature, e.g., Jeon and Eun (2007), Martin (2003), and Wang and Tu (2014) whereby non-native English writers followed the linear pattern of writing abstracts than the English or international authors. However, in this current study, the local writers were found to be not in compliance with the linear five-move RA abstract structure of Hyland (2000). Another significant difference in the RCAs of the two groups is their word count which is presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
WORD COUNTS

Research Conference Abstracts (RCAs)	Average per move				Least Number of Words	Most Number of Words	Total Number of Words	Word Average
	I	P	M	Pr	C			
Local	63	48	53	65	61	210	380	16,820	290
International	47	39	48	58	48	150	240	12,130	209

Local RCAs were longer, that had a word average of 290, than international RCAs that had a 209-word average. It is also obvious that the average word count in each move in the local RCAs was higher than the international abstracts. The total number of words for local abstracts was 16,820 while the international abstracts had 12,130. The longest RCA in the local group was 380 and 240 for the international group, while the shortest RCA in the local was 210 and 150 for the international group. This finding could only mean one thing and that is the RCAs presented in the local colloquia were much longer than the international abstracts.

This finding provides comparable insight into a study of Viera (2019) that explored the move structure in abstracts of research articles published in Ecuadorian and American English-speaking contexts following Hyland's (2000) five-move model with 20 abstracts in each group. The study reported that the Ecuadorian abstracts (also referred to as local papers) recorded 170,32 words, which was higher compared to the American or international abstracts with 166,50 words. Thesis abstracts and research article abstracts were also compared in terms of structure in the study of Ren and Li (2011) where it was found out that thesis abstracts are usually longer than RA abstracts with an average of 434 words for thesis abstracts and 199 words for RA abstracts.

Considering the above findings, the researcher suggested a research article abstract structure anchored in Hyland (2000) with a word-count framework that can be used by the teacher education students and teachers in writing and teaching the abstracts of their research for presentations.
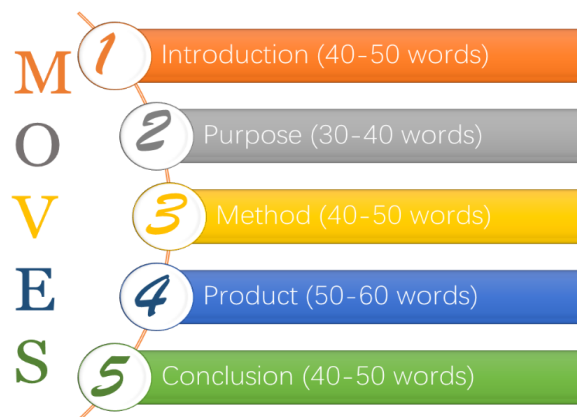

Figure 4. Move Structure and Word Counts of Abstract

Figure 4 displays the proposed model of the researchers in writing a research conference abstract (RCA). The moves are inspired by the five-move model of Hyland (2000) in analyzing and writing research abstracts, and the suggested word counts were based on the findings of the study.

V. CONCLUSION

The single most remarkable observation from the data comparison in this study is the unique characteristics of each group. The results show rhetorical variations in the move structures of RC abstracts of the local and international colloquia. It is reported that there is a difference between the two groups in terms of move sequence and word counts and remarkable similarity of the two groups' Purpose (P) Method (M) and Product (Pr) moves which are stable or compulsory. A new or extra move which is termed by the researcher as Limitation (L) is also found in the local group. This extra move might not do much to convince the reader of the value of the paper, if not undermine it. Although publication guidelines recommend a length of 150 to 250 words for abstracts (APA, 2010, p.27; Chicago Manual, 2010,

p.42), longer and shorter RC abstracts were noted in local and international RC abstracts corpora. One of the longest abstracts in the corpora of the local group with 380 words was verbose and repetitive whereas the shortest one from the international corpora with 150 words displayed accuracy, in terms of structure and content. It is deduced then, that the construction of accurate RC abstracts is not dependent on the number of words used, but rather on how the information is organized by the writers. Thus, the findings support the claim that diverse discursive conventions and discourse community norms influence writers' preferred rhetoric and composing patterns in academic writing. This study, therefore, suggests pedagogical implications for both research professors and students in a teacher education institution, and the framework anchored in Hyland (2000), as suggested by the researcher, is perceived to contribute to this effect.

One of the study's limitations is the corpora's small size, which may limit the testability of the findings and conclusions. Because of the small corpus, it was also impossible to conduct a closer study of the move structure than that described in the paper, such as integrating steps and their sequences. Another significant limitation is the limited use of quantitative methodologies, which results in the current study's primarily descriptive nature, and it did not set out to provide a full account of the move frequency, nor to provide a thorough cross-cultural examination of the disparities uncovered. Furthermore, the findings of the study could be explained from a cross-cultural perspective.

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