ANALYZING THE KEY ELEMENTS OF HIGH-QUALITY ABSTRACTS: A COMPREHENSIVE ACADEMIC DISCOURSE STUDY OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

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Abstract: This study aims to explore the Rhetorical moves and use of Metadiscourse in student abstracts from the English Education program at Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe, Tuban. The sample consists of 17 abstracts submitted by English Education students from the 2023 batch of the program. This Research uses mixed methods for the methodology, the quantitative analysis focused on frequency counts, descriptive statistics, and correlation analyses, while the qualitative analysis explored the functional roles of these elements in enhancing clarity, coherence, and reader engagement. The qualitative analysis revealed that students who used more transitions and frame markers produced more coherent and structured abstracts. Students who used a variety of interactive and interactional markers, such as transitions, frame markers, and self-mentions to balance confidence with caution and engage the reader, were more likely to produce more coherent, clear, and engaging abstracts than those who did not. The findings suggest that students would benefit from explicit instruction on the role of Metadiscourse in academic writing, particularly in how to use hedges, boosters, and self-mentions to balance confidence with caution.

Keywords: *metadiscourse; rhetorical moves; coherence; clarity; engagement.*

INTRODUCTION

Abstracts are fundamental elements of academic writing, serving as brief summaries that capture the essence of research papers (Katsampoxaki-Hodgetts, 2024; Khalifa & Albadawy, 2024; Lim & Koay, 2024). Their primary purpose is to provide readers with a clear, concise overview of a study's key components, including its objectives, methods, results, and conclusions (Feld, Lines, & Ross, 2024; Golparvar, Crosthwaite, & Ziaeian, 2024; Lu et al., 2024). This brief encapsulation allows readers to quickly assess the relevance and significance of the research, facilitating informed decisions about whether to engage with the full paper (Liao, Mi, & Xu, 2020; Polanin, Pigott, Espelage, & Grotpeter, 2019; Scherer & Saldanha, 2019).

The critical role of abstracts extends beyond mere summarization. They are pivotal in the academic dissemination process, impacting how research findings are shared and accessed (Ashcraft, Quinn, & Brownson, 2020; Lindquist & Ramirez-Zohfeld, 2019; Ramos & Concepcion, 2020). In databases, journal articles, conference proceedings, and other scholarly repositories, abstracts function as the initial point of interaction between researchers and their audience (Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020; Kelly, Doucet, & Luke, 2019; Scherer & Saldanha, 2019). An effective abstract must convey the core message of the research in a manner that is both accessible and engaging (Heinonen & Nissen-Lie, 2020; Shiragasawa & Narukawa, 2021; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021). By doing so, it enhances the visibility of the study and encourages further exploration of the complete work (Aksnes, Langfeldt, & Wouters, 2019; Bürki, Elbuy, Madec, & Vasishth, 2020; Fang et al., 2019).

For researchers, especially those in fields such as education, the quality of an abstract can significantly influence the reach and impact of their work (Haraldstad et al., 2019; Pigott & Polanin, 2020; Roldan-Valadez, Salazar-Ruiz, Ibarra-Contreras, & Rios, 2019). In educational research, where studies often address complex pedagogical issues, the ability to present findings clearly and concisely is crucial (Drury et al., 2023; Dupree & Casapao, 2023; Tullu, 2019). High-quality abstracts enable researchers to communicate their findings to a broader audience, including educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders (Drury et al., 2023; Millar & Lim, 2022; Tullu, 2019). This dissemination is essential for advancing knowledge and practice within the field (Crable, Lengnick-Hall, Stadnick, Moullin, & Aarons, 2022; Davis & D'Lima, 2020; Giroux, Kim, Sikora, Bussières, & Thomas, 2024).

The presence of abstracts in academic databases and repositories underscores their importance. These platforms rely on abstracts to facilitate searches and indexing, making it easier for researchers to find relevant studies (Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020; Tullu, 2019; Zaorsky et al., 2020). An abstract that effectively summarizes the research not only aids in this search process but also contributes to the academic dialogue by highlighting key contributions and insights (Howitt, Wilson, & Higgins, 2024; Luetsch, Wong, & Rowett, 2024; Schillings, Roebertsen, Savelberg, & Dolmans, 2023).

Understanding what constitutes a high-quality abstract is essential for researchers aiming to maximize the impact of their work (Crossley, 2020; Pigott & Polanin, 2020; Tennant & Ross-Hellauer, 2020). Quality indicators include clarity, precision, and completeness also an abstract should clearly state the research problem, outline the methods used, present significant findings, and discuss the implications of the study (Aksnes et al., 2019; De Groot, Triemstra, Paans, & Francke, 2019; Pigott & Polanin, 2020) . By adhering to these principles, researchers can ensure that their abstracts are not only informative but also compelling, thereby increasing the likelihood of their work being read and cited (Muka et al., 2020; Paul & Barari, 2022; Pigott & Polanin, 2020).

Abstracts play a crucial role in the academic writing and research dissemination process. They serve as a gateway to the full paper, impacting how effectively research is communicated and received (Huang & Tan, 2023; Stoll, Kerwer, Lieb, & Chasiotis, 2022; Wu, Jiang, Kumar, & Chen, 2024). For researchers, particularly in educational fields, crafting high-quality abstracts is vital for enhancing the reach and impact of their studies, ultimately contributing to the advancement of knowledge and practice (Drury et al., 2023; Dupree & Casapao, 2023; Tullu, 2019).

The term "academic discourse" describes the specific vocabulary used in academic settings. It includes the methods of thinking and speaking that are unique to academic contexts, like colleges and research facilities (Al-Subhi, 2023; Hadi, Warsono, & Faridi, 2020; Soleimani & Mohammadkhah, 2020). A variety of genres and styles are used in academic discourse, such as research articles, theses, conference papers, and lectures. It is distinguished by its methodical, formal approach and its dependence on facts and reasoned reasoning to explain difficult concepts and advance knowledge (Gusenbauer & Haddaway, 2020; Pearson & Abdollahzadeh, 2023; Pigott & Polanin, 2020; Wang, 2022).

Metadiscourse is essential to improving communication and ensuring clarity in academic writing. Hyland (2005) theory serves as the main analytical foundation for comprehending metadiscourse in this study. According to Hyland, metadiscourse consists of language cues that direct readers through a book, clarify how arguments are put together, and disclose the viewpoint of the author. According to Hyland, metadiscourse falls into two main categories: The first type of metadiscourse is interactive; it helps the reader understand the text's logical structure and arrangement. The second type of metadiscourse is interactional; it expresses the writer's position and engages the reader directly.

Academic discourse is made much more coherent, approachable, and engaging by the addition of these metadiscursive components. They not only help readers understand the writer's aims and purposes and help them navigate difficult arguments, but they also make the text's structure and flow more clear. This is especially important when writing strong abstracts, which should highlight the main conclusions of the study, grab the reader's attention, and give a brief rundown of its accomplishments.

It is essential to incorporate Swales (1990) theory of rhetorical moves in academic writing in addition to Hyland's framework. Swales pointed out several rhetorical devices that are regularly used to promote clear communication and aid readers in understanding the content. Additional insights into the functioning of metadiscourse within the context of text organization and structure are provided by this theory.

To improve the efficiency and readability of their English abstracts, undergraduate students at Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe, Tuban, use both the rhetorical devices described by Swales and the forms of metadiscourse supported by (Hyland, 2005). Hyland's model offers a methodical approach to comprehending how students arrange their abstracts to improve readability and engagement, and Swales' theory offers an extra degree of direction on material organization and communication techniques.

These metadiscursive strategies are applied by students at Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe, Tuban, to enhance the hierarchical structure of their academic texts in their English abstracts. These abstracts are usually divided into discrete portions that can be further subdivided into particular tasks and intricate processes.

This methodical technique reflects the intricacy of academic writing, where correctness and clarity are crucial. In the English Department at Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe, Tuban, the Hyland writer identity model is utilized to assist students in creating their abstracts. According to this approach, the text should be organized to express the author's knowledge claims and personal opinions, describe the experimental setups and procedures, and provide credit to funding agencies, persons, and organizations for their contributions. This practice improves the overall quality and impact of students' academic writing by assisting them in presenting their work in a coherent and well-organized manner.

Analyzing the general format and usage of metadiscourse components in academic abstracts is essential to understanding the qualities of excellent writing. These components and how students use them were clarified by two important studies. Under the title "Research on the Discourse Power Evaluation of Academic Journals from the Perspective of Multiple Fusion: Taking Medicine, General, and Internal Journals as an Example," the first study examines the general format and linguistic elements encountered in student abstracts. It highlights the value of methodical presentation and coherence and shows how accessibility and engagement are improved by clearly stating study objectives, methodology, findings, and conclusions (Wang, 2022).

As an example, the study "Metadiscourse within a discipline: A study of introduction and literature review chapters of sociology masters' theses" focuses on how academic theses employ interactive and interactional metadiscourse methods. This study emphasizes the function of hedging devices, code glosses, and transitions in directing readers and enhancing coherence. It demonstrates how the quality and readability of abstracts can be greatly improved by employing these metadiscourse features in an efficient manner (Akoto, 2020). Both studies emphasize how important it is to comprehend and use generic structures and metadiscourse to create concise and interesting abstractions.

These results are consistent with previous studies highlighting the significance of these components for academic papers (Anjum & Masroor, 2023; Pradhan, Bhatia, Kumar, & Pal, 2021; Strobl et al., 2019). Suggesting that well-organized information and purposeful use of metadiscourse are crucial to improving academic abstracts. Readers can relate more effectively to the subject matter by staying involved with texts that utilize metadiscourse (Ng & Cheung, 2021; Pearson & Abdollahzadeh, 2023; Wei, 2023).

However, current research frequently concentrates on either qualitative evaluation of metadiscursive markers' efficacy or quantitative analysis of them. To give a thorough knowledge of how these components work together, an integrative method that integrates these viewpoints is still required. By providing a thorough analysis of metadiscourse patterns and their beneficial implications for enhancing abstract quality, this work seeks to close that gap. Through the use of a comprehensive framework, it builds on existing research and offers practical advice for improving abstract writing that is particularly useful for Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe Tuban students (Berndtsson, Dahlborg, & Pennbrant, 2020; Chen, Xie, Zou, & Hwang, 2020; Huerta & Garza, 2019).

This study tries to close this gap, especially for Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe, Tuban English Education students. This study looks at the practical applications of theoretical insights into generic structures and metadiscursive features in order to create guidelines that are specific, useful, and appropriate for different student needs. This method not only expands on previously developed theoretical knowledge but also offers workable methods to improve abstract quality, which is essential for students' academic and professional progress. Closing this gap will guarantee that better writing habits are derived from theoretical models, which will ultimately promote better academic communication and results.

The primary objective of this research is to assess and identify the key elements of excellent abstracts for English education theses at Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe. This involves

investigating the rhetorical structure as well as the use of metadiscourse elements, paying particular attention to how these aspects support the abstracts' scholarly rigor, coherence, and clarity. The goal of the study is to emphasize the advantages and disadvantages of students' existing abstract-writing habits by identifying patterns of successful abstract writing.

This study also intends to offer practical recommendations for enhancement based on the results. These suggestions will be specifically designed to address the difficulties that students encounter when arranging and successfully presenting their findings in an abstract. This goal is urgent because well-structured summaries are essential for conveying research findings, making student work more visible, and guaranteeing adherence to academic norms. This is especially crucial for English Education Department students, since developing their abstract writing abilities will greatly advance both their academic and professional goals.

METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to examine rhetorical structure and metadiscourse in student abstracts by combining quantitative and qualitative analysis. While rhetorical structures and metadiscourse markers are counted in quantitative analysis, their contribution to the coherence and clarity of abstracts is examined in qualitative analysis. The sample consists of 17 abstracts submitted by the 2023 batch of English Education students at Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe, Tuban. The abstracts are labeled as Subject 1 to Subject 17 according to the order of the Student Identification Numbers (ID). Each abstract has been coded and analyzed for rhetorical moves and metadiscourse elements, following established academic writing models.

Data collection adheres to Swales (1990) model of rhetorical moves and Hyland (2005) framework for categorizing metadiscourse. Metadiscourse is divided into interactive and interactional categories: interactive metadiscourse includes elements such as transitions and frame markers, while interactional metadiscourse encompasses hedges, boosters, self-mentions, and engagement markers. In the quantitative analysis, each abstract is coded based on Swales' model, categorizing the text into four main sections: introducing purpose, describing methodology, summarizing results, and presenting conclusions. Metadiscourse markers are also coded according to Hyland's framework.

Statistical analysis, performed using SPSS software, calculates the frequency of rhetorical moves and metadiscourse elements, including descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, means, and standard deviations. Correlation analyses are conducted to explore relationships between different rhetorical moves and metadiscourse types, such as whether abstracts using more interactive metadiscourse present clearer results and conclusions.

Qualitative analysis focuses on the functional role of rhetorical moves and metadiscourse in enhancing the coherence and clarity of the abstracts. Each abstract is assessed for how effectively students employ rhetorical moves to introduce their research, describe their methods, summarize their findings, and present their conclusions. A thematic analysis is conducted to explore how different types of metadiscourse (e.g., transitions, hedges, boosters) contribute to the overall clarity of the text. This analysis is performed manually and using NVivo software, enabling a detailed examination of how metadiscourse guides the reader and asserts the writer's stance. Each abstract is evaluated for overall coherence, clarity, and reader engagement, with qualitative findings presented alongside examples of well-written and less effective abstracts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research aims to examine the rhetorical structure and the use of metadiscourse in abstract writing by English Education students at Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe Tuban. As an essential component of academic writing, an abstract should reflect the writer's ability to convey the core ideas of their research succinctly, clearly, and systematically. The study employed a mixed-methods approach (quantitative and qualitative) to identify the key elements in the abstracts and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of students' abstract writing habits. This section will present a detailed analysis of the findings, followed by a systematic and organized discussion.

The key elements of abstracts in english education
The key elements in an abstract include the introduction of the research purpose, methodology used, results obtained, and conclusions drawn. These elements are clearly outlined in this model, which explains how scientific abstracts are structured to achieve coherence and academic appeal. Based on the findings, all 17 abstracts analyzed contained these key elements, though

with significant variation in quality and completeness.

Introduction of research purpose
This was one of the most consistent aspects across all abstracts. Every abstract (100%) clearly stated the research purpose. Phrases such as "The purpose of this study is…" or "This research aims to…" reflect the students' awareness of the importance of establishing the research context early on. This indicates that they understand the need to introduce the research purpose as the first step in writing an effective abstract.

However, the quality of the research purpose introduction varied in terms of precision and detail. Some students provided a more focused and targeted description of their research questions, while others presented the purpose in a more general form. Vague introductions can make it challenging for readers to fully grasp the research context, particularly when the research purpose is not directly linked to the problem being addressed.

Methodology
Methodology is a crucial aspect of an abstract as it provides a brief overview of how the research was conducted. Of the 17 abstracts analyzed, 94% (16 abstracts) clearly stated the methodology, though the level of detail varied. Students who provided a well-presented methodology typically explained data collection techniques, research subjects, and the tools or instruments used. However, some students tended to present the methodology in a general form without specifying the techniques or steps taken in the research.

For example, some abstracts simply stated that quantitative or qualitative methods were used without further explanation of how data was collected or analyzed. This weakness reduces the transparency of the research and makes it difficult for readers to assess the validity or reliability of the findings.

Summary of results
This section showed greater variation compared to the introduction and methodology. Only 88% (15 out of 17) abstracts provided an adequate summary of the results. Among those that did, there were significant differences in how the students presented their findings. Some students provided clear and detailed results, while others gave a general overview without further explanation.

Quantitative analysis using SPSS indicated that the average score for the results section was 2.4, with a standard deviation of 0.72, highlighting

variability in the depth of explanation provided by students. Those who used interactive metadiscourse, such as frame markers (e.g., "The aim of this study..."), were more successful in producing coherent and structured abstracts. The use of more interactive markers resulted in abstracts that were easier to follow and clearer in presenting the results.

Conclusion
The conclusion section was found in 82% (14 out of 17) of the abstracts. However, the quality of the conclusions varied. Some students managed to draft solid conclusions by summarizing the main findings and linking them back to the research purpose. Others, however, failed to provide a clear conclusion, making the results seem disconnected from the initial objectives. Omission of conclusions is linked to lower overall coherence scores, as indicated by a correlation analysis ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.05$).

Overall, the quantitative data below provide an overview of the distribution of rhetorical moves in the students' abstracts:

Table 1. *Distribution of rhetorical moves*

Rhetorical Move	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Introduction of Purpose	17	100%
Methodology	16	94%
Results Summary	15	88%
Conclusion	14	82%

From the table above, it can be concluded that students generally understand the importance of including the research purpose and methodology in their abstracts. However, the results and conclusion sections require more attention, especially in terms of completeness and coherence.

The strengths and weaknesses of students' abstract-writing habits
The strengths and weaknesses of students' abstract writing habits are not only related to the correct use of rhetorical structure but also to their ability to use interactional metadiscourse to engage readers and convey arguments effectively. Metadiscourse, as an essential element of academic writing, includes linguistic tools that help writers guide readers through the text and express their stance or beliefs. This analysis focuses on two types of metadiscourse: interactive markers (such as frame markers, transitions) and interactional markers (such as hedges, boosters, self-mentions).

Use of interactive markers

As mentioned earlier, interactive markers play a crucial role in organizing and guiding readers through the text. With an average of 26.4 markers per abstract, findings indicate that students use transitions (such as "then," "next," and "finally") and frame markers (such as "the aim of this study") to logically structure their research. Students who effectively used interactive markers demonstrated a stronger ability to draft coherent and structured abstracts.

Table 2. *Interactive markers*

Interactive Markers	Mean Frequency	Standard Deviation
Transitions	9.6	1.9
Frame Markers	8.1	2.3

Proper use of transitions helps readers understand the shift from one part of the abstract to another, while frame markers provide a clear roadmap of the research objectives. For instance, in Abstract 1, the use of transitions such as "next" and "finally" created a logical flow from the introduction to the conclusion. Conversely, students who were less skilled in using transitions and frame markers often produced abstracts that felt disjointed and difficult to follow.

Use of interactional markers

When it comes to interactional markers, students tended to use fewer compared to interactive markers. Interactional markers include hedges (such as "may," "could"), boosters (such as "clearly," "undoubtedly"), self-mentions (such as "I found"), and engagement markers that directly involve the reader (e.g., "you can see"). The research found that students were hesitant to use hedges or boosters effectively, leading to an imbalance between certainty and caution in presenting research findings.

For instance, Subject 6 did not use any hedges, making their findings appear too certain, despite the qualitative and interpretive nature of the research. On the other hand, Subject 5 overused boosters such as "clearly" and "obviously," creating the impression that their findings were overly emphasized, even though their approach was descriptive.

Table 3. *Interactional markers*

Interactional Markers	Mean Frequency	Standard Deviation
Hedges	5.4	1.8
Boosters	3.2	1.6
Self-Mentions	2.8	1.7

A balanced use of hedges and boosters is critical in academic writing. Students who used hedges appropriately, like Subject 9 with phrases such as "may indicate" or "seems to suggest," showed a better understanding of how to express uncertainty in qualitative research. Conversely, excessive use of boosters can undermine the credibility of the research, particularly when claims are not backed by strong data.

Self-mentions and engagement markers

The use of self-mentions was found to be limited in most student abstracts. While self-mentions are often avoided in modern academic writing to maintain objectivity, their appropriate use can strengthen the writer's stance and show that they are actively engaged in the research process. In Abstract 15, the use of phrases such as "I observed" and "we analyzed" enhanced the author's authority and increased the credibility of the study presented. However, most students avoided self-mentions, making their writing feel more passive and less engaging.

Additionally, engagement markers that invite readers to directly interact with the text were almost absent in the abstracts. This suggests that students need more training in using these linguistic tools to enhance reader engagement.

The analysis of rhetorical moves and metadiscourse markers in student abstracts reveals both strengths and areas for improvement. The qualitative analysis highlights that high-performing students effectively used a variety of interactive and interactional markers to enhance coherence, clarity, and reader engagement. In contrast, many students struggled with these elements, resulting in disjointed and less effective abstracts. The quantitative analysis using SPSS further demonstrated a clear link between the use of interactive markers and the clarity of rhetorical moves, especially in the results and conclusions sections.

While students generally understood the basic structure of abstracts, their limited use of interactional metadiscourse indicated a need for further instruction on how to balance academic caution with confidence and engage readers effectively. Incorporating peer review exercises, where students evaluate each other's use of metadiscourse, could raise awareness and improve the quality of abstract writing.

To illustrate these findings, the table below provides a comparison between high-performing and low-performing abstracts, focusing on key elements such as transitions, frame markers,

hedges, boosters, self-mentions, and engagement markers.

Table 4. *The comparison of key elements*

Elements	High-Performing Abstracts	Low-Performing Abstracts
Use of Transitions	Sophisticated transitions guide the reader	Basic transitions overused, leading to disjointed ideas
Frame Markers	Clear framing signals structure and purpose	Lack of frame markers results in unclear objectives
Hedges	Effective use of hedges conveys uncertainty	Absence of hedges creates overconfidence in results
Boosters	Well-placed boosters emphasize key findings	Overuse of boosters leads to overstating results
Self-Mentions	Self-mentions engage the reader and add authority	Lack of self-mentions creates a detached tone
Engagement Markers	Rare but effective in drawing the reader in	Largely absent, reducing reader engagement

The table highlights the differences in writing quality and provides insights into specific areas that need improvement for low-performing abstracts. For instance, sophisticated transitions used by high-performing students allow for smooth guiding of ideas, while excessive and basic transitions in low-performing abstracts lead to disjointed text. Similarly, the clear use of frame markers in high-performing abstracts signals purpose and structure, which is often missing in the low-performing counterparts.

The findings suggest that students would benefit from explicit instruction on the role of metadiscourse in academic writing, particularly in how to use hedges, boosters, and self-mentions to balance confidence with caution and engage the reader. This improvement in rhetorical techniques will help students produce clearer and more engaging abstracts.

In summary, the comparison highlights the importance of utilizing both interactive and interactional markers effectively. Students who master these tools can enhance their writing's coherence, clarity, and overall impact, leading to stronger academic presentations of their research.

CONCLUSION

Finally, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, this study provides a thorough assessment of rhetorical devices and metadiscourse indicators in student abstracts from the English Education program at Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe, Tuban. The findings show that although students often follow traditional rhetorical frameworks, there are considerable differences in how they employ metadiscourse components. Effective use of interactive and interactional markers by high-achieving students improves coherence, clarity, and reader engagement. Unfortunately, a lot of students find it difficult to incorporate these ideas, which leads to fragmented and ineffective abstracts. Using SPSS for the quantitative analysis, it is evident that interactive markers and clarity in rhetorical gestures are positively correlated, particularly in the sections focused on outcomes insights.

This points to a larger issue. While students understand the abstract structure, their limited use of interactional metadiscourse indicates that they still need to work on drawing readers in and counterbalancing claims. Teachers should implement focused instructional strategies that prioritize the use of metadiscourse, offering students specialized resources and instruction to enhance their academic writing abilities, to solve these issues. This strategy will improve abstracts' efficacy and clarity while also improving academic achievement as a whole.

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