

# Rhetorical structure and linguistic features of research article abstracts in the humanities: the case of Lithuanian, English, and Russian

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**Abstract.** Over the past few decades, research article abstracts have been receiving increased attention of scholars. While abstracts in English have been extensively researched, there are few studies on abstracts in Russian and no studies on abstracts in Lithuanian. This study investigates the rhetorical structure and linguistic features of research article abstracts across different humanities disciplines in Lithuanian, English and Russian. My aim is to detect similarities and differences in abstract structure and corresponding linguistic features within the three different academic writing traditions. I seek to answer the question which writing tradition, the Anglo-Saxon or the Continental, is closer to Lithuanian academic writing. This study employs contrastive qualitative and quantitative analysis and corpus-based methodology. The results highlight aspects of abstract writing that may be relevant for researchers while preparing abstracts of their research articles in these three languages.

**Keywords:** *academic discourse, humanities, research article abstract, rhetorical structure, cross-linguistic research*

## Humanitarinių mokslų straipsnių santraukų lietuvių, anglų ir rusų kalbomis retorinė struktūra ir kalbiniai ypatumai

**Santrauka.** Pastaraisiais dešimtmečiais mokslininkai vis daugiau dėmesio skiria mokslinių straipsnių santraukoms. Mokslinių straipsnių santraukos anglų kalba yra daug ir išsamiai ištyrinėtos, tačiau vis dar mažai tyrimų, analizuojančių santraukas, parašytas kitomis kalbomis, o ypač trūksta kelių kalbų kontrastyvinių tyrimų. Mokslinių straipsnių rusų kalba santraukos yra mažai tyrinėtoms, o lietuvių kalba – netyrinėtoms. Šiame tyrime nagrinėjama skirtingų humanitarinių disciplinų mokslinių straipsnių santraukų retorinė struktūra lietuvių, anglų ir rusų kalbomis. Tyrimo tikslas – nustatyti penkių humanitarinių mokslų sričių mokslinių straipsnių santraukų pagrindinius struktūrinius ir kalbinius ypatumus žvelgiant į tris skirtingas akademinio rašymo tradicijas. Straipsnyje siekiama atsakyti į klausimą, kuri rašymo tradicija – anglosaksiška ar kontinentinė – yra artimesnė lietuvių akademiniam diskursui. Šio tyrimo metodika remiasi kontrastyvine analize

This project has received funding from European Social Fund (project No 09.3.3-LMT-K-712-23-0175) under grant agreement with the Research Council of Lithuania (LMTLT).

**Acknowledgements.** I gratefully acknowledge my postdoctoral supervisor, Professor Dr Jolanta Šinkūnienė, for her continuous support and productive cooperation. I would also like to thank the independent expert who participated in the inter-rater reliability test.

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ir tekstynų lingvistikos metodu. Tarpkalbinė analizė rodo, kad lietuviškos santraukos turi daugiau panašumų su rusiškėmis santraukomis nei su angliškėmis, todėl prieinama prie išvados, kad lietuvių retorikos tradicijos yra glaudžiau susijusios su kontinentine, o ne anglosaksiška rašymo tradicija. Tai matyti iš tam tikrų retorinių žingsnių, kurių dažnumas rusų ir lietuvių kalbų santraukose yra artimesnis, palyginti su angliškėmis santraukomis. Be akivaizdžių skirtumų, yra nemažai tarpkalbinių panašumų, susijusių su tam tikrų žingsnių kalbine realizacija. Kontrastyvinė analizė išryškina struktūrinius ir kalbinius santraukų rašymo aspektus, kurie gali būti aktualūs mokslininkams, rengiantiems savo mokslinių straipsnių santraukas šiomis trimis kalbomis, taip pat pradedantiesiems tyrėjams ir studentams, siekiantiems įsisavinti šio kompaktiško, bet labai svarbaus žanro struktūrą ir jam būdingus kalbinius ypatumus. Rezultatai taip pat gali būti naudingi vertėjams, kurie galėtų pateikti autoriams patarimų dėl tarpkultūrinių akademinio teksto kūrimo skirtumų.

**Raktažodžiai:** *akademinis diskursas, humanitariniai mokslai, mokslinio straipsnio santrauka, retorinė struktūra, tarpkalbinis tyrimas*

## 1. Introduction

The past few decades have seen a growing linguistic interest in the analysis of academic discourse: the rhetorical structure of academic texts, effective argumentation, the expression of author stance, and ways to build engagement with the reader are just a few elements that have been extensively studied in various languages, disciplines and genres of academic discourse. Such studies have offered significant insights into the ways academic discourse is constructed, taking into account specific science fields and their epistemologies as well as similarities and differences related to the cultural background of the authors. Research on hard and soft fields has revealed academic discourse features which are universal irrespective of the discipline, as well as those which are characteristic of only some of the disciplinary traditions. Cultural aspects of research writing are frequently discussed in light of the concepts of collective vs. individualistic cultures (Clyne 1993) or writer-responsible vs reader-responsible writing (see Hinds 1987).

Besides various other genres of academic discourse, it is the research article abstracts that have received increasing attention of scholars. This can be explained by the fact that the abstract has become an important tool for the publication and dissemination of research results: research journal editors frequently judge the quality of a submitted article based on its abstract, potential reviewers accept or reject proposals to review the article by reading the abstract, and it is the abstract which helps to attract the reader's attention once the article is published. Abstracts usually provide concise information about the research object, methods, results and conclusions, so these texts, sometimes considered a separate genre (see e.g. Bhatia 1993, Sala 2014), should help readers understand the essential aspects of the article at a glance, hence the importance of their clear rhetorical structure. They should be not only informative, but also attract the attention of the readers and encourage them to continue to read the complete article.

The rhetorical organisation of a research article abstract in various disciplines has been addressed in a number of previous studies, which usually point to a five-move structure (cf. Hyland (2000)). The typical moves would include contextual background to the study, presenting the research (purpose / research questions), information on data and method / framework, results and discussion / conclusion. This type of rhetorical structure has been certified in abstracts of various science fields: applied linguistics (Dos Santos 1996), protozoology (Cross, Oppenheim 2006), tourism (Ahmed 2015), computer and communication systems engineering (San, Tan 2012) fields. Despite the apparent uniformity of the structure, disciplines could differ in terms of which moves are considered to be obligatory, i.e. which moves appear in most of the analysed abstracts. Applied linguistics abstracts, for example, favour presenting the research and describing the methodology over the other moves (Dos Santos 1996),

whereas protozoology researchers always describe their methods and summarize the results (Cross, Oppenheim 2006). These insights point to an inherent capacity of the discipline to highlight and emphasize the elements that are of highest importance to its tradition.

The disciplinary differences could be even more visible in cross-disciplinary comparisons of research article abstracts. Katalin Doró's study (2013) revealed that linguistics abstracts more often provided clear reference to the research scope, methodology and main results, while literature abstracts focused on the placement of the research into a wider context and offered a more tentative reference to the findings. Subtle but important differences could be detected even in epistemologically close disciplines, such as marketing and management, with abstracts in marketing including more introduction and methods moves and management texts focusing more extensively on conclusion (Li, Pramoolsook 2015). Phuong Dzung Pho's (2010) study of applied linguistics and educational technology abstracts, on the other hand, draws attention to specific linguistic features within the move. The findings of her study show that linguistic features vary more across moves than disciplines, and that the same move in two different disciplines often has similar distribution patterns of a certain linguistic feature (Pho 2010: 149).

The above-mentioned studies focus on research article abstracts in English and indeed the rhetorical structure of the English abstract has been extensively researched. However, there are still few studies analysing abstracts in other languages, especially from a cross-linguistic perspective. Pedro Martín-Martín's (2003) study of English and Spanish abstracts in experimental social sciences reveals important differences which are explained by the author as the result of different socio-cultural factors, such as different intellectual styles and cultural patterns as well as the influence of political, historical circumstances (2003: 42). Likewise, Giuliana Diani (2014), in her study of English and Italian research article abstracts in linguistics, observes cross-cultural variation in the structure of abstracts, with Italian abstracts being rhetorically less complex. This is explained by the author as a result of differences in intellectual styles and level of academic writing instruction. A contrastive move structure analysis of research article abstracts on management in English and Russian revealed that Russian abstracts are less rhetorically complex than abstracts in English (Zanina 2017). English authors also tend to provide more detailed indications of research methods and results in comparison to texts written by Russian scholars (2017: 63).

One of the important differences found in cross-linguistic research on abstracts is the expression of author voice. A comparison of French and English research article abstracts in linguistics (Van Bonn, Swales 2007) reveals different tendencies of voice choice, which are explained by general differences between the two languages. Personal pronoun use, sentence length and transition word selection, according to Sarah Van Bonn and John M. Swales, can be aligned with expectations as to what constitutes appropriate academic style (2007: 94). In the same vein, Rosa Lorés-Sanz's (2016) analysis of English and Spanish sociology abstracts refers to the differences in cultural traditions and concludes that in the Spanish academic culture the author's voice is less personal than in Anglophone cultures, where there is a much stronger tendency to project an individual voice rather than create a collective or an impersonal voice (Lorés-Sanz 2016: 152). A cross-linguistic comparison of abstracts written in English by Russian novice students and native English-speaking experts in geoscience (Belyakova 2017) revealed that Russian authors implemented the same rhetorical patterns as native English experts did. The author explains this by noting that Russian scholars are no longer isolated and have access to quality international journals, such that English academic standards have become more transparent for them since the 90s (2017: 40).

Cross-linguistic studies or studies of less researched languages are very important because they reflect on cultural differences in academic text construction, the role of writing instruction as well as broader issues that focus on the question of which features of academic discourse are universal and which are

specific to certain cultures. These studies can also reflect the change in the writing traditions or the influence of one writing culture on another. Therefore, more research is needed, especially with regard to less researched languages and languages belonging to different writing traditions.

The aim of the study is to identify key structural and linguistic features of research article abstracts in five disciplines of the humanities (philosophy, arts, history, linguistics and literature) in three languages: English, Lithuanian and Russian. To achieve this aim, the following objectives have been formulated: to compile a comparable corpus of research article abstracts of various disciplines of the humanities in Lithuanian, English and Russian and to perform a quantitative and qualitative analysis of rhetorical moves and steps (cf. Swales 1990).

To the best of my knowledge, there are no studies of research article abstract structure in the Lithuanian language, and studies on research article abstracts in Russian are very scarce. These are the above-mentioned research by Zanina (2017) and Grigoriev and Rubtsova (2021) on the abstract structure of English and Russian medical articles. The English language abstracts are selected as the medium of comparison to attempt to identify which writing tradition, the Anglo-Saxon (i.e. abstracts written in English) or the Continental (i.e. abstracts written in Russian), is closer to Lithuanian academic writing. The Anglo-Saxon (or Anglo-American) tradition of academic writing is characterised by dialogicality. As Anna Duszak notes, academic texts written within this tradition are believed to be more interactive and hence more reader friendly. Its distinctive features are reader guidance and discourse predictability through staging and signposting. The Continental (or Teutonic) tradition (e.g. German and Slavic languages), on the other hand, is more monological, with authors more concerned with reproducing their thought in the name of scientific truth, rather than with communicating it to the readers (Duszak, 1997: 13).

## 2. Data and methods

This study employs contrastive analysis and corpus-based methodology, which prove to be very successful in academic discourse investigations. Following the general principles of corpus compilation (McEnery, Wilson 2001) and the criteria for the compilation of specialised and comparable corpora (Bowker, Pearson 2002; Connor, Moreno 2005; Moreno 2008), the HUMLER<sup>1</sup> corpus was compiled from 450 research article abstracts in five main disciplines of the humanities (philosophy, arts, linguistics, literature, history) in Lithuanian, English and Russian. The corpus includes 30 abstracts from each discipline and language and its overall size is nearly 72,000 words (Table 1).

**Table 1.** The size and composition of the HUMLER corpus

	<b>English</b>	<b>Lithuanian</b>	<b>Russian</b>
	Number of words	Number of words	Number of words
<b>Philosophy</b>	4,933	4,180	5,210
<b>Arts</b>	4,378	3,991	3,759
<b>Linguistics</b>	5,341	4,091	4,715
<b>Literature</b>	4,955	4,268	5,031
<b>History</b>	6,145	4,182	6,702
<b>Total</b>	25,752	20,712	25,417

<sup>1</sup> The acronym is composed of ‘HUM’ for humanities and ‘LER’ for languages (‘L’ for Lithuanian, ‘E’ for English and ‘R’ for Russian).

The Lithuanian empirical data set was selected from research journals included in the *Lituanistika* database (<https://www.lituanistika.lt/en>), which ensures the high quality of publications by having them qualitatively assessed by experts from relevant science fields. The English and Russian empirical data sets were mainly compiled from high-level peer-reviewed research journals indexed in the Clarivate Analytics database. In order to avoid journal bias, two journals that do not impose strict requirements on the structure and content of the abstracts in their guidelines for the authors were selected as the basis for the pool of abstracts to be analysed in each discipline in the three languages with their publication spanning not longer than 10 years (2012–2021) (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Research journals included in the HUMLER corpus

Discipline	Research journals in Lithuanian	Research journals in English	Research journals in Russian
Philosophy	<i>Logos-Vilnius</i> <i>Problemos</i>	<i>Philosophical Quarterly</i> <i>Philosophical Explorations</i>	<i>Voprosy Filosofii</i> <i>Filosofskii Zhurnal</i>
Arts	<i>Acta Academiae Artium</i> <i>Vilnensis</i> <i>Menotyra</i>	<i>Art History</i> <i>Journal of the Royal Musical Association</i>	<i>Articult</i> <i>Muzykal'naya Akademiya</i>
Linguistics	<i>Taikomoji kalbotyra</i> <i>Acta Linguistica</i> <i>Lithuanica</i>	<i>Applied Linguistics</i> <i>English Language &amp; Linguistics</i>	<i>Vestnik Volgogradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta-Seriya 2-Yazykoznanie</i> <i>Voprosy Yazykoznanija</i>
Literature	<i>Colloquia</i> <i>Literatūra</i>	<i>Literature Compass</i> <i>Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction</i>	<i>Novyi Filologicheskii Vestnik-New Philological Bulletin</i> <i>Sibirskii Filologicheskii Zhurnal</i>
History	<i>Lietuvos istorijos studijos</i> <i>Acta Historica Universitatis Klaipedensis</i>	<i>Past &amp; Present</i> <i>Historical Journal</i>	<i>Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta-Istoriya</i> <i>Noveishaya Istoriya Rossii-Modern History of Russia</i>
Number of journals	10	10	10

Only single-authored abstracts of original research articles written mostly by native speakers were included in the corpus. The native speaker status was identified by the name and the affiliation of the author. In a few cases abstracts written by authors of non-British origin were included in the English dataset. However, in these cases the authors would have substantial work experience and / or education obtained in the UK, which allows them to be considered as having a near-native English speaker competence. Not more than one abstract written by the same scholar was selected for the corpus.

Instructions for authors of most selected journals specify a maximum or a minimum number of words / characters in the text of the abstract (on average, 150–200 words). An attempt was made to select abstracts of similar length though there are a few cases when the length of individual abstracts varies from 90 to 311 words.

The five-move model proposed by John M. Swales and Christine Feak (2009) was used for a pilot analysis of the rhetorical structure of abstracts, which was later supplemented with several moves and steps from Swales' CARS model (Swales 1990; 2004). The move is defined as a bounded communicative act that is intended to contribute to a single primary communicative goal. A move is a functional, not a grammatical term, and it can vary in length from a phrase to a paragraph (Swales, Feak 2009: 5). Despite the fact that CARS is a model based on the introductions of research articles, some of its moves and steps were detected in the analysis of abstracts. Table 3 below shows the framework of moves and steps used in this study.

**Table 3.** Move and step framework used for the analysis (adapted from Swales, Feak 2009: 5; Swales 1990: 141; 2004: 230, 232)

<b>Moves (in bold) and steps</b>	<b>Implied questions</b>
<b>Background / introduction / situation</b>  Claiming centrality Making topic generalisation(s) Reviewing items of previous research	What do we know about the topic? Why is the topic important?
<b>Establishing a niche</b>  Indicating a gap Counter-claiming	What is the gap in the study area? What in the previous studies is misguided?
<b>Present research / purpose</b>  Outlining purposes Announcing present research Presenting research questions or hypotheses Stating the value of the present research Outlining the structure of the paper	What is this study about?
<b>Announcing position<sup>2</sup></b>	What is the author's position towards the discussed phenomenon?
<b>Methods / materials / subjects / procedures</b>	How was it done?
<b>Results / findings</b>  Statement of findings Comparison of finding with literature <sup>3</sup>	What was discovered?
<b>Discussion / conclusion / implications / recommendations</b>	What do the findings mean?

In order to obtain more objective results, the reliability of the coding was confirmed by an inter-rater reliability test. The author of the article and an expert in the field of academic writing in English coded 10% of the whole set of abstracts in English independently following the coding scheme above. The inter-rater agreement Cohen's kappa coefficient at the level of moves was 0.69 (moderate agreement). Any discrepancies between the coders were discussed until a consensual agreement was reached. Then all abstracts were read and analysed manually as complete running texts several times to obtain quantitative and qualitative results of the structural analysis. Following Kanoksilapatham (2005), moves that are identified in 60% of the abstracts of a particular subcorpus are considered conventional in that discipline in each language.

The examples provided below are coded indicating the discipline, language and the abstract number.

### 3. Results and discussion

This section presents quantitative and qualitative results of the contrastive analysis conducted from cross-linguistic and cross-disciplinary perspectives.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Deividas Zibalas and Jolanta Šinkūnienė (2019).

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Martín-Martín (2003).

### 3.1. General frequencies

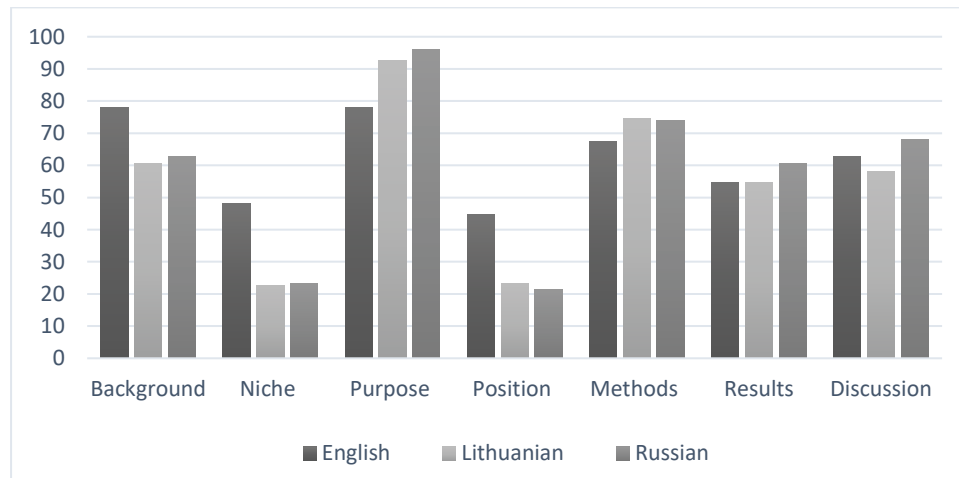
Table 4 indicates the raw numbers of abstracts in which a given move or step is identified at least once. The total number of steps as part of a particular move in the table often exceeds the number of abstracts in which a particular move is used, as a particular move can consist of several types of steps in the same abstract. The moves which turned out to be conventional are marked in bold.

**Table 4.** The distribution of moves and steps in abstracts (raw numbers)

Moves (in bold) and steps / Disciplines	English					Lithuanian					Russian				
	Phil.	Arts	Lin.	Lit.	His.	Phil.	Arts	Lin.	Lit.	His.	Phil.	Arts	Lin.	Lit.	His.
<b>Background</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	11	12	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	14	<b>25</b>	15
Claiming centrality	7	14	7	14	12	11	12	6	6	9	9	12	7	10	10
Making topic generalisation(s)	10	12	6	12	14	6	15	5	11	15	11	12	6	12	12
Reviewing items of previous research	<b>22</b>	7	14	10	13	15	10	3	7	11	12	4	5	9	0
<b>Establishing a niche</b>	15	11	14	12	<b>20</b>	6	6	2	11	9	8	9	4	6	8
Indicating a gap	4	4	6	7	10	2	6	2	8	7	2	5	1	4	6
Counter-claiming	13	8	10	5	13	5	1	0	4	2	7	5	3	2	3
<b>Purpose</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>28</b>
Outlining purposes	12	6	8	6	3	9	15	13	14	12	11	6	7	3	8
Announcing present research	20	23	25	24	21	25	25	24	23	21	26	28	30	29	28
Presenting research questions or hypotheses	1	2	2	2	1	7	6	3	5	3	7	1	4	0	0
Stating the value of the present research	2	1	6	1	2	0	3	1	0	2	0	4	2	1	4
Outlining the structure of the paper	12	4	4	6	4	7	1	1	3	1	3	2	2	0	1
<b>Announcing position</b>	<b>19</b>	15	11	13	9	<b>18</b>	6	1	6	4	12	6	1	8	5
<b>Methods</b>	10	<b>23</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	15	<b>25</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>	15	<b>19</b>	16	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Results</b>	6	14	<b>22</b>	16	<b>24</b>	17	11	<b>23</b>	<b>20</b>	11	<b>21</b>	11	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	14
Statement of findings	6	14	22	15	24	17	11	23	20	11	21	11	25	20	14
Comparison of finding with literature	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Discussion</b>	<b>22</b>	15	<b>20</b>	17	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	15	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	11	<b>21</b>	16	<b>19</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>21</b>

As can be seen from Table 4, all seven moves have been identified in the abstracts of the analysed humanities disciplines in all three languages. The employment of steps displays a greater variation with some of the steps occurring quite rarely or not at all. It should be noted that it is quite rare for a single abstract to contain all seven moves, and their combination and sequence could also be quite different from abstract to abstract. Not surprisingly, indicating the study **purpose** is the only move identified as a conventional move in all disciplines and all languages. It is interesting to note that this move was found in every single abstract of Russian linguists, whereas every single abstract of Lithuanian linguists employed a move discussing the methodology of the study. The other moves were used to a varying degree across the disciplines and languages, with the **Background**, **Methods** and **Discussion** moves being generally frequent in the three subcorpora. **Establishing a niche** seems to be rather important to British historians only, whereas **Announcing position** seems to be typical of the field of philosophy.

A general cross-linguistic comparison revealed both similarities and differences in the rhetorical structure of humanities research article abstracts. Figure 1 below shows that the Lithuanian and Russian abstracts have more structural similarities.



**Figure 1.** Distribution of moves in the three languages' subcorpora (%)

**Background**, **Establishing a niche**, **Announcing position** and **Methods** moves are used with almost the same frequency in Lithuanian and Russian subcorpora. It is interesting to note that the more promotional moves of **Establishing a niche** and **Announcing position** are markedly more frequent in English abstracts as is the move providing contextual background to the study. Explicitly announcing the purpose of the study is more commonly used by Lithuanian and Russian researchers, whereas the moves typical of research work (describing **methodology**, **results** and **discussion**) are employed in the three subcorpora with no marked difference. More detailed qualitative cross-linguistic analysis as well as some typical cross-disciplinary structural features of abstracts are discussed in the sections below.

### 3.2. Rhetorical structure of abstracts in the humanities: a cross-linguistic perspective

In this section I present the features of the rhetorical structure of abstracts from a cross-linguistic perspective, without going into much detail regarding the disciplinary aspects as this is the focus of Section 3.4. The results on the **Methods** move are also discussed in Section 3.4. as this move contains more disciplinary differences than linguistic ones.

#### 3.2.1. The Background move

The **Background** move is typically employed to introduce the context of the research, and / or to indicate the importance of the topic or the object of the study. The **Background** move can consist of three steps: **Claiming centrality**, **Making topic generalisation(s)**, and **Reviewing items of previous research**.

According to Swales (1990: 144), **Claiming centrality** is an appeal to the discourse community to accept that the research about to be reported is part of a lively, significant or well-established research area. Following Weihong Wang and Chengsong Yang (2015), I identified four ways to claim centrality as claiming the salience, magnitude, problematicity, and topicality of the reported research area.



**The appeal to salience** occurs frequently in abstracts across all disciplines and languages under consideration. As defined by the authors, “in an appeal to salience the importance or significance of a research topic or the importance, usefulness, or advantages of a key construct involved in the topic in either the research world or the real world is directly stated” (Wang, Yang 2015: 166). Typical examples of this type of **Claiming centrality** are given below.

- (1) *It does play an **important** role in an intuitionist theory offered by Bengson, Cuneo, and Shafer-Landau, <...>. (Phil EN 8)*
- (2) ***Bene svarbiausia** šio filosofavimo nuostata yra laikoma mąstymo subjekto ir objekto perskyros reliatyvumas. (Phil LT 27)*  
‘Perhaps the most important tenet of this philosophy is considered to be the relativity of the subject-object distinction of thought’.
- (3) *Для понимания развития и специфики философских концепций **важно** изучение межличностной, экзистенциальной коммуникации авторов внутри малых философских сообществ и групп. (Phil RU 2)*  
‘To understand the development and specificity of philosophical concepts, **it is important** to study the interpersonal, existential communication of authors within small philosophical communities and groups’.

In different disciplines and languages, very similar linguistic means of expressing salience are employed, including such adjectives as *central / important / significant* and their equivalents *centrinis / svarbus / reikšmingas* and *центральный / важный / значимый* in Lithuanian and Russian.

**The appeal to magnitude** was the second most frequent way to claim centrality in the analysed abstracts. It shows the prevalence or popularity of a research topic by indicating, for instance, the number of studies that have been conducted on it or researchers’ enduring interest in it, thus implying its significance and recognition while simultaneously, albeit indirectly, promoting the topic. Exact numbers, sizes, volumes, or years can add to the value of magnitude as well (Wang, Yang 2015: 166–167). This type of appeal also occurs in all languages and disciplines under analysis with the exception of English literature abstracts. Here are some typical examples:

- (4) *In recent times, there has been a **surge of interest** in, and **enthusiasm** for, contextualist views about prudential discourse – thought and talk about what has prudential value or contributes to someone’s well-being. (Phil EN 11)*
- (5) *Lietuvių kalba kaip svetimoji užsieniečiams komunikaciniais tikslais Lietuvoje **dėstoma jau nuo Nepriklausomybės** <...>. (Ling LT 17)*  
‘Lithuanian **has been taught** as a foreign language to foreigners for communicative purposes in Lithuania already **since the Independence** <...>.’
- (6) *Она относилась к числу **самых больших местных подразделений банка**, осуществлявших наиболее крупные кредитные операции в стране. (Hist RU 14)*  
‘It was **one of the largest local branches of the bank** carrying out the largest lending operations in the country.’

**The appeal to problematicity** relates to the problematic, controversial, difficult or challenging nature of the research topic or phenomenon (Wang, Yang 2015: 168). This type of **Claiming centrality** is much less frequent in the corpus than the previous two types, and can be exemplified with (7):

- (7) *Nevertheless, Bernini’s visual language **has become increasingly hard to read**. (Art EN 3)*

This type of appeal is found in all three languages, but not in all disciplines. It typically appears in linguistics and history in English and Lithuanian, and in literature in Russian.

**Appeal to topicality** relates to the newness or recency of the topic or phenomenon, suggesting that the research is likely to provide new knowledge in an under-researched or novel area (Wang, Yang 2015: 167). This is the least frequently used step across all three languages.

The second step of the **Background** move, **Making topic generalisations**, represents a more neutral kind of general statement than claiming centrality. This step can take a variety of forms, but it generally falls into two categories: **statements about knowledge or practice** (8), or **statements about phenomena** (9) (Swales 1990: 146):

- (8) *Global expressivism is the radical view that we should never think of any of our language and thought as representing the world.* (Phil EN 3)
- (9) *The birth metaphor is a biblical trope for joy following pain, and an established cultural reference to both divine and artistic creative impulses.* (Art EN 3)

Steps of the second category are found in the subcorpora of all languages and disciplines.

The **Reviewing items of previous research** step includes references to other researchers' work and can be both non-integral (10) and integral (11) or what Sally Jacoby (1987: 55) refers to as "summary", in which no particular researcher is mentioned (12) but rather reference is made to the general state of the previous research:

- (10) *Japanese language learners' proclivity for silence has been alluded to by various writers (e.g. Anderson 1993; Korst 1997; Greer 2000) and is supported by plenty of anecdotal evidence, <...>* (Ling EN 28)
- (11) *Pasak Thomo Stearnso Elioto, „nebrandūs poetai mėgdžioja; brandūs poetai vagia; blogi poetai pasiduoda tam, ką perima, o geri poetai paverčia tai kažkuo geresniu arba bent kažkuo kitokiu“.* (Lit LT 13)  
'According to Thomas Stearns Eliot, 'Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different.'
- (12) *<...> которое в западной литературе названо «этикой после Аушвица», <...>.* (Phil RU 19)  
'<...> which has been called "post-Auschwitz ethics" in Western literature, <...>.'

**Reviewing items of previous research** can be found in virtually all abstracts irrespective of language and discipline.

In general, the **Background** move in the entire corpus is more often found either at the very beginning or in the first part of the abstracts. Often this move is divided into steps, which can be separated from each other and intertwined with other moves. There were some cases when certain steps of the **Background** move were also found at the end of the abstract, but such cases were rare.

### 3.2.2. Establishing a niche move

The **Establishing a niche** move is employed by authors in order to point out possible topics or areas that still need research in relation to previous works (Martín-Martín 2003: 34). Two steps were identified in the data: **Indicating a gap** and **Counter-claiming**. According to Swales, in the **Indicating a gap** step the author does not counter-claim that the previous work is misguided, but indicates that it 'suffers from some limitations' (1990: 154):

- (13) <...> **but** *there is still little linguistic evidence of its impact on the actual value system of academic institutions.* (Ling EN 11)
- (14) <...> **tačiau** *nuoseklių ir išsamių tyrimų apie jos įsisavinimo raidą nėra.* (Ling LT 17)  
'<...> **however, there are no** consistent and comprehensive **studies** on the evolution of its uptake.'
- (15) *Актуальность статьи обусловлена недостаточной изученностью творчества колониальных художников эпохи барокко.* (Art RU 4)  
'The relevance of the article stems from the **insufficient study** of the work of Baroque colonial artists.'

The same contrasting conjunctions in all three languages (*however/but, tačiau, однако*) are typical indicators of this step.

**The Counter-claiming** step takes the form of counter-claims, counter-assertions and counter-arguments, critical judgments, and negative value judgments in relation to previous research. This way of establishing the niche is much more argumentative and rhetorically stronger than **Indicating the gap**. Here are some typical rhetorical correspondences in the three languages:

- (16) *This essay challenges the received account of montage practice in the later career of George Grosz as the recovery of his dada identity and anticipation of pop art.* (Art EN 2)
- (17) *Straipsnyje kviečiama persvarstyti šią prielaidą <...>.* (Hist LT 7)  
'In the paper, **it is invited to reconsider this assumption** <...>.'
- (18) *В статье опровергается общепринятое мнение о существенном влиянии на русскую философию XIX–XX вв. системы Гегеля, доказываемся, что на деле большее значение имело позднее религиозно-философское учение Фихте.* (Phil EN 1)  
'In the article **the generally accepted opinion** that Russian philosophy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was strongly influenced by the system of Hegel **is refuted** and the later religious-philosophical doctrine of Fichte **has been proven to** be of greater importance.'

Using this step, the authors reject and challenge previous views and claims or propose alternatives to the existing views and approaches.

**Establishing a niche** move occurs in the abstracts in all three languages albeit with varying frequency (Table 4). It is much more frequently manifested in the British abstracts and to a similarly lesser degree in Lithuanian and Russian research writing. In the English abstracts the **Counter-claiming** step is typically used to establish the niche, especially in Philosophy and History, adding considerable discursive power to the abstract:

- (19) *Many philosophers display relaxed scepticism about the Doctrine of Doing and Allowing (DDA) and the Doctrine of Double Effect (DDE), suspecting, without great alarm, that one or both of these Doctrines is indefensible. This relaxed scepticism is misplaced.* (Phil EN 18)
- (20) *Existing literature on federalism in twentieth-century Africa fails to place regional projects in dialogue, studying in isolation East Africa and Central Africa, 'utopian' and oppressive regionalisms. But such clear dividing lines were not articulated in the four discursive 'sketches' of East and Central Africa.* (Hist EN 4)

### 3.2.3. The Purpose move

The **Purpose** move is the most frequently used move in the three languages under consideration (see Table 4) as around 90% of all abstracts employ it. This move can consist of five steps: **Outlining purposes**, **Announcing present research**, **Presenting research questions or hypotheses**, **Stating value of the present research**, and **Outlining the structure of the paper**.

The **Outlining purposes** step is used by authors to straightforwardly indicate the purpose(s) of their articles. Although not the most frequent step within the **Purpose** move in the analysed data set, it is fairly popular in the abstracts of all three languages. The linguistic structures used to indicate this step are rather uniform in the three languages. English authors typically use these structures:

- *In this paper / article, I aim / seek to* + verb.
- *This paper / article sets out to / seeks to / aims to* + verb.
- *The (main) goal / (overarching) aim of this article / the paper is to* + verb.
- *In order to* + verb.

The most common verbs in these constructions are *identify*, *explore*, *examine*, *investigate*, *demonstrate*, *interpret*, *uncover* and *characterise*.

The typical Lithuanian formulation of this step is similar:

- *(Šiame) straipsnyje mėginama / bandoma / siekiama / keliamas tikslas* ‘(In this) article it is attempted / tried / intended to / aimed to’ + verb.
- *Šio straipsnio tikslas yra (–)* ‘The purpose of this article is’ + verb.
- *Siekiant / siekiama* ‘Aiming / intended to’ + verb.

The most frequently employed verbs are *išanalizuoti* ‘analyse’, *išsiaiškinti* ‘ascertain’, *nustatyti* ‘determine’, *įvertinti* ‘evaluate’, *atskleisti* ‘disclose’, *apibrėžti* ‘define’, *parodyti* ‘show’, *pagrįsti* ‘justify’ and *patikslinti* ‘specify’.

In the Russian abstracts, the purpose of the article is most frequently formulated in the following ways:

- *В (данной) статье делается / предпринимается попытка* ‘The (present) article attempts to’ + verb
- *Целью (данной) статьи является* ‘The purpose of (this) article is’ + noun.
- *Цель проведенного / настоящего исследования –* ‘The purpose of the conducted / present study is to’ + verb.

In addition to the noun *статья* ‘article’, the authors synonymously use such words as *исследование* ‘research’, and *работа* ‘work’, whereas the most frequent verbs include *выявить* ‘identify’, *обнаружить* ‘detect’, *установить* ‘identify’, *рассмотреть* ‘review’, *пересмотреть* ‘reconsider’, *выделить* ‘distinguish’, *охарактеризовать* ‘characterise’ and *реконструировать* ‘reconstruct’.

The difference between this step and the seemingly similar **Announcing present research** step is that the former emphasizes the research intent, whereas the latter focuses on its implementation / achievement of the result. The **Announcing present research** step is the most common and widely used step in the abstracts of all analysed languages and disciplines. According to Swales (1990: 159), using this step the author describes what he / she considers to be the main features of his / her research. Common linguistic structures employed for this step include the use of the personal pronoun *I*, the use of the impersonal ‘the author’, passive constructions, and inanimate subjects with active verbs.

- (21) *In this paper, I present new support for this pluralistic form of intuitionism* <...>. (Phil EN 8)
- (22) *Автор показывает особенность понимания этого различия в русском языке в отличие от языков европейских* <...>. (Phil RU 14)  
'**The author shows** the peculiarity of understanding this distinction in Russian as opposed to European languages <...>.'
- (23) *Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas Jurgio Kunčino romane Tūla sukurtas Vilniaus vaizdinys*, <...>. (Lit LT 12)  
'**In the article** the image of Vilnius created by Jurgis Kunčinas in his novel Tūla **is examined** <...>.'
- (24) *The article explores the extent to which these creative practices reflect the creativity identified in spoken and online interaction* <...>. (Ling EN 27)

The main difference in the formulation of this step is that British authors do not try to avoid the use of the personal pronoun *I* or inanimate subjects with active verbs, whereas Lithuanian and Russian scholars prefer impersonal or passive constructions. A common feature of this step is the use of similar verbs (e.g. *identify* and *explore*) just like for the **Outlining purposes** step.

Much less frequent but still visible in the subcorpora of all three languages was the **Presenting research questions or hypothesis** step. This step is carried out in a similar way in all three languages with such typical formulations, as in (25)–(30):

- (25) *I ask why* <...>. (Art EN 23)
- (26) <...> *the hypothesis is advanced that* <...>. (Ling EN 12)
- (27) <...> *gilinamasi į klausimą, ar* <...>. (Phil LT 11)  
'<...> delves into **the question of whether** <...>.'
- (28) <patvirtina> *hipotezę, kad* <...>. (Ling LT 20)  
'<confirms> **the hypothesis that** <...>.'
- (29) *Основной вопрос, который ставится в статье, состоит в том* <...>. (Ling RU 25)  
'The main **question** posed by the article **is** <...>.'
- (30) <...> *выдвигает гипотезу о том, что* <...>. (Phil RU 26)  
'<...> puts forward **the hypothesis that** <...>.'

Interestingly, Lithuanian and Russian abstracts displayed frequent cases of presumption formulation, as in the following examples:

- (31) <...> *keliama prielaida, kad* <...>. (Art LT 5)  
'<...> it is **presumed that** <...>.'
- (32) *Высказывается предположение, что* <...>. (Phil RU 16)  
'<...> it is **presumed that** <...>.'

In the English abstracts such formulations were not found. Presumably, this is due to a tendency of British researchers to be more inclined either to articulate hypotheses or to express their position straightforwardly in their abstracts.

The **Stating the value of the present research** step was equally infrequent in all three subcorpora, presumably due to the limited space of the abstract. It could also be the case that **Stating the value of the present research** is more typical to research article introductions, even though in introductions this step is considered by Swales (2004) to be optional.

The final step in the **Purpose** move is **Outlining the structure of the paper**. This step is more typical of the English language abstracts, but apart from frequency there are no significant differences in the way this step is employed as seen in the following examples:

- (33) *Part I* contextualizes this argument and argues for an understanding of forgiveness through emotion. *Part II* offers an overview of the field of forgiveness scholarship and explores its relevance for nineteenth-century debate on the topic. *Part III* offers a way into thinking forgiveness as sound and rhythm in Wordsworth's poem 'Airey-Force Valley' (Lit EN 23)
- (34) *В первой части* анализируются проблемы современных либертарианских теорий <...>. (Phil RU 7)  
'In **Part I** the problems of contemporary libertarian theories are analysed <...>.'

#### 3.2.4. Announcing Position move

This move exhibits a very overt and straightforward position of the author towards the discussed phenomenon (Zibalas, Šinkūnienė 2019: 106). **Announcing position** is more frequent in the English data, which is perhaps unsurprising considering the promotional nature typically attributed to Anglo-American discourse. Some examples of this move in the three languages are presented in (35)–(38).

- (35) *I argue that there are two ways of understanding this link, and while one has recently been the target of criticism, the other withstands such criticism.* (Phil EN 5)
- (36) *The article argues that revolutionary situations are best understood through concepts of liminal time, and that the winter of 2011, rather than the initial stage of the Tahrir Square sit-in in January–February, represented the crucial phase of the revolutionary process in Egypt.* (Hist EN 8)
- (37) *Teigiama, jog šiuo pagrindu Pėdų tekstuose formuojami betarpiškai regimi ženkliski objektai, nurodantys į numanomą kultūros atminties fragmentus.* (Lit LT 1)  
'It is argued that this is the basis for the formation of immediately visible sign objects in the texts of the Footsteps, which point to fragments of an implied cultural memory.'
- (38) *Автор статьи утверждает, что из однозначной трактовки хтонической, чувственной, а значит, аморальной женщины на экране этот образ трансформировался в реальную женщину с четкой жизненной позицией.* (Art RU 13)  
'The author of the article argues that from an unambiguous portrayal of a chthonic, sensual and therefore immoral woman on the screen, this image has been transformed into a real woman with a clear life stance.'

As in the case in the **Announcing present research** step, British authors tend to use *I* as self-representation or an inanimate subject with an active verb, as demonstrated in (35)–(36). This way of expressing the position is not characteristic of the Lithuanian and Russian academic writing tradition where passive voice constructions are common (as in (37)). This constitutes a similarity between the Lithuanian and Russian academic writing traditions and one of their most striking differences from the British tradition. Another important cross-linguistic aspect to note is that **Announcing position** constructions such as (38), in which the author refers to himself in the third person, occur only in Russian abstracts.

#### 3.2.5. The Results and Discussion moves

The moves of **Results** and **Discussion** are both frequent in the abstracts of all three languages. The **Results** move consists of two steps: **Statement of findings** and **Comparison of findings with literature**. Only the first step is common in the analysed data, accounting nearly fully for the frequency

of the **Results** move. Comparisons of findings with literature are extremely rare in the abstracts in all three languages.

The **Statement of findings** step is again formulated nearly identically in all three languages, as in (39)–(41):

(39) *The results of the investigation reveal gender-differentiated patterns in general extender use, and indicate that productive variants are differentially affected by processes collectively associated with grammaticalization.* (Ling EN 30)

(40) *Duomenų analizė atskleidė, kad trečiųjų metų pradžioje tirti vaikai jau taisyklingai vartojo daugelį tirtų mandagumo šnekos aktų.* (Ling LT 30)

‘**The analysis of the data revealed that** by the beginning of the third year, the children in the study were already using many of the studied politeness speech acts correctly.’

(41) *Выявлено, что негативный прогноз нередко строится на основе смешения факта и прогностической версии.* (Ling RU 1)

‘**It is revealed that** a negative prognosis is often based on a mix of fact and prognostic version.’

In many cases, similar lexical items are used in all three languages, such as the identical verbs (e.g. *atskleisti / parodyti* in Lithuanian, *выявить / показать* in Russian, and *reveal / show* in English) in the past and present tense form. The passive voice is also used in all three languages.

Only one particular feature stands out in the English abstracts, and that is the use of *I* when an author presents their results, as in (42):

(42) *And, as I explain, there is a good case that facts and claims about morality do entail facts and claims about irreducibly normative second-personal reasons.* (Phil EN 6)

As has been observed before, this feature is typical only of abstracts written by British researchers.

In the **Discussion** move, authors draw conclusions regarding their research and discuss the results and their potential application, significance and implications. The **Discussion** move is a frequent move in all three subcorpora of abstracts and is signalled by similar devices in all three languages, such as *thus*, *to conclude*, *in conclusion* and their equivalents in Lithuanian and Russian.

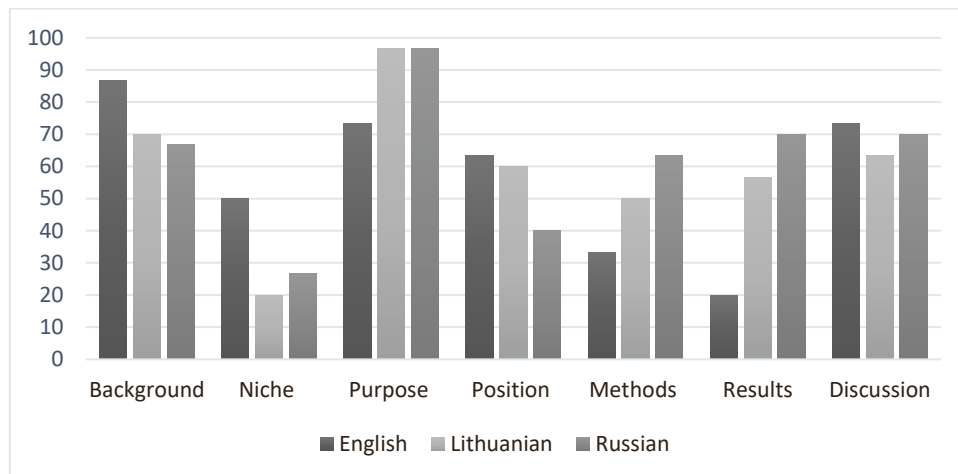
### 3.3. Structural features of abstracts in different disciplines

This section shows rhetorical features of abstracts characteristic of individual disciplines. Different sub-sections are dedicated to presenting the analysis results for each discipline separately.

#### 3.3.1. Structural features of abstracts in philosophy

In the rhetorical structure of philosophy abstracts, **Background**, **Purpose** and **Discussion** moves are the conventional ones irrespective of the cultural background of the authors (consider Figure 2).

In the **Background** move, reviewing items of previous research seems to be quite important with as many as 22 abstracts in English, 15 abstracts in Lithuanian and 12 abstracts in Russian using this step to provide contextual references for the readers (see Table 4). The claiming centrality step was not frequent, which suggests that philosophers rely on insider knowledge of the readers regarding the relevance of the topics discussed in the articles. On the other hand, the analysis revealed a strong promotional aspect in the discourse of philosophy in the tendency to point to a **niche** and especially in **Announcing position**.



**Figure 2.** Distribution of moves in the **philosophy** subcorpora (%)

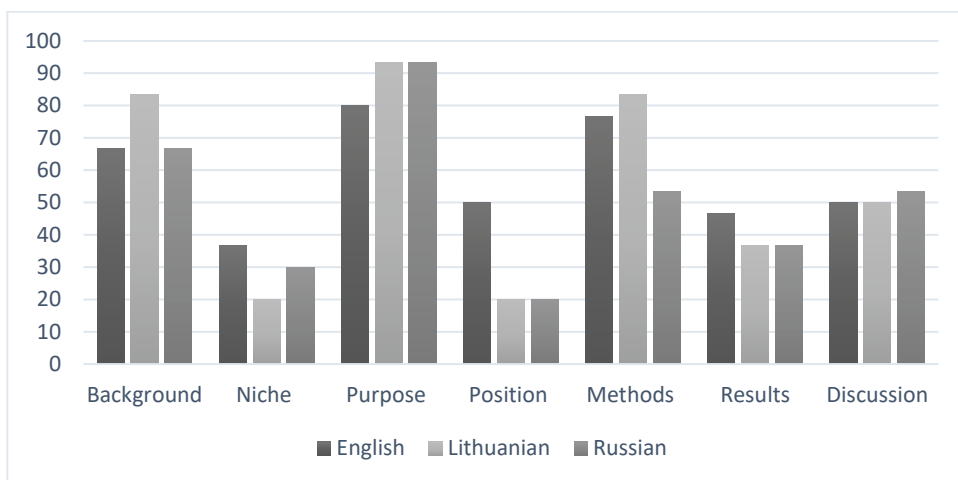
The **Methods** move in philosophy abstracts is more likely to outline the approach taken or methodology used in the study as in the following examples:

- (43) *I give a **biological account** of epistemic normativity.* (Phil EN 19)
- (44) ***Pasitelkus S. Fruedo išskirtas vaiko raidos **psichoseksualines pakopas**, <...>. (Phil LT 3)***  
 ‘**Using Frued’s psychosexual stages** of child development, <...>.’
- (45) *<...> **с точки зрения дистальной теории референции.** (Phil RU 25)*  
 ‘<...> **from a distal referential theory perspective.**’

The **Results** and the **Discussion** moves are presented similarly to other disciplines.

### 3.3.2. Structural features of abstracts in arts

The rhetorical structure of arts abstracts, irrespective of the cultural background of the authors, contains the conventional **Background** and **Purpose** moves (Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Distribution of moves in the **arts** subcorpora (%)



A quantitative comparison of the structure of the arts abstracts (see Figure 3) reveals similar trends in the use of **Purpose**, **Announcing position**, and **Results** moves in the abstracts in Lithuanian and Russian.

**Claiming centrality** and **Making topic generalisation(s)** steps are used in more than half of the abstracts containing the **Background** move in all three languages. These steps introduce the readers to the topic of the article and emphasise its importance (Table 4).

It is notable that the frequency of the **Methods** move in abstracts written by Lithuanian and British arts scholars is very similar, indicating disciplinary similarities within Lithuanian and British academic writing traditions in arts discipline.

The **Background** move is more often used by Lithuanian arts scholars. In some cases, in Lithuanian the **Appeal to salience (Claiming centrality)** step is additionally boosted by intensifiers, such as (*ypač / itin svarbus, reikšmingas* ‘(especially / extremely) important, significant’, which further emphasise the importance of the research topic. As Wang and Yang point out, the **Appeal to salience** is accomplished by capitalizing on linguistic devices that convey inscribed attitudes towards topic significance, the degree of which can be amplified through lexical graduation and / or syntactic means (Wang, Yang 2015: 166). Such cases could also be observed in abstracts of arts in Lithuanian: *darė įtaką ne tik <...>, bet ir <...>* ‘having an impact not only <...> but also <...>’.

An interesting feature of the **Purpose** move in abstracts on arts (as well as in the literary abstracts discussed below) in English is a fairly common use of the abstract referent *This essay*:

(46) *This essay examines the use of Olmec colossal heads <...>*. (Art EN 9)

The use of this abstract referent in these disciplines seems to be non-accidental since in both arts and literary studies the object of research is creative work. The evaluation and interpretation of such an object is inevitably influenced by a certain subjectivity on behalf of the researcher, and the genre of essay is often associated with a personal point of view of the author.

Below are examples of **Methods** move from the three languages:

(47) *Focusing on four key paintings, Chato Presence (1982), Night and the Olmec (1983), Chato III (1984) and Hymn to the Sun IV (1984), <...>* (Art EN 9)

(48) *Tyrimo objektu pasirinktos kinų medžio graviūros <...>*. (Art LT 1)  
‘The object of study chosen is **Chinese woodblock prints <...>**.’

(49) *<...> в фильме Г.В. Пабста «Дневник падшей» (1929)*. (Art RU 13)  
‘<...> in G. W. Pabst’s film ‘**Diary of a Fallen Woman (1929)**.’

In this move, the abstracts on arts contain descriptions of methods and approaches, but more often, there is a reference to the materials of research. This is probably not a coincidence since a work of art is both the object and the material of study in the discipline.

### 3.3.3. Structural features of abstracts in linguistics

In the rhetorical structure of linguistics abstracts, **Purpose**, **Methods**, **Results** and **Discussion** moves are the conventional ones irrespective of the cultural background of the authors (consider Figure 4).

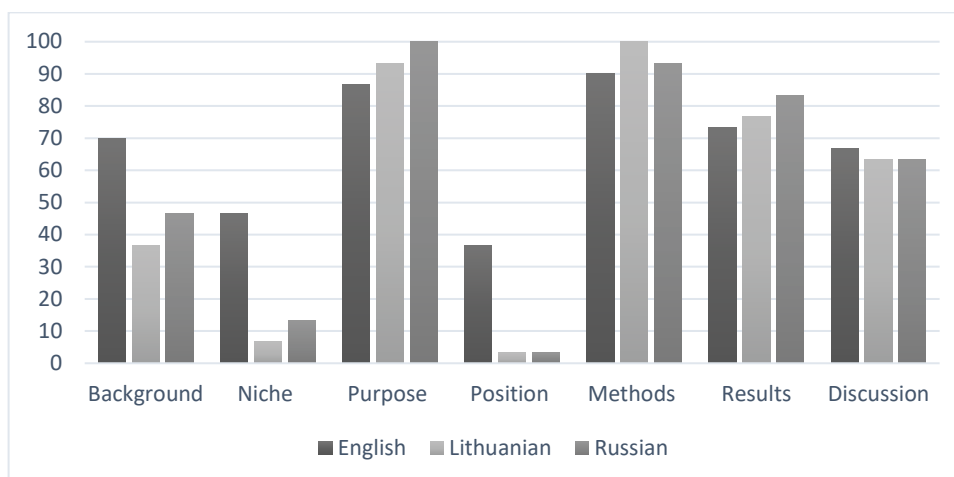


Figure 4. Distribution of moves in the **linguistics** subcorpora (%)

In the **Purpose** move, the use of the **Announcing present research** step is dominant: 25 abstracts in English, 24 abstracts in Lithuanian and 30 abstracts in Russian use this step to provide information about the article for the readers (see also Table 4).

A quantitative comparison of the structure of the linguistics abstracts reveals similar trends in the use of **Establishing a niche** and **Announcing position** moves in Lithuanian and Russian abstracts. Figure 4 shows that the very low percentage of the use of these moves in these languages' subcorpora contrasts strongly with the English subcorpora.

In the **Background** move, the **Claiming centrality** step, such as the **Appeal to problematycity**, is characteristic only of linguistic abstracts in English and Lithuanian:

(50) *Debate continues over what was spoken in Britain before, during and after it was settled by the Anglo-Saxons in the middle of the first millennium ad.* (Ling EN 6)

(51) *Daiktavardžio giminės atpažinimas mokantis svetimosis kalbos dažnai tampa sudėtinga užduotimi.* (Ling LT 23)  
'Recognising the gender of a noun when learning a foreign language is often a difficult task.'

The **Stating the value of the present research** step occurs most often in linguistic abstracts in English, and it typically emphasises the contribution to science in the form of a supporting hypothesis/theory/methodology:

(52) *As a contribution to the ongoing debate, <...>* (Ling EN 11)

(53) *<...> it lends weight to the hypothesis that <...>* (Ling EN 17)

In the **Methods** move, the quantitative ratio of references to methods, materials, subjects and procedures differs to some extent between languages. British authors more often mention research methods or framework, whereas Russian authors more often tend to emphasise research materials. In Lithuanian abstracts, this move contains a similar number of materials and methods mentions.

The **Results** move in English and Lithuanian abstracts is implemented not only by the **Statement of findings** step, but in some cases also by the **Comparison of finding with literature** step, which indicates both a distinctive disciplinary feature and yet another similarity between English and Lithuanian traditions of academic writing in this discipline.

### 3.3.4. Structural features of abstracts in literature

In the literary abstracts, **Purpose** and **Methods** are the conventional rhetorical moves regardless of the authors' cultural background (see Figure 5).

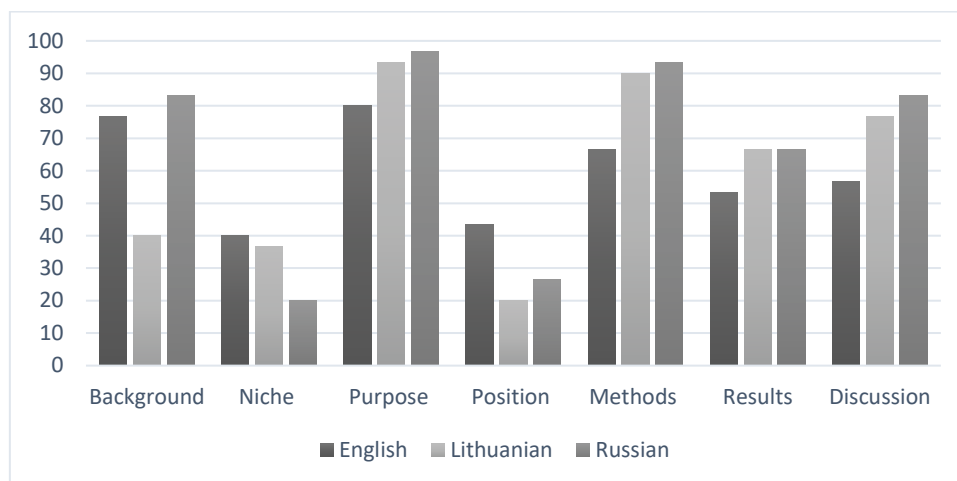


Figure 5. Distribution of moves in the **literature** subcorpora (%)

In the **Purpose** move, the use of the **Announcing present research** step is dominant: 24 abstracts in English, 23 abstracts in Lithuanian and 29 abstracts in Russian use this step to provide information about article for the readers (Table 4).

A quantitative comparison of literary abstract structure elements (as indicated in Figure 5) reveals similar trends in the use of 4 out of 7 moves in Lithuanian and Russian abstracts (**Purpose**, **Announcing position**, **Methods** and **Discussion** moves) in comparison to abstracts in English.

The **Announcing position** move is the least frequently used move in Lithuanian literary abstracts, which suggests that Lithuanian authors are the least likely to state their position straightforwardly. Remarkably, they are almost half as likely to use the **Background** move in their abstract structure compared to authors writing in the other two languages. The only more obvious similarity between Lithuanian and English is observed in the frequency of the **Establishing a niche** move.

There are some cases in Lithuanian when the **Background** move appears as the **Appeal to salience** step through lexical graduation and/or syntactic means, which emphasises the importance of the topic: *išskirtinis ne tik <...>, bet ir <...>* 'remarkable not only for <...>, but above all for <...>'. In Russian abstracts, importance is sometimes emphasised by the use of an adjective in the superlative degree: *важнейший* 'most important'. In the **Background** move, the **Claiming centrality** step, such as the **Appeal to problematycity**, is characteristic of literary abstracts only in Russian:

- (54) <...> *чрезвычайная повествовательная экономность которой затрудняет традиционные литературоведческие подходы к реконструкции ее мотивной, интертекстуальной поэтики, а также жанровой природы.* (Lit RU 28)

'<...> the extreme narrative economy of which **complicates traditional literary approaches to the reconstruction** of its motive, intertextual poetics, as well as its genre nature.'

An interesting feature of the **Purpose** move in abstracts on literature in English (as was mentioned before in the analysis of arts abstracts) is the use of the abstract referent *This essay*.

As in the abstracts on arts, abstracts on literature using the **Methods** move more often refer to the materials of research than to methods or approaches, probably since the object and the material of research is a literary work.

### 3.3.5. Structural features of abstracts in history

Only the **Purpose** move is conventional regardless of the authors' cultural background in the history abstracts (as demonstrated in Figure 5).

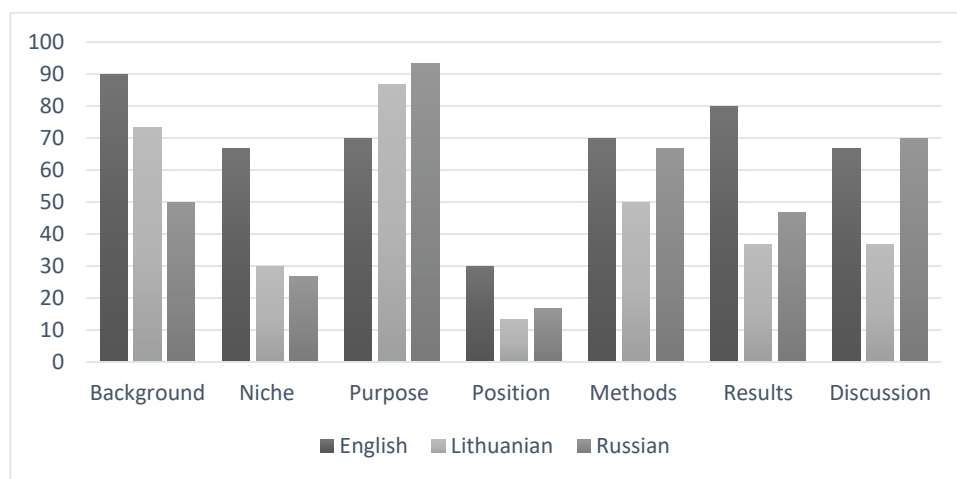


Figure 6. Distribution of moves in the **history** subcorpora (%)

In the **Purpose** move, as in other disciplines, the use of the **Announcing present research** step is dominant: 21 abstracts in English, 21 abstracts in Lithuanian and 28 abstracts in Russian use this step (Table 4).

A quantitative comparison of abstracts in history reveals similar trends in the frequencies of the use of **Establishing a niche** and **Announcing position** moves in Lithuanian and Russian abstracts (see Figure 6), but there is no close quantitative similarity in move and step frequency of abstracts in Lithuanian and English.

A specific feature typical to **Background** move in Russian abstracts is that in some cases the **Appeal to salience** is signalled by the same lexical means described in subsection 3.2.1, but with additional intensifiers *чрезвычайно важный* 'crucially important'. In this way, the importance of the research topic is further emphasised. The **Appeal to problematicity** is characteristic in history abstracts in English and Lithuanian:

(55) <...> *the perennial debate* <over the origins and nature of female power> (Hist EN 27)

(56) *Didžiojo Šiaurės karo (1700–1721 m.) išvakarėse didikų grupuočių kova Lietuvoje ėmė įgauti itin radikalias formas, peraugusias rutininės politinės konkurencijos ribas. Vis dažniau buvo griebiamasi atviros prievartos, ypač vykstant seimeliams.* (Hist LT 14)  
'On the eve of the Great Northern War (1700–1721), the struggle of the noble groups in Lithuania began to take on very radical forms that went beyond the limits of routine political competition. Open violence was increasingly common, especially in the context of sejmiks.'

Thus, for Russian abstracts on history it is more common to emphasise the importance of the topic, while Lithuanian and English abstracts tend to highlight the problematic, controversial, difficult or challenging nature of the topic or phenomenon under consideration.

Below are typical examples of the **Methods** move from the three languages:

- (57) <...> **through comparing** the subject matter of appeals **and mapping** the distribution of cases within Scotland, <...> <article demonstrates>. (Hist EN 28)
- (58) *Tyrimas atliekamas remiantis sovietų saugumo dokumentais, saugomais valstybiname Ukrainos saugumo tarnybos archyve.* (Hist LT 13)  
'The research is **based on Soviet security documents held in the State Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine.**'
- (59) <...> *на основе архивных документов Государственного архива Приморского края* <...>. (Hist RU 3)  
'<...> **based on the archival documents** of the State Archive of Primorsky Krai <...>.'

In this move, materials (often archival) are more frequently mentioned than methods or approaches in Lithuanian and Russian, whereas in English abstracts there are frequent references to methods and approaches.

#### 4. Concluding observations

The focus of this study was on the rhetorical structure of research article abstracts in various disciplines in the humanities in Lithuanian, English and Russian. The results show that in all humanities disciplines in the three languages the abstract structure is based on the seven-move model – **Background, Establishing a niche, Purpose, Announcing position, Methods, Results** and **Discussion**. However, it is rare to find the complete set of moves in a single abstract. The frequency and sequence of moves and steps in abstracts are not strictly fixed. Nonetheless, one move, the **Purpose** move, has been identified as the conventional move in the abstracts irrespective of the discipline and language. This is indicative of the importance authors of research article abstracts place on the overall focus and aim of the research they present.

Other moves deemed as conventional were distributed slightly differently depending on the discipline. Abstracts of linguistics displayed most similarity in the structural moves employed in all three languages as the **Methods, Results**, and **Discussion** moves were identified as conventional alongside the above-mentioned **Purpose** move. In abstracts of philosophy, it was the **Background** and **Discussion** moves that were conventional in the three languages. Abstracts of arts shared the **Background** move as conventional, whereas in abstracts of literature it was the **Methods** move. Finally, in the history abstracts, only the above-mentioned **Purpose** move was conventional in all three languages. These results highlight the importance of specific information that is deemed crucial by different disciplinary communities. Linguistics is highly method-oriented as different results could be obtained depending on the methodology used. Philosophy is based on argumentation of ideas, and background plays a significant role in laying out the context for the arguments; therefore the **Background** and **Discussion** moves hold significant importance. As the **Methods** move also involves the description of the material analysed, this aspect seems to be very important for the literary scholars, as is providing background to the study for the arts researchers. Finally, the historical research could be quite varied depending on the cultural context and tradition, which could be the reason why the only conventional move in the abstracts of this discipline was the **Purpose** move. All these aspects show that disciplines, which are considered quite close epistemologically and belong to the same science field, can be quite distinct in their traditions.

The cross-linguistic analysis shows that Lithuanian abstracts generally have more similarities with Russian abstracts than with English abstracts; hence, there seems to be a closer link of Lithuanian

rhetorical traditions with the Continental writing tradition rather than the Anglo-Saxon writing tradition. This is perhaps unsurprising given the close historical and geographical proximity of the Russian and Lithuanian cultures. This is manifested in a number of moves and steps, which are closer in frequency in Russian and Lithuanian datasets in comparison with the English abstracts. Especially the Russian and Lithuanian scholars seem to be much less promotional than their English-speaking colleagues in the humanities as manifested in the much rarer used **Establishing a niche** and **Announcing position** moves. This also closely correlates with the promotional use of the first-person pronoun *I*, which is typical of abstracts written in English, but is avoided in abstracts in both Russian and Lithuanian where the authors would typically choose the impersonal and passive structures. This is in line with previous research on personal pronoun use in Lithuanian and Russian academic discourse (see, for example, Šinkūnienė 2018, Vassileva 1998) and general trends in European and Asian academic discourse (Mur-Dueñas, Šinkūnienė 2016).

A specific feature more typical of Russian academic discourse is the use of the word “author” which the scholars use to refer to themselves. Another common structure observed in English abstracts is the use of inanimate subjects with active verbs, which is not typically employed by Russian and Lithuanian researchers.

Apart from these obvious differences, there are quite many cross-linguistic similarities in how specific moves and steps are signalled linguistically. They include a nearly identical linguistic repertoire in all three languages to indicate the niche, outline the purpose or present research questions and hypothesis.

The results of this study are novel as they define the key features of a significant promotional genre, which has not been previously investigated in Lithuanian scientific writing. The comparison of Lithuanian research article abstracts with those of English and Russian research articles supplements cross-linguistic studies of scientific discourse worldwide. This contrastive analysis highlights aspects of abstract writing, which may be relevant for researchers while preparing abstracts of their research articles in these three languages as well as to novice writers and students who attempt to master the structure and typical disciplinary linguistic features of this compact yet very important genre. The results can also be useful to teachers of academic writing as they can be inspired to compile their own corpora of research article abstracts to show authentic examples to students in various disciplines, as well as to translators who could advise the authors on cross-cultural differences in academic text construction.

This study can be further extended to examine in more detail the specific linguistic elements used to build the relationship with the reader and to express author stance. It would also be interesting to study humanities abstracts in more under-researched languages, such as, for example, Latvian or Estonian, which are close to Lithuanian and Russian in the geographical and historical sense, but which also have a significant influence of English in the modern times. All these studies can contribute to the general knowledge of how academic discourse is constructed and how universal or individual it can be.

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Submitted January 2023

Accepted June 2023