GENRE ANALYSIS OF UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS IN TWO DISCIPLINES

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This research departed from the result of training on the development of online learning design for secondary school teachers before the pandemic. On that training, WhatsApp is the best choice to be implemented by the teachers. In this research, WhatsApp-based learning design is chosen to facilitate English teachers during learning from home. As a result, the impact for students is that their learning outcomes were positively correlated to their perception, knowledge, motivation, and attitudes during learning from home using WhatsApp. Then, the implication of this research is that English teachers have competitiveness and also competence in the utilization of digital technology, especially in developing English learning designs while they taught from home.

INTRODUCTION

The focus of the present study is on academic discourse, which Hyland (2009a) refers to as the way of thinking and using language which exists in the academy (cf. Marta, 2015). Examples of academic discourse include seminars, theses, dissertations, research articles, inaugural lectures and lectures. Various academic genres have gained much attention over the years. Whereas research articles (RAs) seem to have all the attention, some studies have begun to focus also on dissertations or theses. Afful and Mwinlaaru (2012) refer to RAs as expert writing while they refer to dissertations or theses as learners' writing. Hakim

(2017, p. 12) considers the dissertation as "the rite of passage to an academic career, required by universities around the world and anguished over by thousands of postgraduates (and undergraduate) students and their supervisors".

With the use of the aforementioned and other schematic structure analysis models, researchers have investigated the various sections of dissertations or theses, including the abstract. The abstract is a key component of dissertations without which the work is incomplete. The relevance of the abstracts is inherent in their function. Santos (1996, p. 2) says of the abstract as "specially designed to project the research to the public eye". He goes on to identify four functions of the abstract, namely: it assists readers with different purposes; it offers an overview of the research; it helps readers to remember the content of the research, and it gives information in brief form. Even though the abstract in general as a sub-genre, has received some considerable attention, dissertation abstracts, in particular, appear to receive much attention in Ghana. Given the centrality of this genre to dissertation writing, the present study considers undergraduate dissertation abstract worth researching.

Research Questions

1. What schematic structure is employed in the abstracts of English language studies and Communication Studies dissertations?

2. What lexico-grammatical features are adopted in the abstracts of English language studies and Communication Studies dissertations?

Significance of the Study

The present study is important in three ways. First, the study contributes to the scholarship on academic writing at the undergraduate level in the under-researched area in the literature. Therefore, it adds to the existing knowledge on dissertation writing in general, and abstract writing in particular. Second, this study adds to the teaming interests in research on dissertation writing by emphasizing the important aspect, the abstract of an undergraduate dissertation. Finally, the findings of this study have pedagogical implications for both

undergraduate and postgraduate students by serving as a reference material for those who interact to research further on academic discourse, in general and on dissertation, in particular. This study therefore, provides an impetus for further studies into the researched area.

Literature Review

Genre Theory

The analysis of the dissertation abstracts will follow a genre-based approach which comes in three theories. These include the New Rhetoric, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Unlike the first two theories, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is particularly interested in the characteristics of genre and not the functions or social contexts of texts. Daniels (2017) argues that, while it lacks a formal language model and does not make extensive use of stratified metafunctional grammar, the ESP approach may be seen as an implementation of SFL. Bhatia (2002) also stresses the importance of relatedness of texts in order to demonstrate the importance of the socio-cultural context of the text.

Even though the ensuing discussion seems to suggest the complementary nature of the three theories, the current research will employ the ESP from the approach of Swales (1990). The reason for choosing this approach is that according to Bhatia (1993:1), the framework is "an analytical framework which reveals not only the utilizable form-function correlations but also contributes significantly to our understanding of the cognitive structuring of information in specific areas of language use which may help ESP practitioners to devise activities potentially significant for the achievement of desired communicative outcomes in specialized academic and occupation areas". Bhatia (1993) also considers the approach to genre analysis as a theory that blends grammatical ideas with corresponding sociocultural interpretations.

For a long time, the term 'genre' has come with the difficulty of defining (Daniels 2017). According to Afful and Tekpetey (2011), even though the term 'genre' has existed as far back as the Graeco-Roman period, it has only been

populated recently due to the work of scholars such as Swales (1990), Bhatia (1993), Martin (1985) and Bazerman (1984). There have been various classifications of genres by different scholars. Trosborg (2000) classifies genres into literary and non-literary; Swales (2004, p. 20) has spoken and written genres; Hewings and Hewings (2004, p. 72) also have professional and non-professional genres.

Bhatia (2002, p. 2) posits that genre analysis is the analysis of language use in the broader sense in order to account not for only the way text is constructed but also the way it is like to be interpreted, used and exploited in specific contexts to achieve specific goals. The main action to perform when undertaking a genre analysis is to identify the moves and steps and the arrangement of the moves as well as the linguistic features of the moves. The moves and the steps are indicatives of the communication purpose of the text.

In a similar vein, the central idea to Swales' (1990) genre analysis is the identification of 'moves' and 'steps'. The concept of 'move' captures the function and purpose of a segment of a text at a more general level, while 'step' provides a more detailed rhetorical means of realizing the function of a move. To Martin-Martin (2005), moves manifest themselves as text units that occur in typical sequences. Moves then are the units of every text arranged in order to perform a particular set communicative function. Samraj (2009) identifies that every rhetorical move may or may not have constituent steps. With move identification being an important aspect of rhetorical structure analysis, many researchers use the available linguistic features to realize moves and their boundaries. Each move contains a new information which meets a new communicative need. Moves are functional constituents in a text and can be in lengths of one word to several paragraphs (Farzannia & Farnia, 2017). Each move contains smaller rhetorical units called 'steps'. The current study, therefore, applies Swales' (1990) genre theory in analyzing the content of the dissertation abstracts since it is useful in determining the schematic structure and the lexico-grammatical features that are dominant in the selected dissertation abstracts. Also, the theory is found most

useful and suitable to use to analyze academic genres not only in one discipline, but in different disciplines (Daniels, 2017).

Previous Studies

Behnam and Golpour (2014), Li (2011), Ning (2008), El-Dakhs, (2018) and Loutayf (2017) have also studied the move structure of abstracts. For Loutayf, her research showed English as a Foreign Language (EFL) science writers the available move structures, in order to help them improve upon their abstract writing skills. Behnam and Golpour compared abstracts in linguistics with abstracts in mathematics. His findings revealed that while linguistics abstracts follow a conventional move structure, mathematics abstracts do not. Ning finds research articles in financial economics a neglected area of research hence a need to research into this field. Ten out of the fifty abstracts he gathered follow Bhatia's (1993) four-move structure. He also finds the dominant use of first-person plural pronouns (we, us, our) over other pronouns.

In the even growing interest in research of academic discourse, Al-Zubaidi (2013) has investigated the generic structure of English MA and PhD dissertation abstracts by Iraqi EFL graduate students in the field of linguistics. He focuses on the move structure and linguistic elements employed in his fifty selected dissertation abstracts (DAs) using Swales' (1990) and Bhatia's (1993) frameworks in the micro-analysis of the rhetorical structure and Hyland's (2000) framework in the macro-analysis of the rhetorical structure of his corpus. The results showed that the abstracts section is an unavoidable section since all dissertations had an abstract. Also, moves were signaled by lexical indicators. The generic micro-analysis identified eleven component moves by which the schematic structures of DA are built while the generic macro-analysis identified five component moves.

Kosasih (2018) conducted a study on the move structure of theses abstracts at a State University. His study focused on thesis from four disciplines namely public administration, management, fisheries management, and mathematics education. His study compared the consistency at which these theses made use of

Bhatia's (1993) four-move structure and Swales and Feak's (2004) five-move structure. According to him, Aim-Method-Results move structure is popularly used in each of the disciplines, accounting for 35% of the data. His findings also show that 75% of the data do not follow both Bhatia's (1993) and Swales and Feak's (2004) move structures. He also finds the present tense used more than the past tense. His findings exclude linguistic features peculiar to the moves identified. These features distinguish a move from the other in terms of communicative functions (Swales, 1990). Though Kosasih's (2018) study will have immense bearing on the present study, it is focused on disciplines other than English Language studies.

In an interesting turn, the only African generic study of dissertation abstracts found by the current researcher during the research was conducted by Othman (2011). His study analyzed thirty-nine English language dissertation abstracts written by Sudanese postgraduate students. His study sought to verify whether the rhetorical patterns of the selected abstracts match with those proposed by Bhatia (2004). He also analysed the preferred tenses and voice mostly used in the data. His studies revealed that some rhetorical patterns and moves match Bhatia's proposal. Also, it was found that present simple tense and passive voice occurred the most. In his conclusion, he recommends the training of advanced students so that they can adopt a uniform template in the writing of abstracts.

The above review collectively indicates that there has been an appreciable number of researches on the abstract of research articles and dissertations or abstracts of both students and professionals. Also, it can be seen that even in the ESP tradition of genre studies, there are a number of models available to me. In addition, the moves realized after the researches in the reviews is indicative that it is not always the case that the realized moves would match the moves proposed by the model in use and this even goes to affirm the need for discipline accepted format of academic writing. Even though numerous studies have been done on thesis and dissertation abstracts, it can be concluded that scholars have not studies enough abstracts in Africa, especially in Ghana. Upon realizing this gap in

research, the current research seeks to study the structure of dissertation abstracts of two departments or disciplines in the same faculty of the same university.

METHOD

The research design is a plan structure and strategy of investigation in order to get answers to research questions (Kumar, 2011). The research design adopted for this study is a mixed design in that it includes both qualitative and quantitative research designs. The data for this study was obtained from dissertations written from 2009-2019 and submitted to the Department of English and the Department of Communication Studies of the University of Cape Coast. I used the data from this period because enough copies of dissertations written within this period were available during data collection. The purposive sampling technique was used to gather the data. The dissertations were purposely sampled to include an equal number from each department/discipline. The purposeful sampling technique became useful in selecting dissertations that were written every year within the period under consideration. Also, the technique was used to select dissertations from the Department of English that were in any sub-discipline other than literature. Two dissertations written in English language studies and two dissertations written in Communication Studies every year were selected. In all, forty (40) dissertations from which forty abstracts would be retrieved were selected for the study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Schematic Structure of the Abstract Section

The abstract section of the dissertation is an important part of the research work. The communicative purpose of the DA is achieved with the use of moves and steps. The analysis of the data for this study revealed that the abstract section has five moves, which is in line with the study of Kosasih (2018). A further examination of the data from the department of English and the Department of Communication Studies revealed that the abstract section of the undergraduate dissertation comprised one optional move and four obligatory moves. The moves and their constituent steps are presented as follows:

Move 1: Introduction

Step 1a: Claiming centrality

Step 1b: Making topic generalizations

Step 1c: Reviewing previous research

Move 2: Purpose

Step 2a: Outlining purpose/aim

Step 2b: Announcing present study

Move 3: Method

Step 3a: Stating theory

Step 3b: Stating research design

Step 3c: Describing research site

Step 3d: Describing data source

Step 3e: Describing sample size and sampling procedure

Step 3f: Describing data collection procedure/analysis

Move 4: Results

Step 4a: Announcing findings

Step 4b: Indicating significance/contribution

Moves 4: Conclusion

Step 5a: Stating recommendation

Step 5b: Stating implication

Frequency of Occurrence of the Moves/Steps in the Data

The table below illustrates the frequency of Moves according to their occurrence in the DAC and DAE data sets, and it is followed by a discussion of the results.

Table 1: Frequency of Moves/Steps

MOVE	DAE = 20 Freq.	%	DAC = 20 Freq.	%	Total = 40 Freq.	%
1. **Introduction**	11	55	9	45	20	50
- Step1a: Claiming centrality	6	30	1	5	7	17.5
- Step1b: Making topic generalizations	4	20	7	35	11	27.5
- Step1c: Reviewing previous research	0	0	2	10	2	5
2. **Purpose**	18	90	20	100	38	95
- Step2a: Outlining purpose/aim	12	60	14	70	25	62.5
- Step2b: Announcing present research	8	40	8	40	16	40
3. **Method**	20	100	20	100	40	100
- Step3a: Stating theory	9	45	8	40	16	40
- Step3b: Stating research design	12	60	10	50	22	55
- Step3c: Describing research site	4	20	14	70	17	42.5
- Step3d: Describing data source	14	70	12	60	26	65
- Step3e: Describing sample size and sampling procedure	18	90	11	55	29	72.5
- Step3f: Describing data collection procedure/analysis	4	20	7	35	10	25
4. **Result**	18	90	20	100	38	95
- Step4a: Announcing finding(s)	20	100	20	100	40	100
- Step4b: Indicating significance/contribution	4	20	3	15	7	17.5
5. **Conclusion**	15	75	13	65	28	70
- Step5a: Stating recommendation	15		12	60	13	32.5
- Step5b: Stating implication	14	70	15		15	37.5

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It is realized from Table 1 that Move 1 is an optional move while Moves 2, 3, 4, and 5 are obligatory or core moves. Move 1 is an optional move in the data because most students did not see the need to provide a summary of the background to their study but went ahead with the second move to inform readers what the research is about. Considering the main communicative function of the dissertation abstract, it tends to be surprising that some students will choose not to include a summary of their introductory chapter in their abstracts. The main communication of the dissertation abstract is to provide an overview of the entire work by presenting a comprehensive but concise summary of the work. Moves 2 – 4 are said to be core or obligatory because they appeared in almost all the dissertation abstracts collected from the two departments. In line with the works of Alhuqbani (2013) and Kosasih (2018), a Move in the current study is considered obligatory if it occurred in the data sets not less than 60% in each department but it is considered optional if it occurred in less than 60% of the corpus. From the table, move 1 recorded an occurrence of less than 60 % in both corpora. This move was realized by any of the individual steps or a combination of the steps. As can be seen in Table 1, none of the students from the Department of English used Step 1c in Move 1. In view of Aboagye (2015), the students who begun their dissertation abstracts with the first move and subsequently having all five moves attempted to present their writing in a cohesive manner. It therefore makes the work complete given that the dissertation abstract is to provide a summary of the entire research work.

It is also seen in Table 1 that Move 2 is an obligatory move occurring in all 40 samples but two. It had an occurrence percentage of 90% in DAs from the Department of English and an occurrence percentage of 100% in DAs from the Department of Communication Studies. This finding is expected given the fact that without a purpose, research cannot begin in the first place. In this Move, the student expressed the intention to fill an already established gap, and that the reason for undertaking the research work is mentioned. This Move was also realized by one or a combination of the moves. Students from both departments used Step 1 the most in realizing this Move.

Table 1 also shows that Move 3 is an obligatory Move and it is the most frequent Move in both DAs in English language studies and Communication Studies. It recorded a 100% occurrence in both corpora. This Move appeared in all samples from the two departments because with the combination of any of the Steps under the Move, the student was able to show how the study was conducted. Step 3e occurred the most (90%) in the DAE data set while Step 3c occurred the most (70) in the DAC data set. The least occurring step under this move in both data set is Step 3f.

The next Move is Move 4- *Result* and it is also an obligatory Move occurring in all samples except two. It is frequent in both DAE data set (90%) and DAC data set (100%). The communicative purpose of this move is to present a summary of the findings of the research work and so almost all the students from both departments presented a summary of their findings. Some students also indicated the significance or the contribution of the research in this Move. This move is realized by any or a combination of the two Steps present in this Move. From the table, the most realized step under this move in both data sets is Step 4a (100%), while step 4b had the least occurrence of 20% for DAE and 15% for DAC.

The last move – *conclusion*, is highly frequent in dissertations from both departments. Per the occurrence percentage in DAE and DAC, it can be said that move 5 is a core move in both data sets. This move is also realized by two steps. It is rather surprising to realize from Table 1 that while Move 5 was realized mostly by Step 5b in DAE (70%), it is realized mostly by Step 5a in DAC (60%). This indicates the disciplinary preference in the conclusion of an abstract. Students from the Department of English prefer to indicate the implication of their study in the concluding part of their abstracts while students from the Department of Communication Studies prefer to indicate their recommendations in the concluding part of their abstracts.

Sequencing of Moves

Table 2 below presents the sequencing of Moves in the abstract section of dissertations selected from the Departments of English and Communication Studies of the University of Cape Coast.

Table 2: Sequencing of Moves in the Abstract section

Pattern	DAE (n= 20)		DAC (n =20)	
	Freq.	**(%)**	**Freq.**	**(%)**
5-Move Sequence				
1, 2, 3, 4, 5	7	(35)	6	(30)
2, 1, 3, 4, 5				
4-Move Sequence	0	(0)	1	(5)
1, 3, 4, 5				
1, 2, 3, 4				
1, 2, 3, 2				
2, 3, 4, 5	2	(10)	0	(0)
2, 4, 3, 5				
3-Move Sequence	1	(5)	2	(10)
2, 3, 4				
2-Move Sequence	1	(5)	0	(0)
2, 3	6	(30)	5	(25)
	0	(0)	1	(5)
	2	(10)	5	(25)
	1	(5)	0	(0)

Table 2 presents the quantitative sequencing of the moves identified in the data. Sequencing of moves involves the order of moves as they appear in a text. From the table above, the ordering of Moves ranges from a 2-Move sequence to a 5-Move sequence. The analysis of the data revealed that the 5-move sequence occurred in two forms. It either comes in the 1>2 >3 >4 >5 sequence or the 2 >1 >3 >4 >5 sequence, with the former occurring in 7(35%) of the DAs from the Department of English and 6(30%) in DAs from Department of Communication Studies while the later occurred only once in the data from the Department of Communication Studies. The abstract as a genre has particular pattern which is mostly the 1 >2 >3 >4 >5 sequence and so it is not surprising that is the move sequence that occurs the most in both data sets. The findings of the move arrangement confirm the ESP assertion that even though a genre may have a template for the reference for later researchers, there can be variations in the way

genre is patterned. It can equally be observed from Table 2 that the 4-move sequence has four different patterns with the 2 >3 >4>5 pattern being the most occurring sequence in both data set. This sequence is realised when the introduction move is not realised in the abstract. The 3-Move sequence 2>3>4 recorded a 10% occurrence in the DAE data set but a 25% occurrence in the DAC data set. The analysis revealed the occurrence of a 2-move sequence which appeared only once (5%) in the entire corpus and that was in the DAE data set. Below are some examples of the 5-Move sequence. First, the sequence of moves in English language studies will eb presented followed by the sequence of moves in Communication Studies.

Advertise are a kind of applied writing aimed at persuading consumers to buy specific products. As a result of increasing competition in the world over, advertisers are sharpening their tools of persuasion to increase consumerism through the use of various linguistic strategies. The purpose of this study was, therefore, to investigate whether doublespeak, a persuasive language strategy, exists in newspaper advertisements by examining the linguistic forms it assumed and whether the use of doublespeak had any effect on the clientele. The qualitative analysis was based on ten advertisements each from 'The Mirror' and 'Daily Graphic'. Key findings showed that the use of doublespeak in the advertisements assumed two main forms, namely, ambiguity and hyperbole in order to make the products seem attractive. The study also revealed that the use of doublespeak increases sales of the products because it had a persuasive effect on buyers. It was, however, found that the value claims of the products were not satisfactory. The study has implications for future studies in semantics, discourse analysis and media studies. (DAE 16)

Figure 3: Sample of a 5-Move Sequence of the DA in English Language Studies

Radio is a tremendous means for scientific education, political enlightenment and socio-cultural progress and become a major channel for empowering the disenfranchised though the utilization of national languages in terms of development. Although it could be said that the presence of radio in Ghana's democratic dispensation should be a blessing and contributor to community development, it appears this has not been the case. The study examined the role of radio in community development in the Cape Coast Metropolis of the Central Region, Ghana. The study, which was a descriptive survey, used purposive sampling techniques and solicited information from 50 respondents. Using simple quantitative methods, the study revealed that radio was important in educating and informing the society. It was also found out that there were challenges such as interferences from local authorities, quality of output and tight budget. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the stations should continue to foster positive relationship with the communities and must be opened to the general public specially to contribute during the formulations of programmes from the initial stages to the implementation stage. (DAC 3)

Figure 4: Sample of a 5-Move Sequence of the DA in Communication Studies.

Textual Space of Moves

Textual space is the amount of space occupied of given to a particular Move in a text. According to Afful (2005), the frequency of occurrence and the textual space given to a Move indicate their importance. Thus, a Move would occur more and be given more textual space if it is of a high rhetorical importance. In order to know the importance, it is needful that the textual space is calculated. The T-unit is chosen as the calculating unit for the textual space of the Moves in the data. This, according to Hunt (1970), is the shortest into which writing can be reduced

without rejecting certain sentence fragments. The current study selects the sentence as the unit of measurement. The table below is a summary of the textual space given to each Move followed by a discussion of the findings.

Table 3: Textual Space Allocated to Moves

Moves	English language studies DAs (DAE)		Communication Studies DAs (DAC)		Total	
	No. of T-units	%	No. of T-units	%	No. of T-units	%
Move1-Introduction	21	11.	16	8.7	37	10.
Moce2-Purpose	23	12.	25	13.6	48	13.
Move3-Method	58	32.	50	27.1	108	29.
Move4-Result	54	30.	70	38	124	34.
Move5-Conclusion	17	9.	23	12.5	40	11.
Total	**178**	**97.**	**184**	**99.9**	**362**	**98.**

Table 3 above is the quantitative representation of textual space occupied by each move. Table 3 indicates that in the DAC data, move 1(introduction) occupied the least textual space (8.7%), followed by Move 5(conclusion) which is then closely followed by Move 2(purpose) while Move 4(result) occupied the most textual space with 38% followed by Move 3(method) with 27.1%. For the DAE data, move 3 is allocated the most textual space (32.58%) while Move 5 is allocated the least textual space with 9.55% of the total textual space. Averagely, move 4 (method) occupied the most textual space while Move 1(introduction) occupied the least textual space in the DAs of students from both departments. This occurrence is as a result of the importance the student writers place on Moves 3 and 4. Thus, student writers allocate more textual space to the Move they deem more important with consideration to the communicative purpose of the Move. Students allocated much space to discuss how they conducted their various researches and the outcomes of the researches. It is surprising to note that the Method section of the dissertation perhaps occupies the least textual space in the

dissertation but occupies the most textual space in the DAC data and the second in the DAE data. This is perhaps because the Method section of the dissertations has a lot of sub-sections than all the other sections and that all of those must be summarized in the abstract section.

Lexico-Grammatical Features

Linguistic Realizations

Move1 – Introduction

In analysing the linguistic items, the structural types of sentences and verb tense used are examined. There was the use of superordinate and subordinate clauses in both DAs in English language studies and DAs in Communication Studies. Superordinate clauses mostly present one main idea. Examples are as follows:

21. *Various studies are increasingly being conducted on religious discourse in general*. (DAE 13)

22. *With the rapid growth and development of entertainment, language use in entertainment news writing has gained more and more attention in recent years*. (DAE 20)

23. *Newspapers are essential sources of information and news which when read regularly broadens readers' horizon. (DAC 19)*

24. *Social media advertising is a particular segment of marketing that utilizes internet's social platforms to deliver commercial messages to potential customers. (DAC 13)*

The underlined clauses above are superordinate because they are independent and they present one main idea. The underlined structures could make meaning on their own without those not underlined. While sentences 22, 23 and 24 have subordinate and superordinate clauses, sentence 21 has only a superordinate.

On the type of tense used, it is observed that the simple present tense is used the most. The introduction move is used mainly to state facts about the area of study and thus the simple present tense is preferred. The introduction Move is also used to define related terms in the field and in doing so the present tense is used the most. It is only when a student researcher wanted to make a reference to a previous study in the field that the past tense was used, but that was very rare in the data set. Examples are as follows:

25. *Political Campaigns **play** vital role in every country's elections. (DAC 2)*

26. *The 'Objective of the Study' **is** a section found in the introductory part in most academic writings. (DAE 14)*

The above examples show the use of simple present tense in Move 1.

Move 2 – Purpose

This Move is characterized by the prevalent use of the various forms of the verb "examine" across the two disciplines. This is perhaps expected considering the communicative function of the Purpose Move – to state the reason for the research. Examples are as follows:

27. *This paper examines the use of reporting verbs in front page stories of the "Daily Graphic" and "the Ghanaian Times". (DAE 9)*

28. *The study examined the role of radio programming in community development in the Cape Coast Municipality of the Central Region of Ghana. (DAC 15)*

29. *This research sought to examine the effectiveness of relations in the oil sector in some selected oil companies in Ghana. (DAC 7)*

30. *The study examines the manifestation of emotive language in Independence Day speeches. (DAE 17)*

The underlined lexical items in the structures above indicate the varied use of the verb *examine.*

Also typical of this Move is the use lexical bundles such as "sought to examine", "study examined/s", "objective of the study" and "purpose of the study". These are a sequence of words the frequently occurred in the corpus. Examples are as follows:

> *31. This study sought to examine the significance of strategic communication in achieving gender equity and empowerment of all girls and women in Ghana. (DAC 5)*

> *32. The objective of this study is to investigate the discourse of Christian devotional guides… (DAE 13)*

> *33. This study examined the mood systems of English and Twi as exhibit in television cooking shows. (DAE 19)*

> *34. This study examined the role of corporate communication in the efficient running of the UCC branch National Health Insurance Authority. (DAC 11)*

The lexical bundles "sought to examine" and "the objective of this study" were peculiar to DAC and DAE data sets respectively while "study examined" occurred across the disciplines, as shown in 33 and 34 above.

I realized, in line with Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), that the student researchers made linguistic choices that are available to them given the context within which they operate. Thus, the choice of words in this Move as well as the other Move is indicative of the communicative function of the Move.

Move 3 – Method

The third move presents the methodology with which the research was conducted. This is done by stating research theory, design, site, as well as data source and size. Due to this, Move 3 is prevalent with years, proper nouns and numerals. Instances are provided below:

35. *The number of students was <u>100</u>, comprising <u>50</u> students from private schools and <u>50</u> students from public schools that were randomly selected. (DAE 12)*

36. *The study also made use (of) the politeness theories of <u>Brown and Levinson (1987</u>) and Myers (1989). (DAE 8)*

37. *Questionnaires were designed to collect data from the staff of the radio station, <u>Amamoma</u>, <u>Apewosika</u>, and <u>UCC</u> campus. (DAC 18)*

38. *The study was based on Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) Theory, developed by E. M. Rogers, The agenda-setting function theory by Dr. McCombs and Dr. Dorald Shaw and Social judgment theory by Carolyn Sherif, Muzafer Sherif and Carl Hovland. (DAC 11)*

The numerals in this move is used to quantify the sample size used in the research. The proper nouns are mostly town names of the research site and names of propounds of theories. The years are also indicative of when the theories were propounded.

Move 4 – Result

Move 4 presents the key findings of the research and that the opening words of this move is suggestive of this. The dominant lexical bundles prevalent in this Move are "the study found out" and "the study revealed that. These structures in most cases opened the Move. Below are examples:

39. *The <u>study revealed that</u> the major themes of the elections were on education, economy and governance. (DAC 16)*

40. *Among others, <u>the study found</u> out that at the heart of every development issue, are the basic strategies of and awareness creation. (DAC 5)*

41. The findings of <u>the study revealed that</u> the editorial

sections of the selected editorials are made up of four moves…

(DAE 18)

The underlined structures are found in most of the DAs collected from both departments. The bundle "study revealed that" was found to be more prevalent in the DAC data than in the DAE data. This Move is also characterized by the use of verbs such as show revealed, indicate and found.

Move 5 – Conclusion

This is the last move in this genre and as stated earlier is to make recommendations and indicate implications. The lexical items "recommends" and "implications" are prevalent in both corpora.

42. The findings of this study have implications for

further studies. (DAE 17)

43. Therefore, it is recommended that private radio

should report in accordance with the social well-being and

code of professional duties. (DAC 20)

"Implications" was most prevalent in the DAE data set while "recommends" is most prevalent with the DAC data set.

Verb Tense Occurrence

An analysis of the verb tense type mostly used is conducted on the various Moves in the corpus. The choice of verb tense in the construction of a research abstract has two meanings. According to Paltridge and Starfield (2007), the present tense is used if the abstract is considered a summary of a thesis but the past tense is used if the abstracts is seen as a report of s research that has been done in the past. The table below is a summary of the of tenses used in each Move.

Table 4: Verb Tense Occurrence in Each Move

Move and Tense	DAE No. of Moves	%	DAC No. of Moves	%	Total = 40 No. Verbs	%
Introduction						
Present	16	94.12	14	93.33	30	93.75
Past	15.88		1	6.67	2	6.25
Purpose						
Present	17	60.71	11	44	28	52.83
Past	11	39.29	14	56	25	47.17
Method						
Present	13.03		4	11.43	5	7.35
Past	32	96.97	31	88.57	63	92.65
Result						
Present	21	31.82	49	54.44	70	44.87
Past	45	68.18	41	45.56	86	55.13
Conclusion						
Present	18	100	9	75	27	90
Past	00		3	25	3	10

Table 4 is a summary of the choice of tense across the two disciplines. The data in Table 4 shows that present tense is more used with the proportion of 93.75% and past tense is used with the proportion of 6.25% in introduction move across the two disciplines. This shows that the giving of the background of the field of study and the update of the affairs in the field of study are done with the present tense. The Purpose Move and the Result Move do not record a wide gap in the usage of tense. The present tense is used a little more than the past tense in the Purpose Move while the past tense is used a little more than the present tense in the Result Move across the two disciplines. Move 3 records the highest usage of past tense mainly because this Move recounts the methodology with which the research was conducted. This is quite the opposite to the case in Move 5 where the present tense is used the most with a proportion of 90%. Move 5 indicates the implications of the research and makes recommendations hence the prevalent use of the present tense. In all, the results show that present tense is mostly used in the *introduction, purpose*, and *conclusion* moves. Meanwhile, past tense is mostly

used in the *method* and *results* moves. This finding is in sync with Kosasih's (2018) study of graduate students' theses abstracts in a university in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the current study indicated that the maximum five-Move structure of abstracts are the same in both English language studies and Communication Studies dissertation abstracts. Five moves as well as fifteen steps were identified to typify the abstract section of undergraduate dissertations submitted to the Departments of English and Communication Studies of the University of Cape Coast. It was also revealed that not all abstracts in the data sets from both departments have a five-move structure thus, it was not all selected dissertation abstracts that followed Hyland's (2000) five-move structure.

Again, the study revealed that the move sequence of the abstract section of dissertations range from a five-move sequence to a two-move sequence. Researchers in the two departments do not arrange their moves in a strict sequential order. It was revealed that most of the dissertation abstracts from the two departments follow a sequential order with a few having the moves arranged not in order. In addition, there were findings concerning the textual space of the moves. The study indicated that more textual space was given to moves 3 and 4 than all the other moves in both data sets. Also, moves 1 and 5 had the least textual spaces in both data sets.

The study revealed the linguistic resources employed by the researchers from both departments to help realize their communicative purposes. It was observed that Move 1 is typified by superordinate clauses in the present tense. Move 2 is mostly typified with the use of the verb "examine". Move 3 was rather typified with years, numerals, and proper nouns. Move four is characterized by the use of lexical bundles.

Implications of the Findings of the Study

In terms of theoretical implication, this study proves the flexibility of Swales' move-step theory. The study showed that the theory could be used to analyze the schematic structure of the abstract section of undergraduate dissertations. The study contributes to the concept of genre studies and studies on dissertation abstracts.

With the ever-growing interest in studies in academic writing, the findings of the study contribute to the scholarship on academic writing at the undergraduate level. Most of the research works in the literature on abstracts were on master's thesis abstracts thus this research proves significant in this an under-researched setting at the undergraduate level.

With respect to pedagogy, he results of this study have pedagogical implications to help students and instructors. For students, knowledge in genre studies will help them in the structuring of their academic papers. For instructors, the research gives them the knowledge of how their students write their dissertation abstracts and that based on the findings of this research, they will help improve the writing skills of their students as Bonsu (2021) has found to be crucial in academia.

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