

RHETORICAL MOVE AND GENRE KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT IN LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL GRADUATES' THESIS AND DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

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Abstract

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the study of research abstracts and its rhetorical structure. While the number of studies in rhetorical moves of RA abstracts are growing, there is still little attention given to thesis and dissertation abstracts especially in relation to the link between genre knowledge and its rhetorical realization. The present study aims to identify the variations of rhetorical move manifestation in abstracts of master's theses and dissertations written by local and international graduate lecturers and explore the relationship between the manifestations and the author's genre knowledge development. The data for this study were purposively selected based on certain criteria. This study employed a qualitative approach with Hyland's (2000) five-move analysis model as the main framework of the study. The findings revealed that there were similarities in the rhetorical structure of abstracts by the local and international graduates. The study also found that educational level and supportive academic environment play an important role in author's genre knowledge trajectories. The findings discovered in the study provide a clearer picture to help in the development of a universal guideline for abstract writing in final papers for higher education.

Keywords: Abstracts, genre knowledge, move analysis, rhetorical structure.

Introduction

The generic structure of academic papers has gained plenty of interest among researchers. Among other genres, research genre represents scientific inquiry where a systematic and rigorous process of acquiring accurate, objective, and comprehensive information is fundamental (Lubis & Kurniawan, 2020). From all sections of a research paper, one that has received a lot of attention is abstract. Even though it is relatively short, abstract is considered the most important part of a research paper since it acts as the "face" of a whole study. Abstract is a part of a research paper that is easily accessible on the internet, and since it is aimed at fulfilling the function of communicating information on an original piece of writing to a predominantly academic readership (Krajňáková, 2015), abstract acts

as a pivotal point for readers to decide whether to continue reading the whole paper or not.

For students and novice researchers, when they are faced with the need to produce research abstracts in a well-organized manner, writing an abstract is considered difficult. The difference in academic writing styles between languages or between institutions creates confusion and limits their ability to write a good abstract. Kurniawan, Lubis, Suherdi, and Danuwijaya (2019) argued that this is more crucial to take into account when non-native English writers aim to publish their articles to the international scope as there is a need to demonstrate certain abilities to meet the expected rhetorical organization and language standards. As an attempt to find a solution to this problem, it is suggested that an effective way to help inexperienced writers cope with the challenges in academic writing might be to make the knowledge of writing explicit to students through genre analysis (Amnuai, 2019b; Ren & Li, 2011).

Genre analysis through move analysis is widely used to analyze the rhetorical structure of abstracts. It is first introduced by John M. Swales, who describes move as “a discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse” (Swales, 2004, p.228-229). Understanding rhetorical moves and steps could help researchers to achieve the communicative function of a text.

Genre analysis is closely related to genre knowledge. Genre knowledge can be understood as the resources one has to utilize to respond appropriately to the recurrent demands of a particular discourse community (Uzun, 2017). Tardy (2009) proposes that genre knowledge can deepen and extend as it is applied in new situations and as writers combine various knowledge features to varying degrees. Implicit in this notion is the underlying assumption that educational level and varying academic experiences will influence someone’s genre knowledge development, and this development will be reflected in their writing especially in theses and dissertations as a final academic work in completing master’s or doctoral degree.

Previous studies on move analysis have examined the rhetorical moves in abstracts of research articles across disciplines (Darabad, 2016; Gani, Kurniawan, Gunawan, & Lubis, 2021; Ramadhini et al., 2021), of research articles in local and international journals (Amnuai, 2019a; Saidi & Cheragi, 2020), and English abstracts produced by non-native English speakers (Al-Khasawneh, 2017; Katic & Safran, 2018; Pratiwi, Kurniawan, Gunawan, & Lubis, 2021; Ren & Li, 2011). Most of these studies focused on research article abstracts in academic journals, while there are still a few numbers of studies which explore abstracts in theses and dissertations. Research studies conducted by Amnuai (2019b), Mauludini (2020), and Katic & Safran (2018) analyzed thesis and dissertation abstracts. Amnuai compared and contrasted research article abstracts and thesis abstracts written by Thai writers, and the study resulted in differences in the frequency of occurrence of Introduction and Conclusion moves. Mauludini analyzed the rhetorical move realization and linguistic features of dissertation abstracts from universities in England and Indonesia, and the findings revealed a significantly different generality in the two data groups with the four-move configuration having a higher number of occurrence than the five-move model. Katic and Safran examined dissertation abstracts written by Serbian writers, and the findings

showed differences among various disciplines and some similarities that were influenced by cultural conventions. However, among these studies, factors that could possibly influence abstract writing outcome such as the author's educational background and the genre knowledge development of the author have not been considered.

Therefore, the present study tries to identify the rhetorical patterns presented in the abstracts of master's theses and dissertations as well as the relationship between the abstract patterns and the author's genre knowledge development. To do the analysis, Hyland's (2000) five-move analysis model is adopted, and an interview is conducted to examine the author's genre knowledge trajectories. The discovery of rhetorical move pattern in the abstracts and the link between rhetorical move realization and genre knowledge trajectories will hopefully help in producing a standardized model for abstract writing to assist non-native English speakers to cope with academic writing challenges for international scope.

Research Abstract

Abstract is "an abbreviated, accurate representation of the contents of a document, preferably prepared by its author(s) for publication with it" (Lorés, 2004, p.281). It serves not only as a compact synopsis of a research but also a means to persuade and reassure readers that the research is credible and worth reading. Referring to Hyland (2004), abstracts are worthy of study because they are significant carriers of a discipline's epistemological and social assumptions. Consequently, the number of researches on abstracts and its rhetorical structure started to increase along the year.

According to previous studies (Al-Khasawneh, 2017; Amnuai, 2019a, 2019b; Darabad, 2016; Katic & Safranj, 2018; Lubis & Kurniawan, 2020; Ren & Li, 2011; Saidi & Cheragi, 2020), the pattern of abstracts in research papers varies greatly. The variation can be influenced by different disciplines, place of publication, culture, or the type of journal or publication. The variation leads to the need of a more universal guideline of abstracts so that all readers can have the same understanding in reading research papers, theses, or dissertations.

Move Analysis

To study abstracts, a genre-based approach is employed, that is, move analysis. Move analysis aids researchers in analyzing the similarities and the patterns of rhetorical moves. Models for rhetorical move analysis has been proposed by a number of researchers, such as Swales (1990) with the CARS model and Bhatia (1993) with the four-move model. Swales' (1990) CARS model was initially proposed to analyze introduction part in research papers, and the model proposed by Bhatia (1993) consists of four moves, leaving out the Introduction part in an abstract. A latter framework which was derived from the analysis of 800 abstracts across 8 disciplines (Amnuai, 2019b) was proposed by Hyland in 2000. The framework, which includes a total of five moves, covers the entire communicative functions of the units inside a text including the Introduction and Purpose. Besides, Hyland's (2000) framework has been the most frequently employed in recent studies due to the comprehensiveness of boundaries across moves and steps (Lubis & Kurniawan, 2020). For this reason, Hyland's (2000) five-move analysis model is adopted as the main framework of this study.

A detailed explanation on the five moves in Hyland's (2000) model is presented hereinafter.

Genre Knowledge and Its Development

The study of genre has been greatly influenced by Swales in 1981 (as cited in Swales, 1990). He defines genre as a class of communicative purposes, which is shared and recognized by the members of discourse community (Swales, 1990). Genre is mainly illustrated in terms of rhetorical structure, which contains moves and steps. Bazerman (2013, as cited in Driscoll et al., 2020) suggests that genres help to create, reproduce, and revise the systems in which they are used, so that the understanding of these functions can support writing development.

Regarding genre knowledge, Tardy (2009) offers a model that includes four different dimensions namely formal knowledge, process knowledge, rhetorical knowledge, and subject-matter knowledge. Formal knowledge refers to the structural components of genre, such as the genre's prototypical forms, discourse and lexico-grammatical conventions, structural moves, modes and media of communication, and the associated linguistic code. Process knowledge refers to the procedural practices on how a genre is carried out. Rhetorical knowledge includes the understanding of the genre's intended purposes and the dynamics of persuasion in a sociorhetorical context. Lastly, the subject-matter knowledge specializes in content knowledge related to a discipline.

The development of genre knowledge can be described as an adaptation process in increasing generic ability to face demands in a particular context. Prior researchers suggest some factors that may influence the quality of genre knowledge development (Casanave, 2002; Prior, 1995). They are personal cognitive abilities, social status in a certain academic environment, and experience in trying to be part of a particular academic discourse community. Variation in life experience denotes that writers will bring a unique combination of sets of logic, strategies, and capacities to bear on new rhetorical situations because of their diverse social paths (Rounsaville, 2014).

Ren and Li (2011) suggested that explicit teaching through genre analysis might be an effective way to help students cope with the challenges in academic writing. To support the suggestion, a study by Driscoll et al. (2020) which examined the role of genre knowledge as it relates to students' improvement in key aspects of writing showed that General Education Writing (GEW) course of a semester can effectively help students to improve their writing. The study indicates that someone's genre knowledge may develop after an explicit teaching activity. The development of one's genre knowledge is expected to be reflected in the rhetorical realization in their writings, and so this study aims to find out if there is any influence from teaching activities while pursuing master's and doctoral education on someone's genre knowledge and their ability to express the knowledge in academic writing.

Method

Research Design

This study used a qualitative approach to carry out the research objectives, that is, to (1) examine the rhetorical patterns in the abstracts of master's theses and dissertations, and (2) analyze the link between the abstract patterns and the

author's genre knowledge trajectories. Derived from the analysis of 800 abstracts across disciplines (Amnuai, 2019b), Hyland's (2000) five-move model is adopted as the framework for the rhetorical move analysis. Hyland's (2000) model is predominantly used in research studies regarding move analysis (Al-Khasawneh, 2017; Amnuai, 2019a, 2019b; Darabad, 2016; Katic & Safran, 2018; Lubis & Kurniawan, 2020; Ren & Li, 2011; Saidi & Cheragi, 2020). To analyze the genre knowledge development, an interview session was conducted with a designed interview protocol based on Tardy's (2009) genre knowledge domain to explore each participant's educational background and academic writing experience. The interview adopted the interview data analysis techniques by Creswell (2012).

Hyland's (2000) analysis model includes five moves: Introduction, Purpose, Methods, Product/Findings, and Conclusion. Each move consists several steps with different communicative functions as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Hyland's (2000) five-move model

Move	Step
M1 Introduction	S1 Arguing for topic significance
	S2 Making topic generalization
	S3 Defining key term(s)
	S4 Identifying gap
M2 Purpose	Stating the research purpose
M3 Method	S1 Describing participants/data sources
	S2 Describing instrument(s)
	S3 Describing procedure and context
M4 Findings	Describing the main results
M5 Conclusion	S1 Deducing conclusion
	S2 Evaluating the significance of the research
	S3 Stating limitation
	S4 Presenting recommendation or implication

Data Source

The data used for this study were theses and dissertations abstracts written by Indonesian local graduate, Indonesian international graduate and by a mix of both. A total of six abstracts, consisting of three thesis abstracts and three dissertation abstracts, were collected from three participants. Since the aim of the study was to examine author's genre knowledge development, the number of abstracts analyzed in this study was intentionally limited in order to enhance the understanding of each participant's development. The criteria for the participants of this study are listed below:

1. The participants are lecturers of the same subject/major (English Department) from a state university in Bandung, Indonesia with a doctoral degree and have written a thesis and dissertation.
2. One participant obtained both their master's and doctoral degree in a university in Australia, the other one obtained their master's and doctoral degree both in universities in Indonesia, and the other participant obtained their master's degree in an Indonesian university while the doctoral degree was obtained in a university in Australia.

To gather the information regarding the author's genre knowledge development, a semi-structured interview was conducted using an interview protocol that includes three main sections. The first part was intended to find out the participants' background and personal identity related to the research topic: educational background and level of English language proficiency. The second part was aimed at investigating the acquisition and development of genre knowledge influenced by personal, social, and socio-historical factors at graduate level. The third part was intended to find out the same information at postgraduate level and the transition process from the graduate level.

Data Analysis

The textual data collection started with asking for consent to all participants to use their abstracts for the study. The data were then named based on its type: theses as T1, T2, and T3, and dissertations as D1, D2, and D3. Textual approach was employed for analyzing the abstracts in order for the analysis to focus on the structure that is seen only in the abstract. The data were manually analyzed referring to Hyland's (2000) five-move model. The analysis result was then transferred to Excel to calculate the percentage and map the trends and variations of the moves and steps.

The interview session was conducted after the textual data were analyzed to allow adjustments in the interview questions based on the results of the move analysis. The answer of each question asked in the interview was transcribed and inserted into a designed table. The answers of each participant were compared and concluded afterwards. The summary of each question was made to make it easier in deducing an overall conclusion regarding the participant's genre knowledge trajectories.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the results of the data analysis in the form of occurrence percentages and patterns. T1 and D1 refers to thesis and dissertation abstract by international graduate, T2 and D2 refers to thesis and dissertation abstract by local graduate, and T3 and D3 refers to thesis and dissertation abstract by a mix of both (local master's degree and international doctoral degree). This section also describes the analysis results in relation to the research questions, that is, to find out the variations in the rhetorical move patterns and the link between the patterns and each author's genre knowledge development.

Move Occurrence

Table 2 Frequency of move occurrence in each abstract

Move	T1	T2	T3	D1	D2	D3	Average
M1	25.0%	16.7%	7.1%	31.8%	11.1%	21.1%	18.8%
M2	12.5%	22.2%	7.1%	4.5%	11.1%	2.6%	10.0%
M3	25.0%	16.7%	35.7%	54.5%	22.2%	15.8%	28.3%
M4	25.0%	33.3%	50.0%	4.5%	55.6%	36.8%	34.2%
M5	12.5%	11.1%	0%	4.5%	0%	23.7%	8.6%

Table 2 shows the frequency of move occurrence in the abstracts. The moves that occur the most in each abstract are presented in bold. As seen in the table, M4 - *Findings* had the largest number of occurrences among all abstracts with the occurrence average of 34.2%. This finding is supported by prior studies (Al-Khasawneh, 2017; Amnuai, 2019a, 2019b; Ren & Li, 2011; Saidi & Cheragi, 2020) which stated that the Findings was considered an obligatory move in an abstract. Referring to Van Bonn and Swales (2007), it is believed that the product (findings) move occurs in all research abstracts to “sell” and promote their research to the community of the same field. As for D1, the abstract paid more attention to the methodology due to the novelty and the variety of approaches used by the author for the study, which resulted in a high number of occurrences in M3 - *Method* (54.5%).

The least used move among all abstracts was M5 – *Conclusion*, with two abstracts that was published in local universities fully omitted the Conclusion move. This finding is in line with the research conducted by Al-Khasawneh (2017), Amnuai (2019a; 2019b), and Saidi & Cheragi (2020) where only a small proportion of non-native English speakers included the Conclusion move in their abstracts. According to Amnuai (2019a), this could be considered as a sign of inadequate rhetorical knowledge of the genre or that the authors do not see the importance of conclusions in attracting readers. In addition, Amnuai (2019b) also suggested that student writers face a less competitive pressure in convincing their readers, and their objective in writing their final paper is to suit the criteria set by their institutes and gain acceptance by the committees.

Step Occurrence

In the step level, M2 - *Purpose* and M4 - *Findings* were not included in the analysis since the moves do not consist any steps. Only the steps from M1 - *Introduction*, M3 - *Method*, and M5 - *Conclusion* were analyzed further in step manifestation. The results are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3 Frequency of step occurrence in each abstract

Move	Step	T1	T2	T3	D1	D2	D3	Average
M1	S1	-	-	-	5.0%	-	13.0%	3.0%
	S2	40.0%	22.2%	14.3%	30.0%	-	4.3%	18.5%
	S3	-	-	-	-	33.3%	13.0%	7.7%
	S4	-	11.1%	-	-	-	4.3%	2.6%
M3	S1	-	11.1%	28.6%	5.0%	-	-	7.4%
	S2	-	11.1%	-	5.0%	66.7%	17.4%	16.7%
	S3	40.0%	22.2%	57.1%	50.0%	-	8.7%	29.7%
M5	S1	-	-	-	-	-	21.7%	3.6%
	S2	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
	S3	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
	S4	20.0%	22.2%	-	5.0%	-	17.4%	10.8%

As presented in Table 3, the occurrence of each step varied in each abstract, but it can be seen that Step 2 of Move 1 and Step 3 of Move 3 appeared in almost every abstract. It is likely that S2 of M1 - *Making topic generalization* and S3 of M3 - *Describing procedure and context* is considered as a compulsory step by the

authors because they state the key selling points in an abstract. Among all six abstracts, S2 - *Evaluating the significance of the research* and S3 - *Stating limitation* of M5 had no occurrence at all. This might be caused by the contrastive nature of the two steps, in which they insert the importance and plus points of the research for significance and the limitation of the research almost sequentially after one another. Since one of a student's main goal in writing a thesis or dissertation is to be accepted by the examiners (Amnuai, 2019b), the authors are likely to avoid the use of these two contrastive steps in an abstract to minimize the risk of misunderstanding between the authors and their examiners.

Another finding in the step occurrence was the use of embedded steps in the abstracts. Embedded steps are the combination of several steps of a move in one sentence. The combination could be of any steps from any move, but from the analysis only the steps of M3 were discovered to be embedded to one another. Examples of the embedded steps are as follows.

Excerpt 1: S3 + S2 (M3 - *Method*)

“It exerts a set of methods to get data, beginning with survey using questionnaires, choosing relevant materials taken from Indonesian and American presidential campaigns, response forms, and interview.” (T2)

The sentence in the excerpt above is intended to explain data collecting procedure, but instruments of the study such as questionnaires, forms, and interview are also included inside. S2 - *Describing instrument* was embedded to S3 - *Describing procedure and context*.

Excerpt 2: S1 + S3 (M3 - *Method*)

“Melalui pendekatan ‘laman untuk korpus’ terpilih 15 pucuk Surat Pembaca yang berisi keluhan yang dimuat pada 1-7 Januari 2010.” [Through the ‘page for the corpus’ approach, 15 Letters of Readers containing complaints which were published on 1-7 January 2010 were selected.] (T3)

The sentence in Excerpt 2 is mainly discussing the data source of the study, which are letters to an editor. However, it also put in a description about the approach employed in the study. It embedded S3 - *Describing procedure and context* to S1 - *Describing participants/data sources*.

Move Patterns

Table 4 Move patterns in each abstract

Abstract	Pattern
T1	I(M) – P(M) – F – C
T2	I – P – M – F – C
T3	I – P – M – F
D1	I – P – M – F – C
D2	I – P – F(M)
D3	I – P – M – F – C

The move patterns found in the six abstracts were all in sequence from M1 - *Introduction* to M5 - *Conclusion*. An interesting result was found from the

patterns, as shown in Table 4, that some participants use a combination of two moves in a sentence. Similar to the embedded steps explained before, this combination is also known as embedded moves. The embedded moves discovered from the analysis were Introduction + Method, Purpose + Method, and Findings + Method. The manifestations of the moves are shown in the excerpts below.

Excerpt 1: *Introduction* + Method

“Based on a qualitative approach, this study investigated the experience of living in different cultures and its impact on the participants’ sense of identity.” (T1)

Excerpt 2: *Purpose* + Method

“Using Bhabha’s notion of the third space as its major theoretical framework and narrative inquiry as its main methodological tool, it specifically aims to explore processes of identity formation in the ‘new space’.” (T1)

Excerpt 3: *Findings* + Method

“Employing structuralism approach and system formal analysis form Bordwell and Thompson (2008), it is found that textual structure and narrative strategies are ambivalent because they position child characters as subjects, but only under certain conditions: the absence or without involvement of adult characters, in open space, and group-oriented.” (D2)

These excerpts show that the Method move (M3) was frequently combined or inserted to another move. A similar trend was also found in previous research by Amnuai (2019b), where he indicated that this trend happened because the authors of the study purposely did not focus their attention on writing the methods, or that they use well-known methods and approaches in the study so that no further explanation about the methods is needed.

Genre Knowledge Development

In regards to the genre knowledge development, the main hypothesis of the study is that the higher someone’s educational background, the better their writing ability is. Also, it is assumed that if someone experienced a better academic surrounding and is provided with supporting facilities, their writing skills is expected to be way better than others. Hence, an assumption arises that dissertation abstracts would be written better than thesis abstracts due to the knowledge development from master’s degree to doctoral degree. Dissertation abstracts would utilize a more complete set of moves and a more varied steps compared to thesis abstracts. Some findings confirm that the dissertation abstract is more well-written than the thesis abstract, however, there are also results that contrast the hypothesis. It is also confirmed that supporting academic facilities can help produce a better writing outcome. From the move occurrence, step occurrence, and move patterns identified in the study, the genre knowledge trajectories could clearly be seen in the step manifestation.

Participant 1, the international graduate, shared in the interview that the academic facilities including writing courses, access to journals, writing clubs,

and the supervisors when pursuing both their master's and doctoral education were very supportive to the final paper writing process. The academic environment was also considered conducive, as the participant could focus on their final paper writing without any teaching schedules in mind while studying abroad. With this information, it is assumed that the participant's knowledge in academic writing will develop sharply, and it was reflected in the author's writing. Participant 1 applied four out of eleven steps in their thesis abstract, namely S1 and S2 of M1, S3 of M3, and S4 of M5. The distribution was balanced with 25% of occurrence of each step. As for the dissertation, Participant 1 applied six out of eleven steps. The increase in the number of steps used in the abstracts reflected a development in the author's genre knowledge.

In contrast to Participant 1, Participant 2, the Indonesian local graduate, showed a decrease in the number of steps manifested in the thesis and dissertation abstracts. Although the participant used six steps out of eleven in the thesis abstract, only two steps were evident in the dissertation abstract. From the interview, it was discovered that to gain more academic writing knowledge, the participant did a lot of self-learning. Furthermore, the circumstances in the thesis writing process were more unfortunate. There was less access to the internet and literatures, and the supervisor did not really guide the writing process. This information led to the assumption that the participant's knowledge in genre experienced a development so that the thesis writing outcome would not be as good as the dissertation. However, the result of the analysis showed otherwise. Even though the participant's knowledge developed, the development was not realized into the writing outcome.

Participant 3, which is a mixed graduate between local and international, showed a similar result to Participant 1. In the interview, they shared that the surrounding in the thesis writing process was not so conducive due to personal teaching schedules and research activities as a lecturer. The knowledge in academic writing was gained through self-learning. On the contrary, the academic environment in the dissertation writing process was very supportive with more access to free journals and writing workshops, as well as less teaching schedule. As expected, the circumstances resulted in the manifestation of more steps in their writing. Participant 3 only used three out of eleven steps in the thesis abstracts, namely S2 of M1, S1 of M3, and S3 of M3. The step manifestation increased to eight steps in the dissertation abstract. This was the biggest development among all three participants. The variation of step manifestation in the thesis and dissertation abstract of Participant 3 indicated that there was an influence from their genre knowledge development to their writing outcomes.

Only one out of three participants analyzed in the study showed a decrease in the number of steps used from the thesis to the dissertation abstract. This finding resulted in the identification of several factors that may prevent authors from realizing their knowledge into writing. Considering the difference in the length of the abstracts, where the thesis abstract (329 words) is longer than the dissertation abstract (193 words), the reason for the decrease could be because the participant simply wanted the latter to be more compact. The use of fewer variations of steps in the abstract could also be due to different writing criteria or standards from the institutions where the participant pursued their master's and doctoral degree. Another factor to consider is the occupational background as a lecturer that

required the participant to split their focus to finish their final paper and teach at the same time. Suherdi, Kurniawan, and Lubis (2021) in their study have also suggested some factors that could influence the realization of cognition into writing, which are the need to fulfill the expectation of publication editors and the level of familiarity and intensive experience of the authors with the abstract genre. In the end, their study stated that cognition does not necessarily reflect the actual writing in terms of rhetorical organization of the abstracts.

Conclusion

The present study was designed to compare the variations of rhetorical structure manifestations in theses and dissertations abstracts by Indonesian local and international graduate lecturers as well as its relation to the genre knowledge development of the authors. Using Hyland's (2000) five-move analysis, this study has identified similarities in move manifestations between the abstracts, such as Move 4 – *Findings* as the most manifested move and Move 5 – *Conclusion* as the least manifested move in most of the abstracts. In the step occurrence level, regardless of the varying occurrence percentage of the steps, all six abstracts did not apply Step 2 and Step 3 of Move 5. The move patterns of the abstracts vary with the use of embedded moves, but all six abstracts applied the five moves in sequence from Move 1 to Move 5.

Regarding genre knowledge development, it can be inferred from the findings that the varying life experience and social situations of a person lead to various ways of expressing their knowledge development in genre through their writing. Although there was no explicit teaching of this particular genre, an environment favorable to academic activities could help strengthen and develop someone's knowledge and ability in academic writing, as reflected from the writings of the international graduates. However, as seen from the analysis result of the local graduate, certain social circumstances could halt or intercept them from making use of the acquired knowledge in genre to their writings.

Notwithstanding the small scale of data employed in the study, the outcome of the present study contributes to existing literature in academic writing, particularly in genre move analysis in final papers such as theses and dissertations. The use of a larger set of data is suggested to help establish a greater degree of accuracy in the analysis of rhetorical structure and genre knowledge development of abstracts in theses and dissertations.

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