

# A Cross- Disciplinary Genre Analysis Of Phd Theses Abstracts Of Pakistan

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## Abstract

The goal of this reand search is to look into how interactive and interactional Meta discourse elements are used in applied linguistics and engineering PhD theses abstracts. The current study is constructed on the collection of 100 engineering thesis abstracts and 100 applied linguistics research abstracts. Hyland's model (2005) was used to analyze the corpus that was chosen fromboth fields incorporated interactive and interactional components in their abstracts, according to the findings. Writers in both the disciplines favored interactive Meta discourse over interactional Meta discourse. There were also substantial differences in the overall frequency of Meta discourse characteristics; furthermore the incidence of specific sections in interactive and interactional characteristics.

## Introduction

An increasing number of researchers are considering academic writing, with a particular concentration on the type of the research work that has sparked a lot of attention in the recent two decades. When reporting their findings in academic writing, it was often assumed that writers have to be impartial and employ an objective or impersonal style when expressing their findings in academic writing. Several research analysts (such as Swales, 1990; Tang & John, 2000) have critiqued this prevalent understanding of academic writing. Written text contact can be controlled like spoken text interaction, according to research analysts (Thetela, 1997; Hoey, 2001; Hyland, 2005), but with different consequences as a result of different factors. Gradually, this viewpoint has manifested itself in academic writing as social engagement, which incorporates author-learner interaction. As a result, rather than creating texts

to portray external reality, knowledgeable and skilled writers are expected to employ language to convey themselves and their work, as well as acknowledge and negotiate social interactions with learners. Academic writers' capacity to manage the point of traits in their work, assert unity with learners, evaluate their content, and appreciate different points of view is becoming increasingly acknowledged as a vital attribute of outstanding academic writing (Hyland, 2004).

Writing a PhD thesis, as previously noted, is an extremely challenging and arduous task. PhD thesis writers are expected to demonstrate original and new research work by adhering to the writing principles in their specific topic field. The distinctiveness of the study effort and adherence to the instructional community's writing guidelines increase the likelihood that the writers' claim of the most recent expertise gets reputation and acclaim. Awwaad (2012) Writing a thesis, according to previous research, is a

complex and modern form of writing. This is also discussed by two other famous critics Ren & Li, (2011) in their research work. According to Kawase and Koutsantoni (2015, 2006) research projects have been defined as beautiful types of particular qualities and principles by research effort.

Hyland stated that "a writer focuses on abstracts in this Endeavour, stating that "the abstract is often the reader's initial contact with textual content, and it is frequently the moment at which they decide whether or not to save and supply the following thesis work in addition notice otherwise to reject it". Hartley (2009) and pique- Noguera(2012) negotiated that a number of excellent writers are unable to get the attention they deserve, due to poor quality of work by writing abstracts.

Hartely & Betts (2009) considered an essential skill to write highly quality abstracts for writers to gain reputation plus identification of their disciplinary groups. During the last few decades, abstracts have gained significant importance due to a remarkable boost in the book of research articles; thesis and monographs have brought about an extraordinary statistics overload (Cross & Oppenheim, 2006).

Bhatia (1997) discussed for the evaluation of abstracts, a popular method for assessing the level of textual content is the advanced study of style assessment, which defines "the study of situational language behavior among educational or traditional specialists. Swales & Feak (2009) showed, the word "style" is classified as "a type of textual material and speech organized for the achievement of a specific communication purpose and the study of many types has greatly added to our knowledge. As each style has possessed style-particular qualities and customs, they contribute to linguistic variety. As a result, genre investigation is highly valued in the field of

applied linguistics because it has significant educational suggestions for language acquisition, particularly in EA and ESP training.

The current research examined Ph.D. theses abstracts which are primarily based on components of style analysis. The rhetorical shape of the textual content is the first factor and it is composed of "moves" In any spoken or written discourse, the word "move" refers to discourse or rhetorical unit and it plays a communicative features. Moves have communicative qualities; however they have contributed to the style's overall goal. Moves are routinely evaluated in terms of their occurrence conjunctive samples and their status as optional or mandatory to the style. According to Weissberg (1990), moves are so important in the study of rhetorical structure, several styles have defined the most prevalent films of various genres. The present literature is based on a modified edition of Hyland's model, which identifies five essential abstract moves: (1) introduction, (2) motive, (3) approach, (4) product and (5) conclusion. Because of its simplicity of performance and extensive application in further study, Hyland's model, like the previous prominent paintings of Weissberg and Buker (1990), is extensively utilized.

The existing study work examines the abstracts of Ph.D. thesis Applied Linguistics and Engineering along with the meta discourse textual and interpersonal features unique to the type, in addition to the rhetorical structure. Table 1 shows Hyland's (2005) popular metadiscourse taxonomy. The approach developed by Hyland (2005) examines two sorts of categories: Interpersonal and textual characteristics. The approach developed by Hyland (2005) examines two sorts of categories: Interpersonal and textual characteristics. Textual traits comprise the employment of logical connectives, frame markers, and endophonic markers, to name a few. Hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-

mentions are examples of interpersonal aspects, as are markers, evidence, and code glosses, as well as indicators of engagement. The functions and examples for these categories and subcategories are provided in Table 1. It is significant to mention that the existing research centers on (a) rhetorical structure and (b) textual and interactive Meta discourse, whereas other research has focused on different linguistic components of genres, mainly lexica grammatical traits and resources. Warchal & lim (2010, 2011) have investigated the usage of linguistic aspects in research papers and theses/dissertations in several modern studies.

The rhetorical structure and Meta discourse of 200 abstracts in the field of Applied Linguistics and Engineering were explored in this study. The first half came from Pakistan's elite Punjab University's Applied Linguistics department, and the second half came from the engineering department. The goal of selecting these two domains was to make sure that the selected works truly reflect standards and practices in respective disciplines, as well as being authorized by reputable academic experts.

Table 1 Hyland's (2005) taxonomy of Meta discourse

Category	Functions	instances
Textual	Assist the reader in navigating the content	sources
Logical connectives (Transitions)	Interrelationships between important sentences should be specified.	Moreover, except, additionally, though, consequently
Frame markers	Acts, sequences, or phases of a discourse	My goal is..., primary, following, the results are..., at the ending
End phoric markers	Make use of information from other sections of the text.	revealed above, as go after
Evidential	Make use of data from other texts.	along with..., X describes that...
Code glosses	Propositional meanings that are more detailed	specially, it signifies that..., for instance..., e.g., for example
Interpersonal	Engage the reader in the writing process.	Resources
Hedges	Withhold the complete commitment of the writer to statements	can might, ought, should, perhaps, some, possible
Boosters	Emphasize force or writer's certainty	in fact, definitely

Attitude markers	Express writer's attitude including significance, compulsion to proposal	ought to, have to, agree, amazingly
Self-mentions	express writer's explicitly	I, my, special we, our
Engagement markers	Clearly establish a bond with the reader.	imperatives (e.g., kindly note down this ...), you may check that..., general We

Seven sections are discussed in this current study. First of all, the introduction is given. After that literature review is presented. Then research questions and research methodology will be discussed. At the next point, results will be provided and analyzed. In the end, the conclusion and academic suggestions of the current study will be given.

### Literature Review

Textual and interpersonal Meta discourse features have traditionally been separated. Soler-Monreal & Gil-Salon (2011) stated that several researches are accomplished on different elements of thesis; however there have been relatively few studies on thesis abstracts. Al-Ali & Sahawneh, 2011 and Maleki, (2011) described that most thesis abstract research included cross-linguistic comparisons. For three reasons, this research, on the other hand, have not shown to be relevant to the current endeavor. To begin with, some studies looked at topics other than Applied Linguistics. Whereas other literature work centered on Master's theses these writers have often lack of educational ability and socialization in the punitive community compared to Ph.D. theses authors. Lastly research on theses written by foreign speakers. Speakers are primarily interested in a thesis written in the context of learning a foreign language. Due to the modest institutional requirements theses with

comparatively meager educational English may be recognized.

There are four different sorts of research abstracts. The first kind focuses on certain disciplines in order to uncover their distinct rhetorical structures and Meta discourse applications. Usaha & Suntara (2013) found out that the Purpose-Method-Product-Conclusion pattern is most popular in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics patterns. They also discovered that in both disciplines, Purpose, Method, and Product are used as general moves, while Introduction is an elective move with a high regularity of incidence. The conclusion is common in Applied Linguistics because of the discipline's practice-driven orientation, as opposed to Linguistics, which is more theoretical. In both disciplines, the authorial perspective was expressed by self-mention pronouns. The method had the most frequency, pursued by Product, Purpose, Conclusion, and Introduction, in that order. While linguistic summaries provided a clear indication to the study's range, methods, with major findings, literary abstracts placed research in a broader perspective and provided a more unsure reference to the results.

Metadiscourse is a type of category that can be argued about in a variety of ways. Furthermore, linguistic elements such as punctuation and typographic markers (i.e. parentheses and underlining) can be utilized in

conjunction with spoken signals (such as tone of voice and stress) to indicate our intent in oral or written texts. As a result, Crismore & Vandepol proposed many meta discourse taxonomies (1989, 1985).

Hyland discussed in his model "Metadiscourse is a type that can be debated in many different ways. Furthermore, in oral and written texts, linguistic components such as punctuation and typographic markers can be used in conjunction with verbal signals to express our meaning". Vandepol presented the first model in 1985. He distinguished between "textual" and "interpersonal" Meta discourse. Textual Meta discourse has four strategies: text connectives, code glosses, illocution markers, and narrators; interpersonal meta discourse has three: validity markers, attitude markers, and remarks. Vandepol's approach was important since it was the first systematic and deliberate attempt at providing taxonomy, leading to various research and new taxonomies. In contrast, the classifications are fuzzy and functionally overlap. Citations, for example, not only bolster a position by claiming the support of a reliable third party but they identify the source of the material (narrators) (Hyland, 2005). The next model is divided into two categories by Hyland (2005): "interactive" and "interactional." The conceptualization of Thompson and Thetela (1995) is significant in the development of this model because it incorporates position and appointment indicators. The interactive aspect of Meta discourse is concerned with the researcher's acknowledgment of his reader, with his efforts to shape the argument to the reader's concerns and desires, in addition to to make the argument satisfactory and sensible for the reader. The researcher's efforts to construct his views apparent and involve the reader by anticipating his difficulties and responses to the text are focused with the interactional element (Hyland, 2005). Hyland & Tse distinguish between

interactive and interactional Meta discourse by following Thompson & Thetela (2004).

According to Hyland, the umbrella term for self-reflective phrases "is employed to discuss interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer and speaker in articulating a viewpoint and engaging them as members of a particular community. As it is formerly assumed that interactive tools permit the author to clearly convey his or her selected interpretations.

In a similar spirit, Blagojevic (2004) investigated the usage of meta discourse in educational publications written in English by native English and Norwegian speakers in three disciplines (Sociology, Psychology, and Philosophy). Blagojevic believed that Psychology authors used elaborate methods to make readers aware of the portions that followed or before them, regardless of the language. The findings of his study also revealed that philosophy authors' writing is diverse, whereas psychology authors' writing is very standardized, and sociology authors are somewhere in the center.

## **Methodology,**

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- 1. To what extent the abstracts of engineering and social sciences differ in the use of the metadiscourse textual and interpersonal features?**
- 2. To what extent the abstracts of engineering and social sciences differ in rhetorical structure**

The corpus for this study included two disciplines (Applied Linguistics and Engineering). Random sampling was used to choose 100 applied linguistics theses and 100 engineering theses. Furthermore, random sampling assisted us in overcoming the issue of writer idiosyncrasy. These abstracts were selected from the PhD

theses published between 2006 to 2015. The abstracts were all written in English. The goal of the literature was to provide a suitable criterion for comparing abstracts.

The author collected the abstracts by copying and pasting them. The writer used separate word document for assessment.

The abstracts copied from the thesis that had been selected from online HEC repository. As previously stated, the uniqueness of the abstract writer, whether he is native or non-native, was irrelevant because the theses were accepted by prestigious academic experts.

The current research focused on coding two features of genres: moves and meta discourse. The moves were coded using a modified version of Hyland's (2000) five-move model and it is exposed in Table 2. The model was selected because it is simple to execute and widely used in the literature, making cross-study comparisons easier. The five key categories marked in bold in Table 2 were initially part of the model.

Table 2 Ren claims that the mobility of findings in thesis summaries is “short” are refuted by this investigation (2011).

Adapted version of Hyland's (2000) model for the rhetorical structure.

1 Introduction	Establishes context of research
Word context	Places the research in its non-research-based world context.
study background	As previous researches, places the study in its research perspective.
topic importance	Emphasizes the significance of the topic.
2 purpose	Describes the research's purpose and objectives.
Description of research	Explains the study's aims and states the study's purpose.

However, in the current study, more subcategories were included to permit for additional study and evaluations. The coding was done in two parts. The first stage was to read all over the abstracts, emphasize every move in a special color, and after this it calculates the length of every move using Microsoft Word's word count tool. In order to do statistical analysis, total words of each move are entered into excel file. The data are adjusted before running because length of every abstract in both domains is different. The entire words for moves and the entire words for abstracts are evaluated in t-tests. The assessment of move combinations was the second step. Every move was assigned a number. The arrangement of the moves was included into a new Excel file for assessment.

### Results & discussion,

How rhetorical moves in the abstracts of Ph.D. linguistics thesis different from engineering research thesis?

Research questions	Explains the study's aims and states the study's purpose.
3 Method	Design, processes, data analysis, and other topics are covered.
Data collection	The study participants, supplies, and technique are all detailed.
Data analysis	Comprises information on how the data analyzed.
4 findings	Indicates results
5 conclusion	Points to application, or wider implications and interpretation
Study contributions	The study's contributions are highlighted.
Implications	Describes the study's theoretical and/or practical consequences.
Research directions	In regard to the findings, suggests future research directions.
Limitations	Mention any study constraints that may have an impact on the results.

In the study abstracts, Hyland's (2005) paradigm of Meta discourse is chosen for coding Meta discourse. This model is frequently utilized in the text and handles a wide collection of textual and interpersonal characteristics. In order to capture differences at micro-levels, the model's main categories were further broken into sub-categories and table 3 clearly described it. Two steps were necessary for metadiscourse coding. First of all the researcher read the abstracts and

noted the metadiscourse aspects. The next step was to separately count the number of metadiscourse aspects in every move and enter them into an Excel file separated by moves. This categorization was required to explain the number of features of every move rather than overall number of features in the abstract. This was quite beneficial because it increased the accuracy of the results.

Table 3 Hyland's (2005) taxonomy of meta discourse has been adapted.

categories	Sub-categories	examples
Textual	Assist the reader in navigating the text.	sources
Logical connectives (Transitions)	compare	though; compare

Frame makers	Reason & cause Purpose Consequence Addition Sequence	for the reason that, because of in order that, so as to therefore consequently next to, furthermore followed by, next First, second
Endophoric marker	Listing phrases sentences No subcategories	In conclusion, briefly The results explain, The article concludes No subcategories
Evidential	Perspective Work Instrument Punctuation Phrases  Exemplification Markers	assumption, model previous research review, analysis, task Colon, semi-colon A case in point, A excellent model is for instance, for example
Interpersonal	Assist the reader in navigating the text	sources
Hedges	Adjective Phrase Adverb	comparative, reserved frequently but not entirely possibly usually
Boosters	Modal Verb  Emphatic do	would, might  look, agree
Attitude markers	Adjective Adverb  Phrase	Do believe, does exist  outstanding, extensive powerfully, undoubtedly
Self-mention Engagement marker	Impersonal  Verb Adverb  No subcategories	In the light in opposition belief, It is proposed that  discuss, explain



	No subcategories	unexpectedly captivatingly No subcategories No subcategories
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For both corpora, the occurrence of interactive Metadiscourse aspects were calculated independently (Table 2). Logical markers are used more frequently by both applied linguistics and engineering writers than other interactive elements. However, there is a distinction between the two corpora in terms of interactional metadiscourse. This category is used

more by the authors of applied linguistics. Hedges and attitude markers and used widely by engineering writers more than other features of engagement. Thesis abstracts for Ph.D. applied linguistics and engineering both are educational genres and these two should be studied and taught separately.

Table 4 Percentages of moves

Category	introduction	Purpose	Method	Finding	conclusion	Total
Linguistics thesis	17.28%	14.37%	15.83%	37.96%	14.55%	100%
Engineering Thesis	18.15%	13.45%	15.83%	36.97%	15.54%	100%

Table 4 also demonstrates that the introduction appears to be more essential part of both these abstracts. The purpose, method, and conclusion moves are roughly evenly distributed between these two different types of abstracts. The thesis abstracts' longer introductions reveal the thesis writers' main focus on the subcategory of world context.

Example (1). Sample introduction - world context parts of Ph.D. thesis abstracts,

Garratt (2012) stated that every year, many students of different countries come to

United States for the learning of English so that they could take admission in any American university. It is very difficult to teach these students because they are not prepared for the demands of university.

Walters(2012) described that adults value mobile learning gadgets because of their widespread availability for communication, work, and learning. a lot of teenagers and children have access to, or possess, mobile learning devices outside of the classroom context. Children's regular use of digital gadgets in classrooms is a comparatively latest trend.

Table 5 T-test comparisons of the rhetorical structure

Move	Category	Mean	SD	T	Sig
World context Introduction	L. Abstract	.0472	.12146	1.306	.011
	E. Abstract	.0248	.07864		
	L. Abstract	.1330	.15133	2.337	.013

Description of Objective	E. Abstract	.1054	.14306		
	L. Abstract	.1855	.13567	1.022	026
Research questions	E. Abstract	.1270	.01226		
	L. Abstract	.0129	.05406	1.024	001
Purpose	E. Abstract	.01286	.01243		
	L. Abstract	.0043	.12751	1.011	206
Data analysis	E. Abstract	.1173	.13352		
	L. Abstract	.0113	.17254	2.022	.000
Method	E. Abstract	.0053	.1057		
	L. Abstract	.01432	.13413	1.014	.032
Findings	E. Abstract	.01433	.14140		
	L. Abstract	.2036	.17046	4.735	.000
Implications	E. Abstract	.00445	.14521		
	L. Abstract	.0426	.08243	1.563	015
Conclusion	E. Abstract	0416	.14123		
	L. Abstract	.1100	.11620	476	462
	E. Abstract	0046	.10313		

Other noteworthy findings can be found in the above Table 5's t-test results. First, while the overall purpose shift does not differ significantly, its two subcategories do. In these abstracts, the purpose is more commonly expressed as research questions. In both corpora, the employment of five moves in Hyland's (2005) model can be seen. The frequency of moves, however, appears to have some variances and similarities. To begin with, not all abstracts followed the traditional five-move approach. When the two corpora were compared, it was discovered that the frequency of Hyland's model moves was shown very high.

This disparity between the two groups may be due to differences in research communities, as Engineering critics may have a preference to discuss the implication of their

research work, whereas linguistics authors typically end abstracts with the results rather than the implications and conclusions of research. Previous research of Alotaibi (2016), Amnuani I(2019) and Kafes, (2012) backed up this conclusion. In this study the high frequency of purpose and method changes, which is consistent with earlier research. These results demonstrate that the writers know of the importance of moves in research. Finally, although there is no substantial change in terms of the overall conclusion.

Linguistics and Engineering abstracts' comparison was further expanded to include move combinations. Table 6 shows that there are noteworthy differences in combination patterns between these two types' abstracts.

Table 6 Percentages of move combination patterns

category	Pattern 1	Pattern 2	Pattern 3	Pattern 4	Pattern 5
L.T	IPMFC 24%	PMFC 13.3%	PMF 09%	IPMF 09%	PIMFC 4.3%
E.T	PMFC	PMF	IPMF	IPMFC	MPFC

	19%	17%	16%	09%	4%
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While analyzing the technique shift, it was also found that many researches clearly show the research design. Some writers follow this design but others do not. In this sense, there is an interesting difference between the two sorts of abstracts.

In applied linguistics and engineering areas, Interactive Meta discourse is compared.

The chi-square test was utilized to compare the utilization of Meta discourse features in applied linguistics and engineering corpora. Table 7 explains the results of this analysis.

Table 7

Interactive Metadiscourse			
Logical Markers	2.89	1	n.s
Code Glosses	18.62	1	.001
Sequencer	11.63	1	.001
Topicalisers	6.25	1	.05
Endophoric Markers	30.00	1	.001
Evidential	.74	1	n.s
Total	25.51	4	.001
Interactional Metadiscourse			
Hedges	153.33	1	.001
Boosters	16.91	1	.001
Attitude Markers	19.70	1	.001
Engagement Markers	2.39	1	n.s
Self-mentions	7.86	1	.05

Total	9.74	4	O5
Overall Total	35.42	9	.001

Thus, engineering corpus used more interactive and interactional elements than the applied linguistics corpus. It shows that the writers in the domain of engineering are more connected with their readers as compared to Applied Linguistics, particularly through hedges and attitude signals. Furthermore, engineering authors use more logical markers and code glosses in the text for the help of their readers but applied linguistic writers do not follow this pattern. Furthermore, interactive metadiscourse is used more by writers in applied linguistics.

The chi-square test revealed a statistically noteworthy difference in hedges usage, how applied linguistic and engineering writers use them ( $X^2=153.33$ ,  $p.001$ ). In the applied linguistics corpus, there were fewer hedges than in the engineering corps. Hedges are characteristics and they bound the writer's assurance to the proposition. As a result, engineering authors employ a greater number of hedges when reporting new discoveries. The use of boosters differed statistically significantly between the two groups ( $X^2 =17.81$ ,  $p.003$ ). Applied linguistics writers use frequently boosters than engineers. These Boosters highlight the author's confidence in their writing. Moreover the high level of occurrence of these boosters in applied linguistics abstracts, along with a lower occurrence of hedges, suggests that the arguments and assertions are stated extra strongly than in engineering abstracts.

In applied linguistics corpus, there were more attitude markers than in the engineering corps. ( $X^2=19.70$ ,  $p<.001$ ). As a result, applied linguistics writers are more likely than engineering writers to disclose their views and emotive evaluations of concepts. This conclusion

is consistent with the fact that applied linguistics writers employ fewer hedges and more boosters.

In terms of engagement markers, these two groups show major difference. This demonstrates that writers in both disciplines purposefully build a relationship with their readers and involve them in the cooperation of educational information.

The chi-square test disclosed a statistically considerable difference in the utilization of self-mentions between applied linguistics and engineering writers ( $X^2=7.86$ ,  $p.05$ ). Consequently, engineering writers frequently use self- mentions but applied linguistics writers do not use them in abstracts. It appears that engineering writers make more explicit references to themselves than authors of applied linguistics

In applied linguistics and engineering areas, Interactional Meta discourse is compared.

The chi-square test revealed noteworthy difference that how writers of both selected domains use hedges in their writing ( $X^2=142.11$ ,  $p002$ ). All hedges found in the corpus of applied linguistics contrasted to the engineering corps.

Applied linguistics writers use frequently boosters than engineers. These Boosters highlight the author's confidence in their writing. Moreover the high level of occurrence of these boosters in applied linguistics abstracts, along with a lower occurrence of hedges, suggests that the arguments and assertions are stated extra strongly than in engineering abstracts.

Applied linguistics corpus had more attitude cues than the engineering corpus ( $X =19.70$ ,  $p.001$ ). As a result, applied linguistics

writers are more likely than engineering writers to disclose their views and emotive evaluations of concepts. This conclusion is consistent with the fact that applied linguistics writers employ fewer hedges and more boosters.

### Conclusion

The objective of this current study was to look at metadiscourse elements in applied linguistics and engineering abstracts, and compare how they are used in these two different domains. Both fields use interactive and interactional characteristics in their research publications, according to the findings of the study. However, interactive metadiscourse is used more frequently in both groups as compare to interactional Meta discourse. This contradicts Hyland's (2005) findings that interactive features are less familiar than interpersonal features in eight fields. It proposes that the use of these elements in and across disciplines is culturally diverse. As a result, writers in applied linguistics and engineering rely on aspects that organize discourse in terms of the authors' assessments of readers' desires and beliefs rather than qualities that reflect the researchers' status as authors talking with the readers.

The present study did not look at the distinctions across different categories within the engineering discipline in this study, so future research can look into that. Finally, PhD theses abstracts in two disciplines; applied linguistics and engineering were researched. As a result, the study's conclusions should be interpreted with caution in other circumstances.

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