

## Move structures and their rhetorical verbs of research article abstracts across Englishes

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### ABSTRACT

Genre-based studies on moves structure of research article (RA) abstracts have established variations across cultures. However, previous studies included at most two countries for comparisons of abstracts written by native against non-native speakers. With the advent of World Englishes, it is deemed more practical to examine abstracts across Englishes to determine the writing conventions of the L1, L2 and EFL speakers of English. Consequently, the present study is a structural move analysis of RA abstracts focusing on the macro-structural moves across the Englishes and the lexical verbs employed used in each move. It examined 36 RA abstracts from linguistics and language and education fields, consisting of 12 abstracts each from the Inner, Outer and Expanding Circles of English by Kachru (1992). Each abstract was segmented into moves using the Five-Move Model of Santos (1996), which includes moves: (1) Situating the Research (STR); (2) Presenting the Research (PTR); (3) Discussing the Methodology (DTM); (4) Summarizing the Findings, (STF), and (5) Discussing the Research (DTR). The study found that the Inner Circle of English has the structure: Abstract → (STR) + PTR + DTM + (STF) + (DTR). The Outer Circle has the structure: Abstract → (STR) + PTR + (DTM) + STF + DTR. The Expanding Circle has the structure: Abstract → (STR) + PTR + DTM + (STF) + (DTR). The formulaic structures of abstract moves revealed that the only common move across Englishes is PTR. Following the approach of Musa et al. (2015), the lexical verbs realizing the purpose of each of the rhetorical moves were listed in order to come up with lists of rhetorical verbs which can be used in structuring an RA abstract. The study concludes with implications for academic writing instruction that calls for future abstract analyses that are world Englishes-inspired.

**Keywords:** Academic writing; move structures; rhetorical verbs; research article abstract; world Englishes

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### INTRODUCTION

Writing skill welcomes individual's personal and professional successes in life. This skill can be demonstrated in writing exemplary research article (RA), which is a definite ingredient for survival and become globally recognized in any academic discourse community. RA is described by Flowerdew (2005) and Kanoksilapatham (2013) as a genre in academic writing and is viewed as a

medium to trade and impart new information to the academic community members. Writing RA needs rich repertoire to master it and achieve recognition in large space, such as research publication. According to Amnuai and Wannaruk (2012), writing publishable RAs requires language use awareness and features and organization of rhetorics. Zand-Vakili and Kashani (2012) added that writers should be particularly skilled with the contrasts in text

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structures to sell their papers to be distributed in worldwide journals, thereby getting universal acknowledgment. Due to this continuing increase of academic publications with the requirement of the RA to be accessible through online scholastic web indexes, RA abstracts have increased extreme significance as they give a focal point through which study ends up accessible to academic discourse community. Ventola (1994) argued abstracts are a helpful device of acing and dealing with the consistently expanding data flow in the scientific community. This is because abstracts serve a vital component to identify the arguments of the RAs (Swales, 1990). Specifically, Lorés (2004) opined that abstracts are viewed as the entryway of readers to see an RA, journals' determination for contributions, and for conferences to acknowledge or dismiss articles. Therefore, composing clear and informative abstract has turned into a crucial ability for writers, and it has received a developing enthusiasm from language specialists who studied it from different lens in recent years.

Genre-based studies focused on moves were conducted by many scholars. Move is defined by Richard and Schmidt (2002) as "a unit of discourse which may be smaller than an utterance" (p. 344). Swales (2004) added that a move is a "discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse" (pp. 228-229). These definitions are best underpinned through the statement of Santos (1996) about move:

"As genres are purposed, staged activities, the move was chosen as the unit of analysis. A move is to be considered as a genre stage which has a particular, minor communicative purpose to fulfil, which in turn serves the major communicative purpose of the genre" (p. 485).

Investigating on this area has increased the importance of understanding the nature of a discourse, and this has been used to demystify the problem on the identification of genre analysis, as Swales (1990) noted. This also largely contributed to writing and even reading classes (Askehave & Swales, 2001). The realisation of structural moves can be realised by one or more steps, yet not all moves have steps. The move can be considered obligatory or optional (Samraj, 2009). It is obligatory if it is frequently occurring in a genre, and optional if it has less instances in a genre. Other studies used numerical considerations to identify whether it is obligatory or optional, resulting in having no consensus of criteria.

As mentioned, various move analysis scholars have been led to delineate the structure of RA abstracts such as through the lens of a cross-cultural investigation. With varying frameworks used in the analysis of the moves of abstracts, different findings emerged. Çandarlı (2012) inspected the rhetorical varieties amongst Turkish and English RA abstracts

in the discipline of education. Using the model of Swales (2004), Çandarlı indicated some similarities between the moves of the two groups of writers, yet a distinction in the frequency of move about indicating the research purpose was observed. Marefat and Mohammadzadeh (2013) employed Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion (IMRD) and Creating a Research Space (CARS) models of analysis in studying the rhetorical variations of RA abstracts in literature by English and Persian writers. The results showed that Introduction and Results sections were the prevailing concentrations of both writers and there was no indication of previous related studies to create a niche. The results also showed that the abstracts have by and large coordinated CARS model more than IMRD; however, none of the models were proficient. The Persian writers' abstracts revealed writers' own standard. Chalak and Norouzi (2013) investigated the moves in the RA abstracts of American and Iranian writers, which were from International Journal of Language Studies (IJLS). After using the models of Swales and Feak (2004) and Tseng (2011), they found out that moves two to four which were Purpose, Method and Result were obligatory, whereas move one (Introduction) and move five (conclusion) were optional. Nasser and Nematollahi (2014) analysed the Master of Arts theses abstracts in applied linguistics by Iranians and native speakers of English. They identified five moves and it is only in the last move, discussing the research, where variation occurred. They also analysed lexicogrammatical patterns but no significant pattern appeared, yet scrutiny on the identities of writers revealed that the two groups tried to exclude their identity in theses. Abarghoeeinezhad and Simin (2015) investigated the move structures of RA abstracts in the engineering field by native and Iranian speakers. Using Santos' (1996) model, variations in moves amongst the groups were likewise revealed. Farzannia and Farnia (2017) analysed the moves in RA abstracts in Mining Engineering field by native speakers of English and Persian writers using the model of Hyland (2000). Quantitative analyses showed that the move on establishing the research purpose was the only move that had a statistically significant variation between the two groups of writers. Ghasempour and Farnia (2017) also investigated the move structures found in RA abstracts in law by native English writers and Persian writers. Using the five-move framework of Hyland (2000), they claimed that the five moves were obligatory in the RA abstracts of native writers, whereas the Persian writers considered moves one and two as the only obligatory moves. Finally, Al-Khasawneh (2017) aimed at studying the differences of moves in RA abstracts by native and non-native speakers of English in Applied Linguistics discipline. The nationalities of both

speakers were not explicit. Using Hyland's (2000) framework, the researcher revealed that both groups utilized three moves, which are purpose, method, and conclusion, as the most frequently occurring. The remaining two moves of the two groups, which are introduction and conclusion had significant variations.

Apart from moves, the RA abstracts have likewise been heavily investigated in terms of certain linguistic features more particularly verb tenses. Salager-Meyer (1991) looked at the dissemination of verb tenses over the distinctive moves of RA abstracts in medical articles. He found out that three moves, which are purpose, method, and results, used past tense whereas the conclusion move used present tense. Pezzini (2003) concluded that the most frequently used was the simple present tense after investigating RA abstracts. The scholar added that few abstracts considered simple past and present perfect tenses. Li (2011) studied the tense and voice of the verbs of the Linguistics and Chemistry RA abstracts. The findings showed that active voice is more in use in the move purpose than the passive voice. The chemistry abstracts employed more present tense in the passive voice. Tseng (2011) studied verb tense of every move realised in RA abstracts under Applied Linguistics discipline. Tseng claimed that present tense is usually considered in the background, aim, and conclusion moves, and past tense is frequently employed in the method and results moves. Chalak and Norouzi (2013) also investigated the verb tenses in the abstracts of American and Iranian writers. They found out that the moves on background and conclusion had more present tense, while the move on method used more past tense. The Americans also preferred present tense while Iranians more often used past tense. Ghasempour and Farnia (2017) likewise investigated the verb tenses found in the moves of RA abstracts in law in English and Persian. It was indicated that all moves in the abstracts in English highly preferred present tense, while past tense was prevailing in the move method only in the Persian abstracts.

As can be gleaned above, move analyses of the RA abstracts have remained in the limelight by comparing two groups of speakers specifically native and non-native speakers of English. This nature of cross-cultural study on moves can be stemmed from the idea of Taylor and Tingguang (1991) who stressed the essence of move analysis in contrastive rhetorics as it explores the cultural difference in the structure of discourse. They also essentially argued that finding variations of rhetorical structures of texts from different cultures should be taken into consideration in the programs of teaching English as a second language (ESL), which will then form epiphany in the tailoring academic writing instructions, acknowledging the existence of differences in writing. While this idea is

a pragmatic concern in academic writing, Nasseri and Nematollah (2014) forwarded an idea that there is a requirement for more relative examinations that delve into RA abstracts in the field of Applied Linguistics by native and non-native users of English. Hence, one more pragmatic and interesting platform to consider is the widely acknowledged model, three concentric circles of English, that best explicates different groups of English language users. In fact, no one attempted to consider this dimension of users of the English language, which is more exemplary in analyzing contrastive rhetorical moves in the RA abstracts of different cultures. The researcher of the present study addresses this gap.

Mollin (2006) noted that the three concentric circles of English model were first developed by Kachru in 1985. This represents the groupings of the English varieties throughout the globe as the English language continues to grow and spread. The model has caught much attention among the scholars especially in the Applied Linguistics discipline. To illustrate, Kachru (1992) said that the world is divided into three circles. The first circle is called the inner circle, referring to the traditional bases of English which are the countries that use English as their first language (i.e. United States of America, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa). They are then described as norm providing. The second circle is referred to as the outer circle, which pertains to the non-native environments where the spread of English happened in earlier phases. The English language then became a second language that has been playing a vital institutional role in this circle. The countries involved here are the Philippines, Hong Kong, Singapore, India, and Malaysia. They are described as norm developing. Lastly, the expanding circle refers to countries that consider English as a foreign language. These countries did not have any territorial colonization by those in the inner circle. These countries, such as Germany, Hungary, Poland, China, Japan, and Korea, were described as norm dependent.

Drawing on the existence of varieties of English, the essence of contrastive rhetorics may be more given premium in the light of writing the RA abstract as the interest genre of the current research. Thus, a myriad of similarities and differences in writing the abstract may then be put forward in the body of knowledge in academic writing discourse by acknowledging the truism about English language users from different Englishes. This pivotal idea in academic writing discourse can be supported by the assertion of Al-Khasawneh (2017), arguing that writers of RAs should know about the cultural variations in regard to the text structure to prevail in the international group. Likewise, the absence of basic information about text structure variations frequently makes non-native language scholars use self-systems writing RA. In effect, it

could prompt them absence of innovativeness, basic reasoning, subjectivity, and developments (Abarghooinezhad & Simin, 2015). Hence, it is important to know the notable ways of writing the abstract to draw in more readers and improve the chance of one's abstract to be recorded and referred to in universally-recognized journals (Marefat & Mohammadzadeh, 2013). Move analysis on abstracts is then imperative to raise mindfulness of not only non-native writers but also novice writers by furnishing them with more rhetorical learning and guidelines in writing the genre.

Moreover, as reviewed above, studies on linguistic features of the RA abstract have painstakingly focused on the verb tense, suggesting that other linguistic dimensions may be interesting to delve into. One interest of the present study is to look into the verb choices in every move which has been neglected by scholars. This linguistic category was already explored in the RA genre; however, it was identified in the methodology section of an RA conducted by Musa et al. (2015). Investigating verbs in the RA abstract could provide a more illustrative representation of an RA as a whole discourse since abstract, containing the different sections of an RA, is generally conceived as the summary or condensed format of an RA. Consequently, different verbs in different sections may be forwarded in the linguistic repertoire of academic writers specifically when writing an RA abstract to contribute to the body of knowledge through research publication. This is because apart from the move structures, beginner writers also need to know the customary linguistic realizations of those rhetorical functions or moves (Ventola, 1994).

With the advent of World Englishes, the present study argues then that cross-cultural studies focused on the move structure of RA abstracts and the lexical markers such as verbs employed by the writers are deemed important to shed light on the conventions of academic writing discourse. Brett (1994) posited an idea that applied linguists accepted the emergence of genre analysis such as rhetorical structure analysis because of the invaluable pedagogical implications it gives to the communicative English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classroom. The present study also acknowledges the view that each culture has its own writing convention; hence, no specific format in writing the RA abstract can be prescribed. With that end, this research delved into the rhetorical choices with a specific linguistic feature in the RA abstracts realized across Englishes. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. How do writers across the three concentric circles of English structure their RA abstracts?
2. What lexical verbs are used in each of the rhetorical moves of the RA abstracts?

## **METHOD**

### **The data**

According to Moreno (2007, as cited in Connor et al., 2008), there is a need to control as many important confounding factors as possible to attain a maximum level of similarity or comparability of corpora being compared. Such a crucial consideration is also facilitative to the attribution of possible commonalities and contrasts in the rhetorical structure of the texts to the writing culture, which is an important variable the present study largely takes into account. In this regard, the academic discipline-field, the publication year, the distribution of number of texts per circle, and the research journals were all controlled by the researcher of the current study in collecting the RA abstracts or corpus to be analyzed. Specifically, the corpus was purposively collected, which includes 36 RA abstracts written in English related to linguistics and language and education fields. They were all published in 2018, since they were collected as a requirement in one of the courses of the researcher in his graduate studies in that year. Based on the classifications of the three concentric circles of English, 12 of the RA abstracts were obtained from the journals published in the inner circle of English which is composed of countries the United States of America, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa. Another 12 RA abstracts were from journals published in the outer circle of English represented by the countries the Philippines, Hong Kong, Singapore, India, and Malaysia. Finally, the last set of 12 RA abstracts were from journals published in the expanding circle of English, consisting countries which are Germany, Hungary, Poland, China, Japan, and Korea. Two abstracts from each country were considered, except that there were three abstracts from the Philippines and Hong Kong since only five countries from the outer circle of English were included. Using the website Scimago Journal and Country Rank, these journals ranked first in terms of H-index based on each of the countries mentioned. The website likewise provides the country where these journals are published; hence, the easy identification of the concerned countries in each circle of English. However, only the journal from Korea was an exception, since Korea is not included in the Scimago Journal and Country Rank. Nonetheless, the selected Korean journal is peer-refereed and is the official journal of the Applied Linguistics Association of Korea that has been established since 1978. Given that these journals have high impact factors, the abstracts can be assumed to represent well-constructed abstracts (Kanoksilapatham, 2013). Moreover, the researcher conducted further online research on the background or nationalities of the authors of each abstract to guarantee their profiling according to the countries in the three concentric circles of English. Table 1 presents the journals

from each country as the sources of the RA abstracts used for analysis.

It is noteworthy to mention that the researcher acknowledges the limited number of abstracts taken for analysis. Consequently, it is not the aim of the researcher to draw generalizations as to the rhetorical organizations with linguistic features of the abstracts across different groups of writers, a similar concern of Çandarlı (2012). The implication

of such a limitation is further explicated in the concluding remarks of the present study. Howbeit, a limited number of datasets of abstracts or texts was also taken by the past researchers in analyzing the rhetorical moves (e.g., Abarghooeinezhad & Simin, 2015; Al-Khasawneh, 2017; Amnuai & Wannaruk, 2012; Çandarlı, 2012; Chalak & Norouzi, 2013; Doro, 2013; Li, 2011; Lores, 2004; Pezzini, 2003; Pho, 2008; Zand-Vakili & Kashani, 2012).

**Table 1**  
*Sources of RA Abstracts across Englishes*

Inner Circle		Outer Circle		Expanding Circle	
Journal	Country	Journal	Country	Journal	Country
Cognitive Psychology	US	Kritika Kultura	Philippines	Cognitive Linguistics	Germany
Statistics Education Research Journal	New Zealand	Asia-Pacific Forum on Science Learning and Teaching	Hong Kong	Across Languages and Cultures	Hungary
Applied Linguistics	UK	Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching	Singapore	Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching	Poland
Canadian Modern Language Review	Canada	Media Watch	India	Studies in Chinese Linguistics	China
Australian Journal of Language and Literacy	Australia	GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies	Malaysia	JALT CALL Journal	Japan
Lexicos	South Africa			Korean Journal of Applied Linguistics	Korea

**Analysis of move structures**

Following several researchers (i.e., Abarghooeinezhad & Simin, 2015; Doró, 2013; Lon et al., 2012; Pho, 2008; Tseng, 2011), the present study utilized the five-move model of Santos (1996) to analyze the rhetorical structures of the RA abstract. As can be gleaned from the 2, the model has five moves which are further explicated by an indication of functions. These functions are substantiated by guide questions that should be answered during the analysis of the moves. The abbreviations of each move were used as codes during the analysis. This framework was principally employed for the analysis because it has been used in the analysis of abstracts in the field of Applied Linguistics (Pho, 2008). Pho also added that the model encompasses all of the moves in various frameworks used in the analysis of rhetorical structures of RA abstracts, and that it has more meaningful moves specifically in the introduction and conclusion sections of an abstract. Doro (2013) likewise explicated that the model provides richer information than other three- or four-move frameworks, and is perceived as a better parameter in juxtaposing the structures of RA abstracts.

As espoused by Santos (1996), the identification of the move is dependent on both semantic and linguistic information. This notion has been supported by scholars suggesting that one move cannot only be exemplified in one whole sentence but also in a word, clause, or phrase. This

idea is due to the fact that abstract is a text that is largely condensed in nature, making it a summary of a whole RA discourse. Considering the total number of abstracts under scrutiny, the present investigation considered a move as obligatory if it was observed in all of the RA abstracts as the whole corpus. On the other hand, a move was conceived optional if its frequency was less than hundred percent of the whole corpus.

**Analysis of verb choices**

Noorli (2011, as cited in Musa et al., 2015) argued that lexis is the basis of a language. Lewis (1993, as cited in Musa et al., 2015) asserted that a construction of meaning is identified from fixed words than from fixed structures. Musa and colleagues then claimed that grammatical expressions and the rhetorical structure of a text are closely linked with each other. Supporting this is the idea of Bloch (2010, as cited in Musa et al., 2015), explicating that fixed grammatical expressions reflect the rhetorical purpose of a structure; hence, they assist one’s understanding of the rhetorical intent of a structure. Underpinned by such a premise, Musa et al. analyzed the frequently used verbs in the methodology section of RAs under Engineering discipline. The scholar gave examples of verbs, such as *purchase*, *obtain*, and *use* that reflect the rhetorical purpose they serve. Such a rhetorical purpose refers to when a scholar *describes the materials of the study*, which is a move realized

under a methodology section. Thus, the current study also investigated the same feature or

expression that reflects an intent or a purpose of a rhetorical move.

**Table 2**  
*The Five-Move Model for Abstract Analysis of Santos (1996)*

Codes along with Abbreviations	Moves	Functions	Questions Asked
STR	Move 1: Situating the research	Setting the scene for the current research (topic generalization)	What has been known about the field/topic of research?
PTR	Move 2: Presenting the research	Stating the purpose of the study, research questions and/or hypotheses	What is the study about?
DTM	Move 3: Describing the methodology	Describing the materials, subjects, variables, procedures	How was the research done?
STF	Move 4: Summarizing the findings	Reporting the main findings of the study	What did the researcher find?
DTR	Move 5: Discussing the research	Interpreting the results/findings and/or giving recommendations, implications/applications of the study	What do the results mean? So what?

This study adopted such an approach of Musa et al. in identifying verbs that help realize the rhetorical intent of a certain move in an RA abstract. In the present study, the sample excerpts below present some lexical verbs in bold that were used in discourse to realize the purpose of STR as the first move that acts as the onset of writing an abstract, setting a picture of a study by describing previous studies or the topic of investigation in general (Santos, 1996):

*To date, few studies have **explored** the exact process of EFL students' response to assessment feedback on their speaking and writing performances. (Outer Circle, Abstract 5)*

*Much of the cross-cultural research into the speech act of apologizing has **focused** on the phenomenon of non-native communicative competence and less on cross-cultural data for their own sake. (Expanding Circle, Abstract 9)*

*The discussion included in this paper **continues** the academic tradition of the Rzeszow Scholl of Diachronic Semantics (henceforth RSDS), in that it concerns **cognitively-couched, diachronic research into the semantics of the lexicon that is close to man. (Expanding Circle, Abstract 12)***

The lexical verbs *explore*, *focus*, and *continue* give the readers an idea that the extracts above constitute move one that provides topic generalization by showcasing what has been carried out by scholars about the topic of investigation. Although there are other lexical items in the sentences that set up the realization of the move one, these lexical verbs with the meanings they carry clearly show the rhetorical intent they serve. For example, the lexical verb *explore* is used to foreground the idea or intent that the sentence attempts to bring out, that is, to insinuate what has

been done in the past and that calls for a more exploration on the given context of the study.

Needless to say, lexical verbs were specifically explored in each move. Lexical verb is one of the two classes of verb (i.e., lexical and auxiliary verbs) by Quirk et al. (1972), pioneering scholars of corpus-based resources on English grammar. Accordingly, lexical verbs are verbs that are open class, which act as the main verbs in the sentence. They are lexical because they carry definite meaning, which can stand alone even without helping verbs. To identify these verbs in each move of the RA abstracts, manual analysis of the lexical verbs was carried out. Inspired by the idea of Musa et al. (2015), the current study attempted to come up with a list of lexical verbs, specifically in their original forms, reflected in each of the moves.

#### Intercoder

It is also noteworthy that an inter-rater reliability was considered to evaluate how much different raters have predictable assessments of a similar circumstance. Thus, two coders from Language Department of a university where the researcher works were selected to help in the analyses. Specifically, there were two set levels of agreement in analysing the rhetorical moves and their lexical verbs of the RA abstracts: (1) there was agreement when the coders identified the same move and verb; and (2) there was disagreement when one of the coders identified a move differently; as a result, the contented data were reviewed based on the model used for move analysis and the approach in analyzing the verb and were discussed until an agreement among the coders was reached. At the onset, a detailed discussion on the model of moves and analyzing the verbs was done to ensure that they all have the same way of understanding and approaching the analyses. A trial coding of 20% of

the data among the intercoders followed to guarantee similar understanding among them. They then proceeded to independently analyzing the moves and verbs. After going over the discussed parameters, they all achieved 100% agreement in analyzing the moves and verbs.

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### Move structures of RA abstracts across Englishes

Using the move structure proposed by Santos (1996), the moves evident in the RA abstracts across Englishes is summarized in the Table 3. It can be found that in the inner circle, all of the RA abstracts have the moves *Presenting the Research* (PTR) and *Describing the Methodology* (DTM) as indicated by their occurrences in the 12 abstracts. However, the moves *Situating the research* (STR), *Summarizing*

*the Findings* (STF), and *Discussing the Research* (DTR) are present in 6, 8 and 10 RA abstracts, respectively. These findings suggest that PTR and DTM are obligatory moves in the inner circle abstracts, while STR, STF, and DTR are optional. Consequently, the RA abstract structure in the inner circle can be formulated as follows:

$$\text{Abstract} \rightarrow (\text{STR}) + \text{PTR} + \text{DTM} + (\text{STF}) + (\text{DTR})$$

Following Chomsky's symbols, the single headed arrow means "rewrites as," while the parenthesis means "optional" moves. This formula means that writers in the inner circle primarily structure their RA abstracts by presenting the research and describing the methodology as obligatory moves. Some writers would include situating the research, summarizing the findings and discussing the research as optional moves.

**Table 3**

*Move Structures in the RA Abstracts across Englishes*

Move	Inner Circle N=12		Outer Circle N= 12		Expanding Circle N= 12	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1. STR	6	50%	10	83%	7	58%
2. PTR	12	100%	12	100%	12	100%
3. DTM	12	100%	9	75%	12	100%
4. STF	8	66%	12	100%	9	75%
5. DTR	10	83%	12	100%	6	50%

In the outer circle abstracts, the moves PTR, STF and DTR are evident in all the 12 abstracts, while the moves STR and DTM are present only in 10 and 9 abstracts, respectively. The results suggest that writers in the outer circle chiefly prefer writing their abstracts by presenting the research, summarizing the findings, and discussing the research. The acts of situating the research and discussing the methodology are optional in the writing repertoire of the writers. Hence, the moves present in the RA abstracts in the outer circle can be illustrated as follows:

$$\text{Abstract} \rightarrow (\text{STR}) + \text{PTR} + (\text{DTM}) + \text{STF} + \text{DTR}$$

In the expanding circle, the moves PTR and DTM are present in all the 12 abstracts. The moves STR, STF and DTR are observed in 7, 9 and 6 abstracts, respectively. These findings suggest that RA abstracts in the expanding circle can be written merely by presenting the research and describing the methodology. Situating the research, summarizing the findings, and discussing the research moves may be absent in the RA abstracts. Hence, the research abstracts in the expanding circle may be formulated as follows:

$$\text{Abstract} \rightarrow (\text{STR}) + \text{PTR} + \text{DTM} + (\text{STF}) + (\text{DTR})$$

The formula suggests RA abstracts composed by writers in the expanding circle are structured with the PTR and DTM as the obligatory moves.

The moves STR, STF and DTR may also be realized as the optional moves.

It is obvious then that the three circles of English follow all the identified five moves in writing an RA abstract. However, they differ in terms of considering a move as obligatory or optional as the set descriptive criteria in this research. The outer circle of English, which is described as "norm developing," is further supported by the result of this study since it is the only circle that has three obligatory moves (i.e., PTR, STF, and DTR), compared to only two obligatory moves of the inner and expanding circles. This pattern may suggest that developing a norm by the outer circle writers is also evident in abstract writing.

Across the three Englishes, it appears that the move PTR is used obligatorily; hence, the only common move. This move is given importance in abstract writing since it presents what a research or study is about, or it shows the objectives of the study. A number of scholars of contrastive analyses of RA abstract moves (i.e., Al-Khasawneh, 2017; Chalak & Norouzi, 2013; Doro, 2013; Farzannia & Farnia, 2017; Ghasempour & Farnia, 2017; Nasseri & Nematollahi, 2014; Pho, 2008; Tseng, 2011) also claimed that this move has the most numbered instance in the RA abstracts; thereby, a compulsory or an obligatory move. The other moves in the current study may be obligatory in some settings but

optional in other settings. The idea goes to show that there is no uniformity in the structural moves of the RA abstracts across Englishes, that is, what may be observable in one setting may not be observable in another setting. Apparently, this observation indicates an existence of variations in the moves in the RA abstracts across Englishes due to a feasible reason that each setting has its own writing conventions. Specifically, Çandarlı (2012) asserted that cultural difference and expectations of the academic community are possible reasons of writing variations. She added such attributions are indicators of situatedness of writing. The fact that the linkage of writing and culture has been established by many theoretical underpinnings, such as the well-known contrastive rhetoric theory, the writing behavior of writers from various groups, that is, Englishes in the case of the present study, may then exemplify their cultural attributes, expectations of local context, influence of “standard” Englishes in the conventions of localized Englishes, or even the writer’s personal style.

**Lexical verbs used in each move**

As delineated in the methodology, the lexical verbs taken in the current investigation are those that reflect the rhetorical intent or purpose of each of the rhetorical moves based on the descriptions of the moves provided by Santos (1996). After manual analyses of all the moves in all the RA abstracts, the Table 4 below reveals the lists of lexical verbs in every move taken under study.

Note that as mentioned in the methodology section, the lists of verbs are in their original forms. Their use in terms of its tense and voice is dependent upon the writer when opting to utilize these available lexical verbs when structuring their RA abstract. Moreover, it can be observed that there are the same verbs used in more than rhetorical move since such verbs may also be used to realize the intent of more than one move.

It is also quite evident that the coders noted few lexical verbs under move one. These were

*characterise, explore, recognise, and use* from the outer circle, and *concern, continue, and focus* from the expanding circle. The coders decided to include only these verbs because they were the lexical verbs that clearly reflect the purpose of the rhetorical move one. They agreed that the main reason for this was the wordings of the line/s or sentence/s under the move one. An example of sentences realized by the move one is indicated below:

*The study of public signage referred to as linguistic landscape (LL) is an approach to understanding multilingualism. It has been used as an attempt to examine diversity and power relations in a multilingual environment such as the Philippines.*

These lines are considered *STR* move which do not have a lexical verb that explicitly reflects the intent of the move due to the observation that such sentences are written as a sort of background information or a piece of related literature that introduces the topic of the study. In effect, its wording does not clearly show a lexical verb that realizes the purpose of the rhetorical move.

The fact that a lexical verb is deemed part of abstract writing convention that may act as indicators or help in writing an abstract move by realizing or serving a rhetorical intent or function of a move, the researcher terms such a lexical item in RA abstract writing as *rhetorical verb*. This means that there are sets of rhetorical verbs that may be used in writing an RA abstract as a discourse. Writers can also be flexible in using these rhetorical verbs in writing a move in their abstract. This flexibility means that there is no such a pattern or position of where to use a rhetorical verb in a move as long as the verb exemplifies the rhetorical purpose of a rhetorical move. It is likewise imperative to mention that apart from abstract, such rhetorical verbs may also be employed when writing the other sections of an RA since an abstract is a condensed form of a whole RA and that its moves depict the parts of a whole RA.

**Table 4**  
*Rhetorical Verbs to be Used in Every Move of RA Abstract*

<b>Five Moves of Santos (1996)</b>	<b>Rhetorical Verbs</b>
Move 1: Situating the research (STR)	characterize, concern, continue, explore, focus, recognize, use
Move 2: Presenting the research (PTR)	address, aim, answer, conduct, describe, discuss, examine, explore, focus, give, illustrate, intend, investigate, leave, look, present, report, seek
Move 3: Describing the methodology (DTM)	adapt, administer, analyse, anchor, collect, compare, compile, conclude, consider, describe, design, determine, document, draw, embark, employ, encompass, examine, explore, initiate, investigate, link, make, participate, perform, present, start, tag, undertake, use
Move 4: Summarizing the findings (STF)	argue, assess, demonstrate, discuss, display, find, illustrate, indicate, note, obtain, point, recur, reveal, show, suggest
Move 5: Discussing the research (DTR)	attest, believe, centralise, challenge, close, conclude, contribute, create, focus, illustrate, inform, present, propose, provide, raise, shed, show, suggest, support, undertake, warrant

## CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to find out the structural moves used in the RA abstracts across the three concentric circles of English. Using the five-move model of Santos (1996), the moves PTR and DTM are obligatory in the inner and expanding circles, while PTR, STF, and DTR moves are obligatory in the outer circle. The remaining moves were optional to the three circles. This striking result revealed that only the outer circle known as “norm developing” religiously follows more of the moves in RA abstract. The possible reason behind this epiphany is the cultural variations and expectations of discourse community. Across the three circles of English, the move two (PTR) appeared to be the only obligatory since such a move highlights the objective/s of a study. Moreover, this investigation listed lexical verbs that were apparent in every move in the RA abstracts. The lexical verbs were termed *rhetorical verbs* since the lexical verbs that were taken were those items that realise or serve a rhetorical purpose or function of an abstract move.

While the data used under study are relatively few when considering world Englishes as an established framework in juxtaposing groups of English users, this study can be then a starting point of illuminating research writers about the similarities and differences of the inner, outer, and expanding groups in abstract writing. Thus, this research invites scholars of genre analysis to delve into world Englishes as a framework with a large corpus in order to provide novice research writers ideas on the moves employed by “norm providing,” “norm expanding,” and “norm dependent” scholars which are a great picture of cultural variations. In effect, the line of inquiry can be a guide to help such writers get the high possibility of selling their RA abstracts in internationally recognised journals and conferences. Furthermore, what is more valuable this study provides in academic writing instruction is the given lists of rhetorical verbs in every move when writing an RA abstract. The fact that such a linguistic analysis of abstract moves is what makes the nature of this study novel, the lists of rhetorical verbs may be extended by future researches that use a large world Englishes-driven corpus to come up with lists of the most to least utilized rhetorical verbs under each move of each circle of English. This possible undertaking will present more contextualized lists of rhetorical verbs as options available to the writing repertoire of scholars from across the globe. This consideration of world Englishes paradigm in analyzing the rhetorical verbs may be given premium by future researches since the current research did not present the rhetorical verbs as used by every circle of English. This limitation is due to the fact that the analyzed data were very limited, which do not show idiosyncrasy as far as the rhetorical verbs are used according to the circles of English is concerned.

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