n both textual and interview data, and interpretive analysis. The writneshe 1997 issues of ten journals in ,000 words. The interview data were ants I discussed in the Preface. My sof the abstracts and to search for the writer's purpose by strengthing disciplinary membership (what tatus'). I then discussed these with

in Chapter 7, but because my analyes of discourse than concordancing
out the procedure more fully here.
camining each abstract several times
of the abstracts and to identify recurrabstract moves discussed above was
mework. I then marked the moves
ctive if rather labour-intensive and
reliability, the specialist informants
ions in several of the abstracts from
ndently carried out an analysis of 10
from the corpus. A cross-check with
in 84 per cent of cases.

locate 'membershipping' features. itted to the Conference on College elpful in compiling a list of features fatus. He identified a range of traits ed words or expressions, and occaed to the success of accepted papers linary ethos. I therefore scanned the methods by which writers demontaken scriously by readers. I also fat could be used to offer persuasive which advocated claims by asserting their frequencies between disciplines is of 240 abstracts from the same disdiscussed the findings with the their own abstract reading and writ-

# A MOVE-STRUCTURE CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACTS

I first divided the abstracts into a series of communicative categories, or moves, representing the realisation of a specific overall communicative purpose (Swales, 1990, offers a detailed discussion). As I noted above, previous analyses of abstracts have identified a rhetorical macrostructure broadly corresponding to the organisation of the paper itself: Introduction–Methods–Results–Conclusion (e.g. Bhatia, 1993; Brenton, 1996). These four elements are occasionally mentioned in editorial guidelines and provide an explicit intertextual link to the accompanying article. While fitting this schema of positivist inquiry onto humanities abstracts is not without difficulties, it offers a fairly robust, if rather general, classification for cross-disciplinary comparison if we admit a certain flexibility. I have also distinguished the writer's purpose from the introduction, where it is often located, as it seems to perform a very different role to the introduction's typical purpose of providing a justificatory context for the research. The schema is outlined in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 A classification of rhetorical moves in article abstracts

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

This arrangement of generic stages or moves can be seen in the following abstract from *Plant Molecular Biology* (the symbol // marks move boundaries):

(1) Acetaldehyde is one of the intermediate products of ethanolic fermentation, which can be reduced to ethanol by alcohol dehydrogenase (ADH). Alternatively, acetaldehyde can be oxidized to acetate by aldehyde dehydrogenase (ALDH) and subsequently converted to acetyl-CoA by acetyl-CoA synthetase (ACS). // To study the expression of ALDHs in plants we isolated and characterized a cDNA coding for a putative mitochondrial ALDH (TobAldh2A) in Nicotiana tabacum. // TobALDH2A shows 54-60 per cent identity at the amino acid level with other ALDHs and shows 76 per cent identity with maize Rf2, a gene involved in restoration of male fertility in cms-T maize. TobALDH2A transcripts and protein were present at high levels in the male and female reproductive tissues. Expression in vegetative tissues was much lower and no induction by anaerobic incubation was observed. //This suggests

that TobALDH expression is not part of the anaerobic response, but may have another function. The use of specific inhibitors of ALDH and the pyruvate dehydrogenase (PDH) complex indicates that ALDH activity is important for pollen tube growth, and thus may have a function in biosynthesis or energy production.//

A brief introduction sets the scene for the reader, providing essential background to the paper and, equally importantly, indicating the significance of the topic to the community and the writer's grasp of the issues involved. A purpose statement is then given, introduced by the infinitive 'to study' and embedded in a general description of the method. The writer then presents the product of the research, in this case the results of an experimental study together with a bottom-line generalisation based on these findings, suggesting an outcome that readers may find surprising. The conclusion explicitly announces the wider significance of the research to the discipline and implicitly suggests a line of further research.

However, while the formal characteristics of this abstract correspond to descriptions often proposed in the literature, this model is actually quite rare in my corpus, even in the science sample. In fact less than 5 per cent of the papers contained all five steps in this sequence. Roughly half of the papers contained no method section, about 55 per cent omitted an explicit introduction, and only 22 per cent offered a conclusion. Thus, despite the admonishments of some researchers (e.g. Salager-Mayer, 1990), writers obviously chose to represent their work in ways that fail to conform to a universal 'ideal' of information structuring. Clearly, then, more than summarising is taking place.

## MOVE-STRUCTURE AND RHETORICAL PERSUASION

The most striking feature of the data is that virtually all papers included a Product statement (94 per cent) which foregrounded the main argument or findings. This underlines the assertion by Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995: 34) that the abstract is essentially a promotional genre. Writers are anxious to underline their most central claims as a means of gaining reader interest and acceptance; a point clearly made by a number of my informants:

Without results you can't do justice to the paper. They are the key to the study and they need to be there so that people know what to expect. What they can get out of the paper, whether it will be useful to them or not.

(Bio interview)

It is essential. If I didn't say anything else I would put my main claims in the abstract. I think readers expect it and I always look for them when I'm reading. (Soc interview)

The main points, what we've found and what we think it means. These are the most important things to go into the abstract. A summary of what the paper is really about.

(ME interview)

The most frequent move structures in the corpus were the sequences Purpose-Method-Product (P-M-Pr), accounting for about 25 per cent of all

cases, and Introduction-Par per cent of the sample. The respectively:

- (2) This paper is intended to purpose MESFET's. // amplifier design, // it we tion can approximate in normal channel-doping to predict good IMD per with specially tailored do
- (3) The process of modernic effective solution to various ple in China poses and this subject are rare. ///remedy the problem, /// state of handicapped peo

In (2) a clear Purpose is of the Method to be used, amplifier design'. A Producings of the study, introduced results, favourably comparintext (3), on the other hand, Method statement. The Intustudy and persuades them of problems, a social issue, 'the disciplinary issue, an import his Purpose is to 'remedy Essentially a product is an otciplines this is often an arguather than report research as a discussion which will an

While P-M-Pr and I-P-P moves – the most 'prototy| generic variation, principall tern and preceding the Internation in the sciences, also order to highlight a series of ent purposes or methods. abstracts, most often where presupposing the backgrou. The choice of presentation such as discuss, describe, ext demonstrate, find and establish

I do not intend painstaki here; I am less interested in tof the anaerobic response, but may have inhibitors of ALDH and the pyruvate delignat ALDH activity is important for pollent a function in biosynthesis or energy (Bio)

the reader, providing essential backtantly, indicating the significance of iter's grasp of the issues involved. A iced by the infinitive 'to study' and emethod. The writer then presents he results of an experimental study in based on these findings, suggestinprising. The conclusion explicitly search to the discipline and implic-

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## **L** PERSUASION

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think it means. These are the most imporwhat the paper is really about.

(ME interview)

the corpus were the sequences unting for about 25 per cent of all

cases, and Introduction-Purpose-Product (I-P-Pr), comprising around 15 per cent of the sample. These patterns are illustrated below as (2) and (3) respectively:

- (2) This paper is intended to evaluate the linearity that can be provided by general-purpose MESFET's. // By a simple physics-based analysis and a practical amplifier design, // it will be shown how educated device and bias-point selection can approximate intermodulation distortion (IMD) performance of some normal channel-doping profiles, for which previous theories would not be able to predict good IMD performance, to the one expected from MESFET devices with specially tailored doping profiles. (EE)
- (3) The process of modernization in China is speedy and turbulent, requiring an effective solution to various social problems. The situation of handicapped people in China poses an increasingly serious social problem but publications on this subject are rare. // This article outlines the author's proposals for how to remedy the problem, // giving an initial outline and an analysis of the current state of handicapped people in China. (Soc)

In (2) a clear Purpose is offered in the first sentence, followed by a sketch of the Method to be used, 'a simple physics-based analysis and a practical amplifier design'. A Product statement follows, presenting the principle findings of the study, introduced by verb show, together with a promotion of these results, favourably comparing them with previous approaches. The sociology text (3), on the other hand, contains a relatively lengthy Introduction and no Method statement. The Introduction provides readers with a context for the study and persuades them of a significant problem to be addressed, in fact two problems, a social issue, 'the situation of handicapped people in China', and a disciplinary issue, an important gap in the literature. The writer indicates that his Purpose is to 'remedy the problem', and finally states the Product. Essentially a product is an outcome, or what the paper achieves. In the soft disciplines this is often an argument, where writers discuss or address a topic rather than report research findings. In (3) the writer represents the Product as a discussion which will analyse the situation of the handicapped in China.

While P-M-Pr and I-P-Pr were the dominant sequences using these four moves – the most 'prototypical' in the Swalesian sense – there was some generic variation, principally with Purpose following Method in the first pattern and preceding the Introduction in the second. Some longer abstracts, mainly in the sciences, also recycled moves throughout the abstract, often in order to highlight a series of results by presenting them as outcomes of different purposes or methods. There were also a high number of two-move abstracts, most often where writers presented their purpose and product only, presupposing the background to be recoverable by an informed audience. The choice of presentation verb often distinguished the two moves, items such as discuss, describe, explore and address marking intentions, and show, demonstrate, find and establish signalling results.

I do not intend painstakingly to itemise the possible diversity of abstracts here; I am less interested in offering a detailed classification of these data

than in using them to see how academics socially negotiate their purposes in different institutional contexts – how the moves become 'strategic elements in a rhetorical game' (Mauranen, 1993: 251). It is clear, however, that writers are acutely aware of the linguistic resources that the functional structures of abstracts offer them and exploit these possibilities rhetorically in many ways. This shows, to say the least, that move sequences appear to be less predictable than previously supposed, and that consequently current descriptions of move sequences may be overly restrictive.

# DISCIPLINARY DIFFERENCES IN ABSTRACT STRUCTURES

More importantly, the analysis points to considerable disciplinary variations in move structuring in the corpus, which once again suggests that credibility, significance and persuasion are community-specific matters.

Table 4 shows a general preference for the P-M-Pr pattern among the physicists and engineers (60 per cent of all cases), and the I-P-Pr model among the humanities/social science writers (75 per cent of cases). Biologists once again fell between the two groups. These differences indicate that writers in the soft knowledge domains saw a greater need to situate their discourse with an Introduction, while writers in the hard knowledge fields tended to omit this move in favour of a description of the Method. So, while over 60 per cent of abstracts in the soft disciplines contained Introductions, this figure was only 30 per cent for the hard disciplines. The percentages were almost exactly reversed for Methods.

Table 4.2 Most frequent move sequences in abstracts by discipline (% rounded)

			i *				i		<u> </u>	<u> </u>
Discipline	I-P-M-Pr	[C]	P-M-Pr	[C]	I-P-Pr	[C]	P-Pr	[C]	I-Pr	Others
Phil	1	[0]	3	[1]	27	[8]	14	[1]	37	8
Soc	15	[4]	22	[5]	26	[9]	9	[3]	0	7
AL	14	[4]	19	[7]	20	[3]	16	[3]	4	10
Mkt	15	[6]	17	[4]	20	[8]	9	[1]	0	20
EE	7	[0]	37	[7]	9	[4]	17	[6]	3	10
ME	13	[3]	38	[7]	10	[0]	11	[3]	3	12
Phy	8	[1]	39	[6]	4	[1]	18	[4]	1	18
Bio	10	[11]	20	[7]	9	[7]	8	[9]	5	14
Overall (%)	10	[4]	25	[5]	15	[5]	13	[4]	7	111

These preferences are clearly related to the disciplinary variations discussed in Chapter 2. There I noted that an important dimension of disciplinary knowledge-making is the extent to which fields agree on a common set of outstanding problems and appropriate procedures for pursuing

them. Toulmin (1972) sugge arranged on a continuum fra identify and study problems, sciences which form close-kn discrete number of problems ing on them. Researchables there is a general expectation which any piece of research is

There are certain things one expenting out to them.

I want to use my 150 or 200 won Most people who read my work we area and have the background an

This abstract concerns quite a spe ing the kind of investment need mainly writing for each other. You introduction, there's just too much

Writers in the hard sciences of understandings, presuppose textualise their studies. They at these understandings to deter of the procedures, the theore to the incremental developmental developmental a Purpose move, or occasitly signal these assumptions, required to unpack the text.

(4) A Co-Cr-Ta/Ni-Fe double-film by facing targets spit showed higher read/write protonly the short but also the Here, we report the localizathe p24 family of transmemt. The objective of this work is order to increase the stiffn technique.

The soft disciplines, on the absence of well-defined sets of follow them. Community me areas of study and proceed aloresult, writers have to work muground to their research and presence of sometimes length demonstrates attempts both

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#### LACT STRUCTURES

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by discipline (% rounded)

y									
P-Pr	[C]	I-Pr	Others						
14	[1]	37	8						
9	[3]	0	7						
16	[3]	4	10						
9	[1]	0	20						
17	[6]	3	10						
11	[3]	3	12						
18	[4]	1	18						
8	[9]	5	14						
13	[4]	7	11						
	P-Pr 14 9 16 9 17 11 18 8	P-Pr [C]  14 [1] 9 [3] 16 [3] 9 [1] 17 [6] 11 [3] 18 [4] 8 [9]	P-Pr [C] I-Pr  14 [1] 37 9 [3] 0 16 [3] 4 9 [1] 0 17 [6] 3 11 [3] 3 18 [4] 1 8 [9] 5						

he disciplinary variations disan important dimension of which fields agree on a comriate procedures for pursuing them. Toulmin (1972) suggests that communities can be approximately arranged on a continuum from 'compact' to 'diffuse' in the ways that they identify and study problems. The former are more closely associated with the sciences which form close-knit 'urban' (Becher, 1989) fields where a small, discrete number of problems have relatively large numbers of people working on them. Researchable problems are therefore fairly well defined and there is a general expectation that readers will be familiar with the issues in which any piece of research is embedded. As my informants pointed out:

There are certain things one expects one's readers to know. It would be insulting to spell everything out to them.

(ME interview)

I want to use my 150 or 200 words to tell them what I've done and how I've done it, not why. Most people who read my work will know the why. They will probably be working in the same area and have the background anyway.

(EE interview)

This abstract concerns quite a specialised line of research. The number of labs capable of making the kind of investment needed to do this is probably very small and they are probably mainly writing for each other. You couldn't hope to get everyone else up to speed in a three line introduction, there's just too much background. (Phy interview)

Writers in the hard sciences are therefore often able to draw on a reservoir of understandings, presupposing much of the background required to contextualise their studies. They can anticipate that readers will be able to access these understandings to determine the value of the research, the productivity of the procedures, the theoretical rationale of the study, and its significance to the incremental development of knowledge. So, by opening the abstract with a Purpose move, or occasionally a Method statement, a writer can explicitly signal these assumptions, pointing not only to the shared knowledge required to unpack the text, but also to shared membership of a community. These examples show how this is often achieved:

(4) A Co-Cr-Ta/Ni-Fe double-layer tape was fabricated on 10 gm-thick polyimide film by facing targets sputtering. The Co-Cr-Ta/Ni-Fe double-layer tape showed higher read/write performance than the Co-Cr-Ta single-layer tape in not only the short but also the long wavelength region. (Phy)

Here, we report the localization and characterization of BHKp23, a member of the p24 family of transmembrane proteins, in mammalian cells. (Bio)

The objective of this work is to search the optimal shapes and locations of ribs in order to increase the stiffness of structures using the topology optimization technique. (ME)

The soft disciplines, on the other hand, are characterised by the relative absence of well-defined sets of problems and a definite direction in which to follow them. Community members participate in less clearly identifiable areas of study and proceed along less heavily trodden paths of research. As a result, writers have to work much harder to acquaint readers with the background to their research and to construct its significance rhetorically. The presence of sometimes lengthy introductions in these abstracts therefore demonstrates attempts both to accommodate and engage explicitly with

readers. In Swales's (1990: 140) terms, they have to 'Create a Research Space' for the work.

I tend to spend a lot of time providing the background, making sure people understand the context I'm working in, the questions I'm addressing. You have to position yourself in an (Soc interview) identifiable area and then talk up the issue.

There are just so many live topics in my field. No-one can keep abreast of them all so it's necessary to establish, or at least reestablish anyway, the importance of the subject.

(Mkt interview)

So, because research in the humanities and social sciences tends to be more diverse and have more permeable boundaries, statements which functioned to provide a general context were more common:

Despite widespread confusion over its meaning, the notion of a conceptual scheme is pervasive in Anglo-American philosophy, particularly amongst those who call themselves 'conceptual relativists'.

The decline in traditional nuclear family households, and the marked increase in the proportion of people living alone, or alone with dependent children have led some to claim that individualism has replaced the importance of family life.

Relative to younger adults, older adults appear to exhibit greater use of schema-(Mkt) based, as opposed to detailed, processing strategies.

Disciplinary peers look for a reason to read the paper, and generally expect to find it in an explicit Introduction to justify the time the reader will have to devote to understanding it.

This greater contextualisation also reflects another obvious difference here: that the purposes of the papers themselves are often quite different. While the science and engineering articles reported the fact of acts of research and their outcomes, writers in the softer fields frequently sought to discuss or define an issue rather than establish empirical truths (cf. Myers, 1992b). Consequently, Purpose statements were more likely to introduce the reader to the area to be covered, and perhaps the interpretation that would be made, rather than signal an explicit research claim.

In this article we (a) argue that mainstream composition studies is at present too narrow in its scope and limited in its perspective and (b) offer some thoughts, from our unique interdisciplinary position, that we feel could help mainstream composition professionals improve this situation.

This paper is a critical engagement with some of the writings of Judith Butler who is perhaps best known for popularising the idea of gender as performative.

In this article we review recent economic, demographic and cultural trends in Spain and discuss changes in consumer buying behaviour and in the macromarketing environment.

Biology, as I noted earlier, was once again an exception to these broad patterns, departing from the hard science conventions by containing fewer P-M-Pr and P-Pr sequences and far more concluding moves. As I discussed in Chapter 2, molecular biol inferential discipline than m ably more discursive scope at incisiveness, has drawn this co

It is the resulting complexi unscramble. Biology is thus physics can usually be express ably the same throughout the often only broad generalization mechanisms that natural selec

Data and evolutionary prei and interpretations, and these that arguments in biology are suading one's colleagues of rhetorical practices that lead often resemble those more i knowledge spectrum.

Accommodating one's wor only means taking into accoun topic, but also involves provi given. In the science and end fairly strong expectation that conducted. Method was theref the Product and Purpose mov edge abstracts. In cases when than what was found, it repli often, Method was handled bri move:

The effects of milling a-Fe2 and 2.0M) as investigated by are reported.

> This paper discusses the de active transmit-receive arra rotation.

To determine if low diversity incompatibility (vic) loci, we mon vc types and estimated the Using survey responses  $(n = 1)^{n}$ in Austria, we test hypothesi object may be 'available' from tain conditions.

This merging of Purpose a appears to be a rational respons it also performs a useful rhetoric way, the writer can insinuate the have to 'Create a Research Space'

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we can keep abreast of them all so it's necesimportance of the subject.

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me of the writings of Judith Butler he idea of gender as performative.

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nventions by containing fewer including moves. As I discussed in Chapter 2, molecular biology is in many senses a more interpretive and inferential discipline than many of its scientific cousins, allowing considerably more discursive scope to writers. Francis Crick (1990: 5), with typical incisiveness, has drawn this comparison very clearly:

It is the resulting complexity that makes biological organisms so hard to unscramble. Biology is thus very different from physics. The basic laws of physics can usually be expressed in exact mathematical form, and they are probably the same throughout the universe. The 'laws' of biology, by contrast, are often only broad generalizations, since they describe rather elaborate chemical mechanisms that natural selection has evolved over billions of years.

Data and evolutionary premises can only suggest possible lines of research and interpretations, and these may not always be reliable guides. This means that arguments in biology are often more geared to devising, testing and persuading one's colleagues of the veracity of speculations and theories. The rhetorical practices that lead from these approaches to research therefore often resemble those more typical of disciplines at the softer end of the knowledge spectrum.

Accommodating one's work to fellow community members, however, not only means taking into account the knowledge they are likely to have of the topic, but also involves providing information that they anticipate will be given. In the science and engineering disciplines in particular, there was a fairly strong expectation that the abstract would indicate how the study was conducted. Method was therefore the most frequently occurring section after the Product and Purpose moves and sometimes dominated the hard knowledge abstracts. In cases where what was done was seen as more important than what was found, it replaced the Product move altogether. But more often, Method was handled briefly and occasionally merged with the Purpose move:

(7) The effects of milling a-Fe203 in a range of NaCl solutions (0.1M, 0.5M, 1.0M and 2.0M) as investigated by x-ray diffraction and Mossbauer effect spectroscopy are reported. (Phy)

This paper discusses the design and implementation of a novel two-element active transmit-receive array using dual linear polarization and sequential rotation. (EE)

To determine if low diversity was caused by a lack of polymorphism at vegetative incompatibility (vic) loci, we made crosses between isolates in the three common vc types and estimated the number of vic genes segregating. (Bio)

Using survey responses (n = 401) of a sample of households in one market area in Austria, we test hypotheses grounded in accessibility theory: a concept or object may be 'available' from memory but may be 'accessible' only under certain conditions. (Mkt)

This merging of Purpose and Method moves into a single sentence appears to be a rational response to the space constraints of the abstract, but it also performs a useful rhetorical function. Presenting them together in this way, the writer can insinuate the appropriacy of the technique by strategically

linking the approach in a unproblematic and reasonable way to accomplishing the research objective.

Method sections were also evident in the more empirical social science studies, and particularly in the marketing abstracts (61 per cent). Such studies are predominantly focused on relatively tangible, real-world phenomena and often seek to yield measurable results with material advantages for government bodies or the commercial sector. Method moves were, of course, rare in the philosophy abstracts, where procedures generally involve the elaboration of concepts and argument through analogy, detailed exemplification, hypothetical cases, peer engagement and so on rather than modes of inquiry that can be objectively characterised and labelled:

What I try and do is say something about the issue, put it into the reader's immediate consciousness so they have something to hang the argument on, then I set out my main points. Give something of the flavour of the way I'm thinking and where the argument will lead.

(Phil interview)

Setting the scene for readers is then a far more significant rhetorical act in philosophy and Introductions occurred in about 80 per cent of papers, often with only a Product move or as part of a three-part I-P-Pr sequence.

Finally, Conclusions seemed to be an optional extra in all disciplines, appearing in only 21 per cent of the abstracts, principally in biology and marketing. This move typically takes the reader from the text into the world by commenting on the implications of the research or its applications. Conclusions therefore explicitly emphasise the value of the paper, either to the discipline or to the wider community:

(8) Implications for marketing management are drawn by proposing controversial developments to be considered. (Mkt)

These results reinforce the utility of combining genetic and biochemical analyses to studies of biosynthetic pathways and strengthen the argument that brassinosteroids play an essential role in Arabidopsis development. (Bio)

I conclude with the hope that the issue will help address the current fragmentation in the literature on the relationship between language and identity and encourage further debate and research on a thought-provoking and important topic. (AL)

The IQ literature needs to be reconceptualized. (AL)

Such simulated inductors have important applications in microwave active filters. (EE)

To some extent a writer's choice of moves is constrained by the editorial directives set out in the journal's submission guidelines, but these are generally very vague and give little guidance on creating a discursive context beyond the need to be 'informative', 'succinct' and to 'summarise the main points'. Only a handful of journals stipulate what is to be included and most, as these examples illustrate, specify little more than a maximum length:

Include a brief abstract (not more than 100 words) summarising the findings.

(American Journal of Sociology)

The abstract may.

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