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Rhetorical Moves and the Evaluative ‘that’ in Research Article Abstracts of Applied Linguistics Published in the Libyan Local Journals

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ABSTRACT

Rhetorical moves and evaluative-*that* construction in research article (RA) abstracts have been one of the most productive areas of discourse studies of the past decade. The present study aims to answer two research questions. The first research question is to show how a well-organized RA abstract is constructed by academic Libyan writers. The second one is to look into how academic Libyan writers evaluate the propositional contents in RA abstracts. The study adopts a mixed-method approach to analyze the data of this study. The corpus consists of 50 RA abstracts written by NNS of English (i.e. Academic Libyan writers). Drawing on a corpus of 9123 words taken from one discipline (Applied Linguistics, AL), the Hyland model (2000) is used to analyze the rhetorical moves, and Hyland and Tse model (2005b) is used to analyze the structure of *that*-clauses. The results reveal that all the moves based on Hyland (2005) framework are prominent in the present data. Notably, the findings display that academic Libyan writers used Move 2 (Purpose) more than the other moves. In addition, academic Libyan authors found enough space to explicitly express the evaluations of the propositions presented in their researches. The study also revealed that the academic Libyan writers tended to evaluate their findings via *that*-clauses while most frequently attributing their evaluations to abstract sources. They mainly conveyed epistemic stance by *that*-clauses were mostly expressed with verbal predicates.

Keywords: RA Abstracts, Evaluative *That*, Move Analysis, Libyan Writers, Hyland Model

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1. Introduction

In scholar writing, research article (RA) abstract, as a part-genre of the RA, has increasingly become a substantial part of journal articles (Swales & Feak, 2004). It is placed at the beginning of the article to 'sell' the article. Although abstracts are short, they have particular conventions (i.e. rhetorical moves and linguistic features) that are accepted by academic discourse communities (San & Tan, 2012). More specifically, these conventions form the frame that the writers need to follow to attain the communicative goal of (RA) abstracts (Bazerman, 1994), and they are considered to be “the main building blocks” in discourse construction and organization (Biber, Connor & Upton, 2007, p. 53). Writing abstracts skillfully, therefore, is vital for native and non-native speakers (NNS) of English to enter the discourse community of their disciplines. A lack of awareness of the

generic features of abstracts, still makes constructing RA abstracts difficult, especially for inexperienced and (NNS) of English writers (Amnuai, 2019; Mauranen, 2007).

With this pivotal rhetorical skill, abstracts have gained striking attention and have been studied from a variety of perspectives. Plethora of studies have examined the rhetorical moves of abstracts (e.g. Ahmed, 2015; Amnuai, 2019; Bhatia, 1993; Golebiowski, 2009; Hyland, 2000; Pho, 2008; Samraj, 2005; Santos, 1996; Suntara & Usaha, 2013; Tanko, 2017). Other studies have particularly focused on the language of abstracts, for example, the distribution of verb tense (e.g. Salager-Meyer, 1992), metadiscourse (Hu & Cao, 2011; Gillaerts & Velde, 2010; Martin, 2003; Alharbi & Swales, 2011; Khedri, Heng, & Ebrahimi, 2013; Akbas, 2012; Ozdemir & Longo, 2014; Del Saz Rubio,

2011), evaluation (e.g. Hyland & Tse, 2005; Stotesbury, 2003), the distribution of modality (e.g. Salager-Meyer, 1992; Thompson, Venturi, McNaught, Montemagni, & Ananiadou, 2008), the distribution of nouns (Charles, 2003); stance (e.g. Çakır, 2016; Jiang & Hyland, 2017) and *evaluative that* (Charles, 2006, 2007; Hyland & Tse, 2005a, 2005b; Hyland & Jiang, 2017; Kim & Crosthwaite, 2019). On close review of the previous studies, a gap in the literature is identified; rare studies on the rhetorical moves and *evaluative that*-construction in academic texts written in English by Arab writers (especially Libyan) as (NNS) are noticed. This study is thus significant to demonstrate how academic Libyan writers as (NNS) construct a well-written abstract in Libyan local journals especially in applied Linguistic discipline and how they evaluate the propositional contents presented in abstracts.

To address this gap in the literature, a corpus-based of 50 (RA) Abstracts, selected from local journals of Libyan public universities (LJLP), seeks to identify the rhetorical moves and the main elements of *evaluative that*-clause in abstracts.

Overall, the following research questions are addressed to form the purpose of the current study:

1. What are the rhetorical moves employed in abstracts written by academic Libyan authors in the field of applied linguistics?
2. How do academic Libyan authors construct *evaluative that*-clauses in abstracts of applied linguistics discipline?

In the following, an overview is given of the fundamental rhetorical moves in abstracts and the construction of *evaluative that*-clauses, and the main findings found in the literature up to date.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Rhetorical Moves in RA Abstracts

According to Swales (2004), move is a “discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse” (p. 228-9). This term was first introduced by Swales (1990) as a methodology to examine the rhetorical structures of a specific genre. He suggested a three-level model of the genre; communicative purpose, move structure and rhetorical strategies. According to his model, a genre can be broken down into various move structures. Each move serves a certain communicative function (Swales, 1990). Rhetorical moves can be recognized by linguistic clues (Swales, 1990) or can be based on the communicative purposes that

each move serves. The length of each move can be recognized by a single finite clause or a group of sentences (Swales, 2004) and these moves can be optional or obligatory (Bhatia, 2014; Swales, 2004). Taking a decision when each move is considered to be optional or obligatory depends on its frequency.

(RA) abstract is regarded as an independent genre. It demonstrates “a well-defined and mutually understood communicative purpose,” (Bhatia 1993, p. 147) and, thus, is worthy of analysis. For this reason, many corpus-based move studies have investigated the structure of abstracts across a range of disciplines; applied linguistics (Pho, 2008; Santos, 1996; Suntara & Usaha, 2013; Tseng, 2011), linguistics (Suntara & Usaha, 2013), educational technology (Pho, 2008), protozoology (Cross & Oppenheim, 2006), tourism (Ahmed, 2015), physics (Hyland, 2000), biology (Hyland, 2000; Samraj, 2005), medicine (Salvager- Meyer, 1990) and various analytical models were adopted (Bhatia, 1993; Hyland, 2000; Santos, 1996) as analytical frameworks. Bhatia's (1993) and Santos's (1996) models identified four moves in abstracts: (Introduction – Methods – Results – Conclusion). Later, Hyland (2000) and Swales and Feak (2004) distinguished the author's goal from introduction move and identified five moves in abstracts: (Introduction or Background – Purpose - Methods – Results – Conclusion).

According to the studies listed above, these four or five moves have appeared in the investigated abstracts with varying frequencies. It was particularly noteworthy that the most obligatory moves were purpose (move 2), method (move 3) and results (move 4) (Cross & Oppenheim, 2006; Hyland, 2000; Pho, 2008, Salvager-Meyer, 1990; Santos, 1996; Suntara & Usaha, 2013). The high frequency of these three moves implies that the authors in different disciplines are aware of the importance of these moves. Additionally, introduction and conclusion moves were optional (Alharbi & Swales, 2011; Hyland, 2000, Pho, 2008, Tseng, 2011). The conclusion (move 5) was however ascertained as obligatory in the study of Suntara and Usaha (2013). Besides, introduction (move 1) was found to be obligatory in other studies (e.g. Al-Shujairi, Ya'u, & Buba, 2016; Gheinani & Tabatabaei, 2018; Martin, 2003).

2.2 Evaluative That-Clause

In recent years, academic writing has lost its traditional role as objective and



impersonal, becoming more persuasive consisting of interaction between authors and readers (Hyland, 2005). In other words, not only do scholar writers construct texts to present scientific facts, but they also create social relationships and assess their propositional contents. For this reason, many researchers have paid considerable attention to interaction and evaluation in academic writing (Charles, 2006, 2007; Hyland & Tse, 2005a, 2005b; Hyland & Jiang, 2017; Kim & Crosthwaite, 2019; Hyland, 2005) supporting the idea that scholar writing is not merely informational and objective but it is rather interpersonal and evaluative.

Evaluation is "critical to academic writing as effective argument represents careful considerations of one's colleagues as writers situate themselves and their work to reflect and shape a valued disciplinary ethos" (Hyland, 2005, p. 176). It is the expressions of the authors' personal feelings and perspectives towards the proposition they are talking about (Hunston & Thompson, 2000). Evaluation can be expressed in a wide range of ways to glean interpersonal and evaluative goals. For example, stance (Charles, 2003; Conrad & Biber, 2000), appraisal (Martin & White, 2000), and *evaluative that*-clause (Charles, 2006, 2007; Hyland & Tse, 2005a, 2005b; Hyland & Jiang, 2017; Kim & Crosthwaite, 2019).

Evaluative that-construction is a grammatical linguistic feature that consists of a super-ordinate clause to complete its construction and to show writers' attitude or ideas about the propositional contents presented in their research articles. It offers writers with more evaluative options than the use of modal verbs or lexical items (Hyland, 2005). For example in the following sentence:

(The findings revealed *that* the time allotted to teaching methodology is inadequate).

[Evaluative *that*-clause [evaluative] + *that*-clause [evaluated entity]]

The super-ordinate clause (matrix clause) in this sentence is (The findings revealed) contains both an evaluation and the source of evaluation, while the complement clause contains the 'entity' that is evaluated. This structure is a powerful and key factor in academic writing as it enables the authors to express their views and evaluation.

As indicated by Hyland and Jiang (2017), *evaluative that*-clause contains four

key elements: "(1) what is to be evaluated; (2) the stance to be taken towards it; (3) who to attribute the evaluation to; and (4) the form of expression to use" (p.5). These four components have been examined in a few studies (Charles, 2006, 2007; Hyland & Tse, 2005a, 2005b; Kim & Crosthwaite, 2019) in various scholarly disciplines written by native speakers. There were additionally theses and dissertations, written by (NNS), among these studies. The results of these studies showed disciplinary variations in the frequency of *that*-clauses. Hyland & Tse, (2005a) found out that the most examples of *evaluative that*-constructions were employed in the research article abstracts of Biology. In comparison with the business research papers, the medical research papers contained a lower recurrence of *evaluative-that* clauses (Kim & Crosthwaite, 2019).

The analysis of *evaluative that*-clause needs to start with "what happens at the beginning of the clause" (Hyland & Tse, 2005b, p.125). The choice of the subject in the super-ordinate clause is fundamental as it "allows writers to accept or shift the responsibility for such evaluation or leave the source of knowledge unidentified" (Hyland & Tse, 2005a, p.43). This subject who takes the responsibility to be the source of the evaluation can be a human (e.g. *I believe that/ I think that*), shift the responsibility to the objective data (inanimate source) (Hyland & Tse, 2005a, 2005b), for example, (*the data* showed), or conceal the source (e.g. *it is possible that*). Previous studies, however, found that the academic authors favoured abstract sources (Hyland & Tse, 2005a, 2005b; Kim & Crosthwaite, 2019). Additionally, *evaluative that*-clause can be introduced by a variety of predicates. It can take the form of a verb, a noun or an adjective. However, the previous findings disclosed an overwhelming preference for verbal predicates in academic writing among both native and non-native speakers (Hyland & Tse, 2005a, 2005b; Kim & Crosthwaite, 2019).

Equally important, stance in *that*-clauses has received attention. Stance can be attitudinal or epistemic. A closer review of the previous findings showed that an attitudinal stance was rare while an epistemic stance was more widely employed (Hyland & Tse, 2005a, 2005b; Kim & Crosthwaite, 2019). However, in the writing of (NNS), they employed an attitudinal stance more frequently than an epistemic stance (Hyland & Tse, 2005b).

The propositions (or entities) that are assessed in *evaluative that*-clause, have been analyzed and categorized into four groups "the authors' evaluation of their own findings; their evaluation of previous studies; their statement of research goals; and evaluation of the methods, models, or theories they had drawn on in the research" (Hyland, 2005b, p.129). However, the previous findings showed that the scholar writers preferred to evaluate their own research (Hyland & Tse, 2005a) and their own findings (Hyland & Tse, 2005a, 2005b; Kim & Crosthwaite, 2019). Parkinson (2013) also found out that other possible entities such as survey participants can be found.

The above-reviewed studies undoubtedly contribute to the current body of literature and provide invaluable insights on both areas; rhetorical moves and *evaluative-that* clauses. The previous researches have shown a disciplinary preference in using *evaluative that*-clause as well as in employing the essential moves. More importantly, the previous studies depended on a corpus-based method which allows researchers to examine evaluative patterns and the common moves with a large sample and to ensure the findings' generalizability and validity. Despite this considerable attention to these two areas, there is still a dearth of research regarding the abstracts that are written in English by (NNS) (Amnuai, 2019; Ren & Li, 2011). We were unable to locate such studies on the Arabs (e.g. academic Libyan authors). Furthermore, the academic writing in (LJLP) universities needs a deep investigation to delimit if the academic authors are aware of the global academic convention of the international language (i.e. English), since scientific and academic writing conventions, as well as argumentative style, have been shown to differ from culture to culture (Clyne, 1991; Galtung, 1978). Consequently, we need to know how the academic writers in (LJLP) universities write in English whose rhetorical convention is different from that of their mother tongue (i.e. Arabic).

3. Methodology

3.1 Corpus & Procedures

A mixed-method design was employed in the current research. The selected texts (abstracts) were qualitatively analyzed to identify the rhetorical moves and *evaluative that*-clauses. The quantitative approach plays a supplementary role within the overall design in terms of frequency counts

of moves to decide which were prominent and non-prominent.

This paper was guided by a built corpus consisting of 50 RA abstracts written by (NNS) (Academic Libyan Writers) of English. The total number of words is (9123). Various guidelines were followed in the process of data collection. Firstly, there was no limit set for the text length of each abstract, because the text is not defined by its size; rather it is considered as a 'semantic unit': a unit not of form but meaning (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Secondly, all the selected papers have been recently published, between 2011 and 2018. Thirdly, these papers have been selected from a single discipline, which is applied linguistics (AL). The reason behind this selection is that authors in the field of applied linguistics are more experts in using English than other authors who are from other different disciplines. The articles were randomly selected from Libyan academic journals. They are: The Journal of Azzaytuna, International Journal of English Language and Translation Studies, The Journal of Gharyan University, Faculty of Arts Journal, and A Journal of the Faculty of Languages. They are all published by the Libyan public universities; Azzaytuna University, Sebha University, Gharyan University, Misurata University and Tripoli University respectively.

Permission to collect data in research is an ethical consideration. However, in the present study, there was not necessary to glean permission since the corpora were collected from the online journals which are publicly available.

The collected data has been analyzed in two phases:

The first phase was to analyze rhetorical moves in the selected (RA) abstracts. The texts were arranged in a word file and were analysed manually. Following Swales' (1990) three-level genre model (communicative purpose, move structure and rhetorical strategies), each text was broken down into distinctive moves. Examining the moves can be conducted via two crucial approaches; a top-down or a bottom-up approach (Pho, 2008). A top-down approach starts with assigning moves based on a text' content, meaning, and function. Then, linguistic realizations are probed in the identified moves. A bottom-up, on the other hand, involves identifying segments of texts based on specific linguistic clues. However, in the present study, a top-down was employed when



coding, based on meaning. However, to code a text segment the function of which is uncertain, a bottom-up approach was used for confirmation, and reference was made to several linguistic features. Since the study is derived from Swales' perspective on the genre, the unit of analysis should realize the communicative purpose of the text.

Regarding the frequency of the rhetorical moves, Howe's (1995) four-grade system was adopted to categorize the moves. This system has been amended to suit the current study because default has been found in considering the level of frequency. In Howe's four-grade system, it has been found that 50% of occurrence can be both prominent and not prominent. To avoid confusion, this study considers a frequency of occurrence 50-100% as 'prominent' while a frequency of occurrence 0- 49% is delimited as 'not prominent' to avoid any confusion.

In the second phase, the texts were arranged in a word file and searched then for all the cases containing *that*-clauses. After that, we examined each clause individually and eliminated all cases where *that* was used as a demonstrative or relative pronoun. Finally, all *that*-clauses were analysed again individually, according to the below-mentioned model, to find out the four elements (i.e. evaluated entity, evaluated source, evaluated stance and evaluated expression) of the evaluative *that*-clauses.

3.2 Analytical Frameworks

Two analytical models were adopted in the present study. They are Hyland's model (2000) to analyze the rhetorical moves of the selected abstracts, and Hyland & Tse's model (2005b) to analyze the structure of *that*-clauses that were found in the present corpus.

3.2.1 Hyland's Move Structure Framework

Several models have been developed to analyze (RA) abstracts (e.g., Bhatia 1993; Hyland 2000; Santos, 1996, Swales & Feak, 2004). However, in the present study, Hyland's model is considered more fitting as it consists of five moves which are (introduction, purpose, method, product, and conclusion). Each move serves functional and semantic units of texts which have particular functions (Swales, 2004) and associates with the writer's purpose. This model was obtained from 800 abstracts across eight disciplines. Unlike other models of move structure, Hyland's model distinguishes the aim of the abstract from the introduction and has two separated moves;

purpose and introduction instead of merging them both in one move.

Table 1 Framework for Abstract Analysis (adopted from Hyland, 2000)

Moves	Function
1. Introduction	Establishes context of the paper and motivates the research or discussion.
2. Purpose	Indicates purpose, thesis or hypothesis, outlines the intention behind the paper.
3. Method	Provides information on design, procedures, assumptions, approach, data, etc.
4. Product	States main findings or results, the argument, or what was accomplished
5. Conclusion	Interprets or extends results beyond scope of paper, draws inferences, points to applications or wider implications.

3.2.2 The Evaluative- that Model

In analyzing the structure of *that*-clauses, we adopted the model of (Hyland & Tse, 2005b), taking into account the minor changes that Hyland & Jiang (2017) made in the model. Unlike Hyland and Tse (2005b), Hyland & Jiang (2017) differentiate between human sources of evaluation according to whether these were authors or others. Additionally, Hyland and Jiang (2017) added a neutral category to the attitudinal and epistemic stance. Finally, a new evaluated entity (common or accepted knowledge) was added to the model.

Table 2 Classification of sentences containing evaluative that (Hyland & Tse, 2005b, p.130; Hyland & Jiang, 2017, p.8)

Aspect	Sub-categories	Examples
Evaluated entity	a) Evaluation of author's own findings.	Our findings show that the museum visit can be seen as 6 distinct stages.
	b) Evaluation of previous studies	One limitation from Fransen et al. (2014) was that participants were only asked to evaluate the best.
	c) Evaluation of author's goals	It is our hope that the framework will be applied to other contexts ...
	d) Evaluation of methods, models, theories	It was found that the results of the model were in very good consistency with ...
	e) common or accepted knowledge	It is believed that there is a direct relationship between poverty and crime
Evaluated stance	a) Attitudinal: (1) affect (2) obligation	I hope that / It is very important to note that It must be recognized that
	b) Epistemic	It is likely that / We prove that
	c) Neutral	It means that
Evaluated source	a) Human: (1) author (2) Other humans	We show that / I indicate that Smith notes that
	c) Abstract entity - inanimate source	The findings indicate that
	d) Concealed - writer does not identify the source.	It is well-known that / A general findings is that
	Expression	a) Non-verbal (1) noun predicate (2) adjectival predicate b) Verbal predicate (1) Research acts - actions in the real world (2) discourse acts - Linguistic activities (3) Cognitive acts - mental processes

3.3 Reliability

It is crucial and acquired to establish high reliability toward the analysis of text structure (Crookes, 1986), as coding texts relies largely on coders' personal judgments. For this reason, inter-rater reliability was used, in the current paper, to obtain an accuracy of text analysis and to assure that the two coders could come up with similar move boundaries while identifying the rhetorical moves. Thus, the second

researcher coded 50% of the selected abstracts and Cohen's Kappa test was utilized to assess the inter-reliability. In the end, there was a substantial agreement between the two researchers and the result of Cohen's Kappa was 90, indicating a perfect agreement. However, the cases that caused disagreement were re-analyzed and discussed by both researchers and, eventually, an agreement was reached.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Analysis of Moves

Contrary to the previous studies, academic Libyan authors did not follow certain linear or non-linear move structures. It is apparent from Table 3 that only three abstracts follow the linear ordering (i.e. IPMPC) while there are many non-linear move structure in the abstracts of the applied linguistics discipline. The move pattern (M2+M3+M4+M5) stood out as the most frequently used structure with low frequency (8 cases). A further finding is that in the abstracts (no. 5, 15,23,30,38,41,46), as demonstrated in Table 3, the academic Libyan authors were not consistent in constructing their abstracts. For example, in the abstract (no. 15), they started it with stating one purpose (M2), followed by introducing the topic (M1), then they averred another aim (M2). After that conclusion was stated. Unexpectedly, M1 and M2 were employed again and another conclusion (M5) was employed at the end of the abstract. While it is now widely agreed that abstract moves do not have to be performed in a linear pattern, consistency is required. Furthermore, it was found that some academic Libyan authors exploited the entire abstract in stating only the purposes of their studies (abstracts no. 8, 48,49) ignoring the other ultimate rhetorical moves such as (method and product moves). All these flaws lead us to say that some of the academic Libyan writers in the field of applied linguistics are not sufficiently aware of how to compose well-written and consistent abstracts.

Table 3 Summary of the Move structure of the whole corpus (abstracts)

No.	Move structure	No.	Move structure
1	M1+ M2+ M4	26	M2+M1+M3+M4
2	M1+M2	27	M2+M3+M5
3	M2+M1	28	M1+M2+M3+M4+M5
4	M2+M3+M4+M5	29	M2+M3+M1+M4
5	M1+M2+M1+M3+M5	30	M2+M3+M2+M4+M5
6	M1+M3+M4	31	M1+M2
7	M1+M2+M5	32	M1+M2+M3+M5
8	M2	33	M1+M2
9	M2+M3+M4+M5	34	M1+M2+M3+M6
10	M1+M2	35	M1+M3+M4+M5
11	M1+M2+M5	36	M1+M2+M3+M5
12	M2+M3+M4	37	M2+M3+M4+M5
13	M2 +M3+M4+M5	38	M2+M3+M2+M4
14	M2+M3+M4+M5	39	M1+M2+M3+M4+M6
15	M2+M1+M2+M5+M2+M1+M2+M5	40	M1+M3+M4+M5
16	M2+M3+M4	41	M2+M4+M2+M3
17	M2+M1+M3+M4	42	M1+M2+M4
18	M2+M5	43	M1+M2+M3+M4+M5
19	M1+M2+M5+M4	44	M1+M2+M5+M3+M6+M4+M5
20	M1+M2+M5	45	M1+M5
21	M2+M6	46	M2+M3+M2+M3
22	M2+M3+M4+M5	47	M1+M2+M3+M4+M5
23	M1+M2+M3+M2+M3+M4	48	M2
24	M1+M2+M3+M4+M5+M6	49	M2
25	M2+M3+M4+M5	50	M2+M3+M4+M5

The analysis of move frequency revealed that all the moves are prominent in the present data. Based on the frequency analysis, Move 2 (Purpose) was more employed than the other moves, i.e. introduction, method, result and conclusion. The findings also disclosed that all rhetorical moves existed in more than half of the abstracts written by academic Libyan writers in the corpus. More details will be discussed below regarding each move with examples from the collected abstracts. However, it should be mentioned that we extracted the examples from the abstracts without any corrections because this is not the scope of the paper.

Table 4 Distribution of Moves

Moves	Move 1	Move 2	Move 3	Move 4	Move 5	Move 6
Percentage	60%	92%	66%	58%	56%	10%
Prominence level	Prominent	Prominent	Prominent	prominent	Prominent	Not prominent

It is worth mentioning that in the present corpus a new move beyond Hyland's model was found. This move (structure) was used to indicate the contents of the research (example #1). However, it is not prominent (10%). This move has been also found in the abstracts of theses (Ren & Li, 2011) and it was also not prominent. To determine whether or not this move is common in Libyan academic writing, a large corpus is needed.



(1) This research comprises of the following: The introduction, stating the problem, significance of the study, scope of the study, hypothesis, related literature review, problems of preposition usage, the system of temporal preposition interference, validity, reliability, methodology and procedures, statistical data and analysis, the conclusion, implications, general recommendations for both teachers and students.

In the following section, each move will be detailed and discussed individually with examples from the corpus.

Move 1 (Introduction): It "establishes context of the paper and motives the research or discussion" (Hyland, 2000, p.67). Move 1 (introduction) was included in 60% of the Libyan (RA) abstracts. When comparing our results to those of the older studies (Alshujari et.al., 2016; Gheinani &Tabatabaei,2018; Martin, 2003), we can conclude that academic Libyan authors revealed similar result to native speakers of applied linguistics and TESOL RA abstracts. Based on these findings, it appears that the writers of soft disciplines are trying to acquaint readers with the background of their research (Hyland, 2000). More importantly, this finding supports Hyland's suggestion (2004) that there has been an increasing trend of the appearance of introduction move in abstracts, particularly in the soft disciplines.

A closer scrutiny revealed that this move was achieved by arguing for topic prominence (example #2), making a topic generalization, (example #3) and by identifying a gap in current knowledge (example #4).

(2) Teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language has not been easy either for teachers or for learners. Teachers face problems while teaching it while learners face difficulties while learning it. Many factors contribute to these problems and difficulties and lack of motivation on the part of learners or demotivated learners is one of the most common problems faced by the teachers which affects both teachers and learners in negative way. Motivated learners are a dream of every ESL/EFL teachers but it is hardly realized. However, it is also important to note that teachers enjoy and lay a very significant role in ESL/EFL teaching and learning process

(3) Technology is a new initiative in Libyan education (Hamdy,

2007) and requires deep understanding from different perspectives

(4) In the EFL contexts, while much research is conducted towards investigating the problems that students face in writing and their writing strategies, studies on how EFL writing teacher teach and adopt the writing approaches to their students' needs and levels are few and far between.

Move 2 (Purpose): According to Hyland (2000), M2 refers to the purpose, or hypothesis of the research paper and sets out the intention behind it. It is noteworthy to point out that academic Libyan scholars focused on identifying the purpose of the study which was included in most abstracts and represented (92%) of the whole corpus. It was employed by stating the purpose directly (example #5-6). Interestingly, this result coincides with results found in the literature (Alshujari et al., 2016; Pho, 2008; Santos, 1996; Tseng, 2011) who insisted that move 2 is an essential part of the RA abstracts.

(5) The aim of this study is to investigate the errors committed by the undergraduate students of Misurata University, majoring in English language.

(6) This study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of using flipped classroom model on learning English as a foreign language and students' attitudes towards flipped classroom.

Move 3 (Method): It presents the details related to the design of the paper, the procedures, the adopted approaches, data, etc. (Hyland, 2000). M3 is considered to be crucial in research abstracts (Bhatia, 1993). In the current study, the Method Move was included in the (66%) of (RA) abstracts (example #7-8-9). Since more than half of the abstracts consisted of this move, academic Libyan writers may believe that this part of the abstract is an important part and is directly related to the study. Moreover, stating this move in abstracts can assist readers to have a better understanding of the study's essence. This conclusion is in line with findings of Gheinani and Tabatabaei's study (2018) which concluded that Iranian writers, as (NNS), included method move because they feel it is a significant section in the abstract to help readers to comprehend the abstract easily. Additionally, this finding is directly in line with the previous studies (Hyland, 2000; Pho, 2008; Tseng, 2011) who found out that describing the methodology is an obligatory

move in the abstracts in the field of applied linguistics.

(7) The sample of study consisted of 31 students at Faculty of Arts, Misurata University. The participants were divided into two groups: 16 students for the experimental group and 15 students for the control group.

(8) The data collection tools used in this study were an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) test and a questionnaire to explore students' attitudes towards flipped classroom.

(9) Participants in both groups were pre-tested using the EFL test before the experiment. Then, the experimental group was taught using flipped classroom strategy while the control group was taught using the traditional teaching method. After the experiment, students in both groups were post-tested using the EFL test while the questionnaire was administered to the students of the experimental group only.

Move 4 (Product): It describes the main findings of the study and presents arguments (Hyland, 2000). M4 was found in the (58%) of the current data. It was achieved by describing the essential features of the result (example #10-11). According to Iranian culture, authors may not encourage to "sell" their ideas (Ghasempour & Farnia, 2017). That is why they represent this move with a very low frequency (13.33%). This is in contrast to academic Libyan writers of RAs' result who represented this move with (58%). However, the present result is consistent with what has been found in Pho (2008) and Tseng (2011) studies who maintained that summarizing the findings was an obligatory move in the abstracts of applied linguistics.

(10) The result showed that both teachers and students had positive attitudes for teaching and learning English through songs. Comments added by the teachers and students are included and evaluated in the study.

(11) The main findings show that the promoting goal setting and goal-orientedness were rather neglected area in the participating teachers' practice. This tells that the teachers' own behavioural modeling could be exploited more thoroughly in motivating learners.

Move 5 (Conclusion): In this move, the authors interpret or extend the results and presents recommendations (Hyland, 2000). Move 5 was used in the (56%) of (RA) abstracts and thus is deemed as an obligatory move, exactly in line with Suntara and

Usaha's (2013) study. However, data analysis showed that the conclusion move displayed the lowest occurrence amongst the five moves found in the present paper. It could be due to the authors' belief that all the ultimate information has been averred clearly in the abstracts and it is not important to restate it in the conclusion move. This result was in line with the findings of some of the previous studies (Hyland, 2000; Pho, 2008; Santos, 1996; Tseng, 2011) where M5 was not an essential move.

More close analysis revealed that move 5 was presented by interpreting the results (example #12), evaluating the study (example #13) and presenting recommendations (example #14).

(12) It concludes that the study throws significant light on errors committed by students and provides insight into the way the learners internalize the target language rules.

(13) According to the findings the researchers have reached, some recommendations have been proposed such as teacher of English Language should be well trained and involved in constructing training programs in order to depending on self- ability and experience to design placement tests rather than using ready-made placement tests from Oxford or Mcmillan.

(14) According to the findings the researchers have reached, some recommendations have been proposed such as teacher of English Language should be well trained and involved in constructing training programs in order to depending on self- ability and experience to design placement tests rather than using ready-made placement tests from Oxford or Mcmillan.

4.2 Analysis of Evaluative That-Clause

Analyzing 50 abstracts in the field of applied linguistics, consisting (9123) words, revealed (102) cases of *evaluative that*-clause. Even though abstracts are brief and short, academic Libyan authors were able to find enough space to explicitly express the evaluations of propositions presented in their researches. Turning to the ways these authors as (NNS) construct *that*-clauses, Table (5) shows a summary of the main elements of *evaluative that*-clause.



Table 3 Distribution of features in evaluative that-clauses

Feature	Frequency
<i>Evaluated Entity</i>	
a. Authors' own findings and Claims	59
b. Previous studies	2
c. Authors' goals	21
d. Methods & theories	19
e. Authors' participants	1
<i>Evaluated Source</i>	
a. Humans	21
a1. Authors	20
a2. Others	1
b. Abstract	61
c. Concealed	20
<i>Evaluated Stance</i>	
a. Attitude	17
a1. Affect	17
a2. Obligation	0
b. Epistemic	85
b1. Certainty	56
b2. Uncertainty	25
b3. Neutral	4
<i>Evaluated Expression</i>	
a. Verbal	67
b. Non verbal	35

The analysis disclosed that stance employed in the present study carries the writers' epistemic which indicates the writer's confidence or lack of confidence towards the propositions expressed. This stance is largely found to be of certainty. Authors' findings or claims were the most striking entities that were evaluated by the authors. The source of these evaluations was attributed largely to abstract entities. Additionally, verbal predicates were more employed than noun predicates. More details about these findings will be discussed in the following section of this paper.

1. Evaluated Entities: What Authors Evaluate on

A detailed look at the entities that are evaluated in the current corpus revealed that the authors' own findings and claims (59 cases) were the most significant entities. This is an expected result because abstracts are a promotional genre where authors try to hook the readers and persuade them that their papers have serious claims and findings which should be read in details. Providing evaluation of goals (21 cases) and methods (19 cases) were the next prominent entities. This result is in line with Hyland and Tse's (2005b) and Kim and Crosthwaite's (2019) studies. It seems that the authors in the present corpus devote a greater place for generating authors' main findings and claims (example #15).

(15) The findings of the study reveal that *the Libyan EFL writing skill teachers*

often resort to teaching through grammatical structures.

There was no notable difference in the frequency between the two entities; stating their research goals (example #16) and addressing methods and theories (example #17). They were quite frequent in comparison with the entity of findings or claims. However, they can be regarded as salient elements in abstracts. This could be linked to the rhetorical structure of abstracts where the aim and the method moves are obligatory in abstracts of the present study. Overall, by evaluating such entities in the current study, the academic Libyan authors were capable "to establish both research significance and disciplinary competence, and so strengthen the rhetorical impact of their abstracts" (Hyland & Tse, 2005a, p.49,50).

(16) This research paper attempts to *identify some problems and difficulties that impact the teaching of English language in grade nine in four fundamental stage schools in Misurata city.*

(17) Several studies have found that *a number of strategies can be used to help students better assimilate and retain information.*

However, academic Libyan authors as (NNS) do not give ample space for other voices. In other words, they rarely evaluate the work of others (2 cases). This conflicts with Hyland and Tse's (2005a) results where they found some cases in (RA) abstracts in soft disciplines that contain evaluation about other studies. A possible explanation for this is that academic Libyan authors in the field of applied linguistics are not aware enough of evaluating other works in building the literature to "demonstrate novelty and relevance" (Hyland & Tse, 2005a, p.53).

2. The Evaluative Source: Who Evaluate

Generally speaking, the authors themselves are responsible for selecting the sources of the evaluation. In order to be accepted in their academic community, they select the source which they think is persuasive within the context. Thus, the choice of source in *evaluative that*-clause is a key interpersonal option available to authors in taking or shifting responsibility for a claim (Halliday, 1994). As mentioned above, sources can be attributed to the authors themselves or other abstract sources. In the current study, the results disclosed that the academic Libyan authors distanced themselves from their evaluation by attributing the source of evaluation to the

abstract entities (61 cases) and not to take apparently the responsibility. Out of (102) cases of *evaluative that*-clause, only 20 cases where the authors took the responsibility in stating their findings or claims (example #18). Human sources, according to (Kim & Croswaite, 2019), can also be research participants, but only one case was found in the present corpus.

(18) *We believe that if EFL teachers find a way to provide creativity, students will gain the knowledge needed to write and read creatively.*

The most salient abstract entities were attributed to the body of research (36 cases) (example #19) and their own findings (25 cases) (example #20). These findings are directly in line with Hyland and Tse's studies (2005a & 2005b). This style allows the (RA) to speak directly to the audience (Lester, 1993; Spencer & Arbon, 1996). Additionally, removing the agent is regarded as "a strategy to strengthen a claim as it simultaneously removes any implication of personal interest from the comment and adds rhetorical credibility" (Hyland & Tse, 2005b, p.133).

(19) *Research has revealed that using games in vocabulary learning and teaching is beneficial because they improve students' ability to memorize words, encourage students' interaction, develop their communicative skills and enhance students' motivation.*

(20) *The findings of the study reveal that the Libyan EFL writing skill teachers often resort to teaching through grammatical structures.*

In other cases, the writers also chose to express evaluation by concealing the source of the evaluation and use the dummy *it* as subjects (example #21). This is an attempt from the authors to generalize the source of evaluation and state *it* as objective so that it can be broadly accepted (Hyland & Tse, 2005b).

(21) *It was suggested that individual differences among learners, including gender-related differences, play an important role in enhancing language teaching and learning process.*

3. The Evaluative Stance

Although academic Libyan authors distanced themselves from being the source of the evaluation, the construction of *evaluative that*-clauses enable them to express their attitudes towards the propositional contents by projecting an epistemic (example #22) or attitudinal stance (example #23), and in a few cases, stance

was neutral (example #24). We can see from Table (5), that attitudinal stance was rare (17) in the abstracts. Attitudes can be either affect (example #23) or obligation. However, obligation was not found in the present study. Neutral stance were noticeably on the wane (4 cases).

(22) This study also *suggested* that song activities should be widely applied in teaching different grades, such as high level learners or even elder learners learning.

(23) It is also *important* to note that teachers enjoy and lay a very significant role in

ESL/EFL teaching and learning process.

(24) The teachers *reported* that it facilitates the use of authentic materials, saves time, and improves students' outcomes despite identified technical problems.

Epistemic stance, in the current data, was found more prominent (85 cases) and this result confirms Hyland's (1994) view that epistemic features are significant in academic writing. These essentially results in the fact that the authors are "carefully seeking to persuade readers of claims" (Hyland & Tse, 2005b, p.135). Epistemic in the current study was found to express certainty (56 cases) and uncertainty (25 cases), but it was largely employed to express certainty (example #25). The need "to invest a more convincing degree of assurance" in the propositional contents that are presented in (RA) abstracts (Hyland & Tse, 2005a, p.57) might be the underlying reason for the greater use of certainty through the research act verbs (e.g. reveal, show) and it was found more in evaluating the results and claims (example #25). Similarly, uncertainty, was employed more in evaluating the results in contrast with other entities through discourse acts verbs (e.g. suggest, indicate) (example #26).

(25) The results of the data collected *show* that teachers use different teaching strategies in teaching reading comprehension.

(26) Results *indicated* that the participants need to improve cultural awareness and communication skills.

4. Evaluated Expressions:

Turning to the ways writers expressed their evaluations in *that*-clause. As shown in Table (5), verbal forms (67 cases) were used markedly with large use of research act verbs (33 cases) (example #27). On the same note, Biber, Johansson and Leech (1999), Hyland and Tse (2005b) confirm that



choosing a verb to open an evaluative space to comment on *that*-clause is a prevalent feature in academic writing. More importantly, the preference of the verb forms is due to the epistemic meaning expressed in the selected abstracts. Verbal predicates allow authors to fine 'tune their judgments not only to express doubt or certainty but also to emphasize a particular dimension of activity (Hyland, 2000; 2001; Thompson & Yiyun, 1991).

(27) Findings revealed that the problems EFL experience in using connectors can be classified into three categories: misuse, underuse and overuse.

It is apparent from Table 6 that *evaluative that*-clauses were predominantly controlled by research acts verbs. This result can be supported by Hyland and Jiang's suggestion (2017) that there is an increase in employing these research forms in soft disciplines. Modal verbs were also found to express epistemic meanings; however, in the previous studies, modals were not found in *evaluative that*-clauses, but in the present study, (4 cases) were found to express uncertainty (example #28).

(28) According the study results, it *can* be observed that how both male and female participants showed a high tendency of agreeing to most of the points assigned to the questionnaire.

Table 4 The distribution of verbs that are found in evaluative that-clauses

Types of Verbs	Frequency
Research acts	33
Cognitive acts	09
Discourse Acts	21
Modals	04

Another promising finding was that out of (35 cases) of non-verbal predicates, 30 of them were nouns (example #29) and five predicates were adjectives (example #30). The preference of nouns over adjectives might be due to the fact that nouns allow authors to make their evaluation impersonal and inexplicit. This result agrees with (Hyland & Tse, 2005a), but contrasts with Rodman's (1991) results where the predicates were adjectives.

(29) This research is concerned with *some practical activities* that can be used in teaching English as a foreign language by suggesting some teaching techniques regarding classroom activities.

(30) It is also *important* to note that teachers enjoy and lay a very significant role in ESL/EFL teaching and learning process.

5. Conclusion

The current study conducted to address two research questions; 1. What are the rhetorical moves employed in abstracts written by academic Libyan authors in the applied linguistics field? 2. How do academic Libyan authors construct *evaluative that*-clauses in abstracts of applied linguistics discipline?. These two questions were raised according to the gap found in the literature. Based on the above-mentioned findings, which were obtained by doing qualitative analysis, it could be said that this study contributes to the academic discourse analysis by identifying the basic moves in the abstracts that were written by academic Libyan writers who are non-native speakers in comparison with other cultures and with native speakers. A qualitative analysis approach showed that academic Libyan writers are aware of the five rhetorical moves that each abstract should include based on Hyland's framework. Additionally, a new move beyond Hyland's model was found. This move (structure) was used to indicate the contents of the research. To determine whether or not this move is common in academic Libyan writing, a large corpus is needed to investigate. However, being aware of the five rhetorical moves of abstracts is not enough to construct a good abstract. Rather, authors should be consistent in projecting these moves. Nevertheless, our study showed that some of the selected abstracts are lack consistency. The second question was set out to examine the construction of evaluative-that clauses found in the selected abstracts. Based on Hyland & Tse's framework (2005b), the results indicated that academic Libyan authors are aware of constructing *evaluative that*-clauses. They evaluate their findings more frequently and shift the responsibility to abstract entities. However, they need to present themselves as scholars when they introduce and evaluate their findings. In our point of view, the results obtained by answering the second question could be helpful to the foreign learners in constructing sentences with *that*-clause. Libyan students will also find this study beneficial in exploring the types of predicates employed, the degree of certainty conveyed, and how writers choose to present the source of their evaluations.

Regarding the pedagogical implications of the current study, the findings of the present study can help create pedagogical material for Libyan novice writers/students. However, this study has

some limitations which need to be tackled. This study is considered to be preliminary as only one discipline which is applied linguistics was considered, and a small corpus was analyzed. Therefore, it is unreasonable to extrapolate the present findings to the whole Libyan English academic writing. Additionally, only one section of the research articles which is abstracts was examined. Other sections, like the introduction, need to be investigated too. Thus much more research is needed to get a more in-depth understanding of the considerations academic Libyan writers take into account when they write in English as a foreign language in different disciplines. Overall, academic Libyan authors as (NNS) of English academic need to be completely familiar with the conventions of (RA) abstract to write well organized and evident piece of writing in order to be accepted in the international academic community.

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