

## A Contrastive Genre Analysis of MA Thesis Abstracts Written by Iraqis in EFL (Iraqi Universities) and ESL (American Universities) Contexts

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### Abstract

Abstract is the first essential section of academic research that should be written in style to attract readers to read the entire research. Recently, analyzing abstracts based on specific genre analysis has become a need for recent research exploring thesis writing skills. Some of these genres are rhetorical move analysis (e.g., Introduction, Purpose, Method, Product, and Conclusion) and meta discourse marker-based analysis. Although there is a considerable number of research comparing abstracts written by international and native MA holders in English-speaking countries, research regarding a comparison of written thesis abstracts of English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) in two different academic contexts has not been investigated yet. Henceforth, this study aims to determine the rhetorical moves of Arabic-speaking graduates' thesis abstracts written in Iraqi universities and those written in American universities. Furthermore, it examines the meta discourse markers in each move of the abstract.

The sample of this corpus study consisted of 20 abstracts from Master of Arts (M.A) theses in the English language disciplines written in Iraqi and American universities. Hyland (2000) and (2005) models are used as analytical instruments in the current study. The findings show that there are some similarities and differences in the rhetorical moves in the two contexts. The results also indicate that ESL group have used both rhetorical moves and meta discourse markers in their thesis abstracts more than those of the EFL group. In conclusion, these results reflect the effect of the context on how graduate students structure the thesis abstract. Based on the research findings, some pedagogical implications are suggested.

**Keywords:** Abstract, Thesis, Rhetorical moves, Meta discourse markers.

## تحليل نوع مقارن لملاحظات رسائل ماجستير لعراقيين في سياقات اللغة الإنكليزية لغة أجنبية (في الجامعات العراقية) ولغة ثانية (في الجامعات الأمريكية)

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### المستخلص

المستخلص هو القسم الأول والأساس لجميع أنواع البحوث الأكاديمية الذي تجب كتابته بطريقة تجذب القراء الى الاستمرار بقراءة بقية البحث. وحيناً أصبح تقسيم الملخصات بناءً على أساليب معينة حاجة مهمة للبحث لأنها تكشف عن مهارات كتابة البحث. وبعض هذه الأساليب هي التقسيمات البيانية (مثل المقدمة، الغرض، منهج البحث، النتائج، والاستنتاجات) والتحليل القائم على مؤشرات الخطابات البلاغية. على الرغم من وجود عدد كبير من الأبحاث التي تقارن الملخصات المكتوبة من قبل الطلاب الاجانب والمحليين في البلدان الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية، إلا أن الأبحاث المتعلقة بمقارنة ملخصات رسائل اللغة الإنجليزية لغة ثانية واللغة الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية في بيئتين أكاديميتين مختلفتين لم تتم دراستها حتى الآن. لذلك، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد التقسيمات البيانية لملاحظات رسائل طلبة الماجستير الناطقين باللغة العربية والمكتوبة في الجامعات العراقية وتلك المكتوبة في الجامعات الأمريكية. يهدف البحث أيضاً الى دراسة مؤشرات الخطابات البلاغية في كل قسم من اقسام الملخص. تكونت عينة الدراسة من ٢٠ ملخصاً من رسائل الماجستير في تخصصات اللغة الإنجليزية. تم استخدام نموذجي هايلاند (٢٠٠٠، ٢٠٠٥) كأدوات تحليلية في الدراسة الحالية. اظهرت النتائج أن هناك بعض أوجه التشابه والاختلاف في السياقين من حيث التقسيمات البيانية واستعمال مؤشرات الخطابات البلاغية حيث استعملت مجموعة الطلبة الدارسين للغة الإنكليزية كلغة ثانية كلاً من التقسيمات البيانية ومؤشرات الخطابات البلاغية في ملخصات رسائلهم أكثر من تلك الخاصة بمجموعة الدارسين للغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية. في الختام، تعكس هذه النتائج تأثير السياق على كيفية بناء ملخص رسائل الماجستير. بناءً على نتائج البحث، تم اقتراح بعض التطبيقات التربوية.

**الكلمات الدالة:** الخلاصة، رسائل الماجستير، التقسيمات البيانية، مؤشرات الخطابات البلاغية.

### 1. Introduction

In the field of English language teaching, many theories explore writing skills to find out the preeminent method to teach ESL and EFL students how to master academic writing skills. Graduate students are required and expected to write their research in agreement with conventions of academic genre analysis [1],[2],[3]. According to Coffin *et.al.*, [4], the reason behind using academic writing for graduate students is to expand students' thinking and analyzing skills, enhance their writing skills, and enable them to join academic seminars and conferences. However, guidelines on how academic research is written might be different according to the contexts' conventions that surround students. Therefore, this study aims to examine whether and to what extent different academic contexts in which English is taught as ESL or EFL may affect the writing style

of students pursuing their master's degrees in English language. The selected specializations are linguistics, Methods of Teaching English as Foreign Language (EFL) and Teaching English for Students of Other Languages (TESOL). Graduate students of these specializations are expected to be more professional in the use of academic writing than those students who are from other fields of study.

Abstracts associated with theses and dissertations are a substantial segment of academic research. There are several reasons behind the importance and significance of the abstract. The first reason is that the abstract shows a brief description of the research that is placed at the beginning of academic research [5]. By the same token, Bhatia [6] and Swales and Feak [7] define an abstract as a factual and inclusive summary that usually occurs at the beginning of scientific research like, thesis and dissertation. According to Hwang, Nguyen, and Su [8], the abstract is the section that summarizes a description of all the theses' sections.

Second, the abstract not only acts as a key to cognize the reader about the contents of the research [9], but also serves as a tool of communication among many academic genres like conference presentations, research articles, and short reports [10]. The abstract has an important effect on whether research is accepted in a conference or not [11]. In addition, it helps readers to have concise knowledge about the whole study and then to decide whether or not they read the rest of a thesis [6].

Third, the abstract is the only section that might be available to readers [12]. Despite the abstract's shorter length compared with other sections of research, it is a crucial section that reveals all the contents of research. For instance, in the abstract of the present article, the researchers have summarized the idea behind conducting this study by writing "*this study aims to determine the rhetorical moves of Arabic-speaking graduates' thesis abstracts written in Iraqi universities and those written in American universities. Furthermore, it examines the met a discourse markers in each move of the abstract*". Two models are adopted in the current study. Hyland's [13] model of rhetorical moves and Hyland's [14] met a discourse taxonomy. These models are adapted for many reasons justified in the following section. In sum, abstract is viewed by scholars as the main section of any thesis or dissertation since it gives them the fundamental notion of the whole academic work.

The rationale of this study is to provide graduate students a good perception of the essential rhetorical moves and linguistic skills of writing academic theses. Most of the academic abstracts-related research has focused on either analyzing the abstracts in one context or analyzing and contrasting the abstracts written by native and international students in ESL context. Whereas other research has compared the abstracts written by graduate students in scientific majors with other students in the English major. However, little to no research has explored the use of rhetorical moves and met discourse markers in the abstract by students who share the same mother tongue and speak English as a foreign language or a second language but pursued their master's degrees in two different academic environments. Hence, the present study aims to explore and analyze abstracts of 20 theses in the field of English language submitted between 2013 and 2020 in two different contexts. In addition, this study examines whether and to what extent perusing

masters in the ESL environment facilitates academic writing compared to the EFL environment.

To achieve these aims, the following research question is set:

Are there significant differences between the abstracts of the theses written by Iraqi graduate students who perused their masters in the English language major at the Iraqi universities with those who completed their masters at the American universities?

## 2. Literature Review

Most of the times, abstracts start by a statement through which students introduce and present the purpose of the research aiming at attracting readers towards their topic. Studies on abstracts fall within the realm of writing quickly draw the attention of researchers with concentrations on academic purpose [15]. Although many studies are provided to increase literature on abstracts evaluation, most of them have explored abstracts concerning various fields of study in either pure science articles [16],[17] [18], or cross-disciplinary research that includes two or more academic disciplines [19],[20],[5].

Previous studies (such as [21],[6],[13]) have suggested that an abstract must contain at least four steps; *the purpose of the study*, *method used*, *the scope of the study*, and *the results*. They further add that every abstract should reflect information about these four features. For example, what the researcher has done, the methods of doing these actions, the results of the study, and the conclusions. These features are identified as “moves” which could be one or more than one sentences. Previous move-analysis studies of abstracts have proposed different move models for the sections of research articles in various subjects. In general, these models consist of three to five moves and steps (sub-moves). For instance, **Stoller and Robinson** [22] have classified three main moves in methodology section of chemistry field; namely, *describe materials* (Move 1); *describe experimental methods* (Move 2) which includes procedures and instrumentation as a sub-move. Finally *Describe numerical methods* represent (Move 3). Pho [23] has dealt with the linguistic realization of moves, and the rhetorical organization in three moves of thirty abstracts from applied linguistics and educational technology. A study by **Estaji and Vafaeime** [24] have investigated research articles in the introduction and conclusion moves from mechanical and electrical engineering research papers. The results showed that attitude met discourse marker were the least frequent kind while the boosters were the most frequent marker utilized in introduction section of research. In the conclusion section, met discourse markers were more frequent of Electrical Engineering articles. Accordingly, the idea of comparing thesis abstracts in two different academic environments has been stemmed from the gap found in the literature review. Due to the importance of abstracts in the academic articles, many models on how abstracts should be structured have been introduced.

### 2.1 Models of Analysis

In their book, **Weissberg and Buker** [25] have presented their model which consists of a five-move structure. The first optional move is *Background*, the other four obligatory moves are *Purpose*, *Methodology*, *Results*, and *Conclusion*. Bhatia [6]

proposed a four-move model for research article abstracts. The first move is *Introducing the Purpose*; the second move is *Describing the Methodology*; the third is *Summarizing the Results*; and the last one is *Presenting the Conclusions*. Santos [16] offered a five-move mode: *Situating the Research*, *Presenting the Research*, *Describing the Methodology*, *Summarizing the Results*, and *Discussing the Research*.

Anderson and Maclean [26] employing and adapting Weissberg and Bucker's [25] model, examined 80 abstracts related to medical science, the outcomes of their study showed that some of their abstracts were in accordance with the model applied in their study. On the other hand, a considerable number of abstracts did not conform to the model completely, i.e., these abstracts missed one or more moves. Regarding abstracts in life science, Lau [27], analyzed 80 abstracts, including 50 abstracts from academic journal articles written by Taiwanese PhD students, the other 30 instances of abstracts by foreign researchers of the same field. The results of that study indicated that around half of the students' abstracts did not contain the Introduction, Purpose, and Method moves. While, a high percentage of scholars' abstract included the suggested five move categories, with the exclusion of Method move.

Relatedly, Hyland [13] proposed five moves, namely, Introduction, Purpose, Method, Product, and Conclusion. He got his model from thorough analysis of 800 research article abstracts taken from eight variant disciplines: applied linguistics, biology, electrical engineering, marketing, mechanical engineering, philosophy, physics, and sociology. In a similar way, Swales and Feak [28] suggested that abstracts should have the following moves: Background, Aim, Method, Results, and Conclusion.

To adopt a suitable model for their move analysis, Saboori and Hashemi [29] conducted a pilot study. The results suggested that Hyland's [13] five-move model can be followed and adopted for further analyses of research article abstracts. It was concluded that this model is the most suitable for the structure of the analyzed abstracts because of the valuable distinction it suggested between the introduction and the purpose of the study. Prior to his study, Darabad [5] conducted a pilot study on nine article abstracts to decide whether Hyland's [13] five-move model would be appropriate to use in his study or not. The obtained findings recommended Hyland's [13] five-move model as a prominent model for further examination of research abstracts. Al-shujairi, Buba and Ya'u [30] looked for the better model to use in their study. They mentioned that many researchers used repeatedly both Santos' [16] and Hyland's [13] models to analyze the research abstracts. In fact, Santos' [16] and Hyland's [13] models are practically the same since both have the same five moves with the same functions. The only difference between the two models is that Hyland's [13] model is based on different fields of study while Santos' [16] depends on merely the applied linguistics field. To assist the academic researchers in all fields of study, Hyland's [13] model was nominated as a better model, therefore, Al-shujairi, Buba and Ya'u [30] used it in their study. From these models, a five-move model seems to be a recommended model of an abstract even though the moves are titled differently by different authors. Kondo [31] states that metadiscourse markers are very essential in the academic research writing. Therefore, researchers need to be aware of using these markers in presenting their claims. Hyland's [14] taxonomy, as



presented in Figure 2, is selected for this study because it is regarded by many researchers such as Abdi[32] and Kondowe[31] as the favorable taxonomy in recent metadiscourse research. Figure (1) and Figure (2) illustrate the two models, respectively.

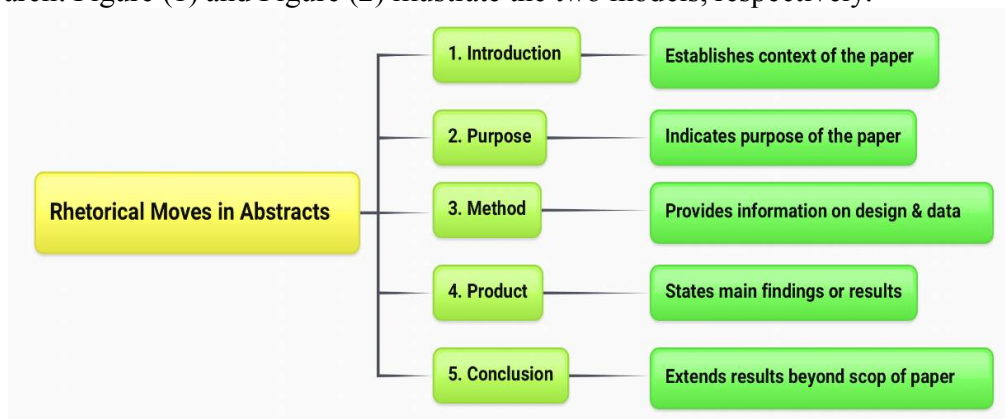


Figure 1. Rhetorical moves based on Hyland, [13].

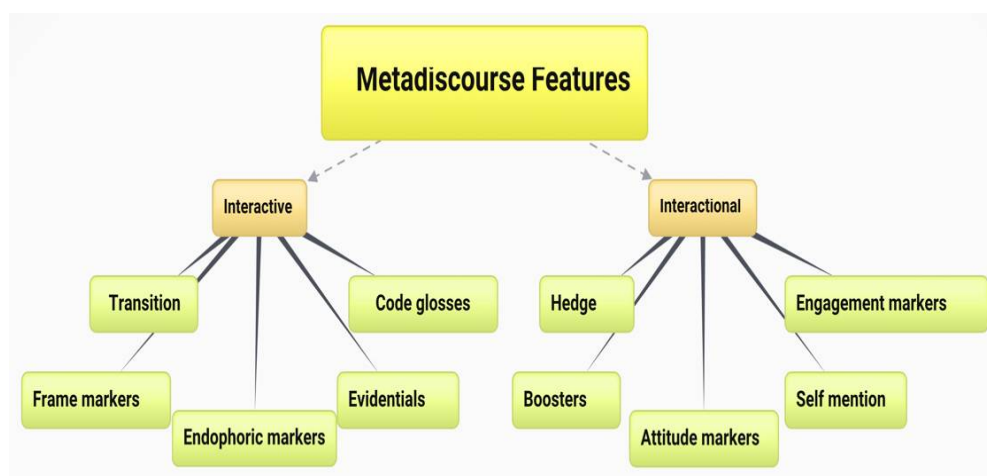


Figure 2. Metadiscourse features based on Hyland's, [14] taxonomy

## 2.2 Academic Writing Difficulties Factors

Graduate students in both ESL and EFL contexts are expected to encountered difficulties that might hinder them to move on in their writing. Some of these difficulties are related to the effect of the first language. L1 interference is one of the crucial factors that lead to the lack of students' self-confidence in their academic writing [33]. Other difficulties might be related to the fact that students have not been taught to be critical academics [34]. Al Fadda[35] believes that the central difficulties ESL students confront are grammatical issues involving subject-verb agreement and providing transition markers between words and sentences to make a coherent text. To avoid the grammatical mistakes, students might copy and paste instead of paraphrasing other's work [34].

Chou [33] states that international students come from different cultural circumstances usually depend on their teachers as they consider themselves as ESL learners. Ghabool, Mariadas s& Kashef [36] claim that low language skill might be another reason of the challenges students have in academic writing.

### 3. Methodology

A total of 20 MA thesis abstracts in English language discipline were chosen from EFL and ESL contexts. The first 10 theses are written in Iraq (EFL context), while the other 10 theses are written in the United States of America where English can be considered as a second language (ESL context) rather than a foreign language. Hyland's [13] and [14] models have been adopted by the researchers as instruments of analysis.

#### 3.1 Data Analysis Procedures

Data were analyzed by adapting Hyland's [13] model of genre analysis to explore the differences of rhetorical moves between EFL group and ESL group of writing thesis abstracts. Hyland's [13] model of genre analysis is summarized in Table 1. The table displays the function of each move.

**Table1: The Five Rhetorical Moves of Abstract Writing Adapted from Hyland (2000) [13]**

Moves	Explanation
Introduction (M1)	Establishes context of the paper and motivates the research.
Purpose (M2)	Indicates purpose, outlines the aim behind the paper.
Method (M3)	Provides information on design, procedures, assumptions, data analysis, etc.
Product (M4)	States main results, the argument.
Conclusion (M5)	Interprets or extends results beyond scope of the paper, draws inferences, points to applications or wider implications.

To complete the analysis of the data collected from the 20 theses, the researchers divided them into common themes. Subsequently they highlighted these individual themes with different colors to identify the types of moves in the abstracts. Then the ones that made no influence on the study were extracted. The screenshot, as shown in Figure 3 below, is an example of the structural move analysis.

In countries such as Iraq where English is taught as a foreign language, it is common to notice that in spite of the years of English language education, most students are unable to speak in a proper way. This fact has been documented by several studies on speaking ability in Iraq. Therefore, the researcher tackled this issue as an attempt to remedy it through using two new techniques which are Three-Step Interview and Talking Chips. The population of the present study is made up of fourth scientific preparatory male students in Baghdad Governorate, the third Directorate General of Education in Al-Gusafa. The sample of the study, which is chosen randomly, consists of three sections of the fourth preparatory male students at Al-Shaheed Qasim Al-Mubarrqa' Preparatory School. The total number of the sample was 128. Two of them are experimental and the third is control. Three-Step Interview is applied on the first section, while Talking Chips is applied on the second one. The third section is taught by using the prescribed method. The experimental design of this study is Non-Randomized Control Group Pre- test Post-test Design, which is one of the quasi experimental designs. The experiment lasted for two months during the academic year 2016-2017. It started on the eleventh of March and ended on the eleventh of May. The researcher himself taught all the three groups. Both of the pretest and the posttest were constructed by the researcher and exposed to a jury of experts to verify their validity. The first version of the pretest was applied on the pilot sample of 67 male students to estimate their discrimination power and difficulty level. M Reliability was calculated by using 'Inter-rater reliability'. The researcher applied the test on the pilot sample and then gave the test to another scorer (a regular teacher of English.) The correlation between the two scores was calculated by Pearson correlation. The result was 0.73. This indicates that the test has a high reliability. Pair-Samples t-Test was used to analyze the results of the comparison between the pretest and the posttest. It showed that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the three groups in favor of the posttest. ANOVA test is applied on the posttest scores. It showed that there are statistically significant differences among the three groups in favour of the TSI and TCs. And to compare the three groups according to each speaking area (grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency and pronunciation), ANOVA test is applied again. If there is any significant difference, the Scheffe test is used to demonstrate the technique which has the greatest effect on it. As a result, the TSI technique is a more appropriate technique in teaching speaking than the TCs technique and the prescribed one since it develops each of the vocabulary, comprehension, fluency and the pronunciation of the students with high scores, while the TCs develops only the vocabulary and the comprehension, but with low scores. prescribed method development weak lower scores. In the light of the study findings, a number of recommendations are stated and suggestions for further studies are put forward.

### Figure 3. A screenshot from the structural move analysis.

As the last step, the results were compared. In the EFL group, the findings showed that six thesis abstracts revealed full agreement with applying the five rhetorical moves of Hyland [13], however the remaining three abstracts showed differences. In the ESL group, eight thesis abstracts followed the five moves while the other two reflected differences as shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Total Number of Moves in the Abstract of EFL Group and ESL Group**

Moves	EFL group	ESL group
Introduction	7	9
Purpose	10	10
Method	10	10
Product	9	10
Conclusion	7	9
Total number of moves	43	48

The next step was finding out the use of the meta discourse features in each move. Met a discourse features were analyzed and identified by adapting Hyland's model [14] of interpersonal met a discourse taxonomy (Table 3 and 4). Hyland [14] divided met a discourse features into two kinds: interactive and interact ional discourse.

### 3.2 Interactive Met a discourse Features

Interactive met a discourse markers are used to organize the propositions and provide information so the readers can find a coherent text. Interactive met a discourse includes *Code Glosses*, *Frame Markers*, *Endophoric Markers*, *Evidentials*, and *Transition Markers*. Table 3 presents the Interactive Met a discourse Features along with their functions and examples.



**Table 3: Interactive Metadiscourse Features**

Category	Function	Examples
<b>Interactive</b>	<b>Help to guide the reader through the text</b>	<b>Resources</b>
Transition	Express relations between main clauses	<i>Moreover/ in addition/ but; thus/ and/ however/ therefore/ and</i>
Frame markers	Refer to discourse acts, sequences, or stages	<i>First/ second/ firstly/ finally/ to conclude/ in conclusion; purpose/ my purpose is/</i>
Endophoric markers	Refer to information in other parts of the text	<i>In this part/ in Chapters 2/ in section 1/ mentioned above/ noted above/ as follows</i>
Evidentials	Refer to information in other texts	<i>According to X/ cite/ (Y, 1990)/ Z states</i>
Code glosses	Elaborate propositional meanings	<i>In other words/ it means/ specifically/ for example/ such as/ defined as/ e.g.,/</i>

### 3.3 Interactional Met discourse Features

Interactional met discourse markers are utilized to focus readers' attention, acknowledge their uncertainties, and lead them to interpretations. Therefore, they involve both writers and readers. For instance, writers could create relationship with their readers by expressing their points of views and displaying their personalities. Hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers are the categories of interactional met discourse markers. Table 4 presents these five categories with their function and examples.

**Table 4: Interactional Metadiscourse Features**

Category	Function	Examples
<b>Interactional</b>	<b>Involve the reader in the text</b>	<b>Resources</b>
Hedges	Withhold commitment and open dialogue	<i>Claim/ may/ might/ could/ would/ perhaps/ possible/ some</i>
Boosters	Emphasize certainty or close dialogue	<i>In fact/ indeed/ definitely/ show</i>
Attitude Markers	Express writer's attitude toward the propositional information	<i>Important/ I agree/ should/ have to/ agree/ surprisingly</i>
Self-mentions	Explicit reference to the writer	<i>I/ we/ my/ the author/ us/ our</i>
Engagement markers	Explicitly build relationship with reader	<i>Classify/ increase/ state/ note that/</i>

A word-by-word analysis technique was employed to determine the met discourse features as shown in Figure 4 and Figure 5. The results were compared after the analysis of ESL and EFL students' abstracts.

The researcher	Transition Markers
The researcher	Transition Markers
The researcher	Transition Markers
The researcher	Transition Markers
The researcher	Transition Markers
The researcher	Transition Markers
The researcher	Announce goals
The researcher	Transition Markers
The researcher	Transition Markers
The researcher	Transition Markers
The researcher	Transition Markers
The researcher	Engagement Markers
The researcher	Transition Markers
The researcher	Code Glosses
The researcher	Transition Markers
The researcher	Code Glosses
The researcher	Transition Markers
The researcher	Transition Markers
The researcher	Transition Markers
The researcher	Boosters

Metadiscourse is a universal rhetorical aspect of languages embodying the notion that the purpose of writing is not only informative; rather, it is a social act enhancing a writer-reader interaction and building effective communicative relationships, thereby creating a reader-friendly text. This thesis examines metadiscourse in L2 academic writing of Arabic-speaking advanced English learners. It investigates the effect of different environments, English as a foreign language (EFL) versus English as a second language (ESL), as well as the effect of time in the development of writers' metadiscourse. Results were mixed. Quantitatively, the EFL group was closer to the Control group of native speakers in their overall metadiscourse, but the ESL group was closer to the Control group in more than half of the subcategories. Qualitatively, the ESL group was closer to the Control group in four categories, which helped them to establish their ethos and logos. However, both EFL and ESL writers failed to employ other metadiscourse markers to express their attitudes clearly and engage their readers. To bridge the rhetorical gaps in L2 writing, this thesis asserts that explicit instruction in the rhetorical features of English academic writing is not only needed, but also should be required at early stages of writing instruction. Practices, such as identifying metadiscourse markers and their functions in well-

The researcher  
Boosters

The researcher  
Transition markers

The researcher  
Transition Markers

The researcher  
Transition Markers

The researcher  
Transition marker

The researcher  
Transition Markers

The researcher  
Transition marker

The researcher  
Transition marker

The researcher  
Transition Markers

Naghman Majeed  
Transition Markers

The researcher  
hedges

The researcher  
Code Glosses

The researcher  
marker

## 4. Results and Discussion

#### 4.1. The Results of the Rhetorical Moves

The purpose move is utilized to show the objective of the study. The purpose move founds in all the abstracts written by EFL and ESL students of English major. All EFL and ESL students comprised the purpose move in their thesis abstracts. Therefore,

this result aligns with the previous study by Van Bonn & Swales [39] who found that all the abstracts they analyzed involved the purpose move.

The method move is employed to describe the instruments, and samples used in the study. In addition, it is used to explain data collection and data analysis. In the present study, all EFL and ESL students comprised the method move in their thesis's abstracts. These findings concur with Pho's [23] and Al-Khasawneh[38] findings who stated that approximately all the analyzed abstracts comprised of the method move.

Move four is used to concisely summarize the main findings of the study. The finding showed that almost all the analyzed abstracts contained the product move. Nine instances of product move have found in the abstracts written by EFL students and ten instances have found in the abstracts written by ESL students. These findings in line with Al-Khasawneh[38] findings.

Researchers used the conclusion segment in their abstracts to summarize their inferences drawn from the findings. The results of the present study showed that nine of the EFL students included conclusion move in their abstract. However, only six EFL students mentioned some of their findings in the abstract. The results show a significant difference between thesis abstracts in conclusion move in EFL and ESL contexts.

In general, the findings show that conclusion moves displayed the lowest frequency in EFL context. Furthermore, the results indicate that EFL students had fewer Introduction Move than ESL students.

#### 4.2 The Results of the Metadiscourse Features

The second adapted model in this study is Hyland's Met discourse Model [14]. This model has been selected to identify and analyze the features of met discourse utilized in the thesis abstracts. In each move the metadiscourse features have been documented based on the subdivisions in Hyland's model, i.e., interactive met discourse and interactional met adiscourse.

##### 4.2.1 Interactive Met discourse

According to Hyland [14] interactive meta discourse features can be divided into the following subcategories: *Transition Markers*, *Frame Markers*, *Endophoria Marker*, *Evidentials*, and *Code Glosses*.

It is obvious from Table 5 that the most frequently used of transition marker in both EFL and ESL contexts is *and*. It occurs 145 times in the ESL context and 140 times in the EFL context. The second most frequently transition in the abstracts written in EFL context is *but*, and the least transitions are *however* and *as a result*. While the second most frequently used transition in ESL context is *as a result* which occurs nine times. The least one is *the result*.

Table 5: Transition Markers used by EFL Group and ESL Group

Transition Markers	EFL group	ESL group
And	145	140
But	4	6
However	2	7
The result	10	5
As a result	2	9
Total number	163	167

The frame markers that are commonly found in EFL are *numbering*, *then*, and *listing*. while in ESL context, *finally* is the most frequently used one among the other frame markers followed by *then*. Table 6 presents the total number of frame markers occurrence in EFL and ESL groups.

Table 6: Frame Markers used by EFL Group and ESL Group

Frame Markers	EFL group	ESL group
Next	1	2
Finally	2	7
Numbering (1, 2, 3, etc.)	5	3
Listing (a, b, c, etc.)	3	2
Then	3	5
Total number	14	19

Turning to endophoric markers, only one marker occurs in ESL context which is *the third chapter*. However, no occurrence is found in the abstracts of the EFL group.

Table 7: Endophoric Markers used by EFL Group and ESL Group

Endophoric Markers	EFL group	ESL group
The (third) chapter	0	1

It is predictable to note that there are few times of citations in the abstract section. The abstract usually depends on the researcher's original work. There are two times more citations in thesis abstract of ESL group than in thesis abstract of EFL group.

Table 8: Evidential used by EFL Group and ESL Group

Evidential	EFL group	ESL group
Citation	1	2

Code glosses *for example*, *for instance*, *such as*, *i.e.*, are used in both contexts. However, they are considerably more frequent in the thesis abstract of ESL group than in EFL group. The most frequently used among them are *for example* and *such as*.

Table 9: *Code Glosses used by EFL Group and ESL Group*

Code glosses	EFL context	ESL context
For example,	4	5
For instance,	1	4
Such as	4	5
i.e.,	2	5
Total number	11	19

#### 4.2.2 Interactional Met discourse

According to Hyland [14] interactional Met discourse markers are divided into the following subcategories: *Hedges*, *Boosters*, *Attitude Markers*, *Self-Mentions* and, *Engagement Markers*.

ESL group used hedges in their thesis abstracts 12 times while the EFL group use them only 4 times. they are sometimes used to soften categorical statements, which is one of the characteristics of academic writing [40].

Therefore, EFL students need to use more hedges in their academic writing. Table 10 presents the total number of hedges occurrence in EFL and ESL groups.

Table 10: *Hedges used by EFL Group and ESL Group*

Hedges	EFL group	ESL group
May	1	4
Should	1	2
Indicate	2	4
Might	0	2
Total number	4	12

In interactional met discourse, the boosters that are frequently found in this study are *believe*, *found*, *indicate*, *show*, and *prove*. As presented in Table 11, the most frequently used one by the EFL group is *prove* with six occurrences, however the least is *believed* with one occurrence. In the EFL context, the booster that appeared most frequent is the verb *show* which occurred six times while there was no occurrence of *prove*.

Table 11: *Boosters used by EFL Group and ESL Group*

Boosters	EFL group	EFL group
Believe	1	4
Found	3	2
Indicate	4	5
Show	4	6
Prove	6	0
Total number	18	17



The attitude markers that are identified include *applied*, *appropriate*, *essential*, and *prefer*. As shown in Table 12, the most frequently used one is *applied*, which appeared six times in the EFL context and four times in the ESL context, followed by *appropriate* which has 2 occurrences each.

Table 12: *Attitude Markers used by EFL Group and ESL Group*

Attitude Markers	EFL group	ESL group
Applied	6	4
Appropriate	2	2
Essential	1	5
Prefer	0	2
Total number	9	13

There is no occurrence for self-mentions in both contexts. In terms of engagement markers, the *verb analyzed* has the highest number with three, and six occurrences in EFL and ESL contexts respectively. The least interactional attitude marker that is utilized in the ESL context is *evaluate* with just one appearance.

Table 13: *Engagement Markers used by EFL Group and ESL Group*

Engagement Markers	EFL group	ESL group
Analyzed	3	6
Define	2	2
Classify	2	4
Evaluate	0	1
Total number	7	13

In sum, there are some resemblances and distinctions in the rhetorical moves in the two contexts. In the EFL context, three thesis abstracts miss the introduction move. While in ESL context, only one thesis abstract lacks that segment. A comparison of the thesis abstracts also shows that the number of occurrences of the Purpose, and Method moves was similar, but the difference was in the occurrence of the Introduction, Product and Conclusion moves. The high regularity of the introduction, product and conclusion moves agrees with previous studies by Li and Pramoolsook[41], Ren and Li[42], and Suntara and Usaha [20]. Interactive met discourse features appeared more frequently than interactional features in both EFL and ESL groups. In addition, ESL group have used met discourse markers in their thesis abstracts more than those of the EFL group.

The only interactional met discourse features which has been found to be more frequent in the thesis abstracts of EFL group than in the thesis abstract of ESL group is

the verb *prove*. Therefore, cultural conventions of ESL context might affect graduate students writing.

## 5. Conclusion

Generally, the aim of the study, which is exploring the rhetorical moves and the meta discourse markers of thesis abstracts considering the influence of different contexts (EFL and ESL) using Hyland's [13] and [14] models were achieved.

A slightly higher number of rhetorical movements are found in the thesis abstracts of the ESL group (48) than in the EFL group (43). The high occurrence of the five moves found in the datasets of the two contexts suggests that the EFL and ESL graduate students were aware of the significance of the moves.

Regarding the meta discourse features, findings show that EFL students and ESL students used meta discourse markers very differently in their thesis abstracts. Therefore, EFL graduate students should be aware of the importance of using meta discourse markers. In addition, EFL teachers should not neglect teaching them to their students. Including rhetorical features of academic writing is not only desirable but also is very necessary.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

There are no conflicts of interest

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