
GENRE-BASED ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLETS (PILS)

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ABSTRACT: *Genre-based studies offer an insight to linguistic researchers as well as EFL, ESP teachers which can be used in instruction. This study sought to identify the rhetorical structures of Patient Information Leaflets (PILs). This research is a genre analysis that aimed at identifying the macro- and micro-structure of PILs; 30 PILs were analyzed. The microstructure analysis was done at two levels of move and step. The analysis is done based on Swales' (1990) model. The overall macro- and micro-structure of PIL is recognized. The results of the analysis indicated that PILs are composed of 17 sections, and each section has its own particular move-step framework.*

KEYWORDS: Genre, Move, Step

INTRODUCTION

Genre analysis aimed at, first to characterize typical and conventional aspects and structural elements of any genre-specific text in an attempt to find theoretically adequate and pedagogically useable patterns and form-function relation; second to explain such a characterization in the context of the communicative rationale and socio-cultural as well as cognitive constraints operating in the relevant area of specialization (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990).

Genre analysis has attracted so much attention since the early 1980. Genre, which has traditionally been a literary concept, has recently become a popular framework for analyzing the form and rhetorical function of non-literary discourse (Candlin, 1993). Linguistics and language teachers have tried to apply genre-centered-approaches to the analysis of written and spoken discourse in order to provide satisfactory models and descriptions for academic and scientific text and also help non-native speaker students to enhance their ability of understanding and proper production of text (Dudley- Evans, 1986).

Swales (1990) asserted that genre analysis essentially is based on two central assumptions. First, the feature of a similar group of text depends on the social context of their creation and use. Second, those features can be described in a way that relates a text to other texts like it. He introduced two other concepts, move and step, in the field of genre analysis. Move is a seminal unit relevant to the writer's purpose. Steps spell out more specifically the rhetorical means of realizing the function of move, the set of steps for a move is the set of rhetorical choices.

Swales' (1990) model has attracted the attention of the researchers working on medical genre (Nwogu, 1997; Samarj, 2000). But except medical research articles the other types of medical text have been ignored. Conducting ample of researches (Nwogu, 1997; Rezaei & Sayfour, 2009; Samarj, 2000; Williams, 1999) on medical research articles is an obvious evidence for the importance of these kinds of texts; other medical texts like medical

brochures, patient information leaflets (PILs), drug labels, and medical postures get less attention. Because of their large number of intended audience and the importance of their content, PILs are considered to be one of the most important text types in the field of medicine. It is surprising that this kind of text genre has got no attention up to now. So, the present study is a genre-based analysis of PILs which focuses on the identification of their rhetorical structure.

METHOD

Corpus

To analyze the generic structure of PILs, 30 PILs were collected. According to the aim of the study the sample is restricted to PILs which are written in English, not the translated version. Translated PILs were counted out to prevent probable effect of translation on the rhetorical structure of the material.

Analytical Framework

The genre analysis model that is applied as the rhetorical framework for this study is Swales' (1990) model. The analysis of the material based on the analytical framework was administered in two parts: analysis of the macrostructure division in a text, and identifying comprising moves and steps of these identified macrostructures of the PILs.

Macrostructure is a significant aspect of discourse which co-occurs with other discourse structures in a text; it is the sequences of a text. The macrostructure of this study is the fundamental sections of the PILs. Move is the next structural division down this hierarchy. As Holmes (1997, p. 325) defines, move is "a segment of text that is shaped and constrained by specific communicative purpose". Each move is consisted of a number of elements or steps that are combined to constitute information in the move.

Data analysis

In analyzing both the macrostructure and move structure the concept of communicative purpose is central. To analyze the macrostructure, PILs were carefully read and the communicative purpose of each section was noted. For Analyzing Move-Step Structure each macrostructural section found in the first stage of the analysis was analyzed in order to detect its move structure. The main concern is to demonstrate the discovered structure in relation to what the text was rhetorically trying to achieve. Bhatia (1993) declared that in spite of the fact that surface signals are fairly valid indicators of discourse functions, the final criteria for attributing discourse values is functional rather than formal. So, the accuracy of these signals is judged against the function of each move in the overall section. Identifying the boundaries facilitates move identification.

Results and Discussion

Macrostructure Analysis

PIL embodies crucial information across different issues to aid and guide their intended readers. These materials are categorized in different sections. They are presented under specified headings based on their subject matter, so readers can move easily through the text and find their required information. As the table below demonstrates, there are 17 sections in PILs. Proposing a unified arrangement, all PILs section sequences are closely inspected and this reported order is distinguished as the most dominant pattern. The sequence of PILs section including:

Table.1. the Percentage and Sequence of PILs Section

No	Sections	Frequency	Percentage
1	Composition	30	100
2	Pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetic properties	19	63.33
3	Indications	30	100
4	Dosage and administration	30	100
5	Contraindications	30	100
6	Special warnings and precautions	30	100
7	Interactions	29	96.66
8	Side effects	30	100
9	Pregnancy and lactation	30	100
10	Drivers and machine users	26	86.66
11	Over dose	28	93.33
12	What you should do in the case you miss a dose?	12	40
13	Effect when treatment is stopped	7	23.33
14	Storage condition and shelf life	30	100
15	Packs	17	56.66
16	Manufacturer	29	96.66
17	Date of leaflet revision	27	90

Table 1 shows the frequencies of comprising sections of PILs. These sections may be presented as a single section, subsection, or even their materials are given without any discrete title. In spite of the same messages sections try to convey, their titles are not the same through all PILs. Some titles are stated in question form, while others use sentence, clause or even a word as a heading. The titles reported above are the most frequent among the others. As the above table demonstrates, there are 17 sections in PILs. Each section presents specific content information to the readers, which are analyzed and reported in separate tables in the next coming parts. These sections are considered as PILs macrostructure. Like the title format and the content rhetorical structure, the section arrangements are also different across the corpus. Proposing a unified arrangement, all PILs section sequences are closely inspected and the above reported order is distinguished as the most dominant pattern.

The macrostructure of the PILs that are produced in the same country has more similarity, and this similarity increases if they have been produced by the same company. It can be concluded that each company has designed its own template for writing PILs. Though there are some cases that the PILs of the same company have heterogeneous rhetorical structure, it may be due to different properties of medicines they are enclosed with. For example, side effects of one drug outnumber the other, or some do not have any interactions to be mentioned and to allocate a separate section to it, etc.

PILs may merge more than one section under a single title, the opposite cases were also observed, in which the content of a single section splits to more than one section, or the content of a section is explained in a separate paragraph, but no title has been assigned to it.

Microstructure Analysis

The sections, presented in Table 1 are analyzed and their moves and steps, if there is any, are identified and shown in the following subsections. The messages their contents try to convey are explained, frequencies and percentages of moves occurrence are calculated and reported. This point should be mentioned that, in naming the moves their overall message or the key points with the frequent occurrence was considered as the base. Some moves were repeated through a single section, but they were counted as 1 move.

It should be mentioned here that not all the identified sections are analyzed with regard to their move analysis. The following conditions were observed in omitting PILs section in move analysis:

- PIL section frequency should be above 50%.
- The content should be at least a coherent paragraph having discursal features.

Regarding these conditions, the sections of “What you should do in the case you miss a dose” and “Effects when treatment is stop” were not analyzed since their frequencies were below 50%. The microstructure of “Packs”, “Manufacturer” and “Date of leaflet revision” sections also was not analyzed as their content does not have discursal features.

Another issue to mention is that the contents vary across moves. A move may be ranged from a single sentence to several sentences or even several paragraphs. This diversity also can be observed in the same move across different PILs, which may be caused by distinction in drugs properties. The special properties of some drugs demand explication of some information, while its inclusion is not necessary for other products.

In the following part, the identified moves and steps of comprising sections of PILs are presented besides their frequencies and percent.

Composition Section:

Move 1: Describing content

Step 1: Giving detailed information about ingredients

Pharmacodynamics & Pharmacokinetic Properties Section:

Move 1: Preparatory information on drug composition

Move 2: Informing patients with drug efficiency

Step 1: Describing the effects through statistical measures such as dose and time of effect

Indications Section:

Move 1: Describing the medicine use for disease treatment

Dosage and Administration Section:

Move 1: Expression of warning

Move 2: Recommending standard dose and its administration method

Step1: Daily use of the medicine

Move 3: Recommending dose based on severity of disease and its administration met

Step1: Daily use of the medicine

Move4: Recommending dose based on age group and its administration method

Step 1: Daily use of the medicine

Contraindications Section:

Move 1: Indicating ban on use of the drug
Step1: Describing cases of contraindication

Warnings and Precautions for Use Section:

Move 1: Expressing advice for the drug side effects

Step 1: Specification of dose

Step 2: Recommendation of increase, decrease or discontinuing the drug

Interactions Section:

Move 1: Informing patients of cases of interactions

Step 1: Naming drug with possible side effects

Move 2: Expressing advice for increase/decrease or halting the drug

Side Effects Section:

Move 1: Showing both physical and mental disorders

Step 1: Describing the side effect

Move 2: Classifying side effects in to very common, common, and uncommon

Step 1: Describing the side effect

Pregnancy and Lactation Section:

Move 1: Expressing rebuttal of the use of the drug for special period of time

Step 1: Specifying the period of ban

Step 2: Describing the side effects

Move 2: Recommending use of the drug when it is not harmful

Driver and Machine Users Section:

Move 1: Showing the psychophysical effect of the drug

Move 2: Warning patients not to use

Overdose Section:

Move 1: Showing overdose symptoms

Move 2: Recommending of treatment in case of overdose

Storage Condition and Shelf Life Section:

Move 1: Recommending patients of the expiry ate

Move 2: Describing physical condition for storing

CONCLUSION

The present study was a genre analysis of PILs. 30 PILs, written in English, were selected to be analyzed in this study. The researcher analyzed PILs at 2 levels of macro- and micro-structure. Results of the analysis at the macrostructure level indicate that approximately PILs are made of 17 sections; however, some variations were also observed. And at the microstructure level, each section has its own move and step framework.

The results of genre analysis can be beneficial for those who are engaged in teaching, learning and designing ESP courses. Instructors can teach rhetorical structures of informative texts such as PILs and make the learners aware of these text's rhetorical features. Furthermore, the material designers can allocate contents in ESP courses to the

empirical findings of this study, and present the issue of genre conventions and genre structure in the ESP text for students of medical sciences and reflect the rhetorical aspects of PILs, besides designing appropriate genre consciousness raising activities to make students aware of these generic conventions.

It is hoped further researches be conducted on the outcome of the present study to find answers and to raise question in this realm. The possible constraints and limitations of this study are well-acknowledged, further studies should be done to overcome these shortcomings.

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