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| RHETORICAL MOVES AND METADISCOURSE IN DICTIONARY USE ABSTRACTS: A GENRE-BASED COMPARISON ACROSS JOURNAL INDEX | SÖZLÜK KULLANIMI ÖZETLERİNDE RETORİK YAPILAR VE ÜSTSÖYLEM ÖĞELERİ: DERGİ PRESTİJİNE GÖRE TÜR TEMELLİ BİR KARŞILAŞTIRMA |

Abstract

This study explores how research article abstracts on dictionary use are structured and how they employ metadiscourse to communicate key information. The dataset includes 99 abstracts published between 2020 and 2024 in linguistics journals indexed in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), the Arts & Humanities Citation Index (AHCI), and the Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI), thus covering both high-impact and emerging journals. Using Hyland's (2000) five-move model adapted by Behnam and Golpour (2014), the analysis revealed that Findings, Purpose, and Method moves dominated across both journal groups, though their distribution varied. ESCI abstracts employed Purpose and Method moves more frequently, whereas SSCI/AHCI abstracts gave greater prominence to Findings and Conclusions. Metadiscourse analysis showed further contrasts: SSCI/AHCI abstracts relied more on transitions, hedges, and self-mentions to project rhetorical sophistication, while ESCI abstracts favored frame markers and code glosses to enhance clarity and accessibility. These results indicate that journal index shapes both rhetorical structuring and metadiscursive choices, with SSCI/AHCI indexed outlets emphasizing disciplinary maturity and interpretive nuance, and emerging journals prioritizing explicitness and transparency. This study offers valuable insights into the rhetorical strategies of applied linguistics writing, especially in the context of dictionary use research.

Keywords: Rhetorical moves, dictionary use, research article, abstracts, metadiscourse

Özet

Bu çalışma, sözlük kullanımıyla ilgili araştırma makalesi özetlerinin nasıl yapılandırıldığını ve temel bilgileri iletmek için üstsöylemi nasıl kullandığını incelemektedir. Çalışmanın derlemi, Sosyal Bilimler Atıf Dizini (SSCI), Sanat ve Beşerî Bilimler Atıf Dizini (AHCI) ve Gelişmekte Olan Kaynaklar Atıf Dizini'nde (ESCI) indekslenen dilbilim dergilerinde 2020-2024 yılları arasında yayınlanmış 99 araştırma makalesinin özetlerinden oluşmaktadır. Behnam ve Golpour (2014) tarafından uyarlanan Hyland'ın (2000) beş aşama modeline göre yapılan analiz sonucunda, Bulgular, Amaç ve Yöntem aşamalarının her iki dergi grubunda da baskın olduğu, ancak dağılımlarının değiştiğini ortaya çıkmıştır. ESCI özetlerinde Amaç ve Yöntem aşamaları daha sık kullanırken, SSCI/AHCI özetleri Bulgular ve Sonuçlara daha fazla önem verildiği tespit edilmiştir. Öte yandan, üstsöylem analizi; SSCI/AHCI özetlerinde, retoriksel karmaşıklığı yansıtmak için geçişlere, geçiş cümleciklerine ve kendi kendine söz söylemeye daha fazla kullanıldığını, ESCI özetlerinde ise netliği ve erişilebilirliği artırmak için çerçeve işaretleyicilerini ve kod açıklamalarının daha çok tercih edildiğini göstermiştir. Bu sonuçlar, dergi prestijinin hem retorik yapılandırmayı hem de üst söylemsel tercihleri şekillendirdiğini, yüksek prestijli dergilerin disiplinler arası olgunluğa ve yorumlayıcı nüansa vurgu yaptığını, gelişme sürecinde olan dergilerin ise açıklığa ve şeffaflığa öncelik verdiğini göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda bu çalışma, özellikle sözlük kullanım araştırması bağlamında, uygulamalı dilbilim yazımının retorik stratejilerine dair faydalı bilgiler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Retorik aşamalar, sözlük kullanımı, araştırma makalesi, özetler, üstsöylem

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Introduction

Academic writing differs significantly across disciplines, and genre analysis has become a widely used method to investigate these differences (Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993; Hyland, 2000). Swales (1990, p. 58) introduced the idea of genre as a structured communicative event with identifiable rhetorical moves, while Bhatia (1993) emphasized how these moves reflect the social practices and expectations of professional communities. One genre that has been extensively studied is the research article abstract (e.g., Hyland, 2000, 2005; Santos, 1996; Bhatia, 1993, 1997). Although brief in form, abstracts serve as essential gateways to academic work, offering concise yet persuasive summaries of research findings (Hyland, 2000, p. 63).

Hyland's (2000, p. 67) five-move model, comprising Introduction, Purpose, Method, Product, and Conclusion, has been particularly influential in describing how abstracts function. These moves are not just informative but often persuasive, guiding readers to see the significance of a study. However, Samraj (2005, p. 143) has noted that these rhetorical patterns can vary across disciplinary norms. Her comparison of abstracts in wildlife behaviour and conservation biology showed that more applied fields often use the abstract to highlight problems and justify the research, blurring the distinction between the abstract and the introduction. Such findings reinforce the idea that the communicative goals and values of specific research communities shape genre conventions.

One area where this variation has yet to be fully explored is lexicography, particularly research focused on dictionary use. As a branch of applied linguistics, lexicography is concerned not only with the creation of dictionaries but also with how users interact with them. Dictionary use research investigates how people, especially language learners, consult dictionaries and what difficulties they encounter (Atkins & Rundell, 2008, p. 37). This research has real-world relevance: dictionaries play a crucial role in language education, translation, and autonomous learning (Tarp, 2008, pp. 123-125). Given its applied nature, one might expect that abstracts in lexicographic studies, especially those focusing on dictionary use, would include more promotional or problem-oriented moves such as establishing the importance of a practical issue or highlighting a gap in user knowledge. This expectation aligns with Samraj's (2005, p. 149) observation that applied disciplines often use abstracts to persuade readers of their relevance and value. Despite the growing number of dictionary use studies in recent decades, little is known about how these studies are rhetorically presented in abstracts, a significant gap in genre research.

The present study aims to fill this important gap by examining the rhetorical structure of research article abstracts within the domain of dictionary use. Using a genre-based framework, particularly Hyland's (2000) model, we analyzed a corpus comprising abstracts from journals specializing in lexicography and applied linguistics. The goal is to identify which moves are most frequently used, how they are organized, and whether the abstracts reflect the applied orientation of the field. The findings will contribute to a better understanding of how disciplinary and practical factors shape academic writing.

In the following sections, the methodology outlines the data collection process and the analytical framework used for the genre analysis. Next, the results present the identified moves and communicative features in the abstracts. Finally, the study offers a discussion of the findings, a brief conclusion, and explores the implications for genre theory and for practitioners in applied linguistics.

Methodology

Corpus Compilation

To compile the corpus for this study, an extensive search was performed using the Web of Science Core Collection database. The search strategy employed combinations of keywords related to dictionary usage, including "dictionary us*", "us* of dictionar*", "using dictionar*", and "using a dictionary," within the "All Fields" category. The search was further refined by restricting the publication years to the most recent five years (2020-2024) and filtering for document types categorized as "Article". Additionally, to ensure relevance to the study's linguistic focus, the search was limited to the "Language Linguistics" and "Linguistics" categories within the Web of Science taxonomy. This process initially yielded a total of 125 articles. The abstracts of these articles were reviewed individually, and 20 articles were excluded as they were not directly related to the topic. Besides, six articles were excluded because the journals in which these studies were published are not indexed in the AHCI database, which might violate the normality assumptions in statistical analysis. Consequently, the final corpus consists of 99 articles that are both recent and academically relevant to dictionary usage.

Corpus Characteristics

The dataset comprises 99 academic publications focused predominantly on linguistics, specifically on dictionary use and lexicography, reflecting a rich and concentrated scholarly output. All publications are classified as journal articles, indicating a strong orientation toward peer-reviewed, formal academic dissemination rather than conference proceedings or book chapters. Ninety-four of the records fall exclusively within linguistics. A smaller number incorporate interdisciplinary perspectives, intersecting with fields such as education, literature, psychology, and communication, thus suggesting an interest in the broader applications and interfaces of linguistic research.

The publications span a variety of open-access (OA) formats, illustrating the author's engagement with different models of academic accessibility. Approximately 57% of the entries have some form of OA designation. Among these, 'gold' open access is the most frequent, comprising 30 entries, followed by combinations such as 'Green Published, gold' and 'hybrid'. This diversity of access types suggests that authors are seeking to ensure wider dissemination of their work, while also highlighting the complexities of navigating OA publishing landscapes.

Academic journals play a pivotal role in shaping the visibility, dissemination, and scholarly impact of research. The most frequently cited source titles are *International Journal of Lexicography* (29 publications) and *Lexicos* (24 publications), both of which are well-established venues in lexicography and applied linguistics. These two journals alone account for over 50% of the dataset, suggesting a thematic concentration on dictionary use, lexicographic practices, and vocabulary instruction. Other journals, such as *Entrepalavras*, *Rasprave*, and *Voprosy Leksikografii*, further support the lexical and pedagogical focus of the research.

From an indexing standpoint, the majority of the articles are indexed in high-impact citation databases, which underscores the academic rigour and relevance of the corpus. Specifically, 59 articles are listed in both the Social Science Citation Index and the Arts & Humanities Citation Index (SSCI/AHCI), reinforcing their scholarly significance in humanities and social science contexts. Another 40 are indexed in the Emerging Sources Citation Index (ESCI), which typically

includes newer journals that are under evaluation for inclusion in more established indexes. In this regard, the present study adopts a per-corpus approach to compare the distribution of rhetorical moves and metadiscourse markers between abstracts from SSCI/AHCI and ESCI journals. In this design, the entire subcorpus (i.e., all abstracts representing each journal group) – that is, per corpus counts – is treated as the unit of analysis.

Overall, this collection of publications represents a robust and specialized body of work in the domain of lexicography and linguistics, characterized by a high degree of journal concentration, significant open access engagement, and consistent representation in reputable academic indexes. The data points to a research community that is methodical in its dissemination strategies and strategically aligned with journals that reinforce the field's evolving priorities and academic standards.

Data Coding and Analysis

The data analysis in this study was informed by a modified version of Hyland's (2000) five-move model for analyzing the rhetorical structure of research article (RA) abstracts (see Figure 1). This model, which includes the sections Introduction, Purpose, Method, Findings (referred to as "Product" in the original model), and Conclusion, was selected for its established relevance in genre analysis and its proven applicability in prior research on academic discourse. The adaptation involved slight relabelling (e.g., replacing "Product" with "Findings" for clarity), and the model was further operationalised in accordance with Behnam and Golpour's (2014, p. 175) elaboration (see Figure 2). This adaptation ensured the model's alignment with the study's objectives and allowed for finer granularity in the identification and categorization of rhetorical moves.

Followingly, driven by a per-corpus analysis perspective highlighted by corpus linguistics research (Geluso et al., 2025), statistical tests based on overall frequency counts, particularly chi-square analysis, were conducted in the study. Given that the goal of this study is to examine whether the overall frequency distributions of rhetorical moves and metadiscourse categories differ across journal index levels, chi-square analysis is appropriate. It allows us to determine whether observed differences in categorical counts are statistically significant when abstracts are aggregated at the corpus level. As shown in previous corpus-based work, "comparisons between groups in terms of greater-than-less-than relationships are extremely common in LCR studies on formulaic language" (Geluso et al., 2025, p. 2). Since this study is not based on individual abstract-level dispersion but instead on aggregated corpus-level frequencies, the chi-square test is the most appropriate tool for analyzing inter-group differences in the present context.

Accordingly, both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyze the rhetorical moves and metadiscourse features of research article abstracts. Descriptive statistics were used to present frequency counts, percentages, and corpus-level averages, showing how often different rhetorical moves and metadiscursive devices appeared across abstracts from SSCI/AHCI and emerging (ESCI) journals. These descriptive measures revealed general trends. To complement this, inferential statistics were applied using chi-square tests of independence to determine. Together, this combination of descriptive and inferential statistics allowed the study not only to summarize patterns but also to establish whether variations were meaningful or merely due to chance.

Figure 1. Hyland's (2000) model outlining the rhetorical structure of RA abstracts

Introduction	Establishes context of the paper and motivates the research
Purpose	Indicates purpose, outlines the aim behind the paper
Method	Provides information on design, procedures, data analysis, etc.
Finding	Indicates results
Conclusion	Points to application, or wider implications and interpretation

To ensure the reliability and validity of the coding process, a stringent inter-coder reliability procedure was implemented. Initially, a training session was conducted in which all coders familiarized themselves with the coding scheme and practiced on a sample set of abstracts. Following this, an initial round of independent coding was conducted on a random sample of 40 abstracts (40 % of the corpus). The coded outputs were then compared, and inter-coder agreement was assessed using Cohen's kappa coefficient. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved by consensus, and necessary refinements to the coding manual were made to clarify ambiguous cases. A second round of coding was then conducted on another sample to re-evaluate consistency. Only after achieving a satisfactory level of agreement ($\kappa > 0.80$) was the full dataset coded. The coding was conducted manually to allow careful attention to contextual and functional aspects of language use. Each identified move and metadiscourse feature was recorded along with its corresponding segment of text and location within the abstract. This rigorous approach ensured both methodological transparency and analytical robustness, facilitating meaningful comparisons between the abstracts of ESCI and SSCI/AHCI-indexed journals.

Figure 2. Adapted version of Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse taxonomy by Behnam and Golpour (2014, p. 175)

Category	Subcategory	Examples
Textual	Help to guide reader through the text	Resources
Logical connectives (Transitions)	Contrast	However; in contrast
	Reason & cause	Because, due to
	Purpose	So that, in order to
	Consequence	Thus, therefore
	Addition	Besides, Moreover
	Sequence	Then, next
Frame markers	Listing	First, second
	Phrases	In conclusion, To sum up
	Sentences	The findings show, The article concludes
Endophoric markers	No subcategories	No subcategories
Evidentials	Perspective	Theory, model
	Work	Earlier study
	Instrument	Survey, test, task
Code glosses	Punctuation	Colon, semi-colon

	Phrases	A case in point, A good example is
	Exemplification Markers	Such as, for example
Interpersonal	**Involve the reader in the text**	**Resources**
Hedges	Adjective	Relative, modest
	Phrase	Mostly but not exclusively,
	Adverb	Perhaps, generally
	Modal	Could, may
	Verb	Seem, assume
Boosters	Emphatic do	Do believe, does exist
	Adjective	Striking, considerable
	Adverb	Strongly, clearly
	Phrase	In fact
Attitude markers	Impersonal	Against expectation, It is suggested that
	Verb	Argue, need
	Adverb	Surprisingly, interestingly
Self-mentions	No subcategories	No subcategories
Engagement markers	No subcategories	No subcategories

Results

The first section of the results examines the rhetorical structure of RA abstracts. According to Hyland's (2000) model, Table 1 illustrates that the moves of purpose, method, and findings constitute the most significant portions of abstracts in both ESCI and SSCI/AHCI journals, as determined by word count. In this regard, Table 1 summarizes the percentage distribution of rhetorical moves across RA abstracts in ESCI and SSCI/AHCI journals. The data indicate that both journal groups emphasize the Findings move most frequently, followed by Purpose and Method. ESCI journals feature a slightly more balanced use of Introduction and Method, whereas SSCI/AHCI journals emphasize Findings more prominently, with lower percentages for other moves.

Table 1. Percentages of rhetorical moves across RA abstracts

Journal	Introduction	Purpose	Method	Findings	Conclusion	Total
ESCI	11.51%	26.12%	25.3%	31.21%	5.86%	100%
SSCI/AHCI	7.32%	24.95%	20.12%	40.35%	7.01%	100%

A chi-square test was used to determine whether the distribution of rhetorical moves significantly differed across the two journal categories (see Table 2). Significant differences were observed in the Purpose, $\chi^2(4, N = 55) = 19.56$, $p < .001$, Method, $\chi^2(4, N = 58) = 16.98$, $p = .001$, and Conclusion moves, $\chi^2(4, N = 25) = 55.31$, $p < .001$. In contrast, no significant difference was found for the Findings move, $\chi^2(4, N = 76) = 5.34$, $p = .253$. These results suggest that authors

publishing in higher-indexed journals (SSCI/AHCI) were more likely to employ the Purpose, Method, and Conclusion moves explicitly than those publishing in ESCI journals. Conversely, the use of Findings appeared relatively consistent across journal groups.

Table 2. Differences of the rhetorical structure across ESCI and SSCI/AHCI RA abstracts per corpus

Move	Frequency count		Total	χ^2	df	*p* Value
	ESCI	**SSCI/AHCI**				
Introduction	14	19	33[a]	44.000	4	.000*
Purpose	20	35	55[a]	19.556	4	.000*
Method	21	37	58[a]	16.98	4	.001*
Findings	32	44	76[a]	5.343	4	.253*
Conclusion	10	15	25[a]	55.313	4	.000*

[a] The total frequencies do not add up to 99 because some abstracts did not cover the related category.

The second section of the results focuses on the metadiscourse of the RA abstracts. Table 3 presents a comparative analysis of the per-corpus average percentages of textual metadiscourse features. The analysis highlights several significant differences in the use of metadiscourse subcategories. In terms of interactive metadiscourse, transitions were more frequent in SSCI/AHCI abstracts (11.3%) than in ESCI abstracts (7.2%). On the other hand, frame markers (5.4% vs. 1.9%) and code glosses (5.3% vs. 3.8%) appeared more often in ESCI. Conversely, endophorics and evidentials were relatively similar across the two corpora, with slightly higher percentages in ESCI (0.5% vs. 0.3% and 2.1% vs. 1.5%, respectively).

Table 3. Per corpus average (%) of textual metadiscourse in RA abstracts

Subcategory	ESCI	SSCI/AHCI
	per corpus average (%)	
Transitions	7.2	11.3
Frame markers	5.4	1.9
Endophorics	0.5	0.3
Evidentials	2.1	1.5
Code glosses	5.3	3.8

Additionally, a chi-square test was conducted to examine how textual metadiscourse is used in ESCI versus SSCI/AHCI research article abstracts (see Table 4). Results indicated no significant difference in the use of transitions between the two corpora, $\chi^2(4, N = 91) = 0.65$, $p = .957$. However, frame markers were used significantly differently across the corpora, $\chi^2(4, N = 64) = 12.37$, $p = .014$. Similarly, endophorics showed a significant difference, $\chi^2(4, N = 51) = 23.27$, $p < .001$. In contrast, evidentials and code glosses did not differ significantly between ESCI and SSCI/AHCI abstracts, $\chi^2(4, N = 82) = 2.92$, $p = .571$, and $\chi^2(4, N = 76) = 5.34$, $p = .253$, respectively. Overall, the results suggest that while both corpora employed similar levels of

transitions, evidentials, and code glosses, they differed significantly in their use of frame markers and endophorics.

Table 4. Differences of the textual metadiscourse across ESCI and SSCI/AHCI RA abstracts per corpus

Subcategory	Frequency count		Total	χ^2	df	*p* Value
	ESCI	**SSCI/AHCI**				
Transitions	37	54	91[a]	0.646	4	.957
Frame markers	33	31	64[a]	12.374	4	.014*
Endophorics	21	30	51[a]	23.273	4	.000*
Evidentials	29	43	82[a]	2.919	4	.571
Code glosses	31	45	76[a]	5.343	4	.253

[a] The total frequencies do not add up to 99 because some abstracts did not cover related category.

As to interpersonal metadiscourse markers, Table 5 presents the per corpus percentage average of interpersonal metadiscourse in RA abstracts. Accordingly, hedges were more frequent in SSCI/AHCI (2.4%) than ESCI (1.4%), as were boosters (0.9% vs. 0.5%) and self-mentions (1.7% vs. 0.2%). Attitude markers were used equally across both corpora (0.7%), while engagement markers were rare in both, though slightly more common in SSCI/AHCI (0.12% vs. 0.07%).

Table 5. Per corpus average (%) of interpersonal metadiscourse in RA abstracts

Subcategory	ESCI	SSCI/AHCI
	per corpus average (%)	
Hedges	1.4	2.4
Boosters	0.5	0.9
Attitude Markers	0.7	0.7
Self-Mention	0.2	1.7
Engagement Markers	0.07	0.12

In this regard, Table 6 presents the results of the chi-square analysis examining differences in interpersonal metadiscourse across ESCI and SSCI/AHCI RA abstracts. Results revealed a significant difference in the use of hedges, $\chi^2(4, N = 67) = 10.34$, $p = .035$, with SSCI/AHCI abstracts employing hedges more frequently (n = 53) than ESCI (n = 14). In contrast, there were no significant differences between the corpora in the use of boosters, $\chi^2(4, N = 83) = 2.59$, $p = .629$, attitude markers, $\chi^2(4, N = 84) = 2.27$, $p = .685$, self-mentions, $\chi^2(4, N = 81) = 3.27$, $p = .513$, or engagement markers, $\chi^2(4, N = 75) = 5.82$, $p = .213$. Taken together, the findings suggest that only the interpersonal metadiscourse category, hedges, showed a significant difference across corpora, with hedges more prevalent in SSCI/AHCI abstracts.

Table 6. Differences of the interpersonal metadiscourse across ESCI and SSCI/AHCI RA abstracts per corpus

Subcategory	Frequency count		Total	χ^2	df	*p* Value
	ESCI	**SSCI/AHCI**				
Hedges	14	53	67[a]	10.343	4	.035*
Boosters	34	49	83[a]	2.586	4	.629
Attitude Markers	36	48	84[a]	2.273	4	.685
Self-Mentions	31	50	81[a]	3.273	4	.513
Engagement Markers	29	46	75[a]	5.818	4	.213

[a] The total frequencies do not add up to 99 because some abstracts did not cover related category.

Discussion, Conclusion, and Implications

The present study offers novel insights into how rhetorical structures and metadiscursive elements vary across research article (RA) abstracts from journals of differing index in the field of linguistics. These findings expand upon and, in some respects, challenge prior genre-based analyses by scholars such as Hyland (2000, 2005), Santos (1996), and Bhatia (1993, 1997), especially regarding the strategic deployment of rhetorical moves and metadiscursive devices.

In line with Hyland's (2000) five-move model, both groups of abstracts prioritized the Findings move, confirming previous studies that underscore the centrality of results in RA abstracts (e.g., Lidyy, 1991; Santos, 1996; Oneplee, 2008). This prioritization indicates that, regardless of journal index, authors in the field of dictionary use understand that readers are primarily drawn to outcomes, which function as the most persuasive element of an abstract. However, significant differences emerged in the distribution of other moves, particularly the Purpose, Method, and Conclusion. ESCI abstracts featured the Purpose move more frequently than SSCI/AHCI abstracts. This pattern echoes San and Tan's (2012, p. 49) findings that novice or less experienced writers tend to foreground research aims to ensure clarity. In the context of emerging journals, where readerships may be more diverse and authorial authority less established, explicitly stating the purpose appears to serve as a rhetorical strategy to secure credibility and relevance. By contrast, SSCI/AHCI abstracts, likely assuming a more specialized readership, relied less on overt Purpose statements, allowing Findings and Conclusions to carry the persuasive weight. The Method move was also more prominent in ESCI abstracts, suggesting a tendency toward explicit procedural transparency. This finding contrasts with Oneplee's (2008, p. 73) analysis of *Science* and *Nature* abstracts, which showed that high-impact journals often minimize methodological detail in favour of highlighting findings. The relative downplaying of Methods in SSCI/AHCI abstracts in this study may similarly reflect the assumption that their audiences are familiar with standard research practices in applied linguistics and therefore require less procedural elaboration. Another notable distinction lies in the Conclusion move, which appeared significantly more in SSCI/AHCI abstracts. This suggests that SSCI/AHCI journals expect authors to go beyond reporting results and explicitly articulate the implications or contributions of their research. Such emphasis aligns with Bhatia's (1997) view of genre as a social practice, where SSCI/AHCI

publications prioritize the demonstration of disciplinary value and broader relevance. Conversely, the reduced presence of Conclusion moves in ESCI abstracts indicates a stronger focus on presenting core research elements (aim, method, findings) rather than situating the study within broader scholarly debates. Taken together, these patterns suggest that while both groups of abstracts adhere to established genre conventions, the rhetorical distribution reflects different communicative priorities. ESCI abstracts tend to be more formulaic, aiming for explicitness and accessibility. In contrast, SSCI/AHCI abstracts adopt a more selective rhetorical strategy, foregrounding results and implications, which resonates with the expectations of experienced academic readers and evaluators.

In terms of textual metadiscourse, the current study provides a more granular comparison than most earlier works. The analysis of textual metadiscourse revealed both commonalities across abstracts and important differences linked to the journal index. Transitions emerged as the most frequent category overall, though they were significantly more common in SSCI/AHCI abstracts. This finding corroborates Hyland (2005), Anwardeen et al. (2013), Mohamed and Rashid (2017), and Qin and Uccelli (2019), who all stress the foundational role of transitions in establishing logical cohesion. Their greater prevalence in SSCI/AHCI journals suggests that experienced writers are expected to construct more complex rhetorical flows, thereby confirming Hyland's claim that transitions function as markers of rhetorical sophistication. By contrast, frame markers occurred far more frequently in ESCI abstracts. This pattern supports Al-Shujairi et al. (2016, p. 385), who found that less experienced or non-native writers tend to rely on explicit organizational cues to guide readers. In this sense, ESCI abstracts adopt a more pedagogical style that prioritizes accessibility, while SSCI/AHCI abstracts assume a readership familiar with disciplinary conventions and therefore require less overt structuring. Differences also emerged in the use of endophorics, which were more prevalent in SSCI/AHCI abstracts. Consistent with Hyland's (2000, 2002, 2005) taxonomy, these markers enhance textual cohesion by directing readers to other parts of the text. Their prominence in SSCI/AHCI journals suggests an expectation for abstracts not only to summarize content but also to build self-referential cohesion that reflects disciplinary maturity. In contrast, evidentials appeared with similar frequency across both corpora, reinforcing Hyland's (2005) view of evidentials as central to situating research within the scholarly conversation. Finally, code glosses were slightly more frequent in ESCI abstracts, although the difference was not statistically significant. Hyland (2005) notes that such markers are relatively rare and primarily serve to clarify meaning or improve accessibility. Their use in ESCI abstracts thus aligns with the broader tendency of these journals to emphasize clarity and explicitness. Accordingly, these findings demonstrate that while some textual metadiscourse features, such as transitions and evidentials, are widely shared across journals, others, such as frame markers and code glosses, are shaped by the journal index. SSCI/AHCI abstracts favour rhetorical subtlety and cohesion, whereas ESCI abstracts rely on overt guidance to ensure accessibility. This contrast underscores Bhatia's (1997) claim that genre practices are socially situated, showing that textual metadiscourse is conditioned not only by disciplinary traditions but also by the expectations of different publishing contexts.

The analysis of interpersonal metadiscourse revealed both convergences and divergences between abstracts published in SSCI/AHCI and ESCI journals. Among the five categories examined, only hedges displayed a statistically significant difference, occurring more frequently in SSCI/AHCI abstracts. This finding reinforces Hyland's (2000, 2002, 2005) claim that hedging

represents a sophisticated rhetorical strategy that signals caution and openness to alternative interpretations. In SSCI/AHCI journals, where expectations of rhetorical subtlety are heightened, hedging appears to function as a marker of authorial credibility and disciplinary alignment. In contrast, its reduced use in ESCI abstracts may reflect a tendency toward more direct or less nuanced positioning, consistent with the needs of wider or less specialized readerships. Boosters and attitude markers, by comparison, did not differ significantly across the two corpora. Their relative stability suggests that these devices may be shaped more by disciplinary norms than by journal index, supporting Darabad's (2016, p. 137) observation that metadiscursive preferences often vary across fields rather than across publishing contexts. This pattern also indicates that dictionary use research, as a subfield of applied linguistics, generally avoids overt emphatic or evaluative language, regardless of indexing status. Interestingly, self-mentions were much more frequent in SSCI/AHCI abstracts, although the difference was not statistically significant. This result challenges earlier studies (e.g., Abarghooeinze & Simin, 2015; Kafes, 2017; Moradi & Montazeri, 2024; Mur Dueñas, 2007), which suggested that less experienced or non-native writers are more likely to avoid self-mentions due to rhetorical caution or cultural conventions. Instead, the increased presence of self-reference in SSCI/AHCI journals appears to align with Hyland's (2002, 2005) argument that contemporary academic discourse increasingly accommodates authorial visibility as a means of projecting stance and ownership of research. Finally, engagement markers were rare across both journal categories, with only marginally higher frequencies in SSCI/AHCI abstracts. Their limited presence confirms Hyland's (2002, 2005) observation that engagement markers are not a defining feature of abstracts, a genre that prioritizes informational density and rhetorical economy over dialogic interaction. In sum, these findings suggest that interpersonal metadiscourse in dictionary use abstracts reflects both disciplinary stability and index-based variation. While hedging and, to some extent, self-mentions appear sensitive to journal index, other categories (i.e., boosters, attitude markers, and engagement markers) remain stable across contexts, reflecting the field's overarching conventions. This combination highlights how interpersonal resources are negotiated at the intersection of disciplinary norms and the expectations associated with different publishing contexts.

Overall, this study has highlighted how rhetorical structures and metadiscursive strategies in dictionary use research abstracts differ according to journal index, revealing both shared conventions and index-specific practices. Across both ESCI and SSCI/AHCI abstracts, the Findings moved most prominently, confirming its centrality in persuading readers of a study's value. However, notable contrasts emerged: ESCI abstracts relied more heavily on explicit Purpose and Method moves and on frame markers, underscoring accessibility and transparency, while SSCI/AHCI abstracts emphasized Conclusions, transitions, hedges, and self-mentions, projecting rhetorical sophistication, disciplinary maturity, and authorial stance. These patterns indicate that while the abstracts of the studies on dictionary use across journals adhere to core genre expectations, their rhetorical and metadiscursive choices reflect differing communicative priorities shaped by publishing contexts. Altogether, the findings extend genre-based analyses by showing how indexing level influences the balance between explicit guidance, procedural detail, and rhetorical subtlety.

The findings of this study have significant implications for academic writing pedagogy, especially within the contexts of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). First of all, instructional materials should incorporate comparative genre analysis

between varied journal abstracts to sensitize learners to varying rhetorical expectations and metadiscursive norms. Additionally, novice scholars aiming to publish in high-impact journals must be trained to use hedging and transitions more effectively, recognizing these as markers of rhetorical sophistication and disciplinary alignment. Journal editors and reviewers should be mindful of rhetorical diversity and avoid penalizing authors, especially non-native English speakers, for styles that deviate from normative expectations but remain communicatively effective. Besides, the findings advocate developing feedback protocols that distinguish between genre conventions tied to content quality and those tied to stylistic execution, thereby promoting more equitable evaluation across journal indexing levels. Last but not least, these results pave the way for exploring how other factors, such as authorship demographics, editorial policies, and language background, influence abstract composition, potentially informing more nuanced models of genre instruction and assessment.

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