

The rhetorical moves of abstracts in thesis

Abstract

Abstract plays an important role in representing research articles (RAs) or theses. A clear, concise, informative and interesting abstract helps the RAs or theses in terms of visibility and drawing attention towards the research. Being among the first writings read by the target audience, that is after the title and name of the researcher/s, it determines whether the rest of the RA or thesis will be read or not. Therefore, this paper draws attention to the rhetorical moves found in Engineering discipline thesis abstracts compared with the TEFL discipline thesis abstracts. The sample of the study are 10 thesis abstracts, selected from the best thesis award recipients of Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP). All the thesis analysed are from the engineering discipline and are written in English. The corpus size is 4540 words. Then, the result obtained were compared with a previous study on TEFL thesis abstracts done by [1]. The study uses Move analysis guided by CARS Model (2004) and utilizes frequency count (presence of Move). The findings of the study show that Move 3 is the most utilized Move in these abstracts. Move 3 is present in all of the theses for both the Engineering and TEFL abstracts. The Move step analysis indicated that for Move 2, the Engineering discipline thesis has more occurrences as compared with the TEFL discipline abstracts. The finding can be used by instructors for teaching abstracts writing based on best practice and from a more personalized perspective taking into account the discipline and cultural variation of the abstracts. As most instructors teaching academic writing in university comes from the linguistic or English language education background, it is hoped that the comparison made in this study would benefit those instructors teaching academic writing, particularly abstract writing for Engineering students.