

UDC 811.111'42

DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/2522-4077-2026-216-8>

## ABSTRACT AS A GENRE OF ENGLISH ACADEMIC DISCOURSE: RHETORICAL STRUCTURE AND LINGUISTIC FEATURES

### АНОТАЦІЯ ЯК ЖАНР АНГЛОМОВНОГО АКАДЕМІЧНОГО ДИСКУРСУ: РИТОРИЧНА СТРУКТУРА ТА ЛІНГВІСТИЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ

**Tymoshchuk N. M.,**

*orcid.org/0000-0001-5638-5825*

*Web of Science Researcher ID L-8431-2018*

*Scopus-Author ID 58094116400*

*Candidate of Philological Sciences,*

*Associate Professor at the Department of Foreign Philology and Translation  
of Vinnytsia Institute of Trade and Economics  
of State University of Trade and Economics*

Research article abstracts play a crucial role in academic communication, as they summarize research content and influence both editorial decisions and readers' interest. The paper examines the abstract as a genre of English academic discourse using a comparative analysis of its rhetorical structure and linguistic features in philology journal articles. We have focused on abstracts published in Ukrainian Category A and Category B journals, which differ in terms of international visibility and academic prestige. The corpus includes 100 English-language research article abstracts selected from four philological journals, with an equal number (25 abstracts) representing each journal and each category (50 abstracts). The study employs a combination of descriptive, quantitative, and qualitative methods. The five-move rhetorical model was applied to identify the distribution of rhetorical moves. The linguistic analysis was simultaneously used to examine voice and tense patterns across the abstracts. Research findings show that abstracts of Category A journals have a more comprehensive and standardized rhetorical structure than those from Category B journals, particularly in the inclusion of methodological and concluding moves. Move 2 (Aim/Purpose) appears consistently across both categories, whereas the Conclusion/Suggestions move is the least frequent. The analysis of grammatical voice reveals a general preference for the active construction, particularly in the Introduction and Results/Findings sections, while the passive voice dominates in the Methods section. The analysis of tense usage shows that the Present Simple and Past Simple tenses are used most frequently, reflecting their functional roles in summarizing research aims and reporting results. The paper finds that rhetorical organization and linguistic choices are deeply connected in the abstracts. It therefore strongly suggests explicit instruction of both rhetorical and linguistic aspects in English for Academic Purposes classes aimed at novice Ukrainian researchers.

**Key words:** abstract, research article, academic discourse, linguistic features, English for Academic Purposes.

Анотації наукових статей посідають важливе місце в академічній комунікації, оскільки вони забезпечують стислий виклад основного змісту дослідження та суттєво впливають як на редакційні рішення щодо прийняття рукописів до публікації, так і на формування читацького інтересу. У статті анотацію розглянуто як самостійний жанр англійського академічного дискурсу крізь призму порівняльного аналізу її риторичної організації та лінгвістичних характеристик у публікаціях філологічних наукових журналів. Основну увагу зосереджено на анотаціях, опублікованих в українських журналах категорій А та Б, які різняться за вимогами до наукового письма. Корпус дослідження охоплює 100 анотацій англійськомовних наукових статей, відібраних із чотирьох фахових філологічних журналів, при цьому кожний журнал і кожна категорія представлені однаковою кількістю матеріалу. У межах дослідження використано п'ятикомпонентну риторичну модель. Лінгвістичний аналіз було застосовано для дослідження уживання активного та пасивного станів і часових форм в анотаціях. Результати дослідження свідчать, що анотації статей, опублікованих у журналах категорії А, характеризуються більш повною та стандартизованою риторичною структурою порівняно з

© Tymoshchuk N. M., 2026



Стаття поширюється  
на умовах ліцензії  
відкритого доступу (CC BY 4.0)

анотаціями журналів категорії Б. Мета та завдання дослідження представлені в анотаціях обох категорій журналів, однак висновки та пропозиції є менш частотними. Лінгвістичний аналіз засвідчує превалювання активних конструкцій, зокрема у «Вступі» та «Результатах дослідження», тоді як у «Методах» домінує пасивний стан. Дослідження часових форм показує, що найчастіше автори в анотаціях використовують теперішній простий (Present Simple Tense) та минулий простий (Past Simple Tense) часи, що відображає їхні функціональні ролі в узагальненні мети дослідження та поданні отриманих результатів. У статті проаналізовано взаємозв'язок між риторичною організацією анотацій і лінгвістичними засобами їх реалізації. Авторкою обґрунтовується доцільність навчання як риторичних, так і лінгвістичних аспектів написання анотацій у межах курсів з англійської мови для академічних цілей, орієнтованих на молодих українських дослідників.

**Ключові слова:** анотація, наукова стаття; академічний дискурс, лінгвістичні особливості, англійська мова для академічних цілей.

**Statement of the problem.** Scholars have suggested that there has been a growing linguistic focus on analyzing academic discourse over the past several decades. Researchers have extensively studied effective argumentation, the rhetorical structure of academic texts, the expression of authorial stance, and methods for building engagement with the reader across various languages and genres of academic discourse [1, p. 34]. As a genre of English academic discourse, research article abstracts have garnered increasing attention from scholars due to their significance in scientific publications. According to Ventola, research article abstracts «have become a tool of mastering and managing the ever-increasing information flow in the scientific community» [2, p. 333]. They play a crucial role in academic publishing, serving as a key means for disseminating research findings and influencing decision-making: editors and reviewers often rely on them to assess submissions, while readers use them to judge the relevance and value of a paper. Belcher claims that an abstract is like an advertisement that markets an article [3].

In practice, many students find writing abstracts challenging, as it requires them to present their ideas clearly and write well-structured, high-quality text. The most common issues are limited writing skills in academic English for reporting research results, neglect of lexical and stylistic norms, and reliance on word-for-word translations from the source language. Thus, the research topic is closely related to the curriculum of the Vinnytsia Institute of Trade and Economics of the State University of Trade and Economics (VITE SUTE), especially the English for Academic Purposes course. Besides partially illustrating how a group of Ukrainian scholars constructs their English abstracts, the findings of this study are expected to inform higher educational institutions on teaching academic writing to novice Ukrainian researchers, thereby maintaining and increasing the national and international reputation of Ukrainian universities, as well as ensuring quality assurance.

**The latest research analysis.** Several previous studies have addressed the rhetorical organization of research article abstracts in various disciplines, which typically employ a five-part structure [4]. This rhetorical structure has been identified in abstracts from multiple scientific disciplines, such as applied linguistics [5], tourism studies [6], protozoology [7], and computer and communication systems engineering [8]. Ukrainian scholar Natalia Ivanytska has established the linguistic and discursive characteristics of the cross-language transformation of nominalization in Ukrainian translations of academic texts [9]. Oksana Chepil has identified the criteria for writing a successful conference abstract, taking into account the ability to conduct linguistic analysis to develop academic writing skills [10].

**The purpose of the article.** To the best of our knowledge, most previous studies have been primarily descriptive, lacking a comparative analysis of the rhetorical structure and linguistic features of journal article abstracts across different quality levels.

This study addresses this gap by exploring the following research questions:

1. How are rhetorical moves employed in category A and B journal article abstracts in philology written by Ukrainian authors?
2. How are active and passive constructions used in these abstracts?
3. What are the patterns of tense usage in these abstracts?

Rhetorical moves and linguistic features are two key aspects to consider in abstract writing [11]. Accordingly, this study **aims** to examine the abstract as a genre of English academic discourse through a comparative analysis of its rhetorical structure and linguistic features in category A and B philology journal abstracts authored by Ukrainian scholars.

**The primary material of the study.** After the titles, the abstract is the most frequently read part of a scientific paper. Readers expect it to be a concise summary that captures the key ideas of the article. There are two types of abstracts: informative and indicative [12]. Informative abstracts encompass all parts of a scientific work. They are often used in original research reports and systematic reviews to guide the reader to seek more detailed information throughout the paper. Indicative abstracts are of simpler construction, used to express opinions or discuss facts, crafted to provide a context by which the reader can approach the content [13].

The professional academic publications in Ukraine are classified into two categories. Category A scientific journals are Ukrainian academic publications with international recognition, indexed in databases such as Scopus or Web of Science. Category B regional journals are Ukrainian academic publications that are not yet included in international databases. Nevertheless, publishing in these journals is also required to realize the key scientific goals of scholars.

For our research, 100 English-language research article abstracts were selected for analysis from two types of philological scholarly journals: Category A and Category B. These are the Alfred Nobel University Journal of Philology (Category A), the East European Journal of Psycholinguistics (Category A), and the Research Bulletin. Series: Philological Sciences (Category B), and Studia Philologica (Category B). 25 research article abstracts represent each journal. The selection of these journals was based on several criteria: they are open-access, nationally accredited, and internationally indexed, which serve as indicators of the quality and credibility of the published articles.

The research method used was a combination of descriptive, quantitative, and qualitative analysis of the communicative objectives and linguistic features of the abstract part of the research sample. In this study, the five-move model developed by Swales and Feak [4] was employed to analyze the rhetorical structure of research article abstracts. «A move is a functional, not a grammatical term, and it can vary in length from a phrase to a paragraph» [4, p. 5]. Our study adopts the definition proposed by Erika Gobekci, who defines a move as «a bounded communicative act that is intended to contribute to a single primary communicative goal» [1, p. 37].

Initially, the focus was on the rhetorical moves found in abstracts across the two groups of articles within the study’s corpus. The study’s results are presented in the following table.

Table 1

**The Distribution of Moves in the Research Article Abstracts**

Rhetorical Move		Category A n=50	Category B n=50	Total n=100
Moves	Description	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
Move 1	Introduction	48	37	85
Move 2	Aim/Purpose	50	50	100
Move 3	Methods	49	32	81
Move 4	Results/Findings	47	35	82
Move 5	Conclusions/Suggestions	45	33	78

Table 1 shows the distribution of rhetorical moves in the abstracts of papers from two categories of journals: Category A and Category B (n = 50 for each category). Move 2 (100 %) is the most frequently used move across both categories, indicating its essential role in academic writing, regardless of journal quality. In contrast, Move 5 is the least frequent one, appearing in only 78% of the abstracts. A comparative analysis reveals that abstracts from Category A consistently demonstrate a more complete

rhetorical structure. For example, Move 1 appears in 48 Category A abstracts versus 37 Category B abstracts, and Move 3 appears in 49 Category A abstracts versus 32 Category B abstracts. Similarly, Moves 4 and 5 seem more frequent in Category A (47 and 45 instances, respectively) than in Category B (35 and 33 instances, respectively). These findings suggest that abstracts published in higher-ranking journals tend to follow a more standardized and comprehensive rhetorical structure. Notably, the substantial difference in the inclusion of methodological descriptions highlights the importance of methodological transparency in academic publishing, particularly in so-called prestigious journals.

Research data reveals a general preference for the active voice (57.5%) over the passive voice (42.5%). Active constructions dominate most of the time, particularly in Moves 4 and 1 (74.4% and 61.2%, respectively). Move 3 is the only one in which the passive voice is used more frequently (58%), in line with conventional academic reporting practices. Move 2 shows a more balanced distribution, indicating variation in stylistic choices depending on rhetorical function. For more detailed information, see Table 2.

Table 2

## Passive and Active Sentences in Abstracts

Rhetorical Move		Category A n=50		Category B n=50		Total n=100		Total n=100
Moves	Description	Active	Passive	Active	Passive	Active	Passive	
Move 1	Introduction	31	17	21	16	52	33	85
Move 2	Aim/Purpose	28	22	26	24	54	46	100
Move 3	Methods	12	37	22	10	34	47	81
Move 4	Results/Findings	37	10	24	11	61	21	82
Move 5	Conclusions/ Suggestions	26	19	18	15	44	34	78

Two examples of passive and active sentences taken from the abstracts in the corpus of this study are given below:

«The study suggests a combined application of linguostylistic and empirical methods to investigate the specificity of the author's poetics as a system» [14, p. 169].

«To achieve the aim and complete the tasks the contextual-interpretative method (to define the author's pragmatic aim concerning the socio-political topic of the text), the method of interactive modelling (to define and generalise the emotional elements of the meaning created and to hypothesise on the possible systemic nature of these means) and the method of structural analysis (to identify the linguistic means that help objectivise the pragmatic intention) are used» [15, p. 234].

As shown in Table 3, the Present Simple Tense dominates in categories A and B, with 94 and 93 uses, respectively. This reflects its standard use in most cases, as it conveys well-known facts, confirms or refutes the authors' hypotheses, and summarizes the study's content. The Past Simple Tense appears 126 times (66 in category A and 60 in category B) and is typically used to describe data and research results. Our findings are in line with Kuznietsova's study regarding the frequent use of the Present and Past Simple Tenses in abstracts [16].

Table 3

## The Distribution of Tenses in Abstracts

Tenses	Category A n=50	Category B n=50	Total n=100
	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
Present Simple Tense	94	93	187
Past Simple Tense	66	60	126
Future Simple Tense	7	5	12
Present Perfect Tense	60	41	101

The following examples illustrate the use of the Present Simple and Past Simple tense forms taken from the corpus of our study.

«*The study results showed that secondary predication structures are pretty common in the analytical and informational genre of mass media business publications, contributing to the conciseness and effectiveness of communication in the modern information-overloaded communication space*» [17, p. 134].

«*The test results show that the English associate the concept of betrayal with a traitor. They clearly identify the subjects of betrayal – specific persons (historical, public, political figures, heroes of cartoons and literary works) with whom the objects of betrayal were in a close, trusting relationship*» [18, p. 169].

These examples are categorized as Move 4 (Results/Findings). Both scholars employ *that*-complement clause to present their study's findings, but use different verb tenses despite serving the same rhetorical function.

**Conclusions.** The research article abstracts in philology written by Ukrainian scholars generally follow the five-move rhetorical model, though there are notable differences across journal categories. Abstracts published in Category A journals demonstrate a more complete and standardized rhetorical structure than those in Category B journals, particularly in the inclusion of methodological and concluding moves. The grammar analysis reveals an overall preference for active constructions, especially in the Introduction and Results/Findings moves, while passive voice is more frequently used in the Methods move, in line with conventional academic norms. The Present Simple and Past Simple tenses dominate across both categories, reflecting their functional roles in summarizing research aims and reporting findings.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. Gobekci E. Rhetorical Structure and Linguistic Features of Research Article Abstracts in the Humanities: The Case of Lithuanian, English, and Russian. *Taikomoji Kalbotyra*. 2023. No. 19. P. 33–56. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15388/Taikalbot.2023.19.4>
2. Ventola E. Abstracts as an object of linguistic study. *Writing vs speaking: language, text, discourse, communication*. Gunter Narr Verlag, 1994. P. 333–352.
3. Belcher W. L. Writing a journal article in 12 weeks: A guide to academic publishing success. London: SAGE Publication Inc., 2009. 351 p.
4. Swales J. M., Feak C.B. Abstracts and the Writing of Abstracts. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2009. 87 p.
5. Santos, M. B. D. The textual organization of research paper abstracts in applied linguistics. *Text & Talk*. 1996. Vol. 16.4. P. 481–500.
6. Ahmed S. Rhetorical organization of tourism research article abstracts. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 2015. No. 208. P. 269–281. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.11.203>
7. Cross C., Oppenheim C. A Genre Analysis of Scientific Abstracts. *Journal of Documentation*. 2006. Vol. 62. P. 428–446. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1108/00220410610700953>
8. San L. Y., Tan H. A comparative study of the rhetorical moves in abstracts of published research articles and students' term papers in the field of computer and communication systems engineering. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*. 2012. Vol. 1(7). P. 40–50. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7575/ijalel.v.1n.7p.137>
9. Іваницька Н. Номіналізація в науковому дискурсі: перекладознавчий аспект. *Лінгвістичні студії*. 2022. Вип. 44. С. 75–86. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31558/1815-3070.2022.44.5>
10. Чепіль О. Я. Критерії написання та аналіз лінгвістичних особливостей conference abstracts у розвитку навичок академічного письма (на матеріалі англomовних тез доповідей для наукових конференцій). *Наукові записки Національного університету «Острозька академія»: серія «Філологія»*. 2023. Вип. 17(85). С. 102–106. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.25264/2519-2558-2023-17\(85\)-102-106](https://doi.org/10.25264/2519-2558-2023-17(85)-102-106)
11. Arsyad S., Hakim H., Astria H. Rhetorical structure and linguistic features of abstracts: A comparative study of local, national and international journals in English education written by Indonesian authors. *Komposisi: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa, Sastra, Dan Seni*. 2021. Vol. 22. No. 1. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24036/komposisi.v22i1.109987>

12. Pereira M. G. O resumo de um artigo científico. *Epidemiologia e Serviços de Saúde*. 2013. Vol. 22(4). P. 707–708. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5123/S1679-49742013000400017>
13. Garcia D. C. F., Gattaz C. C., Gattaz N. C. The relevance of title, abstract, and keywords for scientific paper writing. *Revista de Administração Contemporânea*. 2019. Vol. 23. P. 1–9. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2019190178>
14. Марущак Н. Поетика Е.А. По в контексті міждисциплінарних досліджень. *Studia Philologica*. 2025. № 1 (24). С. 169–182. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.28925/2311-2425.2025.2412>
15. Sazonova Ya., Oleksenko O. Evaluative Potential of Grammatical Gender Asymmetry in Ukrainian Socio-Political Media Discourse. *Alfred Nobel University Journal of Philology*. 2025. Vol. 1. Issue 29. P. 234–250. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32342/3041-217X-2025-1-29-14>
16. Кузнецова І. В. Мова англomовної наукової анотації. *Науковий вісник Міжнародного гуманітарного університету. Сер.: Філологія*. 2024 № 69 Том 1. С. 187–190. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32782/2409-1154.2024.69.1.40>
17. Іваницька Н. Б., Іваницька Н. Л. Вторинна предикація як засіб економії мовних ресурсів в аналітико-інформаційному жанрі англomовних бізнесових медіавидань. *Наукові записки. Серія: Філологічні науки*. 2025. Вип. 212. С. 133–141. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32782/2522-4077-2025-212-19>
18. Ivanchenko M., Kolegaeva I. The concept of betrayal in the consciousness of the English: A psycholinguistic study. *East European Journal of Psycholinguistics*. 2024. Vol. 11(2). P. 69–80. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29038/ejpl.2024.11.2.iva>

Дата першого надходження статті до видання: 31.12.2025

Дата прийняття статті до друку після рецензування: 26.01.2026

Дата публікації (оприлюднення) статті: 14.04.2026