ARTICLES:

Genre Analysis of Research Grant Proposals

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1. Introduction

The genre of research grant proposal is a window on academic engagements and interactions. As an initial step in the process of knowledge production (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Myers, 1990), it is a genre that "all academics have to come to terms with at some point of their career, usually the sooner the better" (Connor & Mauranen 1999, p. 47). Compared with other academic writing, the research grant proposal involves a high degree of marketisation with an attempt to sell the proposed research as well as the researcher. Instead of a general audience, it addresses two different groups of readers: peer reviewers who are highly informed about the topic, and members of the grant review committee who might or might not be engaged in the same research area. Despite the uniqueness and importance of the genre, only a few studies have examined grant proposals for research funds (e.g., Connor, 1998; Connor, 2000; Connor and Mauranen, 1999; Connor and Wagner, 1999; Myers, 1990; Van Nostrand, 1994) though there are some tool-kit texts on grantsmanship (e.g., Locke et al., 2000). As is the case with the genre of graduate thesis or dissertation (Paltridge, 2001), the lack of studies on research grant proposals may be caused by 1) the accessibility of the texts as many researchers feel reluctant to take the risks of releasing them; 2) the size of the texts which could be quite large in the case of national research grants; and 3) variations of the texts depending on the requirement of the funding agency and the year of application. Owing to these difficulties in data collection and analysis, it is not surprising that the research grant proposal remains an understudied genre.

In responding to the need, this paper presents findings of a genre analysis of nine successful SSHRC (The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada) standard research grant proposals. As a federal funding for university-based research in social sciences and humanities, SSHRC is one of the most prestigious research grants in Canada. We followed the tradition of *move* analysis

to describe and compare the generic rhetorical structure of the summary and main text of the sample proposals, and addressed the issues of move mixing and move recurrence in this particular genre. According to Swales (1981, 1990) and other genre analysts, a *move* is a defined and bounded communicative act to achieve one main communicative intention that helps fulfill the overall communicative purpose of the genre; and a *step* is a smaller functional unit under the unit of move to help realize the communicative intention of the move. The idea of move analysis, as Bhatia (1997) points out, is not only to interpret and maintain generic integrity, but also to account for the complex communicative realities of the world.

In the ensuing sections, we begin with a review of previous studies on research grant proposals and a discussion of how move recurrence and move mixing are dealt with in the literature. We then describe the method of the present study and report findings concerning a three-move scheme of the summary and a ten-move scheme of the main text in the sample proposals. Based on the analysis of generic structures and move variations, including move recurrence and move mixing, the grant writers' rhetorical strategies are discussed in terms of how the writers manipulate the moves to address the reader and to achieve the promotional purposes. We conclude with an implication for move analysts as well as a suggestion for grant proposal learner writers.

2. Literature Review

The available literature on the research grant proposal can be roughly categorized into two groups, one focusing on the description of the generic structure (e.g., Connor, 2000; Connor and Mauranen, 1999; Connor and Wagner, 1999), and the other examining the grant proposal writing process using ethnographic methods (e.g., Myers, 1990). Swales (1990), in a two-page sketchy review of the genre, first described its organizational components to include 1) Front matter; 2) Introduction; 3) Background (typically a literature survey); 4) Description of proposed research (including method, approach, and evaluation instruments); and 5) Back matter. Connor (1998) then compared a university research proposal with a proposal written by a small nonprofit organization and found that the former focused heavily on a move to indicate how society at large would benefit from the proposed research. An attempt to develop a comprehensive move system of the genre was finally initiated by Connor and Mauranen (1999). Based on a sample of 34 proposals from European Union research grant applications, the researchers identified a ten-move scheme: 1) Establishing the *territory* in which the proposed research is placed; 2) Indicating a *gap* in the territory; 3) Stating the *goal* of the proposed study; 4) Specifying the *means* of how the goal will be achieved; 5) *Reporting previous research*; 6) Presenting anticipated *achievements*; 7) Describing *benefits* of the study; 8) Introducing the research team and making a *competence claim;* 9) Making an *importance claim* of the proposed research; and 10) Making a *compliance claim* to indicate relevance of the proposal to the objectives of the grant founder. The identification of the ten moves laid the foundation for later research on research grant proposals.

Using these ten moves, Connor (2000) later explored rhetorical variations in 14 research grant proposals written by five researchers (two from a school of humanities, and three from a science faculty). The study found that the move specifying research *means* occupied more space than any other single moves in the sample proposals. The move of establishing research *territory* had a wide range of variation in length (from two to 40 percent of the texts) among individual proposals. The study also noted occurrences or non-occurrences of certain moves. For example, moves presenting *benefits*, making *importance claim* or *competence claim* occurred in only half of the sample proposals, whereas moves that indicated research *territory*, *gap* in the territory, *goal* of the proposed study, and *means* to achieve the goal occurred consistently in the entire sample set.

Given that "it is no longer valid to present a study that focuses on the moves that a writer uses without a consideration of the role of the writer in the discourse community and the expectations of that community" (Flowerdew and Dudley-Evans, 2002, p. 465), some researchers combined textual analysis with interviews of grant writers (Connor, 2000; Connor and Wagner, 1999) or employed ethnographic methods to observe the grant proposal writing process (Myers, 1990; Van Nostrand, 1994). Connor (2000), for instance, interviewed five grant writers to determine the accuracy of move identifications in their texts, and Connor and Wagner (1999) interviewed seven grant writers from six different Latino nonprofit organizations in the US to explore textual representations of Latino identities and writers' awareness of the needs of reviewers. In comparison, Van Nostrand (1994) documented how the process of grant proposal writing (for military research and development sponsored by the U.S. government) shaped the proposed project through a negotiation between the grant writers and the funding agency. Also focusing on the process, Myers (1990) examined two biologists' grant writing and revising processes describing how the writers negotiated their uses of tones as well as referential behaviors according to different situations. The importance the research has stressed of combining analyses of textual and contextual features helps shape the methodological design of the present study.

In previous studies however, an important constitutive part genre—the summary of the research grant proposal—has so far not been examined. Besides, despite some descriptions of move variations in terms of occurrences versus non-occurrences of moves or length variations in some previous studies (e.g., Connor, 2000) we still know remarkably little about move mixing or move recurrence in the genre in question and more importantly, the rationale behind the communicative complexity.

Move mixing is an issue that many genre analysts have noticed; at the same time however, it is an issue of which there has been no satisfactory explanation, either theoretical or methodological. Because of this, there has been a heated debate concerning whether "reporting previous research" should be assigned a move, a step or neither (Crookes, 1986; Bhatia, 1993, Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Samraj, 2002; Swales, 1990); and because of this, there is an analysis tip shared by

move analysts of labeling a move by its most salient function (Holmes, 1997). Flowerdew (2002) recognized the complex form-function relationship at the level of move, though without detailed discussion, and related it to speech act categories as well as Halliday's three meaning components.

As Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) rightly pointed out, genre analysis is dynamic and clarificatory rather than static and classificatory; therefore it would be wiser to investigate the rationale behind the act of move mixing rather than focusing on analytical problems and solutions. Bhatia's research on genre mixing (1993, 1995) provides some useful insights into the explanation and interpretation of move mixing. While genre mixing and move mixing are issues of two different levels, they are comparable in the sense that both of them could be the manipulations of the writer to express "private intentions". For instance, Hyland (2000) noticed the syntactic merging of "objectives" and "methods" in research article abstracts, and explained it not only as a "rational response to the space constraints" but also as a useful rhetorical strategy to "insinuate the appropriacy of the technique by strategically linking the approach in an unproblematic and reasonable way to accomplishing the research objective" (pp. 73-74).

Move recurrence, particularly in texts with large size, is another source of textual complexity and may give rise to fuzziness in move analysis. Flowerdew and Dudley-Evans (2002) pointed out that "a move approach is valid for the limited and short genres with a focused number of rhetorical options available to the writer of the genre" (p. 465). Perhaps for this reason, although there have been quite a number of studies using structural move analysis, most of them focus either on the genres with short texts, such as business letters (e.g. Bhatia, 1993; Pinto doe Santos, 2002), medical abstracts (Salager-Meyer, 1990), acknowledgement texts (Giannoni, 2002), editorial letters (Flowerdew and Dudley-Evans, 2002), or on sub-genres, such as research articles introductions (e.g. Bhatia, 1993; Samraj, 2002; Swales, 1981, 1990), research articles results (e.g. Brett, 1994; Tompson, 1993), and research articles discussions (Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988). Swales in analyzing research articles recognized the enormous size of the genre and "the considerable difficulty in making well-validated decisions about how that whole should be divided up" (1990, p.110). He used the term 'sections' rather than 'moves' to label the IMRD (Introduction-Method-Results-Discussion) pattern of research articles, and examined the structural moves only within the sections. In his discussion of the grant proposal genre, Swales (1990) also used the word 'parts' rather than 'moves' in naming the first layer of organizational components. Connor's studies (e.g., Connor and Mauranen, 1999; Connor, 2000) on grant proposals are among the few studies that used structural move analysis to examine texts with considerable length[1]. However, the studies did not address the issue of move recurrences in this long genre and failed to explain how well the ten-move structure they identified corresponded to the original section divisions prescribed by institutional guidelines. Since the idea of move analysis is to "interpret regularities of organization in order to understand the rationale for the genre" (Bhatia 1993, p. 32), how to apply move analysis appropriately in genres with large

size so that we can see a clear depiction of organizational regularities, and furthermore, how to interpret the writers' tactical use of move recurrence would be an interesting issue for move analysts to deal with.

Further studies are hence needed to describe the generic structure of the summary and the main text of research grant proposals as well as move variations, and to explain the underlying social conventions and interactions that generate the textual features. By analyzing both textual and interview data (the interviews with the participating grant writers), this study aims to answer the following two research questions:

(1)   What are the generic structure of the summary and the main text of the nine SSHRC grant proposals respectively?

(2)   What are the rhetorical patterns or strategies that participants employ in achieving the communicative purposes of the genre?

3. Methods

3.1. Participants

In order to collect samples of SSHRC Standard Research Grant proposals that "have gained legitimacy in the eyes of community gatekeepers" (Hyland, 2000, p. 139), we contacted individual SSHRC recipients in the faculty of education of the participating university in the winter of 2000. Nine education professors volunteered to participate in our study by sharing their proposals and giving us one-hour interview time. As authors of successful proposals, these professors were the most desirable informants (e.g., Huckin & Olsen, 1984; Palys, 1997). All participants were native English-speakers. As Table 1 summarizes the participants' profiles (using pseudonyms), three were male and the rest were female. At the time of data collection, except Bob who was an assistant professor and Diane who was an associate professor, the other seven participants were all full professors. Based on SSHRC's distinction between new and regular scholars (http://www.sshrc.ca), both Bob and Diane were identified as new scholars who had either completed their PhD degree less than five years or had a university tenure tracked appointment for less than five years; the other seven participants were all regular scholars who had already established an extensive record of research achievements. Table 1 also shows that, except for Bob who obtained a SSHRC grant in 1998, all the other eight professors were successful in the 1999 competition.

Table 1: Participants' Profiles

ID*	Gender	Title	New/Regular scholar	Year of the proposal
Ann	Female	Professor	Regular scholar	1999
Bob	Male	Assistant Prof.	New scholar	1998
Carol	Female	Professor	Regular scholar	1999
Diane	Female	Associate Prof.	New scholar	1999
Eliza	Female	Professor	Regular scholar	1999
Flora	Female	Professor	Regular scholar	1999
Gloria	Female	Professor	Regular scholar	1999
Henry	Male	Professor	Regular scholar	1999
Ian	Male	Professor	Regular scholar	1999

* Pseudonyms are used for confidential reasons

3.2. Data collection and analyses

The nine research grant proposals have a total of 39,325 running words. Depending on the font, the one-page summary ranges from 271 to 890 words with a total of 5,325 words, and the six-page summary ranges from 2,454 to 5,171 words with a total of 34,000 words. Structural move analysis was performed on both the summaries and main texts. We draw on two sources in identifying the moves. One is the literature on the generic structure of grant proposals and research articles (e.g., Connor, 2000; Connor & Mauranen, 1999; Samjar, 2000; Swales, 1990); the other is the SSHRC website that contains proposal guidelines (http://www.sshrc.ca). We considered the guidelines important because they have a "status of mandatory prescription" exerting great influence on the writing process (Locke et al., 2000, p. 7).

To develop a reliable coding scheme, the first author and another research assistant (a graduate student in the area of language education) first familiarized themselves with the Swalesean move and step analysis together. They then coded five of the nine proposals (both the summaries and main texts) independently, reviewed each other's coding, and discussed the differences until a complete agreement was reached. Based on the agreement and a refined coding scheme, the first author then applied the moves and steps to the remaining four proposals. Finally, we calculated the frequencies and percentages of words of each move/step to identify rhetorical patterns in the summaries and main texts of the sample proposals.

We also solicited each percipient's perceptions of their own written product and writing process through a one-hour discourse-based interview. Using semi-structured questions, participants were invited to talk about their rationales behind linguistic or rhetorical choices with reference to their previous experiences of grant proposal writing, their understandings of the writing conventions in question, and

their views of the reader-writer relationship in writing the research grant proposal. Upon completion of our analyses, we contacted individual participants again via email to verify the generic and individual textual features in their proposals.

4. Findings and discussion

4.1. A three-move scheme of the summaries

The summary is "the first real rhetorical test" (Swales, 1990, p. 187) in grant proposal writing though no previous study has examined it systematically. In our analysis of the nine summaries of the sample proposals, we identified three moves which, as Table 2 illustrates, constitute a logical and sequential generic structure of the summary. It begins with a justification of research *need*, moves to outline the *means* of meeting the research need, and then concludes with a claim of potential *contributions* of the proposed study. Each move is further distinguished into two or three steps (with a total of eight steps) that help realize the communicative purpose of the move. The first move of *need* is accomplished through three steps: establishing a *territory* in which the proposed study is situated, indicating a *niche* due to a real-world problem or a gap in current knowledge, and reporting *the proposers' own previous research* as part of the research territory and the indication of the proposers' research competence. The second move of *means* contains two steps of outlining research *objectives* and describing research *method*. The third move of *contributions* is distinguished into three steps of making claims about the *importance*, *achievement* and *benefits* of the proposed study.

Table 2. A move-step scheme of grant proposal summaries

Moves	Steps	Examples
Move 1. Justifying a research ***need*** (A move that justifies a research need by creating a research space and indicating its real-world importance.)	Step 1. Establishing a real-world/research ***territory***	As school-based teacher educators, these classroom teachers are involved in the development of the teaching profession, or as Lave and Wenger (1991) argue "the generative process of producing their own future" (p.57). *(Cited from Bob)*
	Step 2. Indicating a ***niche***	This transition between levels of understanding is not well understood by the mathematics education communities. *(Cited from Eliza)*
	Step 3. Reporting the proposers' **own previous research**	Our first SSHRC funded examination of YRS (Year Round Schooling) permitted us to study several Canadian schools… *(From Gloria)*

Move 2. Describing *means* to meet the research need (A move that outlines the objectives and methods to achieve the objectives.)	Step 1. Outlining research *objectives* Step 2. Describing research *method*	The purpose of the proposed research agenda is to begin to determine the relationships between changing to a form of year-round calendar and issues of equity and social justice. …*(Cited from Gloria)* To this end, we intend to work closely with teachers on the planning and implementing of …. Groups of students will be video taped as… Video-stimulated recall and clinical interviewing techniques will be used to…. *(Cited from Eliza)*
Move 3. Claiming potential *contributions* (A move that claims the importance, achievement and benefits of the proposed study)	Step 1. Claiming *importance* Step 2. Claiming *achievements* Step 3. Claiming *benefits*	In this way, the Public Knowledge Project speaks to the urgent need for research on the potential of these new structures. *(Cited from Henry)* This study seeks to understand to what extent teen magazines promote or limit possibilities for young women and how schools can address the challenges posed by mass media. *(Cited from Diane)* The study contributes to research on young children's prosocial development and instructional approaches to teaching social understanding. *(Cited from Gloria)*

Table 3 illustrates a general tendency that the three moves appeared consistently and in a relatively fixed order. Of the nine summaries, four (by Ann, Bob, Diane, and Gloria) followed the exact order of the three moves (*need, means,* and *contributions*). Except Carol and Henry who missed Move 1 (*need*) and Eliza missed Move 3 (*contributions*), all other participants made the three moves in their summaries. Among the nine participants, five (Ann, Bob, Diane, Gloria, and Eliza) started their summaries with Move 1 and the other four (Carol, Henry, Ian, and Flora) started with Move 2 (*means*). By fronting the second move to describe research objectives, these participants' summaries match Swales' (1990, p. 165) observation of an "expectation in research grant applications that there should be early indications of what will be done." However, with only four summaries fronting the second move, the phenomenon needs further examination in future research.

Table 3. Move variations of the nine summaries

Move variations	Instances
Move 1 (*need*) → Move 2 (*means*) → Move 3 (*contributions*)	Ann, Bob, Diane, Gloria
Move 1 (*need*) → Move 2 (*means*)	Eliza
Move 2 (*need*) → Move 3 (*contributions*)	Carol, Henry
Move 2 (*means*) → Move 1 (*need*) → Move 2 (*means*) → Move 1 (*need*) → Move 2 (*means*) → Move 3 (*contributions*)	Ian, Flora

4.2. Rhetorical strategies in grant proposal summaries

There are some interesting rhetorical features in grant proposal summaries that distinguished this sub-genre from other related genres such as research article abstracts. Relating to the writers' interpretations, these features could be seen as strategies the grant writers tend to employ to achieve the promotional purpose as well as to address the audience. We are going to highlight some of these in the ensuing three sub-sections.

4.2.1. Giving considerable space to "describing research means"

In grant proposal summaries, Move 2-mainly the description of research means-seems to be given a prominent status. As shown in Table 5, the move appeared in all the grant proposal summaries in this corpus and was found to occupy an average of 49 percent of the total length of the summaries. Among the participants, Diane and Henry actually wrote their summaries mainly to describe research *means* (86% and 74% respectively). While the Method section in research articles or research article abstracts might be 'de-emphasized' or 'downgraded' (Swales, 1990, p.169), the high percentage of words describing *means* in the sample summaries stands as a unique feature.

Some participating professors mentioned in their interviews that it was their priority and rhetorical strategy to demonstrate a well-designed study in order to persuade the reviewers to make a positive decision. Compared to authors of published research papers whose methodological appropriateness were often taken for granted, the participating grant writers felt the need to explain the research means at the stage when the validity of the research is judged solely upon this move. And it is in this move that grant writers demonstrate their familiarity with the research approach of the field, and establish their credibility as prudent scholars.

Table 4. Words and percentages of three moves in the nine summaries

Participants	Move 1 (*need*)		Move 2 (*means*)		Move 3 (*contributions*)		Total	
	words	%	words	%	words	%	words	%
Ann	310	46%	306	45%	61	9%	**677**	**100%**
Bob	209	50%	97	23%	114	27%	**420**	**100%**
Carol	0	0	291	65%	155	35%	**446**	**100%**
Diane	24	3%	591	86%	75	11%	**690**	**100%**
Eliza	380	59%	262	41%	0	0	**642**	**100%**
Flora	220	41%	282	53%	32	6%	**534**	**100%**
Gloria	538	60%	248	28%	104	12%	**890**	**100%**
Henry	0	0	201	74%	70	26%	**271**	**100%**
Ian	270	36%	337	45%	148	20%	**755**	**100%**
Mean	**217**	**37%**	**291**	**49%**	**84**	**14%**	**592**	**100%**

4.2.2. Emphasizing real-world relevance

In the step of "establishing a territory", seven proposal summaries discussed the real world relevance of the proposed study. The following are two examples:

- …Each year the (Participating University) Teacher Education Office arranges for 1400 teachers to act as school advisors for their student teachers. Given that the student teachers regard the practicum as the most important phase of their professional year(s) in teacher education, and school advisors as the most important element of that phase, it is incumbent upon the faulty of education to know more about our school-based partners in preservice teacher education. … *(Cited from Bob)*

- Interest in the mass media has emerged as central to language arts curricula, not only in British Columbia but in other provinces in Canada. … *(Cited from Diane)*

The above examples illustrate how Bob and Diane created urgency for the proposed research by relating it to a real-world problem. This urgency is necessary because, according to Connor and Mauranen (1999), many grant programs tend to emphasize research with applications for the real world. Their observation was confirmed by the participating professors' comments:

Gloria: In a way, it's what they (SSHRC) are asking for. They want to know who is going to be affected, who might use it and in what ways.

Carol: The head of the SSHRC a couple of years ago used a new phrase "go public or perish". It's the idea that we have to be out there. People have to know what we are doing and why we are doing it. It's having an impact not just on us; it's actually having ripple effects on our profession and the society. So the way I understand "promotion" is how it (the research project) matters to the society.

> Flora: In terms of drawing in the reader, because I write for the SSHRC audience, I always look to the link between theory and practice, that is, to see how important this research is both from the theoretical point of view, but also from the point of view of informing what we do in schools.

All the professors mentioned that they chose to emphasize the practical relevance of the proposed research mainly to address the SSHRC audience. It is their intention to relate their research to the real-world needs and finally to communicate their findings to the wider community; however it is the funding agency that pushed them to reflect it in grant writing.

4.2.3. Deemphasizing other research and foregrounding the proposers' own previous research

In Swales' (1990) study on research article introductions, reporting previous research either in terms of general statements or in terms of specific references is a very important part in establishing a territory. He termed the general statement of previous research as 'topic generalization' and specific references as 'reporting items of previous research'. Two of them were identified as two independent steps in the first move of 'establishing a territory'. The reason why 'establishing a territory' becomes a step only in this analysis of research grant proposal summaries is that only one summary (Gloria's) in this corpus had comparable content of 'topic generalization', and only Bob and Diane had respectively four and two specific citations in discussing real-world concerns. In most cases, statements about the current knowledge were very brief as in the following example, the purpose of which was to introduce the research gap:

> There has been little systematic research focused on the actual activity of students posing problems and none of it addresses questions concerning the cognitive actions called forth in problem posing contexts. *(Cited from Eliza)*

With no explicit and lengthy discussion of the literature, the grant writers are taking account of the length limits and the reader who might not be a specialist of the proposed research field:

> Gloria: I think everybody reads the summary but not everybody reads the whole proposal. So the summary is addressed to a different audience. SSHRC actually says in its guideline to make sure that you choose to write in lay language and avoid jargon because not everybody is going to understand. They are not going to be in your discipline.

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> Flora: Self-citation is in an intelligent fashion. It's not just throwing them in to impress the committee, but because the committee is looking at how programmatic your research is. Part of what you need to be doing is convincing them what you have been doing. You have been producing publications that come from previous funding. I think the biggest motivation is to show that you are making an intellectual contribution.
>
> Carol: SSHRC tends to fund whom they have already funded; in other words, the hardest one to get, this is my impression anyway, is the first grant. I suppose in some way it is the elite group who are getting the funding…I think it's not just the proposal they (grant committee) they are judging; they are judging the whole package.

As the first rhetorical unit of a promotional genre, grant proposal summaries need to sell the proposed research and the researchers, and to win the rapport of the reader at this very early stage. A general negational evaluation of previous research, together with the weight given to self-citation, has very strategically served this purpose.

4.3. A ten-move scheme of the main text

Ten moves were identified in the main text of the sample proposals based mainly on Connor and Mauranen's (1999) ten-move scheme (See Table 5). As can be seen, these ten moves are not completely the same as the ten moves Connor and Mauranen (1999) identified in their study. First, the move of "reporting previous research" was not included, as we believe "reporting previous research" is part of a text labeled more from an ideational perspective than from a functional perspective. Although "reporting previous research" is assigned almost a Section (Section Two) in SSHRC grant proposals, it is not a homogeneous chunk; rather, it serves several rhetorical functions. Therefore it was assigned to different moves according to the particular rhetorical value it realizes. Second, the move of "compliance claim" in Connor and Mauranen (1999), which states the relevance of the proposal to the set of goals of the funding agency, was not present in my corpus. Third, a move of "communication of results" was added, which might be specific to SSHRC. But other funding agencies are very likely to have similar requirements on the discussion of how results of the proposed research will be communicated to the potential audience or beneficiary because of an increasing emphasis on real-world relevance nowadays. Fourth, a move of "meta-discourse", though only occurred in two proposals, was also identified as an independent move as it introduced the structure or the content of the ensuing discourse, particularly in sections with lengthy discussion.

Table 5. Ten moves of the main texts

Moves	Examples
Establishing a real-world/ research *territory*	Much of the current literature on education reform focuses on structures. As many writers point out (Bear & Boyd, 1993; Wallberg, 1997), some educators emphasize the need for increased centralization and accountability; others call for decentralization and a concomitant empowerment of teachers and parents through enhanced opportunities for professionalism (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Lichtenstein et al., 1992), for choice (Brown, 1998) or for voice (Murphy, 1992). *(Cited from Gloria)*
Indicating a *niche* in terms of a research gap or a real-world problem	The impoverished state of professional development opportunities for many school advisors highlights the need to understand better who they are and how they make sense of their work with student teachers. *(Cited from Bob)*
Outlining general or specific *objectives* or research questions	The specific purposes of this research, and related research questions, are: a) to examine and describe the family career development project as a means of facilitating family involvement in the career development of adolescents in economically disadvantaged families (What are the family career development projects in disadvantaged families? How are these constructed, steered and maintained?) *(Cited from Ian)*
Describing *method*	To accomplish this objective, microgenetic analysis of children's responses during an intensive instructional program will be undertaken. *(Cited from Eliza)*
Claiming anticipated *achievements*	The research will result in … profiles of internet-based knowledge use, current and potential among communities with an interest in education … *(Cited from Henry)*
Discussing the value of research or *benefits*	This study will not only benefit professional practitioners, but also policy-makers, teacher educators, artists and researchers. … *(Cited from Carol)*
Claiming *competence* using one's own track record	Through this work I have established strong links with the … School Districts and with individual mathematics teachers. … *(Cited from Eliza)*
Claiming *importance* of the topic	The direct of the research will be a detailed and deeper understanding of a potentially valuable phenomenon -- student problem posing-- that has received scant attention by the mathematics education community. *(Cited from Eliza)*

Reporting anticipated audience and means of *communication* **of results**	Our results will be communicated to three primary audiences: teachers in greater Vancouver; the Canadian educational community; and the international research community of applied linguists and language educators. *... (Cited from Diane)*
Introducing content organization using *meta-discourse*	The following discussion will focus on literature concerning structural change, equity, and leadership as the basis for this research project on issues of social justice in year-round schooling. *(Cited from Gloria)*

Table 6 summarizes the number of words and percentages of ten moves in the main text of the nine proposals. As the table shows, the move of *method* occupied the most space (mean of 32%) followed by the moves of *territory* (mean of 26%), *competence* (mean of 11%), and *objectives* (mean of 10%). The other six moves each occupied less than a mean of six percent of the text. It is interesting to note that the moves of *method* and *objectives* together occupied an average of 42 percent of the main text, which is close to the percentage of the two corresponding steps under the move of *means* in the summary (mean of 49%). Further, the high percentage of the *territory* move in the present proposals written by experienced university researchers shed doubts on Connor's (2000, p. 11) statement that only "a lower experience level of the proposal writer appeared to coincide with a greater amount of space given over to establishing territory."

Table 6. Words and percentages of ten moves in the main text of the nine proposals

Moves	Words and percentages									
	Ann	**Bob**	**Carol**	**Diane**	**Eliza**	**Flora**	**Gloria**	**Henry**	**Ian**	**Mean**
Territory	979 29%	1,597 35%	809 26%	1,567 43%	1,113 28%	979 26%	923 18%	203 8%	759 19%	**992 26%**
Niche	95 3%	480 11%	199 6%	196 5%	418 11%	45 1%	495 10%	74 3%	190 5%	**244 6%**
Objectives	510 15%	419 9%	425 13%	367 10%	232 6%	407 11%	307 6%	280 11%	519 13%	**385 10%**
Method	904 27%	724 16%	1,145 36%	816 22%	1,066 27%	1,891 51%	1,876 36%	1,099 45%	1,340 34%	**1,207 32%**
Achievements	0 0%	45 1%	100 3%	0 0%	34 1%	0 0%	156 3%	383 16%	58 1%	**86 2%**
Benefits	0 0%	270 6%	107 3%	52 1%	104 3%	180 5%	208 4%	93 4%	304 8%	**146 4%**
Competence	709 21%	587 13%	246 8%	487 13%	374 9%	0 0%	746 14%	0 0%	564 14%	**413 11%**
Importance	15 0%	201 4%	40 1%	28 1%	391 10%	104 3%	61 1%	167 7%	144 4%	**128 3%**
Communication	169 5%	201 4%	90 3%	121 3%	236 6%	105 3%	365 7%	155 6%	100 3%	**171 5%**
Meta-discourse	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	18 0%	0 0%	0 0%	34 1%	0 0%	0 0%	**6 0%**
Total	**3,381 100%**	**4,524 100%**	**3,161 100%**	**3,652 100%**	**3,968 100%**	**3,711 100%**	**5,172 100%**	**2,454 100%**	**3,978 100%**	**3,778 100%**

4.4 Recurrences of moves in the main text and ICMC framework

The ten moves in the main text recurred frequently with no particular order. In order to see clearly how these functional components are actually organized, we used SSHRC guidelines on section boundaries as a framework against which to examine moves within as well as across content sections. The four content sections required by SSHRC guidelines are: 1) *Introduction* that states the objectives of the proposed research; 2) *Context* that establishes a research territory; 3) *Method* of the proposed research; and 4) *Communication of results*. The grant writers' "eager compliance" (Connor and Mauranen, 1999, p. 51) with the requirements of the funding agency can be clearly seen from the fact that they all used corresponding headings or subheadings to highlight the four sections. It may be this eager compliance that results in the move recurrences, considering that the grant writers could only maneuver their private intentions within the specified sections. As Table 7 shows, of the ten moves, except the move of *Communication of Results* that occurred only in the *Communication of Results* section, the other nine moves were found to spread across sections. Further examination of the move recurrences revealed some interesting trends in moves arrangement, such as the tendency to set the scene for the reader and a niche-centered tide-like structure in literature review.

Table 7. Ten moves and four sections in the main text of the nine proposals

Moves	Number of proposals where the move is present			
	Introduction	**Context**	**Method**	**Communication**
Territory	7	9	2	1
Objectives	9	8	5	1
Importance	2	5	1	2
Competence	1	5	2	2
Niche	6	9	1	
Method	1	4	9	
Benefits		7	3	1
Achievements		3	2	1
Communication				9
Meta-discourse		1	1	

4.5. Some rhetorical strategies in the main text of research grant proposals

In the main text of research grant proposals where more rhetorical options are available because of its length, rhetorical strategies are diversified. Here we focus on the discussion of strategies in terms of the move arrangement.

4.5.1. *Strategy One: Setting the scene for the reader*

In Table 7, we can see that "Territory" can be found in all the four sections while "Niche" can be found in the first three sections. The frequent recurrences of "Territory" and "Niche" in the first three sections, particularly in the first two

sections, seem to suggest that to set the scene for the reader is an important thing that the grant writers had in their mind throughout the writing process.

Interestingly, if we refer to the SSHRC guideline (http://www.sshrc.ca), we may note that there is only one section, the second section—"Context", in which a literature review is prescribed and the moves of "Territory" and "Niche" thus most possibly occur. The first section for instance, according to the SSHRC guideline, should present *objectives* of the proposed research briefly and explicitly. Nevertheless, only two grant writers, Ann and Eliza, wrote to meet the SSHRC requirement exactly. All the other proposals, either with the help of an additional introductory section or within the section of 'Objective' itself, attempted to create a research space first. Here is an episode from Bob's first section of the main text:

Classroom teachers who work with beginning teachers in practicum settings play one of the most critical roles in pre-service teacher education. As school-based teacher educators, these classroom teachers are involved in the development of the teaching profession, or as Lave and Wenger (199 1) argue "the generative process of producing their own future" (p. 57).

Territory
↓

Despite an extensive literature on 'training' programs for school advisors (the name given to school-based teacher educators at University of British Columbia) and numerous accounts of their shortcomings we know remarkably little about the teachers who take on this work or the pedagogy they employ in their interaction with student teachers.

Niche
↓

The objective of the study is to extend the research on school advisors beyond these two literatures. The study has three phases. The first two phases are empirical and constitute the main research effort for which the SSHRC funding is sought. The third phase is conceptual and will begin within the proposed research period but extend beyond that time to involve further research and development efforts. …

Objectives

As a new scholar applying for SSHRC for the first time, Bob was obviously eager to comply with the guidelines with headings and sub-headings of his proposal perfectly conforming to the requirements. However, as the example shows, Bob did not state the *objectives* until a research *territory* had been established and a *niche* had been indicated. Previous researchers suggest that although the "fronted" *objectives* are important for the genre of the research proposal (Swales, 1990), there is a great need for writers in the soft knowledge domains to situate their discourse (Hyland, 2000). This was confirmed by Flora's explanation in the interview about the importance of setting the scene for the reader in her disciplinary writing. She said, "SSHRC guidelines prescribe 'the first part'; this doesn't mean that the objectives need to or should be stated immediately. It is good research practice to set the context first."

The occurrences of the two moves in the first section did not seem to prevent them from appearing frequently again in the second section. The two moves appeared in the second section of all the nine proposals with high frequency. Even in Section Three (Description of research means) and Section Four (Communication of results)-the two comparatively homogeneous sections-we can see the existence of "territory". It indicates the grant writers' great concern to make the proposed research accessible to the reader who may not be the experts of their discipline.
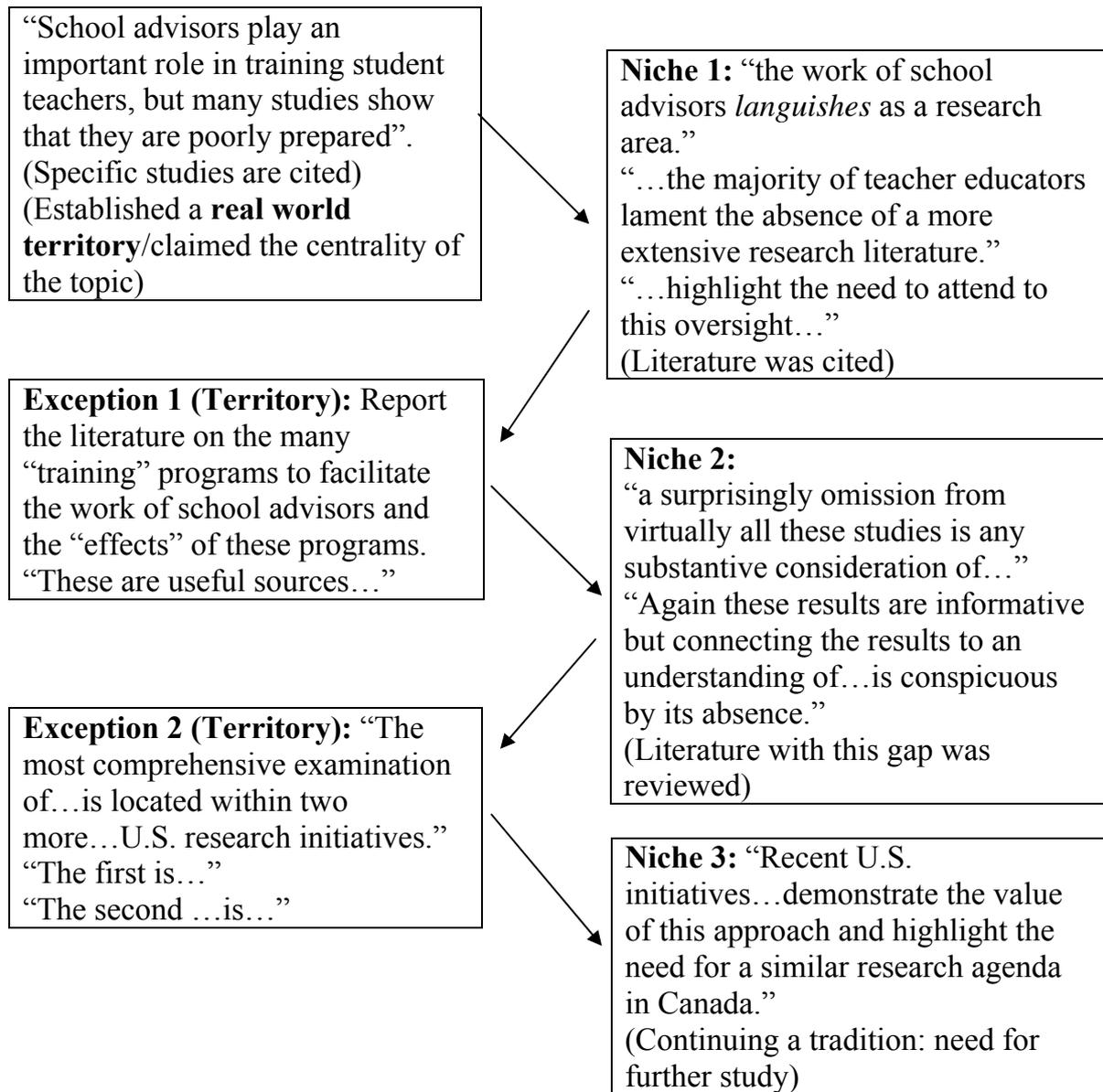
4.5.2. Strategy two: A niche-centered tide-like structure

The frequent recurrence of the two moves also leads to our observation of a niche-centered tide-like in the literature review of Bob, Diane and Eliza's proposals. An example of such structure from Bob is shown in flow-chart (see Figure 1). As can be seen, in this particular structure, the recurrences of the 'territory' and 'niche' should not be considered simply as "recycling of moves". Rather, the running of the text is like the tide, one wave after another, washing up, washing back, and ensuing with washing up again, pushing the discussion of the topic forward. Each niche is not just a simple repetition of the previous one. In this example for instance, the first niche states the general lack of research within the topic-related field. The raising of the first niche is accompanied by the partly filling of it--the discussion of some of the studies in the field. Based on this first ebb, the second niche emerges that all these studies fail to consider from a certain perspective. The text then washes back again, discussing two large U.S. projects that paid attention to these aspects mentioned in niche two. After this second ebb, the writer comes up with the third niche, that is, the necessity to continue the study in the Canadian context.

The occurrence of this structure in literature review serves the promotional purpose of the genre and at the same time has important interpersonal consequences. In order to demonstrate the importance and the originality of the proposed research, grant writers are in pressing need to point out the niche in the literature. Accordingly, they usually employ a niche-centered structure and tend to give previous research negative evaluations. However, it might thus sound too blunt and fail to facilitate solidarity with the reader. By strategically using the "multiple wave" approach, the writer could tone down the negative evaluation of the literature, mitigate the effects of criticism and head off possible objections.

This tide-like structure is not simply a promotional plus politeness device. It also reflects and reports the spiral development of research and the advancement of knowledge. In this sense, it could also be a strategy used in the literature review of other academic writing, such as research articles. But since this rhetorical strategy has not been mentioned in the literature as far as we know, it calls for further examination of its appearance in other academic genres.

Figure 1. An example of niche-centered tide-like structure from Bob

"School advisors play an important role in training student teachers, but many studies show that they are poorly prepared". (Specific studies are cited) (Established a **real world territory**/claimed the centrality of the topic)

Niche 1: "the work of school advisors *languishes* as a research area."
"…the majority of teacher educators lament the absence of a more extensive research literature."
"…highlight the need to attend to this oversight…"
(Literature was cited)

Exception 1 (Territory): Report the literature on the many "training" programs to facilitate the work of school advisors and the "effects" of these programs. "These are useful sources…"

Niche 2:
"a surprisingly omission from virtually all these studies is any substantive consideration of…"
"Again these results are informative but connecting the results to an understanding of…is conspicuous by its absence."
(Literature with this gap was reviewed)

Exception 2 (Territory): "The most comprehensive examination of…is located within two more…U.S. research initiatives."
"The first is…"
"The second …is…"

Niche 3: "Recent U.S. initiatives…demonstrate the value of this approach and highlight the need for a similar research agenda in Canada."
(Continuing a tradition: need for further study)

4.5.3. Strategy three: Mixing moves to serve promotional purposes

The instances of move mixing are not few and far between in the nine SSHRC proposals. In some cases, it is the result of syntactic convenience, as in the following example:

- The public Knowledge Project uses an iterative and participatory design model that will involve educators, researchers, policy makers, and the public <u>in building and evaluating a collaborative knowledge management website prototype.</u> (*Cited from Henry: method* with *objective* embedded, *objective* underlined)

In some other cases, it may be consciously accomplished to express the grant writer's private intentions:

- The second complementary objective of the project is to use the opportunity presented by the needed research for the manuscript to train several graduate students, … Their involvement in the project will, hopefully, secure them each of them a student or co-authored journal publication and/or paper presentation. (*Cited from Ann: objective* with *benefits* embedded)

- Finally, the research has a very practical, classroom-based focus. We wish to draw on research findings to develop a resource booklet that can help language arts teachers in … to engage the mass media strand of the language arts curriculum in a creative and critical way. Once the booklet has been piloted, we plan to publish it in Canada so that teachers nationwide can have access to our research. (*Cited from Diane: objective* with *communication of results* embedded)

The above examples show how the grant writers exploited the move-*objectives* to facilitate their private intentions. The move of *objectives*, according to academic conventions, should be a move discussing the goals of the research itself. However, Ann and Diane extended the meaning of "objectives" intentionally to include and underscore anticipated *benefits* of training of students, and plans for *communication of results*. It is not coincident because training of students and plans of how to communicate research results are two key factors in funding adjudication (http://**www.sshrc.ca**). In SSHRC grant writing workshops at the participating university, we noticed that the attendees were advised to lay emphasis on these two aspects for the preference of the grant committee.

In the sample proposals, we also find some instances of deliberate mixing of informative and promotional communicative intentions as in the following case:

- Y, V and C (1996) have proposed an approach to career development based on action theory. This approach is based on the understanding of the goal-directedness and intentionality of human behavior. It is particularly heuristic for the study of career because the latter is based on reflective communicative and symbolic action. This theory represents a significant advance in the field by establishing a sound conceptual framework for career development research and practice from a social constructionist perspective. (*Cited from Ian*)

This is the opening paragraph of Ian's Section Two—"Context". It introduced an approach to career development that the proposed research would draw upon. In this sense, it could be assigned to the move "territory" since it serves the informative function to set the scene for the reader about the research field. However, considering Y was actually the principal investigator of the proposed project, and the use of evaluative phrases such as "particularly heuristic for", "a significant advance", and "establishing a sound conceptual framework", the

writer's self-promotional intention is clearly seen. The interesting thing is that this paragraph is not displayed as a direct competence claim; rather, it positions the writer as an outsider to seemingly objectively evaluate his own work as part of the literature.

The examples discussed above suggest that in this unique genre, grant writers often purposely exploit the generic feature of one move to express the communicative intention of another. The ultimate purpose is to promote the proposed research or the researcher so as to get funding. This kind of exploitation and manipulation, in Bob's eyes, makes grant writing a kind of creative writing:

> Bob: That's why some people are so skillful at it. People might be brilliant researchers, but they can't get the money, because they don't know how to do it, to do the creative writing almost in some senses.

5. Conclusion

Through a genre analysis of nine successful SSHRC grant proposals we have offered in this study not only a description of the generic structures of both the summary and the main text of research grant proposals, but also a discussion of the rhetorical strategies used by the grant writers. Some strategies are common to both sub-genres such as emphasizing research method to demonstrate a well-designed study, stressing the real-world relevance, and foregrounding the proposers' own previous research. Some strategies are unique to the summary such as the general negational review of previous research, which may result from the negotiation of two somewhat contradictory needs--self-promotional need and the need to avoid face-threatening within the limited space of the summary. Some strategies only appear in the main text such as the repeated occurrences of "territory" and "niche" across sections for the purpose of setting the scene for the reader. All these strategies, reflected in texts as rhetorical features, distinguish the genre of research grant proposals from other academic genres such as research articles.

Another concern of this study is the move recurrence and move mixing in this particular genre. Research grant proposals, especially those submitted for national grants, are usually of large size, where move recurrence and move mixing are salient textual features we cannot neglect. By analyzing move recurrences within as well as across the content sections we see clearly not only the overall organization and the functional units of the genre but also the grant writers' underlying discursive intentions. It thus suggests the generalizability of the method to the analysis of other long genres. In investigating the instances of move mixing we also focused on the rationale behind the communicative complexity rather than the analytical problems and solutions. The analyses reveal the grant writers' strong intention to promote their proposed research as well as themselves as researchers so as to get funding to begin their first step in knowledge making.

With only nine research grant proposals from one funding agency in our corpus, we cannot make any generalizations concerning the genre in question. Nevertheless,

with an attempt not only to describe but also to explain the features of the genre, we believe our study could provide some implications for both move analysts and grant proposal learner writers.

Note:

1. Connor and Mauranen (1999) did not mention the length of their sample grant proposals; however, Connor (2000) did mention the proposal length, which ranges from 57 lines to 1,326 lines, with an average length of 432 lines.

2. Length of self-reference (words)/length of the summary (words): Ann: 81/677; Eliza: 103/644; Flora: 54/535; Gloria: 104/890; Ian: (75+19)/755

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ABSTRACT

Genre Analysis of Research Grant Proposals

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This paper examines nine successful SSHRC (*Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada)* standard research grant proposals written by nine professors in the field of education at a Canadian university. The study follows the tradition of *move* analysis developed by Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) to describe the generic structures of the summary (one page) and main text (six pages) of the sample proposals. Findings suggest a three-move scheme of the summary and a ten-move scheme of the main text. Compared with a comparatively sequential move structure in the summary, the rhetorical structure of the main text with move recurrences and move mixing appears to be quite complex. The study addresses the issues of move recurrence and move mixing by revealing the grant writers' rationale behind their discursive act. Based on the analyses of both textual and interview data, the study also describes and explains the rhetorical strategies the writers employed in achieving the promotional purposes and addressing the reviewer committee. Implications for move analysts and suggestions for grant proposal learner writers are also included.

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