

## Genre Analysis of Law Research Article Abstracts and Application in Legal Writing Teaching

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### ABSTRACT

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Investigating the rhetorical structure of law research article (LRA) abstracts is essential for researchers and instructors in legal writing. Despite their significance in academic discourse, the specific rhetorical strategies used in LRA abstracts remain underexplored. This study examines the rhetorical moves in English LRA abstracts using Hyland's framework. Fifty LRA abstracts, randomly selected from the Journal of East Asia and International Law and Law in Context, both of which are indexed in Scopus and ISI Web of Science, were analyzed as the corpus. The research employed a qualitative content analysis approach to identify and categorize the rhetorical moves. The study reveals that the purpose and introduction moves are the most prevalent, underscoring the importance of clearly stating objectives and establishing context. The product and conclusion move, which summarize key findings and extend research implications, follow in prevalence. In contrast, the method move appears less frequently, reflecting the genre's focus on legislative analysis rather than detailed methodologies. These findings are valuable for law researchers aiming to publish in international law journals and contribute to a broader understanding of genre analysis in legal writing. The study offers practical implications for scholars and educators, enhancing the effectiveness of legal academic communication.

### Introduction

The analysis of rhetorical structures has been playing such an important role the field of law where precision and clarity are paramount. Law research articles (LRAs) are considered to be extremely useful for legal scholars to present their interpretations as well as arguments in the legal community. However, in the law field, the specific rhetorical strategies used in LRA abstracts have not been explored yet, especially in comparison to other areas such as engineering and applied linguistics (Hyland, 2000; Pho, 2009). Therefore, there is a need for a

focused study on the genre analysis of LRA abstracts because LRA abstracts are places where the research content is summarized and thus having a big influence on reader engagement.

Despite the significance of abstracts in LRAs in summarizing the content and presenting the authors' argumentations and persuasions, there is still a notable gap in investigating the specific rhetorical strategies employed in LRA abstracts. Internationally, there have been numerous studies about rhetorical patterns that have extensively analyzed research article abstracts across various disciplines (Cao, 2018; Van Bonn & Swales, 2007). In the context of Vietnamese academic writing, the research tend to emphasize on aligning local research practices with international standards to enhance publication success (Do, 2016a). However, there are limited research that investigate the rhetorical patterns employed in LRA abstracts. Thus, it is timely and necessary to conduct the research for rhetorical strategies in LRA abstracts. In the scope of this paper, facets associated with the structure, rhetorical moves, and linguistic features of law research articles' abstracts will be analyzed, utilizing Hyland's (2000) framework. Fifty LRA abstracts from prominent law journals have been selected for the research in order to analyze the structural patterns and linguistic features in LRA abstracts.

The study is hoped to be beneficial for law scholars desiring to publish their work in international journals by enhancing the visibility and impact of their research using effective rhetorical structures. Additionally, the results of the study can be used for the instructors who take responsibility of teaching legal writing by applying successful rhetorical strategies employed in LRA abstracts.

## Literature review

Genre analysis and its application in ESL teaching has been increasingly conducted in order to grasp the structure and linguistic features of various academic genres, including research articles. Recent studies continue to build on foundational works from the 1980s and 1990s, such as Swales (1990) and Hyland (2000), while also incorporating contemporary perspectives on genre dynamics in academic writing (Amnuai, 2019; Cao, 2018). Genre analysis was first investigated during the 1980s as an area of ESP. At that time, genre analysis was applied in scrutiny of learners' writing in terms of rhetoric (Paltridge, 2007). Swales (1990) defined "genre" as "a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes" (Swales, 1990, p. 58). In this study, he emphasized the importance of delineating the rhetorical structure of genre moves within the field of genre analysis.

The reason for which Hyland's (2000) move model has been chosen for the research is that it analyzed rhetorical patterns comprehensively across various disciplines. Additionally, this model provides a clear structure of five moves: Introduction, Purpose, Method, Product, and Conclusion. Other models such as Santos's (1996) and Bhatia's (1993) can be applied to conduct rhetorical analysis. However, Santos's model emphasizes a four-move structure similar to IMRD (Introduction, Method, Result, Discussion), while Bhatia's model does not include the Purpose move.

As for move-step analysis in research articles, Swales, who was pioneered in this realm, emphasized on the structure of RA introductions (Swales, 1981, 1990). After Swales, there

have been numerous studies delved into the discourse of RAs in terms of move structures. Recent research continues to explore these structures, highlighting their relevance in understanding disciplinary conventions (Samraj, 2019; Amnuai & Wannaruk, 2013). The findings of these studies have been applied in both reading and writing classes (Askehave & Swales, 2001). A genre analysis move is described as a "discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse" (Swales, 2004, pp. 228-229). Each move functions as a distinct role and communicative purpose and aim at contributing collectively to the overall purpose of the text (Pho, 2009). Moves may be obligatory or optional within a genre. The question of whether abstracts that do not follow Hyland's model are qualified depends on the context and specific requirements of the academic community. Abstracts that deviate from this structure may still be valid, reflecting the flexibility and evolving nature of academic writing (Bhatia, 2012; Al-Khasawneh, 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to focus on linguistic features to aid in identifying moves and their boundaries. For that reason, there have been a great number of studies on research article feature conducted in terms of genre analysis (Swales, 2004).

Genre analysis of research article sections has been increasingly attracted numerous authors. Initially, authors have focused on the structural arrangements of the introduction section. When extensively examining the introduction section of RAs across various disciplines, Swales (1981) identified four fundamental move structures, including 1. Establishing the research field, 2. Reporting prior research, 3. Preparing for present research, and 4. Introducing present research (Swales, 1981). Then this structure was modified with a three-move pattern called the Create-a-Research-Space Model (CARS), including 1. Establishing a territory, 2. Establishing a niche, and 3. Occupying the niche (Swales, 1990). The Swale's model has been subsequently applied in studies on introduction structure with revised CARS models (Amnuai, 2019; Amnuai & Wannaruk, 2013; Bhatia, 1997; Lim, 2006; Samraj, 2005). Likewise, Tessuto (2015) examined generic structure and rhetorical moves in English-language empirical law research articles, highlighting interdisciplinary and interdiscursive cross-over in legal discourse (Tessuto, 2015). After that, there have been numerous researchers have conducted move-step analyses on the results, discussion and conclusion sections, emphasizing on cultural variations in move sequences and implication in the teaching methodology (Cao, 2018; Do, 2014, 2016a, 2016b; Ruiying & Allison, 2003).

When it comes to genre analysis of RA abstracts, there have been vast number of research works conducted with the aim at helping readers select appropriate readings (Çandarlı, 2012; Lorés, 2004; Pho, 2009). These authors have utilized a model comprising five moves, including situating the research (M1), presenting the research (M2), describing the methodology (M3), summarizing the results (M4), and discussing the research (M5) and indicated that M2 and M3 are essentially obligatory moves in the genre. Additionally, other studies have conducted genre analyses using either the CARS or IMRD model. For instance, Lores (2004) conducted a genre analysis on a corpus of thirty-six RA abstracts in the field of linguistics. The results revealed that approximately 61% of the abstracts adhered to the IMRD model, around 31% followed the CARS model, and about 8% employed a combination of both (Lorés, 2004).

In addition, there have been numerous studies focusing on contrastive rhetoric in RA abstracts.

Candarh (2012) scrutinized the rhetorical differences between Turkish and English research abstracts, employing Swale's (2004) move analysis model. Candarh (2012) supposed that cultural variance and differing scientific community expectations are factors leading to the difference in the frequency of Move 2. Similarly, Marefat & Mohammadzadeh (2013) conducted contrastive analysis between English and Persian native speakers' research abstracts in literature using IMRD and CARS models. The study indicated that literature abstract writers tend to pay attention to Introduction and Results sections but are less likely to focus on the Method and Discussion sections (Marefat & Mohammadzadeh, 2013). In another study by Ismail & Shah (2014), the rhetorical structure of abstracts from Islamic research articles authored by Malaysian writers were investigated using IMRD and CARS frameworks. The study showed that most of the abstracts employed CARS model (Ismail & Shah, 2014). Moreover, a study by Abarghooeinezhad & Simin (2015) investigated the rhetorical structure variance in research article abstracts penned by native and non-native English speakers (Iranian) in Electronic Engineering by using Santo's (1996) framework and AntMover software. The study identified variations in moves, verb tense, and voice between native and non-native English speakers (Abarghooeinezhad & Simin, 2015).

In conclusion, approaching to RAs has been investigated in facets of genre analysis, move-step analysis as well as contrastive rhetoric analysis. To address potential deviations from established models, this study also considers the flexibility in abstract structure across different journals and disciplines. It acknowledges that while Hyland's model provides a useful framework, variations may exist, and these deviations can still produce effective and well-structured abstracts (Swales, 2019). The investigation has been being conducted in whole RA, every sections of RAs as well as abstract sections in sectors related to accounting, applied linguistics, literature. However, exploration of linguistic features of both law RAs as well as law RA abstracts has still been a big gap, so it is really essential to conduct research on this area. In the scope of this paper, genre analysis of law RA abstracts will be examined with the aim at grasping the structure, rhetorical moves, and linguistic features.

### *Research Questions*

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the survey was seeking to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the rhetorical moves in English LRA abstracts and how frequent are they?
2. What are the most frequent linear move patterns?

## **Methods**

### *Theoretical framework*

In terms of models for move analysis, there are Santos's (1996) model, Bhatia's (1993) model, Hyland's (2000) model. Santos's (1996) model is quite similar to Hyland's (2000) model, but it was conducted on 94 abstracts in applied linguistics (Santos, 1996). Bhatia's (1993) model includes four moves: Introduction, Method, Result, Discussion (IMRD), which means not including Purpose move (Bhatia, 1993). In this research, Hyland's (2000) model comprising

five moves: Introduction, Purpose, Method, Product, and Conclusion has been employed. The reasons for which Hyland's (2000) model has been applied is that Hyland's model was derived from a broader analysis of 800 abstracts spanning eight scientific and social science fields (Hyland, 2000). Besides, Hyland's framework has been significantly prevalent for employment in abstract analysis across various research studies.

Although this research has employed Hyland's model, other models such as Santos's four-move structure and Bhatia's IMRD model were also reviewed. In cases where abstracts do not adhere strictly to Hyland's model, the study remains flexible in its analysis, recognizing that variations may reflect unique disciplinary norms or journal-specific conventions. These abstracts are still evaluated based on their effectiveness in conveying the research objectives, methodology, and findings (Swales, 2019; Samraj, 2019).

Table 1.

Hyland's (2000) Move Model

Move	Function
Introduction	Establishes context of the paper and motivates the research or discussion.
Purpose	Indicates purpose, thesis or hypothesis, outlines the intention behind the paper.
Method	Provides information on design, procedures, assumption, approach, data, etc.
Product	States main findings or results, the argument, or what was accomplished.
Conclusion	Interprets or extends results beyond scope of paper, draws inferences, points to applications or wider implications.

*Source: (Hyland, 2000)*

As for the identification of moves in research article (RA) abstracts, aspects related to move occurrence, pattern, and linguistic structure and pragmatic will be examined in order to conduct analysis.

### *Data collection & analysis*

In terms of data collection, this study analyzed 50 English research article abstracts selected from two reputable open-access journals indexed in Scopus and ISI Web of Science: the Journal of East Asia and International Law and Law in Context from the period from 2020 to 2024. Specifically, 25 abstracts have been extracted randomly from Journal of East Asia and International Law and 25 abstracts have been extracted randomly from the journal of Law in Context. These abstracts were systematically identified and numbered for subsequent analysis, with each abstract assigned a unique identifier reflecting its language and sequence, such as LRA1 for the law research article abstract 1.

Based on Hyland's model, the presence and frequency of the five moves have been coded. In the study, both qualitative content analysis and quantitative frequency analysis have been employed in order to identify rhetorical strategies employed in LRA abstracts.

Table 2.

Data for the research

<b>Journal</b>	<b>Number of abstracts</b>
Journal of East Asia and International Law	25
Law in Context	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>

## Results

The frequency of moves in the abstracts has been illustrated in the Table 3 below:

Table 3.

Frequency of Moves Found in the law research articles' abstracts

<b>Move</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<i>Introduction</i>	46/50	92%
<i>Purpose</i>	48/50	96%
<i>Method</i>	20/50	40%
<i>Product</i>	37/50	74%
<i>Conclusion</i>	34/50	68%

Table 3 illustrates the frequency as well as its percentage of each move in the surveyed abstracts. It can be clearly seen that the purpose move is considered the most prevalent move with 48 abstracts having this section and accounting for 96% of total surveyed data. Similarly, the introduction move also makes up the significant proportion in the surveyed data with the percentage of 92%, which means there are 46 abstracts consisting of this section. Additionally, there is a considerable number of abstracts having product move, which account for 74% in the researched data. This figure is followed by the percentage of the conclusion move with 68%. In contrast, the percentage of the method move just makes up a comparatively modest figure with only 20 abstracts having this section. This means that the law researchers are less likely to follow the five move structures of the conventional abstracts.

The prevalence of the purpose move indicates that the research objectives play such an important role in establishing the relevance and significance of the study LRA abstracts. The frequency of the introduction move reflects the importance of contextualizing the research within existing legal frameworks and debates. In contrast, the less frequency of the method move suggests that law scholars are more likely to focus on legislative analysis rather than methodological details. Finally, the product and conclusion moves which account for 74% and

68% of the abstracts respectively expresses the role of summarizing key findings and implications in LRA abstracts.

These results are quite completely different from the findings in the research conducted by Al-Khasawneh (2017) about “*A genre analysis of research article abstracts written by native and non-native speakers of English*”. Specifically, the research by Al-Khasawneh showed that the purpose move, the product move and the method move are three moves that occurred in all abstracts about Literary Studies and Applied Linguistics by both native and non-native speakers of English while introduction move and conclusion move just accounted for much more small proportion (Al-Khasawneh, 2017). It can be said that the field of study by more and large have the big influence on the occurrence of moves in research article abstracts.

### *The move of introduction*

As it can be seen from table 3, the introduction move ranks second with 46 abstracts having this move, accounting for 92% in total, so it can be believed that the introduction move is the compulsory move in the abstracts. In terms of lexical features, this move is usually realized by present perfect tense together with discourse markers such as *although, despite, but ...* in order to describe the current issues and the demand for conducting the research to suggest resolutions for the problem. Additionally, through investigating the data, it can be seen that the authors tend to begin their abstracts with the introductory section, which is quite similar to the traditional structures of the research articles’ abstracts in the previous studies. As for the role, the introduction move is considered beneficial for the law researchers to convey the contemporary social situations as well as the limitations of the regulations in dealing with these situations and therefore it is necessary to conduct the research for the issue. In addition, the introduction move is considered to help authors attract the intention from the potential readers. The result is contrast with the previous studies about abstract structures. Specifically, the studies by Ismail & Shah (2014) about abstracts in Islamic Social Sciences Journals and by Abarghooeinezhad & Simin (2015) about abstracts in Engineering Journals indicated that setting the background of the research through the introduction move just made up a relatively tiny percentage in the surveyed data (Abarghooeinezhad & Simin, 2015; Ismail & Shah, 2014). This can be explained that contextualizing the current social circumstances and raising the restrictions of the contemporary legislation is deemed to useful to persuade and attract the potential readers. This is the reason why the introduction move is really necessary and nearly a compulsory factor in research abstracts about law.

### *The move of purpose*

Surprisingly, the purpose move is the one occurred nearly all the surveyed abstract with 48 abstracts having this move and made up the highest figure with approximately 96% of the total moves. Therefore, purpose move is considered to be a core move in the abstracts about law and have tendency of following the introduction move in the abstracts. As for the lexical features, this move is often realized by descriptive structures such as *This research / This article / This paper identifies / examines / attempts / dissects / responds to / embraces / reviews / addresses / explains / summarizes / analyses / criticizes / aims to / exemplifies / proposes / provides / discuss / outlines / seeks / considers / ...* or purposive structures such as *The authors aim to analyze ...;*

*The purpose of this article is to address ... ; The overall aim of the study was to explore ...* together with discourse markers such as *thus, therefore, hence ...* In the surveyed law research articles, the purpose move has been employed in order to clearly state the main objectives of the research. Additionally, this move is also to explain the significance of the study and its contributions to the current legislation and help the reader to have a deep understanding of the specific field of law.

This finding is quite consistent with the previous studies in terms of genre analysis of abstracts. Specifically, this result is quite similar to the study by Van Bonn & Swales (2007) about the structure of abstracts in linguistic journals and the study by Al-Khasawneh (2017) about the abstracts in the Applied Linguistics field. These studies indicated that the purpose move is the compulsory one in the abstracts (Al-Khasawneh, 2017; Van Bonn & Swales, 2007). However, law research authors tend to mention the purpose move after the introductory section, which is quite different from the previous researches which state that the purpose are more likely to be situated at the beginning of the abstracts. As mentioned in the previous analysis, this can be explained that the introductory part about the current social situation as well as contemporary legislation has been playing such an important role in law research articles' abstracts. This is the reason why the law researchers tend to present the introduction move before presenting the purposes of their researches.

#### *The move of method*

Methods have significant roles in conducting law research academically. In the investigated data, the method move often describe the research methodology employed in the study. In more details, this move provide an overview of the research methods and approaches to address the research issues raised in the introductory part. In addition, this move also mentioned about the measures from which data was collected, analyzed, and interpreted. When it comes to the lexical features, this move can be varied with a wide range of forms such as *This author has adopted ...; ... by conducting...; Building on...; ... from the perspective of...; ... by means of...; .... from the legal perspective by reviewing...; Observations are also made from the political and cultural perspectives as well...; ... will be examined from three aspects ...; By examining different notions of reflection.....; Using a case study from South Australia ...; Using these evidential methods ... ; Using a sociodemographic approach...; Building on work by Estlund, Moriarty, Caulfield, and others ...; Relevant lessons from the South Australian experience are then extrapolated for consideration by other Australian jurisdictions...; This paper begins with an examination of the types of cases and provides examples of them ....; After coming to some tentative conclusions about such effectiveness ...; With reference to the Australian example...; Based on a survey of international strategies ...; To accomplish this, I draw on...; Drawing on qualitative data, we have applied Bourdieu's tools to understand undergraduate and practical legal training students' responses to notions of career accomplishment...; In this article, drawing on case studies from the United Kingdom and Australia ...*

However, significantly, in law research articles' abstracts, the method move is considered the optional move. This can be proved with just 20 abstracts having the method move and thus accounting for just below the half at about 40% in the total. The result is inconsistent with the



previous studies by Pho (2009) and Al-Khasawneh (2017), which indicated that the method move is a compulsory one in the analyzed abstracts about applied linguistics due to its significant roles (Al-Khasawneh, 2017; Pho, 2009). This raises the question that whether the field of the study have the impact on the occurrence of the method move in the abstracts.

Admittedly, the research method plays such an extremely essential role in any academic research and the researches cannot be conducted without the reasonably suitable method. However, in the field of law, the method move seems not to be included in the abstracts. This doesn't mean that there is no research methodology in the law study. In fact, in the field of law, there are a variety of methodologies to explore legal issues comprehensively and rigorously. The most common approach is doctrinal research, which involves the systematic analysis of the current legislation with the aim at elucidating legal principles and rules. This method helps the researchers grasp the intricacies of legal doctrines and their applications in practice. In addition, the empirical research is considered a research methodology in law, which is based on analyzing data through surveys, interviews, or observations in order to understand legal phenomena within their social context. Additionally, comparative research is considered one research method is conducted by examining legal systems, rules, and institutions across different jurisdictions. Besides, the law research authors also utilize historical research in order to provides valuable insights into the evolution of legal norms, institutions, and practices over time. Moreover, there are other methodologies such as interdisciplinary approaches, theoretical analysis, and policy-oriented research (Cahillane & Schweppe, 2016; Cane & Kritzer, 2012; Leeuw & Schmeets, 2016; McConville, 2017; Örücü & Nelken, 2007).

This result is inconsistent sharply with studies by Pho (2009) and Al-Khasawneh (2017), which found the method move to be compulsory in applied linguistics abstracts. This discrepancy suggests that law abstracts prioritize legislative analysis over detailed methodological descriptions, reflecting disciplinary conventions that differ from those in social sciences and applied linguistics (Al-Khasawneh, 2017; Pho, 2009).

Through the thorough examination, it can be seen that when the authors applied the most popular research methodology – the systematic analysis of the current legislation, the method move are much likely to be mentioned in the law research article abstracts. This is understood by the community of law researchers that if the research methods are not included in the abstracts, this means that the authors apply the systematic analysis of the current legislation. That is the reason why unlike other abstracts in other areas, abstracts about law have a modest percentage of method move.

### *The move of product*

The product move is the one that help the authors describe the key finding of the research. Furthermore, it also beneficial for the authors summarize the key results, arguments, or insights that their papers contribute to the field of law. More importantly, this section also highlights the important implications or recommendations in such specific field of law in order to deal with the issues raised in the introductory section. That is the reason why the product move made up the relatively large proportion in the investigated data. The lexical structures employed in the examined data may include *The research has found that; It is well settled that; The paper finds*

*that; We show that; I argue that; This article speculates on...; This paper demonstrates that ....; The author argues that ...*

Table 3 shows that there are 37 abstracts having the product move, accounting for 74% of the total abstracts. By far and large, the result coincides with the previous studies by Van Bonn & Swales (2007), Candarh (2012), Marefat & Mohammadzadeh (2013), and Al-Khasawneh (2017). These studies indicated that product move is compulsory in all the survey abstracts (Al-Khasawneh, 2017; Candarh, 2012; Marefat & Mohammadzadeh, 2013; Van Bonn & Swales, 2007). However, in this research, this figure just account for about 74% in the total abstracts, ranking the third one in five moves. Therefore, product move is considered the compulsory one in this paper. This slight variation suggests that while the product move is crucial across disciplines, law abstracts may prioritize other moves slightly more, reflecting their focus on legislative implications and contextual background.

#### *The move of conclusion*

The conclusion move is believed to be helpful for the authors summarize the main points in their researches and make suggestions. Therefore, the conclusion move is often realized through lexical structures to conclude the research including *The paper concludes that; It concludes that; In conclusion, the paper draws attention to...; Thus, ...; The article reasons that ...* and the ones to give recommendations such as *The relevant domestic laws should be...; States need to ...; There should be efforts to...; It suggests that; .... could be an important alternative for....; The authors recommend...; These reforms need to be undertaken...*

As for the significance, through the investigation of the data, it can be seen that the authors may make use of the conclusion move not only to sum up the key features but also focus on the importance of the findings and give recommendation for the modification of the current legislation. Some abstracts also mentioned the limitation of the study as well as make some suggestions for other research in the same field.

The result of the study showed that the conclusion move made up approximately 68% of the examined abstract with 34 abstracts having this move, so it can be considered to be the compulsory move in the law research articles' abstract. This figure indicates a little difference in comparison with the previous studies. Specifically, the study by Al-Khasawneh (2017) stated that the conclusion move accounted for 90% of the survey abstracts written by native English speakers (Al-Khasawneh, 2017). Additionally, the study by Li (2011) showed that all investigated abstracts had the conclusion section (Li, 2011). This can be explained that while the conclusion move is important in both contexts, the law research authors tend to pay attention to the objectives in the purpose move as well as the current issues in the introductory section in their abstracts.

#### *The most frequent linear move patterns*

The linear move patterns in the surveyed data is extremely various. However, this paper just conducted survey on five most frequent linear move patterns. The results can be illustrated in table 4 below:

Table 4.

## Five Most Frequent Linear Move Patterns

No	Organization pattern	Frequency	Percentage
1	I-P-M-Pr-C	7	14%
2	I-P-C	7	14%
3	I-P-Pr-C	6	12%
4	I-M-P-Pr-C	4	8%
5	I-Pr-C	4	8%

**Note:** P = purpose; M = method; Pr = product; C = conclusion; I = introduction.

Table 4 illustrates frequency and percentage of different organization patterns employed in the investigated data. It can be clearly seen from the table is that "I-P-M-Pr-C" and "I-P-C" are two most frequently observed patterns with the frequency of 7 times and accounting for 14% of the total respectively. These patterns indicate a comprehensive approach, with the former including a detailed method and proposal before concluding, while the latter skips the method and proposal stages, moving directly from problem to conclusion.

The "I-P-Pr-C" pattern, which includes an introduction, problem, proposal, and conclusion, is the next most common, occurring six times and therefore accounting for 12% of the total. With this pattern, the research authors are more likely to pay more attention to present a solution directly after stating the problem, without detailing the methods used. The "I-M-P-Pr-C", which includes all elements, occurs four times, making up 8% of the instances. This pattern suggests a thorough approach where the method is explicitly discussed. Similarly, the "I-Pr-C" pattern, which happens four times and represents 8% of the total, demonstrates a straightforward approach by jumping from the introduction directly to the proposal and conclusion, bypassing detailed problem discussion and methods.

In conclusion, the table highlights that while comprehensive patterns involving all moves are common, there is also a significant use of more streamlined approaches that skip certain moves, reflecting diverse strategies in organizing law research abstracts.

#### *Application in legal writing teaching*

The findings of study are hoped to bring some benefits in legal writing education. First of all, the common rhetorical moves employed in LRA abstracts should be taught so that the students can familiarize with these rhetorical strategies and have a deep understanding of the expectations and conventions in legal academic writing. This knowledge is crucial for students aiming to publish their work in international law journals. In addition, the rhetorical strategies for building each move in the LRA abstracts should be taught so that the instructors can address specific needs. Specifically, if students struggle with the drafting of introduction move, instructors can provide more focused guidance and examples on how to effectively present

current social situations and the limitations of the contemporary legislation.

Secondly, the abstracts in the reputable international law journals can be used as authentic materials in legal writing classes. Based on these materials, students should be given chances to be accustomed to the rhetorical moves in the LRA abstracts. Specifically, the students should be given the targeted exercises and practical examples that require students to identify and replicate the rhetorical moves and then craft their own abstracts more effectively.

Thirdly, it is really necessary for the students to learn specific lexical features and discourse markers associated with each move in LRA abstracts. Additionally, the students should be taught to critically evaluate existing abstracts, identify the rhetorical moves and assess their effectiveness. When grasping the appropriate language and phrases used in legal abstracts, the students can apply them to write more clearly and persuasively. In terms of this aspect, the template for writing an abstract about law research should be introduced so that the students can easily apply it in their practical writing. From the analysis of the structures of the law research articles, a template can be built for the construction of an abstract as follow:

**(Introduction)** *This research paper examines/ [briefly introduce the topic of your research paper] with a focus on [mention any specific aspects or issues]. (Purpose) This research / This article / This paper identifies / examines / attempts / dissects / responds to / embraces / reviews /addresses / explains /summarizes / analyses/ criticizes/ aims to / exemplifies / proposes / provides / discuss / outlines / seeks / considers / [state the purpose or objective of your research paper], in order to [explain the significance of the topic and what you aim to achieve with your study]. (Method) The research methodology employed in this study involves [describe the research methods and approaches used], including [mention any specific methods or techniques]. Data was collected through [explain how data was collected] and analyzed using [briefly mention data analysis techniques]. (Product) The research has found that; It is well settled that; The paper finds that; We show that; I argue that; This article speculates on ...; This paper demonstrates that ....; The author argues that ... [summarize the key results or insights of your study], which contribute to [highlight the significance of your findings]. [Discuss any important implications or recommendations arising from your study]. (Conclusion) The paper concludes that; It concludes that; In conclusion, the paper draws attention to...; Thus, ...; The article reasons that ..., this research paper underscores the importance of [restate the main points discussed in your paper]. The relevant domestic laws should be...; States need to ...; There should be efforts to...; It suggests that; .... could be an important alternative for....; The authors recommend...; These reforms need to be undertaken....*

Finally, the contrastive analysis of abstracts from different fields of law and different cultural contexts should be conducted so that the students can have a deep understanding of how legal writing conventions vary across disciplines and cultures, preparing them for submitting to any law international journals that they wish. In other words, by aligning their writing with the identified rhetorical moves and conventions, students can meet the expectations of reviewers and editors in the specific law journals, thereby enhancing their academic and professional prospects.

To sum up, the genre analysis of LRA abstracts provides valuable insights of rhetorical

strategies that can be helpful for the improvement of the legal writing instruction. When the students are taught about these rhetorical strategies, the lexical features as well as discourse markers, they can be equipped with the skills needed to excel in academic legal writing and to publish their papers on the international journals the field of law.

#### *Limitation and further research suggestions*

The study has provided valuable insights into the rhetorical structures of law research article (LRA) abstracts, but it still several limitations. In terms of the corpus, the study has just surveyed 50 LRA abstracts from two specific law journals, which may have their own editorial standards and preferences that influence the rhetorical structures of the abstracts. Therefore, the study may not provide comprehensive and generalizable findings. In addition, the selected corpus is all in English, so the findings of different rhetorical conventions and structures has not reflected the cultural and linguistic variations. Thus, in the future, comparative studies should be conducted with more diverse range of articles as well as journals and publishers in order to provide a more global perspective on LRA abstracts. Moreover, there are some analyzed abstracts written by non-native English authors, so it may have influence on the employed rhetorical strategies. Besides, the corpus has been selected randomly from the open-access journals so this can limit the generalizability of the findings to all law research abstracts. In the future, research can address these limitations so that a more comprehensive insight of the rhetorical structures in law research article abstracts will be conducted.

Therefore, further research could explore the rhetorical structures and linguistic features of abstracts in other disciplines such as natural sciences, social sciences.... Then contrastive analysis can be conducted in order to identify discipline-specific conventions as well as academic writing patterns. In addition, exploration of LRA abstracts written in different languages could be conducted in order to evaluate the influence of cultural and linguistic factors on the rhetorical structure. More importantly, future research could extend genre analysis to other sections of legal research articles, such as introductions, literature reviews, results, discussions or conclusions. This could help to provide insights into the entire genre and its variations. In terms of education, further studies could investigate the effectiveness of teaching different rhetorical strategies to law students as for improving writing skills and publication success. Finally, further research could focus on employing digital tools and automated analysis techniques in order to analyze rhetorical structures in law academic articles. This will be useful to provide a more efficient and objective method for genre analysis and explore the potential of AI-driven writing assistants in improving legal writing.

### **Discussion**

On the one hand, the results of this study indicate specific rhetorical moves that are prevalent in LRA abstracts with the popularity of the Purpose and Introduction moves. The findings of the study are quite consistent with Hyland's (2000) framework, which focuses on the role of clearly stated research objectives as well as contextualization of the research. Additionally, the results of the study are also consistent with other studies related to the high prevalence of the Purpose move with the aim at emphasizing the need for clarity and direction in legal writing

(Van Bonn & Swales, 2007; Al-Khasawneh, 2017).

On the other hand, the study shows the differences regarding other moves, specifically the Method move, which just accounts for only 40% of the analysed abstract. This is inconsistent with the results in studies about applied linguistics, where the Method move is more common (Pho, 2009; Santos, 1996). This may be due to the fact that the law scholars tend to focus on legislative analysis and theoretical discussion rather than detailed methodological descriptions (Candarh, 2012).

In addition, the study also analyses the role of Product and Conclusion moves, which were present in 74% and 68% of abstracts, respectively. This contributes to the linguistic characteristics of legal genre. In LRAs, Product and Conclusion moves have been playing such an important role in summarizing key findings and extending research implications, which is quite similar to previous studies of research article abstracts across disciplines (Lorés, 2004).

The study provides a unique contribution by focusing specifically on LRA abstracts, a genre that has been underexplored in genre analysis literature. The study hopes to offer new insights into the specific strategies employed by legal scholars to engage readers and communicate their research effectively.

## Conclusion

This study has conducted a comprehensive genre analysis of law research article (LRA) abstracts, examining their rhetorical moves and linguistic features using Hyland's (2000) framework. The study showed that the purpose move accounted for the highest figure with 96% of the abstracts. This indicates the critical role in clearly stating the objectives of the research. After the purpose move, the introduction move is the most second prevalent with 92% of the abstracts. This illustrates the significance of establishing the research context. The product move and the conclusion move made up 74% and 68% of the abstracts respectively. This highlights the role of summarizing key findings and making the suggestions in the field of law. Surprisingly, unlike the previous studies, the method move just appeared in only 40% of the abstracts, which demonstrates the optional nature in this genre.

Despite some limitations associated with the limited corpus size, the focus on English-language abstracts, the findings are considered to be necessary for legal scholars to adhere to certain rhetorical conventions to meet the expectations of the academic community and enhance the clarity and impact of their scholarly writing. For legal writing instructors, the results of the study may provide valuable guidance for developing targeted teaching strategies. Future research should address these limitations by expanding the corpus and incorporating abstracts from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

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### **Biodata**

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