

A comparative structural move analysis of topical and biographical Encyclopedia articles

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The present paper reports on an empirical study that involved the structural move analysis of encyclopedic genre. For purposes of the current study, a corpus of 240 encyclopedic entries (120 topical entries and 120 biographical entries) were randomly chosen from Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature. They were then converted into *.txt files and fed into AntMover, the computer software developed for structural move analysis by Anthony (2003). A human coder also coded the texts at two different times with a three-week interval. To avoid random carry-over effect, the human coder used the counter-balanced design in his coding of the texts. Rasmeenin's (2006) and Yang and Allison's (2003) frameworks were employed to identify the obligatory, conventional, and optional moves in the texts. Results indicated that topical and biographical encyclopedic entries do differ in rhetorical structure. The findings of this study can help Iranian encyclopediographers to better understand the standard structure of encyclopedia entries.

Key words: Academic Writing, Genre Analysis, Move Analysis, Encyclopediography, Rhetorical Functions, Subgenre.

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