The Investigation of the Textual Organization of Research Article Discussion Sections in the Field of Second Language Writing

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate the textual organization of research article discussion sections in second language writing in order to reveal how expert writers in the discipline prefer to construct their discussion. Move analysis was conducted on a corpus of 103 research article discussion sections collected from five established journals. The analysis reveals that the research article discussion sections in second language writing could be described with eight moves with some moves containing steps. It was found that the commenting on results move, reporting results move and deductions from the research move were most frequent in the corpus. These findings suggest that the main function of the discussion sections is to report and comment on results, but the emphasis is placed on commenting. Besides, writers in this discipline also prefer to provide suggestions, areas for future studies and implications for teaching and learning in this section. Managing the section move, used to announce the outline of the section, was also identified in the corpus. This is a move that has never been reported before in previous studies on discussion sections. This finding suggests a strategy that can be used to handle the complexity of the discussion sections and make them reader friendly. The analysis also identified some typical patterns of moves occurring in a corpus. This study contributes to the fields of genre analysis, English for Specific Purposes and English for Academic Purposes, and provides guidance to novice or less experienced writers who want to write for publications.

Keywords: genre, move analysis, research articles, second language writing, textual organization

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