In the Name of the Almighty

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A Contrastive Rhetoric of Iranian and International Research Article Abstracts in English in Two Academic Fields: Applied Linguistics and Medicine

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باسمه تعالی

به موجب نامهٔ شماره ۳۷۰۵۸/ت مورخ ۸۸/۱۲/۱۰ جلسه دفاع از پایان‌نامه خانم فاطمه مرتضوی صفت دانشجوی رشته آموزش زبان انگلیسی دانشکده ادبیات، زبانها و تاریخ شماره دانشجویی ۸۵۱۱۲۳۰۱۲ در روز چهارشنبه مورخ ۸۸/۱۲/۱۹ تحت عنوان: مقایسه بلاغی چکیده مقالات پژوهشی ایرانی و بین المللی به زبان انگلیسی در دو رشته دانشگاهی، زبان شناسی کاربردی و پزشکی در اطاق دفاعیه برگزار گردید.

ابتدا خانم فاطمه مرتضوی صفت در مورد موضوع و نتایج پایان‌نامه صحبت نمودند و سپس به سئوالات اعضاء حاضر در جلسه پاسخ دادند. هیأت داوران طی جلسه‌ای که همزمان تشکیل گردید پس از مشورت نمره دانشجو را ۱۹/۱۲ و با امتیاز عالی تعیین و مورد قبول قرار گرفت.

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We hereby approve this thesis by Fatemeh Mortazavi Sefat entitled *A Contrastive Rhetoric of Iranian and International Research Article Abstracts in English in Two Academic Fields: Applied Linguistics and Medicine* be Accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

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I hereby confirm that the whole of this thesis and any article derived from it for publication are completely original, and that if clear evidence existed on the contrary, I submit to any grade that my supervisor decides on, as well as any kind of punishment that the department approves, such as revoking my degree, pecuniary retribution, and/or suing in a legal court.

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Dedicated To

My Beloved Family

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Abstract

Contrastive rhetorical studies, which focus on different sections of research article abstracts, have already become an established area of inquiry. However, one of the sections of research articles, abstract, has not received due attention. Although it seems short and simple in surface, writing an abstract which meets the rhetorical demands of editorials is a demanding task even for native speakers. This study tries to explore rhetorical features of research article abstracts by exploring rhetorical variations between Iranian and international research article abstracts belonging to two academic disciplines, applied linguistics and medicine. To this end, 80 research article abstracts written in English were chosen randomly from 6 Iranian and 6 international academic journals in the two mentioned fields of study. The rhetorical moves and steps of the abstracts were analyzed following I-M-R-D move structure and Swales' (1990) CARS model, respectively. The results of statistical analysis suggested that while medical and applied linguistic abstracts differ significantly in several rhetorical features, in the number of rhetorical moves, number and type of rhetorical steps, and move length, Iranian and international research article abstracts share some rhetorical features. It can be concluded that disciplinary conventions play an important role in shaping rhetorical features of research article abstracts.

Keywords: contrastive rhetoric, research article abstracts, IMRD move structure, CARS model

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List of Abbreviations

IMRD Introduction, Method, Result, Discussion

CARS Create a Research Space

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

One of the most important text types in EAP (English for academic purposes) is the research article, because it has the important function of "communicating new knowledge to the other members of the academic community" (Martin, 2003, p .25). In addition, research articles published in first-rank academic journals provide most respect and reward for their writers and promote their academic standing in many academic communities (Swales, 2004).

Because of their perceived importance, research articles are becoming a growing field of study in linguistics. Most of such studies specifically focus on one of the subparts of research articles. *Abstract* is one of the subparts that has lately attracted a lot of attention, because as Ventola (1994, as cited in Lores, 2004, p. 281) mentions, its role is being recognized as "a tool of mastering and managing the ever increasing information flow in the scientific community." They are like a "gateway" that lead readers to take up an article, journals to select contributions, or organizers of conferences to accept or reject papers (ibid.).

Although short and simple in surface, as Lores (2004, p. 281) mentions, the article abstract is "a genre in its own right" and demands lots of time and endeavor, even for the native speakers, to be as summarized and