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ABSTRACT

This research was undertaken to identify the different functions, macrostructure, tense and voice choice in abstracts taken from psychology, sociology, chemistry, and physics journals. In addition, it also compared the macrostructure, tense and voice choice of abstracts taken from the said disciplines.

Thirty abstracts were randomly selected from 10 scientific, professional journals published from 1980 and beyond in each discipline. The following steps were followed for the sample abstracts in each discipline: first, the functions were identified and coded. Second, the macrostructuring was observed and tabulated. Third, verbs which expressed each observed function were categorized according to past, present, and present perfect; then, the rationale was inferred by observing the context. Fourth, voice choice was categorized according to passive, active with impersonal agent, active with researcher agent, and active. After the steps previously mentioned, the macrostructure, tense, and voice choice of the abstracts taken from the four disciplines were compared.



The results showed that introducing the present research, summarizing methodology, generalizing about the results, stating implications, reviewing a related literature, and indicating content were the functions present in psychology abstracts. On the other hand, aside from the functions mentioned previously, stating current knowledge and stating results were present in sociology journals. In contrast, chemistry abstracts had unique functions like stating a conclusion, stating supports, stating a procedure, and stating current practice aside from the common functions like introducing the present research, summarizing methodology, generalizing about the results, stating current knowledge, and summarizing results. Physics abstracts, on the other hand, had the following functions: introducing the present research, summarizing methodology, generalizing about the results, reviewing a related literature, stating current knowledge, stating results, stating a gap, and stating a hypothesis.

The schematic analysis showed as many as four to five patterns in each discipline. For example, in psychology the following schemata surfaced: IP-SM-GR



(Introducing the Present Research - Summarizing the Methodology - Generalizing about the Results) with embedding (47%), SM-GR without embedding (33%), CP-SM-GR (Current Practice-Summarizing the Methodology - Generalizing about the Results) without embedding (10%), and SM-GR with embeddings (10%). In sociology, on the other hand, IP-SM-GR with and without embedding were the most dominant at 26.5% each. CK-SG-SM-GR (Stating Current Knowledge-Stating a Gap - Summarizing the Methodology- Generalizing about the Results) was the next dominant at 20% followed by RRL-[SG]-SM-GR (Reviewing a Related Literature-Stating a Gap-Summarizing the Methodology-Generalizing about the Results) at 17%. Least dominant was IP-SR-GR (Introducing the Present Research- Stating Results- Generalizing about the Results) at 10%.

In chemistry SM-GR macropattern was the most recurring (40%) followed by CP-SM-GR (Current Practice-Summarizing the Methodology-Stating Results) at 20%. Next was SC-SM-[HE] (Stating a Conclusion-Summarizing the Methodology-Hedging) at 17% followed by IP-[SR][GR] (13%). Last was CK-SM/SR-SM/SR at 10%. Various patterns were also observed in physics



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abstracts. For example, SM-SR macropattern was the most dominant at 37% followed by IP-SM-GR at 23%. The third pattern was IP-SR (23%). Fourth was SM-SR[GR] with embeddings (10%), and last was RRL-SM-SR at 6%.

The analysis of tense-function, on the other hand, showed variations of tense choice among the abstracts taken from different disciplines. For example, past tense was generally opted in the functions in psychology abstracts while the present tense was frequently chosen in the functions in sociology and physics abstracts. Tense choice in chemistry abstracts, however, was the most inconsistent. consistent than those in chemistry and sociology.

Analysis of voice choice, on the other hand, showed that voice choice was unpredictable in the abstracts taken from the two branches of social science: psychology and sociology. However, it was predictable in chemistry and physics abstracts. In addition, it was also found out that the voice active with researcher agent was not used in psychology abstracts. In contrast, the active voice was not

used in sociology abstracts. In chemistry abstracts, on the other hand, there were only two choices: active with impersonal actor and passive. Lastly, in physics, verbs were basically in the passive voice.

It was recommended that teachers should teach not only the purpose-methodology-results-conclusions of informative abstracts but also other macropatterns in the target discipline of the students. Also, it was suggested that underlying principles for the choice of tense and voice should be clearly explained to students.

