

Chapter 1

STRUCTURAL ORGANISATION OF ABSTRACTS IN ENGLISH AND TURKISH RESEARCH ARTICLES¹

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INTRODUCTION

Academic writing has increasingly become an essential skill to gain success in the international research community. Since the publication of Swales' (1990) CARS model (Create a Research Space), many studies have used the model to investigate research article (RA) introductions (Samraj, 2002; Öztürk, 2007; Hirano, 2009). Swales' study has also led to more research into the structure of other sections of the RAs such as methodology (Bruce, 2008), results (Bruce, 2009), discussions (Holmes, 1997; Peacock, 2002), and conclusions (Yang & Allison, 2003).

In recent years, RA abstracts have also attracted great attention due to the important role they fulfil. As Lores (2004, p. 281) puts it, "they constitute the gateway that leads readers to take up an article, journals to select contribution or organizers of conferences to accept or reject papers".

Early studies investigate abstracts in broad domains such as humanities, social and natural sciences (Stotesbury, 2003; Martin, 2003). However, most studies focus on the study of abstracts in one discipline. For example, Santos (1996) and Lores (2004) focus on linguistics. Pho (2008), on the other hand, analyses abstracts in the fields of applied linguistics and educational technology, which are the fields of interest in the present study as well. However, Pho (2008), in addition to the rhetorical structure of abstracts, focuses on the linguistic realizations of moves and the authorial stance in abstract.

Despite the fact that RA abstracts have been examined in languages other than English (such as Spanish and French), to the researcher's knowledge, no study has investigated RA abstracts in Turkish. The few studies that compare RA ab-

¹ The study reported here is based on the first author's M.A. Dissertation supervised by the second author

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all of the articles in the English corpus were published between 2006 and 2010, but the Turkish corpus included articles published in 2004 and 2005 to match the number of articles used for the English corpus. If a conventional change has occurred between 2004 and 2010, this may have affected the results. Additionally, five articles were selected from each journal in the English corpus, whereas the number of the articles selected from the journals in the Turkish corpus ranged from three to seven because of the limited number of studies in Turkish.

A very interesting finding of this study was that all the moves identified by the mixed type model were found in only one abstract. Some new moves have emerged, while some others are simply disappearing. Some moves have gained popularity, while others have attracted less attention. Therefore, further research is needed with a larger corpus to generalize the findings of the present study.

Also, it should be remembered that the present study contained abstracts from empirical RAs, and the results may be applicable to this specific genre. Abstracts in theoretical and review articles may have different move structures. As a further research, the structure of abstracts in theoretical and review articles can be profitably conducted.

The findings of this study may have some implications for the teaching of academic writing. Nowadays, almost all articles are required to have an abstract written in English. Thus, knowing the textual organization of abstracts is necessary for non-native speakers of English even if they do not publish their work in English.

Martin (2003) suggests that there are some guidebooks and manuals about writing research articles, but only a few of them describe the textual organization and linguistic features of scientific genres satisfactorily. Using the findings of the present study can increase non-native speakers' awareness, and can be used as a useful source to produce their abstracts. Also, this study can help to understand similarities and differences in abstracts according to the discipline and language.

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