HYPES IN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS ABSTRACTS BY INDONESIAN STUDENTS ACROSS YEARS

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Abstract

Previous studies showed that as a result of intense competition to succeed in academic pursuits such as publishing research papers and securing grants, promotional language known as hypes are pervasive in academic texts. This paper investigates hypes in a corpus of undergraduate thesis abstracts written by Indonesian English learners in a span of ten years, from 2011 to 2020. Taking a corpus-based approach, it examines the extent to which hypes are used in the thesis abstracts, including their linguistic manifestations, frequencies over the years, and the values they promote. We found hypes in all five moves of thesis abstracts, but they were most frequent in the introduction, in which they emphasized the importance and novelty of the research and stress the urgency of the research problems. In the span of the ten years, the frequencies of hypes generally increase, indicating the students' awareness of the need to convince thesis supervisors, board of examiners, and their colleagues and the efforts to stand out in a competitive academic landscape. *Important*, *investigate*, and *reveal* were the most frequent hype words over the years and their instances suggest a growing emphasis on significance, a stronger commitment to evidence-based research, and desire to contribute new and concrete findings.

Keywords

hypes, promotional language, thesis abstracts, Indonesian learners, EFL writers

1   Introduction

In the context of higher education, thesis writing is important for both students and institutions. For students at higher educational institutions, thesis writing is the evidence of having conducted research activities (Nugraha & Mbato 2022) and is indispensable to meet the requirement for receiving a diploma and to succeed in academic pursuits. For universities, research embodied in the process of thesis writing has been their "unique selling point and is central to their identity and mission" (Fyfe et al. 2017: 11). Thus, the quality of theses is the parameter through which institutions achieve better outcomes (Valdez & Rosa 2021).

In the Indonesian context, thesis writing has become more competitive ever since the Indonesian Directorate General of Higher Education (DIKTI) made article publishing mandatory for undergraduate, master's, and doctoral students, which was an attempt to increase the international publications of Indonesian authors and enhance the country's image at the international level (Miasari et al.

2018, Putri et al. 2019). Based on our experience, due to the limited amount of time and budget to do research to meet this requirement, most research articles that undergraduate students plan to publish are commonly a certain part from their theses.

The expectations to publish their research has encouraged students to improve their ability to write scholarly pieces for publication (Cahyono & Amrina 2016). Being aware of the significant relationship between institutional support and the quality of universities' scientific publication (Putri et al. 2019), universities in Indonesia have provided different types of support for students who are working on their theses. As an example, the university in which this study takes place, has established and run an academic writing centre and writing workshops to help students improve the quality of their theses and accelerate research publication. It regularly invites visiting professors from overseas and published writers to help students improve the quality of their theses. The purpose is to increase the chance of getting their thesis published in reputable journals and achieving larger readership. The university also provides financial support through competitive grants where students are to submit their thesis proposals to participate. When driven by these goals, it is plausible for the undergraduate students to make (un)conscious linguistic choices that best promote parts of their theses. As Hyland and Jiang (2021b) argued, factors such as higher pressure in research publishing and explicit incentives, either grants or merits, have led writers to "exaggerate" aspects of their work and to accentuate the value, significance, and uniqueness of their research.

In the literature, words and phrases that are used for promoting positive aspects of a text are referred to as 'hypes' (Rinaldi 2012, Millar et al. 2019, Hyland & Jiang 2021a). The term 'hypes' covers, among others, positive words (Vinkers et al. 2015), boosters (Hyland 2005), drama words (Wheatley 2014), superlatives (McCarthy 2015), and intensification (Hinkel 2005). Previous studies on hypes have identified their linguistic manifestations and functions in academic texts (e.g. Hinkel 2005, Wang & Yang 2015, Millar et al. 2019), and some concerns about their implications to the communication of science have also been raised (e.g. Rinaldi 2012, Master & Resnik 2013, Wheatley 2014, Scott & Jones 2017, Intemann 2022). One of the concerns, as has been observed by Millar et al. (2019, 2022) and Hyland and Jiang (2021a, 2021b), is the growing trend to use hypes in academic writing.

In terms of genre, hypes were pervasive in Randomized Controlled Trials (Millar et al. 2019), clinical research reports (Millar et al. 2020), abstracts of successful grant applications (Millar et al. 2022), highly cited papers about Covid-19 (Hyland & Jiang 2021a), and journal articles (Hyland & Jiang 2021b).

However, not much is known about how hypes are manifested in undergraduate thesis abstracts written by EFL writers, particularly Indonesian student-writers. Some recent studies on abstracts written by student-writers in Indonesia are concerned with the rhetorical moves (e.g. Basthomi 2006, Amalia, et al. 2018, Hakim et al. 2021), metadiscourse markers (e.g. Mazidah 2019, Mazidah et al. 2022), coherence (e.g. Suwandi 2016, Sapriawan & Chandra 2022), and lexical bundles (Samodra & Pratiwi 2018). To the best of our knowledge, there has not been much attention given to hypes in undergraduate thesis abstracts.

The present paper examines hypes in undergraduate thesis abstracts produced by Indonesian student-writers. It aims to explore the extent to which thesis abstracts are hyped by observing their linguistic manifestations and trends over the years. As abstracts naturally promote the entire work to the readers (Arsyad et al. 2021), how the Indonesian student-writers fill this promotional space with explicit lexemes that best promote their work evokes further analysis. Based on this rationale, this paper aims to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do Indonesian undergraduate student-writers hype their thesis abstracts?
2. Has the trend changed over the years from 2011 to 2020?
3. What values do the Indonesian undergraduate student-writers promote in their thesis abstracts?

2 Literature review

2.1 Thesis abstracts by EFL writers

The abstract of any scientific publication is important in giving readers the first impression of the overall text. They are the first section that most people read before deciding on the value of the whole work (Male 2018). In the case of theses and dissertations, abstracts are usually sent to prospective examiners prior to inviting them as formal examiners and they may choose not to examine a candidate if the abstract is not written in a proficient manner (Sivasubramanian et al. 2018). As the point of entry to the whole text (Sapriawan & Chandra 2022), abstracts help readers make quicker decisions if the whole text is worth reading and cited, or if it is eligible for sending out to the board of examiners.

With the increasing demand for publication, most theses and dissertations today are written not only for the completion of study but also for succeeding other academic pursuits such as securing research grants and getting published. In this case, abstracts are particularly influential to decide whether or not the thesis or dissertation is worth funding or publishing. While the primary aim of an abstract is to communicate the essence of a research work (Nugraha & Mbato

2022), when given such demands, it needs to be written in a way that makes it stand out among abundant of existing research projects. To capture readers' attention and gain bigger extent of readership, abstracts not only need to be informative and merely reporting the research, but also be persuasive (Alek et al. 2022) and intriguing enough to hook the readers (Belcher 2019).

Some previous studies have shown that it is often a challenge for most EFL writers to compile thesis abstracts. In the Indonesian context, abstract writing is not easy for most students, including novice authors and postgraduates, particularly in putting their ideas into written form and composing words with good quality (Arsyad 2014). This is probably due to the lack of awareness of writing in academic genres (Male 2018). As reported in Sujiyani (2022), many Indonesian EFL students have difficulties in producing, organizing, and delivering ideas in their abstracts to meet the expectation of widely accepted international standard of English academic writing conventions.

While there have been several studies on conventions in academic genre, there has been less interest given to the linguistic features of thesis abstracts. In terms of conventions in academic genre, Amalia et al. (2018), Male (2018), and Nugraha and Mbato (2022) found that Indonesian writers have accommodated moves such as situating the research, describing the methodology, and summarizing the findings in their abstracts. However, most tend not to be selective in using moves in the abstracts to best promote their work (Male 2018). In terms of linguistic features, Mazidah et al.'s (2022) study compared the uses of hedges and boosters in Indonesian students' abstracts and found that boosters are used to demonstrate the originality of research, put support on the authors' statement, and strengthen opinions.

2.2 Hypes in research writing

Hypes are promotional language that writers use to embellish parts of their research. Hype is defined as hyperbolic and/or subjective language that authors use to glamorize, promote, and exaggerate aspects of their research (Millar et al. 2019). Hypes is an umbrella term that includes linguistic features such as hyperbole (Leech 1983), claiming centrality (Swales 1990), intensification and amplification (Hinkel 2005), stance and engagement (Hyland 2005), drama words (Wheatley 2014), and superlatives (McCarthy 2015, Scott & Jones 2017). Thus, hypes are characterized by particular lexicon, which may allow for a more reliable and quantifiable identification (Millar et al. 2022).

Hyping parts of research for the purpose of promoting its worthiness, novelty, or contribution is not new in research writing and publishing (see "promotional culture" in Wernick 1991). What is new is the considerably increasing attempts

to promote aspects of research more than ever before, as has been found by recent studies (e.g. Vinkers et al. 2015, Hyland & Jiang 2021a, Millar et al. 2022). These studies found that positive language, such as *novel*, *innovative*, *sustainable*, and *important* which carried a sense of promotion and embellish certain aspects of the text, has intensified in research papers published at least in the past ten years.

Such promotional tendencies in research writing might be the consequence of what Fairclough (1993) referred to as "marketization" of discourse, that is, where discourse is used as a means for "selling" goods, services, or ideas. He believed this discursive practice involved "the subordination of meaning to, and the manipulation of meaning for, instrumental effect" (ibid.: 141). Such manipulation of meaning can be observed through the manipulation of language, particularly through linguistic features that exaggerate some parts of the research. Rinaldi (2012) and Millar et al. (2019) alluded to such phenomenon as hypes, which demonstrate a sensationalization in communication of science.

2.3 Categories of hypes

Categories of hypes have been proposed by researchers like Millar et al. (2019, 2020, 2022) and Hyland and Jiang (2021a, 2021b). From their analysis of hypes in Randomized Controlled Trials, Millar et al. (2019) classified hypes into broad research area, specific research topic, authors' prior research, research method, research outcome, research primacy, and research conclusion, which "correspond with the IMRD (Introduction, Methods, Research, Discussion) structure of the conventional science research paper" (Hyland & Jiang 2021b: 196). They also categorized hypes based on their grammatical realisation such as adjective, adverb, noun, possessive adjective, and determiner.

In their later study, Millar et al. (2022) categorized eight groups of hypes based on their shared semantic properties: importance, novelty, rigor, scale, utility, quality, attitude, and problem. This taxonomy was based on an extensive study of hype adjectives in the abstracts of grant applications from 1985 to 2020. Thus, all hypes in this taxonomy are adjectives even though the taxonomy is also applicable for analysing other types of hypes such as verbs and adverbs. This taxonomy also overlaps with Hyland and Jiang's (2021a, 2021b) categories of value that writers seem to promote in their writing: certainty, contribution, novelty, and potential. 'Certainty' and 'novelty' are similar to 'importance' and 'originality' in Millar et al.'s (2022) taxonomy. Meanwhile, 'contribution' is concerned with the immediate use of the research issue (e.g. *effective*, *useful*) and 'potential' stresses the possible future value of the research (e.g. *promising*, *apparent*).

For the purpose of the present paper, we referred to Hyland's (2000) move framework of abstracts, namely, introduction, purpose, method, product, and

conclusion, to examine the extent to which the undergraduate thesis abstracts are hyped. We also adopted the broad categories of values by Hyland and Jiang (2021a) which consist of certainty, contribution, novelty, and potential as the basis for identifying the values that hypes tend to promote.

3 The present study

3.1 Research design

This paper uses a corpus-based design which combines quantitative and qualitative approaches (Biber et al. 1998). The quantitative approach is to elicit the frequencies of hypes from the corpus of undergraduate thesis abstracts that were published from 2011 to 2021. The frequencies are obtained by analysing the data using AntConc (2022). As it is useful for corpus studies to supplement the quantitative results with qualitative analysis (Anthony 2017), the linguistic manifestations of hypes and their trends are interpreted qualitatively by identifying and discussing emerging issues from their uses in the thesis abstracts.

3.2 The corpus data

The data of this study is a corpus of abstracts of undergraduate theses contained in the Corpus of State University of Malang Indonesian Learners' English (C-SMILE). The corpus was developed by the Research on Linguistic (RoLing) group from Universitas Negeri Malang and comprises theses and research articles written by the students whose majors are English Language Education and English Language and Literature (see Basthomi et al. 2019). The undergraduate thesis corpus totals up to 947 abstracts (441,638 tokens). As the number of students graduating each year differed, the number of theses being submitted to the university also varied. To compensate the different numbers of undergraduate thesis abstracts in the corpus, the raw frequencies of hypes were normalized to per thousand words. The composition of this abstract corpus is shown in Table 1.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
abstracts	21	34	100	143	143	93	89	141	116	67
words	10,750	14,911	47,479	66,209	69,486	43,049	40,638	60,660	58,527	29,929

Table 1: Composition of the corpus of thesis abstracts by year

3.3 Data collection

To examine hypes, we primarily followed Hyland and Jiang's (2021a) source of hypes, such as boosters and attitude markers (Hyland 2005), positive words

(Vinkers et al. 2015), superlatives (McCarthy 2015), hyperbolic terms (Millar et al. 2019), Academic Word List (Coxhead 2000), and Academic Vocabulary List (Gardner & Davis 2013). From these studies, we compiled a list of hype words to be identified in our data. To supplement the list, we collected words and phrases that are shown to function as hypes in Hyland and Jiang (2021a, 2021b) and several other previous studies, such as, broad semantic categories (Millar et al. 2022), superlatives (Scott & Jones 2017), drama words (Wheatley 2014), intensifiers and amplifiers (Hinkel 2005), and promotional strategies (Martín & Pérez 2014). This exhaustive process resulted in a list of 320 hype words (see the Appendix).

3.4 Research procedure

All undergraduate thesis abstracts published from 2011 to 2020 in the C-SMILE were examined. Words and phrases, which relevant literature (e.g. Hyland 2005, Wheatley 2014, Vinkers et al. 2015, Scott & Jones 2017, Millar et al. 2019, Hyland & Jiang 2021a, Millar et al. 2022) identified as hypes, were compiled. They were then compiled into a single UTF-8 file and searched in the corpus using the Word List tool in AntConc 4.1.4 (Anthony 2022). Since it is possible that some words and phrases do not function as hypes, we observed the search results using the KWIC tool in AntConc to manually examine the words and phrases in context and ensure the accuracy of the findings.

Following Millar et al.'s (2022: 3) procedure, we categorized the items as hypes "by judging whether or not they could be removed or replaced with a more objective or neutral alternative word without altering the information within the sentences". The word *interestingly*, for example, according to Wheatley (2014), is a hype word when it functions as an emotive word. Thus, when the word appears in "*Interestingly, the sad emoticon usages are followed by a request or demand in most cases*" (16REEG), it is considered as hypes, as it draws readers' attention to the research finding. However, when *interestingly* appears in "*It was because the text-provided in coursebook used cannot interestingly equip students' needs*" (13LUK) it is not performing as hypes and thus, is excluded from the findings. Next, we independently coded the most frequent hype words and any disagreements regarding data coding and labelling were solved through discussions. Lastly, we recalculated the raw frequencies of the hype words and adapted Biber et al.'s (1998) formula for calculating the relative frequencies.

4 Findings

4.1 The extent to which Indonesian student-writers hype their undergraduate thesis abstracts

We identified a total of 3,043 instances of hypes in the undergraduate thesis abstracts published from 2011 to 2020, corresponding to 3.21 cases per-abstract and 68.90 cases per 10,000 words (henceforth ptw). Hypes were found in all moves that were argued by Hyland (2000), namely, the introduction, purpose, method, product, and conclusions. Over than half of the total instances of hypes in the corpus were used in the introduction move.

In the introduction, hypes promoted the research background by claiming the significance, urgency, and complexity of the research topic and by emphasizing on the research contribution. Example (1), for instance, was taken from theses that suggested the idea of using videos for teaching writing, and Example (2) from video games for teaching gender. Hypes were used to describe the proposed media as *powerful*, *effective*, and *useful* tools, emphasizing that the research had the potential to bring about advancements in language learning.

(1)   *Video was proposed to be applied in the teaching and writing because video is a **powerful** motivator and is **potentially effective** in showing action or process.* (11KHO)

(2)   *The **rising** popularity of video games makes it become a **useful** medium to study about gender issues by focusing on the game's characters.* (12NDR)

Hypes also functioned to claim that the research topic was the most difficult or challenging (3) and important (4), creating a sense of urgency and relevance.

(3)   *Writing is often considered as the **most difficult** and **complicated** skill among the four language skills.* (14ENI)

(4)   *Out of those four skills, listening has a **great** role and it is considered one of the **fundamental** skills in learning English.* (13NFZY)

When appearing in the background, most of the hypes emphasized the prominence of the research topic to make it more appealing. They were used to convince readers about the importance of the topic and the worthiness of conducting the research. This function was identified for *very*, *valuable*, *important*, and *worth*.

(5)   *Due to the fact that speaking skill is **very important**, a study about English speaking skill is **worth** conducting.* (20NIS)

(6)   *However, there is one more medium of art that is **worth** looking into: videogames.* (16MHF)

In the following instances, hypes functioned to embellish the expected contribution of the research:

(7)   *This research is expected to provide an **advantageous** reference for research related to grammatical errors in students' speaking and writing.* (19LAI)

(8)   *For teacher this study can give an **innovative** technique in teaching reading that later on can contribute to the development of knowledge.* (19RAF)

In the abstracts, hypes were found to accentuate the research method through words such as *best* and *detailed*, which highlight the benefits of carrying out certain research procedures.

(9)   *Each stage is carried out to get the **best** final form of the product.* (15ANN)

(10)   *In the present study, the researcher used qualitative methodology with descriptive approach in order to describe the observation and **detailed** documentation of a phenomenon of interest.* (19FAI)

Statements about the research findings were the second most hyped after the introduction. In this move, hypes generally highlighted the significance and uniqueness of the research findings. Particularly in the abstracts from English Language Education, hypes promoted the strengths of the proposed teaching strategies, media, and techniques. This can be seen in the following examples:

(11)   *Dictogloss method provides some **benefits** in giving students a more precise improvement of listening than doing other approaches.* (11ADW)

(12)   *It showed that the strategy is **effective** in covering and fitting **all** range of the students.* (13IST)

Lastly, hypes also appeared in conclusions, where they functioned to reemphasize the research output (13) and reamplify its contribution (14).

(13)   *The researcher hopes that this study can give **new** sight and information about the Indonesian phonological interference.* (16DIM)

(14)   *Based on the result of the findings, it is suggested that English teachers use fishbowl strategy in the teaching learning process which has been proven **effective** in improving students' speaking ability.* (17HEA)

4.2 The frequency shift of hypes from 2011 to 2020

We found that the total frequencies of hypes in the corpus increased over the years, especially from 2013 until 2020. Hypes surged from 43.72 in 2011 to 62.37 in 2012, but they peaked in 2020 with a total of 96.22 hypes ptw (Table 2).

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
hype items	28	37	64	70	83	65	70	86	84	65
raw frequency	47	93	230	350	377	297	316	527	514	288
per 10,000	43.72	62.37	48.44	52.86	54.25	68.99	77.75	87.53	87.82	96.22

Table 2: Frequency of hypes across the 10 years

Not only did the total frequencies of hypes increase, but the hype items in the later years were also more varied compared to the first two years. Although the total frequencies of hypes decreased to 48.44 ptw in 2013, the number of hype items in that year doubled from that in 2012. From then onwards, the hype items were more varied, ranging between 64 to 86 items, and their total instances also slowly increased throughout the years.

From all hypes that occurred during these years, *important*, *investigate*, and *reveal* were the most pervasive, as they were consistently among the top ten most frequent hypes from 2011 until 2020. The frequencies of these hype items fluctuated, but they generally showed an upward trend (Figure 1).
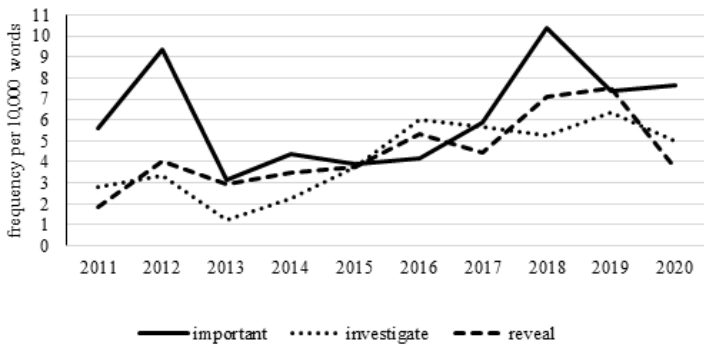

Figure 1: Overall frequencies of *important*, *investigate*, and *reveal* across the years

Other hypes that were dominant in the span of ten years included adjectives such as *interesting*, *useful*, and effective, verbs such as *discover*, *enhance*, and *contribute*, and adverbs such as *successfully*, *most*, *always*, and *very*. These words were among the ten most frequent hypes used in the undergraduate thesis abstracts, even though their frequencies varied over the years.

4.3 Values promoted by hypes in undergraduate thesis abstracts

To identify the values that were promoted by hypes, we referred to the broad categories of value from Hyland and Jiang (2021b). We found the four values existed in the corpus: certainty, contribution, novelty, and potential. In addition to these values, we found that the writers used hypes to promote urgency.

First, certainty was identified from words such as *important*, *crucial*, and *necessary*, which appealed to the significance of the idea being proposed in the theses. Hypes were found in the statements such as (15, 16), where the proposed learning strategies, media, and techniques were hyped to assert their prominence.

(15)   *Questioning is one of the **most crucial** strategies in the teaching of reading.* (11VER)

(16)   *For the smoothness of CTL program, the role of workbook is **very important** because in teaching and learning activities **certainly** teachers require a workbook.* (12EDI)

The student-writers' certainty was also reflected in their suggestions for future research, which were hyped using adverbs such as *highly* and *strongly*, as shown in the following examples.

(17)   *Therefore, it is **highly** suggested for future research to be done using people there as research subjects.* (13DAN)

(18)   *It is also **strongly** suggested for further researchers on children volume book using other focus.* (14USW)

Theoretical and practical contribution of the research were hyped through adverbs such as *hugely* and *a lot* (19) and adjectives such as *positive*, *useful*, and *effective* (20). Contribution is mostly found in the theses from English language education domain, where hypes functioned to emphasize that the proposed learning method, strategy, or media resulted in a positive change to the teaching and learning process.

(19)   *The students stated that they have **a lot** of fun when they were in the class of teaching of listening using this media.* (13FAJ)

(20)   *It can be concluded that STAD is an **effective** method to be implemented in teaching writing a recount text.* (17HAF)

Novelty stresses newness in either the research topic or findings. Novelty was identified from adjectives (e.g. *new*, *novel*, *unique*) and determiners (e.g. *few*, *little*). Using these hypes, the writers claimed that their research topic was rarely studied, which distinguished their work from the previous ones (21), and that their findings gave some sort of newness to the existing body of knowledge (22).

(21)   *Despite the **ample** studies focused on first person pronouns as author self-representation, this study is **distinct** in that it discloses some empirics regarding the use of author non-pronoun self-references which **stands out** as the most prevalent author self-references in EFL students' academic texts.* (13LEL)

(22)   *It is also **worth** pointing that the remaining social motives are **new** findings in this study.* (12ANN)

In few cases, the writers used words such as *no*, *not*, and *never* to show novelty. In these cases, hypes emphasized that there had never been any similar research before, giving the impression of being the first one to conduct the study.

(23)   *To the best of my knowledge, there is **no** research yet on LOLcat published in Indonesia.* (15ANI)

(24)   *Another reason why the researcher conducted this study because this study [was] **never** conducted by other students of English Department in Universitas Negeri Malang before.* (19MAM)

The fourth value that hypes promoted is potential, which could be identified from words such as *benefit*, *potential*, and *valuable*. Potential appeals to the future value of the research.

(25)   *The product is expected to give **valuable** significances for the English teacher, the students, and the future researchers, in the effort of varying speaking activities in class.* (13ORI)

(26)   *This study finds some **new** points which are **potential** to be explored further by future researchers.* (14NAD)

The last value targeted by hypes is urgency, which is slightly different from certainty. While certainty emphasizes the significance of the research topic

or subject, urgency magnifies the problem that the research aims to address. Urgency was identified from *major*, *complex*, *never*, and *unfortunately*.

(27)   *Besides, their teacher had **never** used any certain technique in teaching writing.* (16VIR)

(28)   *Deprivation of morality becomes a **major** problem in **many** countries.* (16FIT)

5   Discussion

The findings from this paper show that hypes are pervasive in the undergraduate thesis abstracts by Indonesian student-writers. This supports McCarthy (2015), Hyland and Jiang (2021a, 2021b), and Millar et al. (2020), who also found a frequent use of hypes in other text types within academic genre. The prevalence of hypes in the thesis abstracts indicates the student-writers' awareness of the need to capture the attention of prospective readers such as thesis supervisors, examiners, and peers. In the cases where the theses are written with the aims to win grants and to be published, the frequent hypes found in the thesis abstracts may also indicate their attempts to promote parts of their theses to the funding bodies and journal editors. Male (2018) noted that Indonesian writers tend not to be selective in using the moves to best promote their work. However, language-wise, the student-writers' frequent uses of hypes as found in this study can be seen as a means to make their research stand out.

In the undergraduate thesis abstracts, hypes increased throughout the years. Although this study did not investigate the factors behind this frequency shift, we strongly believe that the increasing frequencies of hypes do reflect the growing expectations in thesis writing, that it is not only done to convince thesis supervisors, board of examiners, and peers, but also wider audience such as prospective funders and journal reviewers. If this is true, the aims for publishing part of theses, securing grants, or being read, accepted, and cited are probably some factors that motivate the frequency shift. The growing popularity of hypes in this genre is similar to that in other academic prose as reported in Hyland and Jiang (2021a, 2021b) and Millar et al. (2022). It is worth noting that the surge of hypes in 2012 coincides with the new regulation from The Indonesian Directorate General of Higher Education (DIKTI) about mandatory research publication for all university students. This sudden urge to publish may explain the upsurge of hypes in that year, as higher pressure and competitive nature in research funding and publishing have led writers to hype the value and significance of their work (Millar et al. 2019, Hyland & Jiang 2021b, Millar et al. 2022).

The functions of hypes in the thesis abstracts varied according to the moves that they targeted. In the introduction, which was heavily hyped, hypes highlighted the weight or severity of the problems that the writers tried to solve in the theses, thus, promoting relevance and urgency, which is similar to Millar et al.'s (2022) findings. By hyping this value, the student-writers can show their awareness of the existing problems and align their work so as to solve them.

Second, hypes in the undergraduate thesis abstracts were used to accentuate novelty by describing the theses as unique, distinct, or new. This is similar to the findings in Hyland and Jiang (2021b) and Millar et al. (2022). Hyping the novelty of theses can help the student-writers gain readership, convince and persuade thesis advisors and examiners. However, there were also several overtly promotional claims (e.g. *there is no research yet*, *this study was never conducted by other students*) made without any immediate justification. As argued by Intemann (2022), exaggeration in hypes can be overly pessimistic, that is, it overstates uncertainties or unknowns related to research. Such exaggerated claims can give the impression of being the first one to conduct the study, but they may potentially lead to the loss of readers' trust, especially when they are not sufficiently backed up by evidence and justification.

Third, particularly in the theses from the education domain, hypes accentuate a sense of innovation by emphasizing the effectivity and benefits of the learning product that was proposed in the theses, such as strategies, media, method, materials, and techniques. It is generally known that most funding bodies always look for research that has the potential to solve a real-world problem. The students may be compelled to show how the output of their research is able to address the existing problems in language teaching and learning, as this value is commonly sought for in grant applications. In addition, hyping these products may also be seen as an effort to conform to the journal writing guidelines, which often require authors to explicitly state the significance and contribution of their work.

Throughout the years, *important*, *reveal*, and *investigate* were always among the top ten most frequent hype words. One possible explanation for the high frequencies of these words is the influence of academic writing skills teaching at Indonesian universities, such as workshops and academic writing centres. This type of teaching may promote a relatively formulaic, routinized use of linguistic resources, which can reduce the variety of diction. The growing frequencies of these words indicate broader trends in academic writing conventions where writers may be influenced by the expectations to convey the importance of their work and display investigative nature of the research procedure. *Important* points out to the growing emphasis on research significance. This finding is similar to that in Millar et al. (2019) where writers seemed to gravitate towards

certain word families such as *important*, *importance*, and *importantly*. Writers may feel compelled to use this word to convey that their work addresses essential aspects of language education and offers valuable insights to the field. This way, they can communicate the values of the research within the existing academic discourse. *Reveal* highlights findings and creates theatrical effect (Wheatley 2014) by conveying a sense of discovery and novelty. It conveys a presentation of previously unknown or hidden insights and evokes curiosity in the readers. Using this word, the student-writers hint that the information presented in their theses is not just a simple discovery, but rather a note-worthy and impactful revelation. According to Wheatley (2014: 14), using *reveal* instead of less emotive words such as *find*, *show*, or *give* implies the process of "uncovering something 'before your very eyes' in a dramatic way". Lastly, the growing trend of *investigate* may indicate a greater emphasis on research inquiry and empirical approach. It also shows the emphasis on exploring and examining aspects of linguistics, literature, or language teaching in a systematic manner. It is not as dramatic in the same way as *reveal*, as *investigate* implies a systematic examination of the research questions, the writers' intention to explore, analyse, and collect evidence to answer the research questions, and suggests an in-depth examination and methodological rigour.

6   Conclusion

In the undergraduate thesis abstracts written by Indonesian English learners over the years, hypes are pervasive in all five moves of abstracts. In this genre, hypes were used to capture the attention of targeted readers such as thesis supervisors, examiners, peers, as well as funding bodies and journal reviewers, and add visibility of the theses by conveying certainty, novelty, urgency, contribution, and potential of the research. The growing popularity of hypes in the thesis abstracts during the span of ten years suggests the student-writers' awareness of the need and the competition to succeed academic pursuits. It also shows an increasing effort to make their theses stand out in today's highly competitive academic landscape. As a whole, these findings suggests that academic discourse is evolving to accommodate promotional elements.

It is therefore important to raise the issue of hypes during thesis supervision as well as in academic writing courses, especially where students are expected to write papers for publication. In such writing courses, identifying hype words in various types of academic publication and discussing their effectiveness in the context of successful thesis writing and exams, winning grants, and gaining publication are useful as they may help students achieve effective academic persuasion and improve the readability of their theses. Writing instructions and

the thesis supervising process should guide students in striking the right balance in the use of promotional language to achieve clarity and conciseness, and to avoid overhyping and exaggerating of parts of their theses. In order to raise students' awareness of the roles of hypes in academic writing, discussions about the functions and potential pitfalls of using such promotional language in theses, journal articles, and grant proposals are needed.

Lastly, it is also important for gatekeeping in academic publication to carry out rigorous supervising or review processes that critically assess the content and language of submissions. Those who take part in the gatekeeping process should be encouraged to critically evaluate the context and meaning behind hype words before accepting them at face value, as this is important to maintain academic rigor and factual accuracy.

Appendix

List of hype words (in the alphabetical order)

1	a lot	81	emphasize	161	intuitive	241	revolutionary
2	absolutely	82	empirical	162	invaluable	242	rich
3	accessible	83	encouraging	163	inventive	243	rigid
4	accurate	84	enhance	164	investigate	244	rigorous
5	actionable	85	enormous	165	it is important to	245	robust
6	adequate	86	ensure	166	it is not hard to see	246	robustness
7	advanced	87	entire	167	key	247	role
8	advantage	88	entirely	168	largest	248	safer
9	agree	89	especially	169	latest	249	salient
10	alarming	90	essential	170	life saver	250	scalable
11	all	91	essential	171	logical	251	scale
12	always	92	establish	172	longstanding	252	scientific
13	amazing	93	ever	173	main	253	seamless
14	ambitious	94	evident	174	major	254	senior
15	ample	95	exactly	175	markedly	255	sharply
16	apparent	96	excellent	176	marvel	256	significant
17	appropriate	97	exceptional	177	massive	257	skilled
18	assuring	98	exciting	178	maximize	258	sophisticated
19	astonishing	99	exhaustive	179	meaningful	259	specialized
20	attractive	100	exhibited	180	miracle	260	spectacular
21	benefit	101	expansive	181	most	261	stark
22	best	102	experienced	182	motivated	262	stellar
23	biggest	103	expert	183	much	263	strategic
24	breakthrough	104	expose	184	multidisciplinary	264	strength

25	bright	105	extensive	185	myriad	265	strengthen
26	broad	106	extraordinary	186	myriad	266	strikingly
27	careful	107	extremely	187	necessary	267	strong
28	central	108	facilitate	188	never	268	strongly
29	century	109	far-reaching	189	new	269	substantial
30	certain	110	fascinating	190	no	270	successful
31	certified	111	fastest	191	notable	271	successfully
32	challenge	112	favourable	192	notably	272	such a
33	clear	113	few	193	noteworthy	273	superior
34	clearly	114	fill the gap	194	novel	274	supportive
35	close	115	final	195	nuanced	275	surely
36	cohesive	116	finite	196	numerous	276	surprising
37	collegial	117	first	197	obvious	277	surprisingly
38	compatible	118	for the first time	198	obviously	278	sustainable
39	compelling	119	fortunately	199	original	279	sustainable
40	complete	120	foundational	200	our	280	synergistic
41	completely	121	fully	201	outstanding	281	systematic
42	complex	122	fundamental	202	overwhelming	282	tailored
43	comprehensive	123	game changer	203	paramount	283	talented
44	confident	124	general	204	particularly	284	tangible
45	considerable	125	generalizable	205	perfectly	285	the authors
46	constant	126	great	206	perform	286	the importance of
47	contribute	127	greatest	207	phenomenal	287	timely
48	contribute	128	greatly	208	pivotal	288	to shed some light
49	contribution	129	green	209	play a … role	289	too
50	convincing	130	ground-breaking	210	positive	290	top
51	core	131	high	211	potential	291	totally
52	creative	132	highlight	212	powerful	292	trained
53	critical	133	highly	213	practice	293	transdisciplinary
54	crucial	134	home run	214	precise	294	transform
55	cure	135	hopeful	215	prefer	295	transformative
56	daunting	136	hopefully	216	premier	296	tremendous
57	dedicated	137	huge	217	present	297	trend
58	deeper	138	ideal	218	prestigious	298	ultimate
59	definitely	139	immediate	219	primary	299	unanswered
60	demonstrate	140	immense	220	principal	300	undoubtedly
61	deployable	141	impactful	221	priority	301	unearth
62	desire	142	imperative	222	produce	302	unexpected
63	desperate	143	importance	223	productive	303	unexpectedly
64	detailed	144	important	224	professional	304	unfortunately
65	devastating	145	in the search for	225	prominent	305	unique

66	dire	146	incredible	226	promising	306	unmet
67	dismal	147	indeed	227	promising	307	unprecedented
68	distinct	148	indispensable	228	qualified	308	unveil
69	diverse	149	initial	229	quality	309	urgent
70	dramatically	150	innovate	230	quality	310	useful
71	drastic	151	innovative	231	radical	311	user-friendly
72	durable	152	inspiring	232	ready	312	valid
73	dynamic	153	intellectual	233	reassuring	313	value
74	easy	154	intense	234	relevant	314	vast
75	effect	155	interdisciplinary	235	remarkable	315	very
76	effective	156	interesting	236	remarkably	316	vibrant
77	efficacious	157	interestingly	237	renowned	317	vital
78	efficient	158	international	238	reproducible	318	we
79	elusive	159	interprofessional	239	reveal	319	without question
80	emerging	160	intriguing	240	revolution	320	worth

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