Move Analysis of Legal Letters of Demand for Genre-based Writing Instruction in English for Legal Purposes

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Abstract

Numerous studies present employers' dissatisfaction with the English writing competence of law graduates, yet few studies in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) have provided implications for legal genre-based writing instruction. Employing Swales's CARS Model (1990), originally developed for the analysis of the moves in introductions of research articles, this study identified the rhetorical and lexico-grammatical features of five authentic legal letters of demand in order to create a move/step model that would inform legal letter writing pedagogy. The methodology of this study is based on the qualitative move analysis approach, and the five lawyers' letters were coded using QDA Miner Lite software to identify typical communicative purposes of moves and steps and linguistic features pertaining to them. The accuracy of the move/step model created was confirmed with 85% of inter-rater reliability check, and it was also validated by the consent of two lawyers. Further, their views on the discursive practices of the linguistic choices related to the rhetorical organization of the letters were used to supplement the move analysis. The results include the similarities and differences of move/step occurrences in the five letters, linguistic features of the moves, mandatory and optional moves/steps, and the reasons for their presence. The move/step model created, and its linguistic features can be used to develop letters of demand writing lessons to help novice legal practitioners/undergraduates learn the rhetorical structure, linguistic features and discursive practices associated with writing letters of demand.

Keywords: *Discursive practices, Genre analysis, Letters of demand, Move analysis, Steps*

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