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A Genre Analysis of Abstract Moves Written by Non-Native Speakers

Sattar J. Hashim

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Baghdad, Iraq

Nayef Jomaa

Preparatory Studies Center, University of Technology and Applied Sciences- Salalah,
Sultanate of Oman

Sarmad Alahmed

University of Kirkuk, Kirkuk, IRAQ

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Abstract

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Correspondence:

Writing academically is substantially important for transmitting reliable knowledge to readers, abstract represents a fundamental section in revealing basic section. Therefore, this study aims to analyze rhetorical structural moves in two domains: pure sciences and humanitarian . The qualitative approach was employed, and data were selected from the Scientific Journal Ranking website: 24 abstracts from scientific domain and the same from humanitarian. Research articles were chosen intentionally following IPMPC by Hyland (2000). Based on research findings, both domains showed similarities, whereby methodology move was used in all abstracts of the scientific domain and 23 abstracts of humanitarian . The finding move came second of use though it is higher in abstracts of scientific domain. Another similarity is the significance and implications move, whereby only two abstracts in humanitarian domain included this move, whereas no abstracts in scientific domain included this move. In addition, regardless of optional moves, this analysis reveals that Turkish authors are not familiar with rhetorical use of abstracts in both domains since they did not include important moves. These findings demonstrate varieties in structural moves used in scientific and humanitarian domains. Such findings could be employed pedagogically by novice writers who are not familiar enough with how to write abstracts academically and expertly as well as identify which moves are essential and which are optional.

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تحليل نوعي لمكونات مستخلص بحوث متكلمي اللغة الإنكليزية غير الإصليين

نايف جمعة
مركز الدراسات التحضيرية، جامعة التقنية
والعلوم التطبيقية، صلالة، سلطنة عُمان

ستار جبار هاشم
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي، بغداد،
العراق.

سرمد الأحمد
جامعة كركوك، كركوك، العراق.

مستخلص البحث

أن تكتب أكاديمياً لهو أمر في غاية الأهمية لما ينقله من معرفة موثوق بها للقراء، ويُشكل المُستخلص جزءاً أساسياً في الكشف عن المحتوى الأساسي للدراسة. ولذلك تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل المكونات البنوية البلاغية في مجال العلوم الصرفة ومجال التخصصات الإنسانية. تم توظيف الأسلوب النوعي في هذه الدراسة وتم اختيار بيانات الدراسة من موقع تصنيف المجالات العلمية الإلكتروني وتوزعت البيانات بين (٢٤) مستخلص بحث من مجال التخصصات العلمية البحتة و (٢٤) مستخلص آخر من مجال التخصصات الإنسانية. أختيرت البحوث عن قصد، متبعين بذلك الإطار النظري الذي أنشاه (هايلاند) في سنة ٢٠٠٠. أظهرت النتائج بأن التخصصات في كلا المجالين أظهرتا تشابهاً في كتابة المستخلص. حيث ورد الجزء الخاص بالمنهجية في جميع مستخلصات مجال التخصصات العلمية البحتة، في حين ورد (٢٣) مرة في مستخلصات بحوث مجال التخصصات الإنسانية. أما الجزء الخاص بالنتائج فقد حل ثانياً من حيث التكرار رغم أنه ورد بعدد أكثر في مستخلصات بحوث التخصصات العلمية البحتة. ولوحظ وجود تشابه آخر في مستخلصات بحوث كلا المجالين ألا وهو وجود الجزء الخاص بالأهمية و المضامين، في حين ورد هذا الجزء في بحثين فقط من بحوث التخصصات الإنسانية، في حين أن لم يكن هنالك مستخلص بحث في التخصصات العلمية قد احتوى هذا الجزء. وإضافةً إلى التشابه، وبغض النظر عن الأجزاء الاختيارية، يكشف هذا التحليل عن عدم وجود إطلاع لدى الباحثين الأتراك على الإستعمال البلاغي للمستخلص في كلا المجالين نتيجة عدم إحتوائها على هذه الأجزاء الهامة كالغرض من الدراسة والنتائج. وتُظهر هذه النتائج فروقات في الأجزاء البنوية المستخدمة في مجالي التخصصات العلمية البحتة و الإنسانية. وبإمكان الباحثين حديثي العهد غير المطلعين بشكل وافٍ على كيفية كتابة المستخلص أكاديمياً وبتمرس توظيف هكذا نتائج بشكل منهجي فضلاً عن تحديد الأجزاء الرئيسية والاختيارية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكتابة الأكاديمية، المستخلصات، الأجزاء البلاغية، الباحثين الأتراك.

Introduction

Particularly in linguistics-based writing research, aspects like stance have been the focus of studies on academic writing (Gray & Biber, 2012; Hyland, 2012; Liu, 2013; Hamoy, 2014; Akinci, 2016; Jomaa & Bidin, 2017; Hyland & Jiang, 2018a; Jomaa & Alia, 2019). That is, writers either directly or implicitly annotate their statements to correlate with the field's context and the audience's expectations since the personality level of a text is critical to maintaining good engagement with readers and establishing a persuasive argument. According to Jomaa and Alia (2019), for writers to meet these standards, they must comprehend the language tenets of each profession. As a result, advanced academic literacy assumes that becoming proficient in disciplinary practices contributes to improving students' command of the various linguistic and cultural structures necessary for them to interact critically with the texts (Hyland & Jiang, 2018a). To put it another way, proficient writers should be able to employ a variety of rhetorical devices to draw attention to the originality of their study, assess their conclusions, and build rapport with their audience (Hyland & Jiang, 2018b). According to Saboori and Hashemi (2013), members of each academic community adhere to particular rhetorical genres that are unique to each academic genre and are mostly represented by research articles (RA). Hyland (2000) asserts that research articles have two main purposes: first, they disseminate knowledge to the members of the academic community, and second, they persuade readers to believe claims and statements. Thus, the abstract, which is a significant part of a research article (RA), has grown in popularity among academics and has attracted the interest of several studies (AlKhasawneh, 2017; Behnam & Golpour, 2014; Çandarlı, 2012).

In addition, as Gholipour and Saeedi (2019) stated, the abstract serves multiple purposes, such as sharing information with others, convincing certain readers in a community, and persuading editors to accept rather than reject submitted papers (Lores, 2004). Furthermore, Çandarlı (2012) argues that abstracts are important parts of research articles since readers will possibly read them first and decide either to read the whole research article based on the content of the abstract or stop reading it. As a result, producing pertinent research articles from specific domains for the global discourse community requires the ability to write an effective abstract. Another factor is that a high percentage of

manuscripts submitted to scholarly publications are rejected because of their weak abstracts. For this reason, creating a strong abstract is crucial but difficult at the same time (Jalalian, 2012). However, AlKhasawneh (2012) noted that the majority of non-native English speakers appear to be unfamiliar with the common conventions of academic writing. Consequently, a need arises to assist non-native English speakers in learning academic writing patterns and conventions by teaching them how to read and write research abstracts. In light of this discussion, this study intends to address two primary research objectives:

1. To explore the rhetorical moves of abstracts in articles of disciplines in the hard domain.
2. To explore the rhetorical moves of abstracts in articles of disciplines in the soft domain.

Literature Review

Despite the abundance of studies on academic genre analysis in general and reporting verb use in particular, there is a dearth of research on the topic of reporting verb usage in the Turkish academic writing context. Academic writing by EFLs was an axis for many studies during the last few decades due to the novelty of this domain and the fertile settings to prove their theories (e.g., Jomaa and Bidin, 2019; Masrai, 2019). Writing within the frame of academic context is a kind of challenge especially for junior specialists, such as postgraduates due to the sensitivity of this genre if compared to other fields of knowledge. Thus, the genre analysis presents an image of how language is used within the specific discourse community members (Swales, 1990).

More than three decades passed since Swales' (1990) pioneering work *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings* by which he addressed the pedagogic issues related and gave readers an impression of how the field of genre analysis has evolved in many other disciplines. Since that date, several studies have addressed the topic of academic genre in one way or another trying to present practical and vital examples for the genre analysis from different and diverse perspectives (e.g., Gillaerts, 2014; Hyland, 1994, 2007; Thompson, 2001). Genre analysis involves studying the rhetorical structure of varied sections and genres, such as abstracts, introductions, discussions, acknowledgments, and conclusions. In these genres, some studies have focused on specific elements, such as reporting verbs, since they can also reflect the authors' commitment to

the norms and principles of each domain. For instance, in their study, Manan and Noor's (2013) investigated reporting verb usage by Master students' theses in terms of types, frequency, and impact. They employed Hyland's (2000) framework in analysing documents collected. They randomly selected six theses written by Malaysian Master's students in 2012. These theses are part of the ESL program at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). Their findings revealed that master students were more aware of reporting verb usage especially those related to the research acts category, as compared to cognition acts and discourse acts. The study found that the verbs found from the research acts category are used more than the others, while states from the discourse acts category ranked first in terms of reporting verb frequency specified in theses under research. (Manan & Noor, 2014). The study concluded and suggested teaching Master's students the skills required that enable them to deal with reporting verbs skillfully in their academic writings, rather than the research structure students usually taught.

Adopting Swales's (1981) framework on genre analysis, Marefat and Mohammedzadeh (2013) investigated abstracts in the literature field written in Persian. The corpus of the study was ninety abstracts written in Persian and English in the literature field, by Persian and English native speakers. The analyzed corpus was based on the IMRD (Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion) and CARS (Create A Research Space) models. The study found that literature research article writers usually concentrate on Introduction and Results while neglecting Method and Discussion moves, and did not refer to the research gaps of the previous related works. Secondly, despite none of the models being suitable to produce accurate findings, literature abstracts, in general, were adapted to CARS more than IMRD; and thirdly, abstracts written by Persian native speakers produced minor variations from both the Persian and the international standards, and produced a special standard. In addition, this study highlighted the sequence of steps that the models failed to show. Moreover, it presented many pedagogical implications for the field of TEFL, especially for writing skills.

Martin's (2003) study investigated the degree of rhetorical differences between the abstract research articles published in the Spanish language for Spanish journals and those published in the English language for international journals in the experimental social sciences discipline. The comparative analysis

was used as a method to analyze the structural units that form the macrostructure of the texts under study. The findings revealed that the Spanish abstracts in this field widely adopted the international style depending on the standards invented internationally by academicians as they consist of the basic structures (Introduction, Method, Results, Conclusion) that form the basic axes of any research article. However, some divergences have been shown, mostly in the occurrence frequency of the results part, abstract, and introduction in order, where authors justify their position toward the findings and the previous studies. The rhetorical variables that had been shown in both languages under research may be mostly justified by both languages' academicians' diverse expectations.

Besides, Holmes's study (1997) analysed discussion sections of thirty social science research articles: ten abstracts from the disciplines of history, political science, and sociology, according to a modified model invented by Hopkins and Dudley-Evans (1988). The findings revealed that, despite there was basic resemblance to the natural sciences, the Discussion sections of social science also produced certain special characteristics. The data of the history discipline were particularly unique, and the three disciplines had the least similarity to those of the natural sciences. The study concluded that the produced uniqueness was enough to show the reasons behind the idea of a social science subgenre of the Research Article genre. It also concluded that this quantity of data was required if academic reading and writing materials were to be developed that were sensitive to the structural characteristics of academic writings and in particular, to how such characteristics vary according to discipline. These studies reveal contradictory results; consequently, the genre analysis in the Turkish context is one of the areas that lacks deep search and investigation. Therefore, this study aims to address this research gap by analyzing abstracts written by Turkish authors in two domains: the hard domain and the soft one.

Research Methodology

Out of 12 journals, 48 abstracts were chosen in total. From each discipline, four abstracts were selected. 48 carefully selected abstracts made up the corpus of abstracts authored by non-native English speakers (Turkish Authors). The chosen abstracts were released online between 2015 and 2022. The abstracts were written on a range of subjects including disciplines of both hard and soft

domains. These journals are accessible online, and the nationality of the authors of each paper was verified based on their names and affiliations.

Research instrument

The current study used the five-move framework developed by Hyland (2000) to determine the rhetorical structure of the chosen corpus. This framework states that there are five steps involved: the Introduction (M1), the Method (M3), the Purpose (M2), the Results (M4), and the Significance and Implications (M5). Each move signifies the accomplishment of a communication goal. Hyland's (2000) model, in contrast to the others, separated the writer's purpose from the introduction move, which is typically where it is found. The research articles were downloaded and separated into disciplines based on two domains: the hard domain and the soft domain. Each move was analyzed manually using tables and frequency of use. Though it is a qualitative study, quantifying the frequency of use of each move is supported by several studies since such quantifying can lead to identifying similarities and differences between the abstracts of the same domain and comparing them with the abstracts of the other domain.

Results

The findings in this section address the two research objectives stated in the introduction: the rhetorical moves in the soft domain and the rhetorical moves in the hard one. The rhetorical moves in the soft domain were analysed manually using tables and frequencies to identify any similarities and or differences in the abstracts of the same domain and compare them with the moves in the hard domain

Table 1. Rhetorical moves in abstracts of the soft domain

Abstracts No.	Background of the study	Purpose of the study	Methodology	Findings	Significance and implications
1	X	√	√	X	X
2	X	√	√	√	X
3	X	X	√	√	X
4	√	√	√	√	X
5	X	√	√	√	X
6	√	X	√	√	X
7	X	√	√	√	X

8	√	√	√	√	√
9	√	√	√	√	X
10	X	√	√	√	X
11	√	X	√	√	X
12	√	√	√	√	X
13	X	√	√	√	X
14	√	√	√	√	X
15	√	√	√	√	X
16	X	√	√	√	X
17	X	√	√	√	X
18	X	√	√	√	X
19	√	X	√	X	√
20	√	X	√	√	X
21	√	√	X	X	X
22	√	X	√	X	X
23	√	X	√	X	X
24	√	X	√	X	X
Total	14	16	23	18	2

Table 1 presents the results of the use of Moves by Turkish writers in the soft domain. As seen from the results, the most commonly used Move is the *Methodology* (f=23), whereas the least used move was the significance and implications (f=2). This shows that Turkish authors are aware of the importance of the research method move; so this move is dominantly used. However, though the results are highly important in each abstract, some abstracts did not include this move; six abstracts did not include the results move. As for the background of the study, ten abstracts did not include this move. Since this move is optional, some Turkish Authors did not include it in writing their abstracts. In contrast, the purpose is an obligatory move that shows what the writers tend to do. Nonetheless, only 16 abstracts include the purpose move.

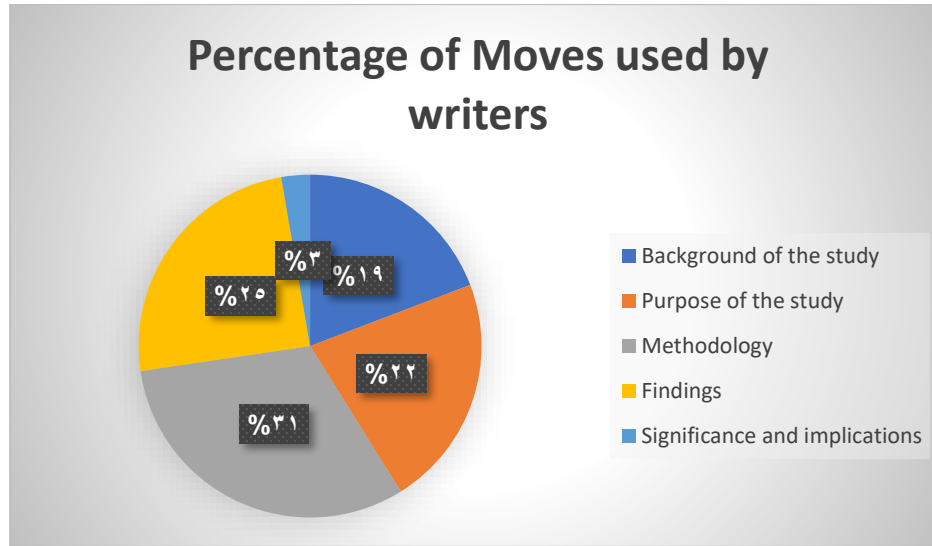


Figure 1. Percentage of moves used by Turkish writers in the soft domain

According to the moves of the abstract, Figure 1 shows the percentage of each move that the Turkish writers used. According to the data analysis, writers used 31% of *Methodology*, 25% of *Findings*, 22% of *Purpose of the study*, 19% of *Background of the study*, and 3% of *Significance and implications*. The highest rate of moves is *Methodology*. Table 2. shows examples for each move related to abstracts of the soft domain.

Table 2. Examples of Moves used by Turkish writers

Moves	Examples
<i>Background of the study</i>	“Ege bölgesinde bulunan Muğla ve Afyonkarahisar, arıcılık için ülkemizin önemli bitki örtüsüne sahip iki ilidir. Muğla ili arıcıları çam balı sezonuna güçlü kolonilerle girebilmek için nisan ayının ikinci haftasından yani haşhaş çiçekleri açmaya başladığı tarihten itibaren Afyonkarahisar iline gelmekte, koloni popülasyonlarını artırdıktan ve güçlendirdikten sonra Muğla iline geri dönmektedirler.”
<i>Purpose of the study</i>	“Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye’deki şeker fabrikalarının özellikleri ile sosyo-ekonomik etkilerine politik ekoloji açısından bakmaktır.”
<i>Methodology</i>	“Çalışmanın evrenini Erciyes Teknopark’ta yer alan firmalar oluşturmaktadır. Çalışma nicel

<p><i>Findings</i></p> <p><i>Significance and implications</i></p>	<p>araştırma metoduna uygun olarak tasarlanmıştır. Nicel veri toplama tekniklerinden anket tekniği kullanılarak veriler temin edilmiştir. Elde edilen veriler SPSS 26 paket programında betimsel ve istatistiksel (lojistik regresyon) olarak analiz edilmiştir.”</p> <p>“Sonuç olarak katılımcıların bilgisayarda oyun oynama süresi arttıkça haz duyma, gerçek dünyadan kaçış ve fayda konusundaki motivasyonlarının yükseldiği saptanmıştır.”</p> <p>“Çalışmamız bulguları ve teknoparktaki firmaların inovasyon süreçlerine farklı bir bakış açısı sunması itibariyle literatüre katkı sunmayı hedeflemektedir.”</p>
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Rhetorical moves in the hard domain

Table 3. Rhetorical moves in abstracts of the hard domain

Abstracts No.	Background of the study	Purpose of the study	Methodology	Findings	Significance and implications
25	√	X	√	√	X
26	√	X	√	√	X
27	√	X	√	√	X
28	√	√	√	√	X
29	X	√	√	√	X
30	X	√	√	√	X
31	√	X	√	X	X
32	√	X	√	X	X
33	X	X	√	√	X
34	√	X	√	√	X
35	√	X	√	√	X
36	X	X	√	√	X

37	X	√	√	√	X
38	X	√	√	√	X
39	X	√	√	√	X
40	X	√	√	√	X
41	X	√	√	√	X
42	X	√	√	√	X
43	√	√	√	√	X
44	√	√	√	√	X
45	√	√	√	√	X
46	√	√	√	√	X
47	√	√	√	√	X
48	X	√	√	√	X
Total	13	15	24	22	0

Table 3 presents the results of the use of Moves by the Turkish writers. As seen from the results, the most commonly used Moves are *Methodology* (f=24) and *Findings* (f=22). The use of *Methodology* as a move of abstract is overwhelmingly more than the others. In contrast, the writer did not use moves like *Significance and implications* (f=0). These findings show that some authors are aware of the importance of moves like methods and findings, but optional moves like the significance of the study were neglected.

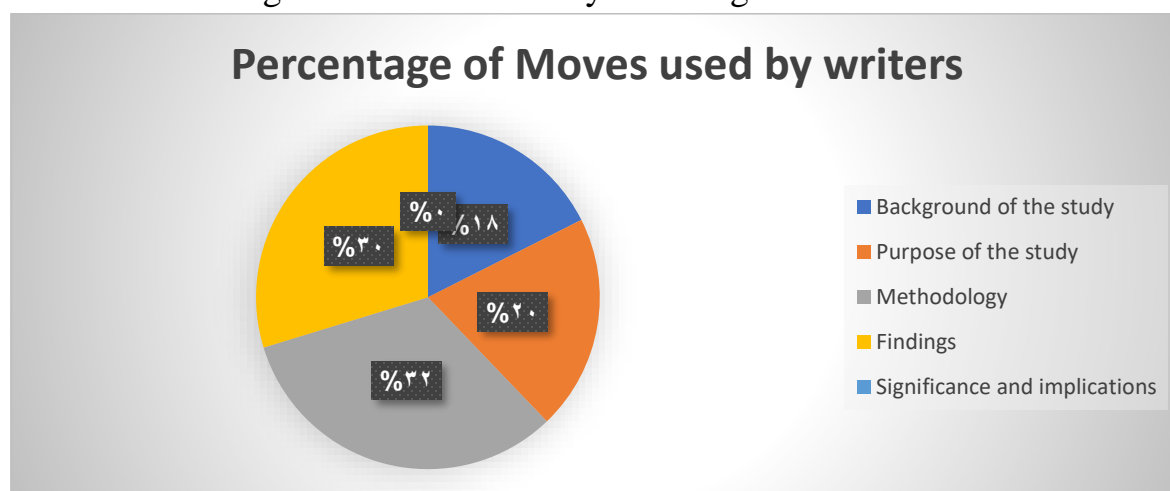


Figure 2. Percentage of moves used by Turkish authors in the hard domain

According to the moves of abstracts, Figure 2 shows the percentage of each move that the writers used. According to the data analysis, writers used 32%

of *Methodology move*, 30% of *Findings move*, 20% of *Purpose of the study move*, 18% of *Background of the study move*, and 0% of *Significance and implications move*. The highest rate of moves is *Methodology*.

Table 4. Examples of moves used in the abstracts of the hard domain

Moves	Examples
<i>Background of the study</i>	<p>“α ve β sıfırdan farklı pozitif tamsayılar olmak üzere, $\mathbb{Z}2\alpha \times \mathbb{Z}4\beta$ nın alt grupları olarak tanımlanan $\mathbb{Z}2\mathbb{Z}4$-toplamsal kodlar araştırmacılar tarafından son yıllarda oldukça ilgi görmüştür. Bu kod ailesine benzer bir kod sınıfı $\mathbb{Z}2 \times (\mathbb{Z}2 + u\mathbb{Z}2)s$ üzerindeki kodlardır. Bu kodlar $\mathbb{Z}2\mathbb{Z}4$-toplamsal kodlara göre bazı avantajlara sahiptir. Bir kodun sıfırdan farklı tüm kodsözleri aynı ağırlığa sahipse bu kod bir- (sabit) ağırlıklı kod olarak tanımlanır.”</p>
<i>Purpose of the study</i>	<p>“Bu makalede, FV enerji santralinin güç üretimini tahmin etmek için kültürel geçiş hedefi temelinde popülasyon tabanlı bir algoritma geliştirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Aynı zamanda, her yinelemede tüm değişkenleri göz önünde bulundurarak daha hızlı yakınsamaya olanak sağlaması özelliği ile Parçacık Sürü Optimizasyon (PSO) yöntemi ile kısa vadeli tahmin yapılmaktadır.”</p>
<i>Methodology</i>	<p>“Çalışmanın evrenini Erciyes Teknopark’ta yer alan firmalar oluşturmaktadır. Çalışma nicel araştırma metoduna uygun olarak tasarlanmıştır. Nicel veri toplama tekniklerinden anket tekniği kullanılarak veriler temin edilmiştir. Elde edilen veriler SPSS 26 paket programında betimsel ve istatistiksel (lojistik regresyon) olarak analiz edilmiştir.”</p>
<i>Findings</i>	<p>“Çalışmamıza dahil olma kriterlerini karşılayan 72 katılımcı alındı. Bu katılımcıların 38’i kız</p>

(%52,8), 34 tanesi erkek (%47,2) idi. Hastalarda çocuklar için depresyon ölçeği puanları açısından bakıldığında, depresyon ölçeği puan ortalaması $10,39 \pm 5,99$ (2-30) idi. Çalışmamızda 72 hastanın 7 (%9,7) tanesinde depresyon ölçeği puanları yüksek olarak bulundu. Hastaların depresyon ölçeği puanları ile yaş arasında anlamlı ilişki mevcuttu. ($p=0,033$). Ayrıca çocuklarda sigara içme durumu ile depresyon puanları ve uyku süresi ile depresyon puanları arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir ilişki saptandı. Sigara içmenin varlığı ile depresyon puanları artmaktaydı.

Çocuk hastanelerine başvuran veya hastanede yatmakta olan çocuk hastaların depresyon açısından taranması erken tanı ve dolayısıyla tedaviye olanak sağlayabilir. Özellikle uyku problemleri ile hastaneye başvuran, sigara içen, ileri yaştaki çocuklar depresyon açısından da taranmalıdır.”

Significance and implications

X

Based on the previous analysis of Turkish abstracts across both soft and hard domains, it is evident that authors consistently use the *methodology* section in their abstracts, followed by the *findings*, *purpose of the study*, and *background of the study*. Notably, the inclusion of sections discussing the *significance and implications of the research* is relatively infrequent. This pattern suggests that while the structure of abstracts exhibits considerable similarity between hard and soft domains, there are subtle differences in the emphasis placed on certain components. The emphasis on *methodology* and *findings* in Turkish abstracts, with less frequent mention of *significance and implications*, reflects the general focus of academic writing on providing a clear, concise summary of research

methods and results. This pattern, while consistent across both hard and soft domains, highlights the constraints and priorities inherent in abstract writing.

Discussion

This qualitative study aimed to analyse the abstracts of 48 articles belonging to two domains: the hard domain and the soft domain. Each domain has 24 abstracts. These research articles are written by Turkish authors whose identity was realised based on their names, affiliation, and country. Tables and hand analysis were employed in the analysis of the abstracts, and the findings were supported by quantifying the qualitative data. The results showed that Turkish authors in the two domains are similar in writing abstracts based on the frequency of use of essential moves, such as methodology move, and findings move. However, some basic moves, such as the purpose of the study were not found in some abstracts of both hard and soft domains. These findings show that some Turkish authors are unaware of the rhetorical style of abstracts in academic writing due to limited exposure to academic instructions or imitating the style of others without realizing the main abstract moves as well as the basic moves and the optional ones.

The hardest talent is writing since it requires continual practice and reading from reliable sources (Alahmed & Kırmızı, 2021; Alahmed, Mohammed & Kırmızı, 2020). In other words, learning academic writing techniques is necessary since the problem goes beyond simply expressing ideas verbally. Academic writing, on the other hand, calls for order, coherence, logic, conviction, clarity, and precision. Accordingly, strong academic writing needs to be well-organized, logically-supported, and show critical thinking (Hei & David, 2015). Since conveying ideas through written language can be seen as establishing a relationship between the author and the reader, writing in English as a non-native speaker has impacted the writer's ability to conceptualize the writer-reader relationship in various cultural contexts.

Given that the English language is "writer-responsible," Dunleavy (2003) underlined that thesis writers should address the expectations of their readers. For reading or speech to be easily understood by readers or listeners, the writer or speaker must organize and clarify the concepts (Hinds, 1987). One important way for them to recognize their duties as authors is by structuring the text and engaging the readers (Dahl, 2004). As a result, rhetorical devices are employed to

highlight the academic voice, which might be difficult for writers who are not native English speakers to convey in English (Shen, 1989; Jomaa & Bidin, 2017; Jomaa & Alia, 2019).

In this regard, equipping non-native speakers of English and novice researchers with the basic skills of academic writing in general and rhetorical genre has become a necessity since each member of the academic community should abide by the norms, regulations, and principles of writing. What is accepted in speaking cannot be acceptable in writing. Similarly, what is accepted in non-academic genres cannot be accepted in academic ones. Therefore, obtaining enough instructions and feedback on academic writing, citing, and varied genres is very fundamental for all researchers and writers.

Conclusions

This qualitative study could present an idea about how Turkish authors write their abstracts. That is, this analysis is essential to identify the text in context. These findings show the authors' lack of familiarity with the rhetorical style of writing the abstract genre since some basic moves were omitted though they are important. However, to obtain comprehensive findings, future studies can explore the context of the texts (abstracts) which possibly results in further findings about the academic literacy of non-native speakers of English and their strategies in writing abstracts. Further, since this is limited to only Turkish authors in two domains, researchers can conduct comparative studies with native speakers of English as well accompanied by interviews. Such studies may lead to additional findings related to academic writing in general and writing genres in specific.

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