

Move Patterns in Iranian Efl Learners' Written Summaries of Short Stories: Probing the Would-Be Role of Gender and Writing Proficiency

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Abstract: The ability to write an effective summary might be regarded as one of the most important writing skills a college student is supposed to acquire. To gain an adequate level of expertise in summary writing, learners need to draw on sound strategies, among the least-heeded instances of which mention might be made of the use of overriding move patterns that configure any piece of academic writing. In an attempt to bring the educational/academic stakeholders into closer terms with the implications of move analysis for the partially-neglected, yet prominent skill of summary writing, the researchers in the current study amassed a corpus of 141 written summaries of 4 short stories from 55 BA English Literature students at Urmia State University. Resorting to a top-down approach in analysis of discourse, the researchers, then, went about the analysis of the obtained data based on the Swalsian definition of move. Later, in their hunt for the possible impact of writing power on the utilization of different move patterns, the researchers divided the corpus into three groups of weak, average and strong writings. Finally, the corpus was divided based on students' gender to compare the patterns of moves used by male and female students. The study led to the extraction of seven overriding moves, two of which, i.e. 'plot' and 'climax' were rendered obligatory. Furthermore, in line with the gained upshots, a significant relationship was found to hold between degree of strength of WSSS (written summaries of short stories) and the moves used in them. Ultimately, based on the findings, a significant correlation was reported to be at work between students' gender and the moves used in their WSSS.

Key words: Move analysis % Swalsian approach % WSSS (written summaries of short stories)

INTRODUCTION

Foreword: Writing is always seen as one of the most prominent skills in EFL pedagogy whose paramountcy is especially underscored in academic and higher educational settings. However, for the students, writing is mostly regarded as a challenging and unmanageable task. This leaves an immense responsibility on EFL teachers and writing instructors who are expected to bring the learners into terms with this focal, yet undervalued skill.

One effective step in leading students through the painstaking task of writing is encouraging them to write summaries. Summary writing might be viewed as a necessary skill in academic contexts as it serves as an inseparable step in academic paper writing, classroom

note-taking and textbook summarizing for later review and rehearsal. Among the manifold ways available for investigating the strength and weakness of learners' written production (e.g. their summaries) lies the practice of discourse analysis. The origin of the term 'discourse' goes back to the Latin word '*discursus*' which denoted 'conversation, speech' [1]. By and large, a discourse can be defined in terms of a set of meanings through which a group of people communicate regarding a particular topic. Crystal [2] delineates the term as "a continuous stretch of (especially spoken) language larger than a sentence, often constituting a coherent unit such as a sermon, argument, joke, or narrative" (p. 25).

As a major sub-branch of discourse analysis, genre analysis was first set in place by the groundbreaking pioneering work of Swales [3] who performed a

stupendous study of the introduction parts of research articles; since that time, genre analysis has had a profound influence on academic writing and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Among the plethora of early research studies carried out in the field of genre analysis reference can be made to seminal probes by Swales [3] and [4], Halliday [5] and Bhatia [6] and [7], to mention but a few. Amid the chief orientations taken in the field of genre analysis, one might refer to the overriding role of studies grappling with the concept of move analysis which is defined by Swales & Feak [8] as a “bounded communicative act that is designed to achieve one main communicative objective” (p. 35).

Statement of the Problem: Writing as a productive skill, is one of the mostly needed competencies in the academic arena where pupils are to deal with various kinds of writing for different purposes. Summary writing, among other forms of writing, can be regarded as a more fundamental need and a vital ability in educational settings. Thus, the ability to write an effective summary might be among the most important writing skills a college student is expected to possess. In simpler terms, to be successful in most other types of writing, a college student needs to be competent in summarizing which is an important part of note taking and essay and paper writing.

Apart from its use in academic settings, the task of summary writing is required in many other real-life contexts. In the business world, as a case in point, one may face occasions such as meetings, symposiums, conferences, etc., where summarizing skill, say for writing abstracts and reports, gains primary significance. Therefore, as Johns [9] notes, “whatever a person’s interest in studying a foreign language, there seems to be no escape from acquisition and development of summarizing skills.”

Though the importance of summary writing might have been partly attended to in the long history of educational endeavors, it appears that none of the studies, to date, have opted for a discursive orientation toward the analysis of learners’ written summaries. Thus, what the researchers in the current study are after scrutinizing is the analysis of Iranian academic EFL learners’ written summaries with a discursive/move-oriented perspective in mind. In other words, the researchers’ chief preoccupation is pinpointing the would-be move patterns in the learners’ written summaries of short stories (WSSS). In so doing, the role of two alternative variables, i.e. the learners’ gender as well as their writing power will also be investigated.

Significance of the Study: The extensive application of summary writing skill in various life contexts, in itself, coerces the importance of and need for instructors and researchers’ special attention toward students’ written summaries. Hence, not only should the task of summary/précis writing be emphasized along with other academic competencies, but its importance in diverse life domains is to be divulged for the learners and the liable setbacks on the way of learners’ acquiring expertise in this regard are required to be dealt with.

In view of the fact that the history of educational research is thought to have appropriated meager heed to the importance of summary writing in learners’ academic career and its implications for their life success, the present paper aims to study the move patterns followed by students through their written summaries. The researchers also intend to find if there is a significant difference between weak and strong summaries in terms of their dominant move patterns. Of tertiary importance in the current scrutiny is investigating the possible role of gender in the move patterns employed by students in their written summaries of short stories.

Research Questions: Based on the objectives of the current study, the following research questions were formulated:

- RQ₁:** Is there any significant move pattern in Iranian academic EFL learners’ written summaries of short stories (WSSS)?
- RQ₂:** Is there any significant difference between move patterns in weak and strong written summaries of Iranian academic EFL learners?
- RQ₃:** Is there any significant difference between move patterns in written summaries of male and female Iranian academic EFL learners?

Literature Review

Discourse Analysis and its Sub-Disciplines: Originating first out of the attempts by Zellig Harris [10], discourse analysis has now turned to a highly productive discipline, with a great many sub-branches such as genre analysis, move analysis, conversation analysis, stylistics, critical discourse analysis and the like. As Kaplan and Grabe [11] contend, “Although the independent existence of discourse analysis as an area of linguistic study is relatively young, it is, of course, derived indirectly from Hermeneutics” (p. 192). However, discourse analysis, in the sense which we are using, emerged in the 1960s and

early 1970s. So, it can be concluded that “a modern history of written discourse analysis is perhaps best covered within a 40-50-year time span” (ibid.).

Since in the present study the researchers are more concerned with genre and move analysis it would prove fruitful to give a brief account of these two major sub-disciplines of discursive studies. In view of the fact that the current study mainly draws on the work of Swales in the field of genre analysis, it seems more appropriate to make a reference to his definition of genre as a commonsensical view of the concept:

A genre comprises a class of communicative purposes, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of a genre as here conceived narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action. In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience. (Swales, [4] p. 58)

As Ding [12] states, “The analysis of context and audience plays an important role in genre studies” (p.369). Context, as a key variable in analyzing discourse, plays an important role in discourse analysis. Therefore, a discourse analyst has to take account of the context in which a piece of discourse occurs. Although some discourse analysts believe that opposed to writing, speech is more inextricably intertwined with its context, there is enough evidence to prove that written discourses are also dependant on their immediate context to be decoded [13]. Swales and Feak [14] believe genre to be influenced by many factors such as audience, purpose, organization and presentation, with audience as the most important factor on their list.

One challenging issue in the study of genre is the identification of moves in a text. Move analysis is one of the most common examples of a text level analysis of discourse structure. It is considered as a helpful tool in genre studies. ‘Move’ is a concept often used to identify the textual regularities in certain genres of writing. Moves are semantic and functional units of texts, which can be identified because of their communicative purposes and

linguistic boundaries [12]. To identify the moves in a certain text, both the rhetorical purpose of the texts and the division of the text into meaningful units based on the linguistic clues are to be taken into account [15].

Move analysis was developed as a top-down approach (where the focus is on meaning and ideas) to analyze the discourse structure of texts from a genre; the text is described as a sequence of ‘moves’, where each move represents a stretch of text serving a particular communicative function. The analysis begins with the development of an analytical framework, identifying and describing the move types that can occur in this genre: these are the functional/communicative distinctions that move types can serve in the target genre. In the ensuing section the researchers go about providing a brief account of the empirical studies done in the areas of genre and move analysis.

Empirical Research on Genre and Move Analysis:

Successive to Swales’ [3] seminal pioneering work in the field of genre analysis, many researchers have implemented similar investigations on RA introduction parts in terms of Swales’ CARS model. Betty Samraj [16], for instance, studied the introduction parts of 24 theses produced at a large public university in the U.S. These theses were selected from the fields of philosophy, biology and linguistics (eight from each discipline) in order to explore inter-textual links. In similar veins, other researchers have opted for studying other sections of research articles, following Swales’ lead. David Bunton [17], for example, performed a move analysis of conclusion parts of RAs and Fallahi & Erzi [18], embarked on the study of discussion sections of journal articles. Another rather different work, done by Kuhl [19] in terms of Swales’ model was the analysis of the move structure of 21 textbook prefaces in applied linguistics. What the analysis revealed was consistent existence of a 4-move schema in the data realized through different textual devices.

In another study, Peacock [20] investigated 252 discussion sections of research articles across seven disciplines—Physics, Biology, Environmental Science, Business, Language and Linguistics, Public and Social Administration and Law to extract the communicative moves. He found an average of 11 moves per paper with no one being dubbed obligatory. Also, a number of marked interdisciplinary and NS/NNS differences were found in the type and number of moves and move cycles. It’s worth noting that Peacock’s study was founded on Dudley-Evans’ [21] model.

In a more recent scrutiny, Halleck and Connor [22] analyzed a corpus of proposals submitted to the 1996 TESOL Conference to extract the move structure through which a proposal is written. They also divided the proposals submitted for Paper presentations, into two groups of accepted and rejected to compare their move patterns. Another more avant-garde study is the one performed by Barron [23] on 121 spam mails received from medical suppliers offering a selection of medications over a period of eight weeks. The analysis concentrated on the macro-textual level and led to identification of seven moves. From this number of moves, Barron categorized three moves as obligatory moves and the remaining ones as optional moves.

In an article written by Ding [12], the move structure of medical and dental students' online personal statements were analyzed. Among these personal statements which were collected from public websites, 20 were posted as successful and/or edited samples and 10 were posted as unedited samples. Having examined the moves of successful personal statements, the writer also compared their rhetorical and linguistic features with the unedited ones. Furthermore, in a shared attempt, Abbasian and Tahririan [24] did an analysis of e-mails exchanged between EFL teachers and biology professionals for the purposes of requesting and providing information. The results revealed clear discrepancies between the parallel constitutive moves, strategies and formal features due to cross-disciplinary variations and the prevalence of intertextuality.

In a case study, Cheng [25] focused on a Chinese-speaking graduate student in electrical engineering who analyzed genre exemplars in preparation for writing. The analysis of the data revealed the student's two prominent and interrelated ways of analyzing the discourse-level generic features in discipline-specific genre exemplars. The writer concluded that the student's rhetorical and evaluative reading of the genre exemplars proved the potential power of genre as an explicit, supportive tool for building academic literacy.

Finally, Lu, Chiu and Wai Ying Law [26] examined how the discourse moves of students engaged in collaborative learning are related to their justifications during computer mediated communication (CMC). Besides, they divided the corpus upon students' gender to see whether there is any meaningful difference between the patterns of move structures used by each group. The corpus included one-hundred and thirty-one

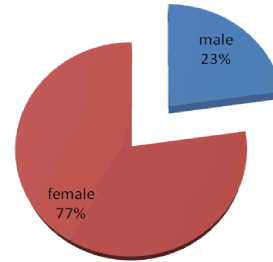


Fig. 1: Distribution of participants by gender

messages posted on an electronic forum by 24 high school students in a geography class, as they discussed proposals to reduce global warming. In addition to the general pattern of move structure, they obtained remarkable results regarding the relationship between patterns of moves and students' gender;

Method

Participants: To do the study, two classes of EFL university students were chosen which comprised a total of 55 students. The sample was a randomly-chosen heterogeneous one, selected from among junior BA students of English Literature studying at Urmia State University. However, there was a great disproportion with regard to the number of participants belonging to each of the two genders, with males forming simply one fourth of the entire sample. The age variable was kept within control via choosing the sample from among junior students who were around 22 to 24 years of age.

As 11 participants out of the entire sample failed to return their summaries for a variety of reasons including their late arrival at the program, the final study population consisted of merely 44 learners (34 females while only 10 males). The distribution of participants based on their gender is displayed in Figure 1.

Instrumentation: The only instrument utilized in the current study was a set of authentic short stories written by four different native writers, namely *The fable of why sweetie flew the track* by George Ade, *The Gretchen plan* by William Johnston, *The scullion who became a sculpture* by George Cary Eggleston and *About ideals* by Margaret Elizabeth Sangster. It's worth noting that the selection of the short stories was performed on a random basis out of a large story bank and the average length of the stories was not more than two pages. Furthermore, as to the difficulty level of the stories due heed was given to the mere inclusion of those which were thought to match students' level of proficiency, i.e. intermediate.

Design and Procedure: This study is by and large in compliance with the axioms of descriptive mode of research, as its main focus is on extracting the moves of written summaries of short stories through a process of word by word examination of students' writings. Moreover, the current study moves in line with tenets of non-experimental research method and is hence after indicating how two events are related rather than manipulating variables and controlling the environment in which the study takes place [27]. In the latter sense, the present scrutiny is liable to be referred to as an instance of ex-post-facto studies.

Data collection procedure was implemented by providing students with the aforementioned short stories and asking them to summarize each in at least one paragraph. In order for the participants to have more time to do the summary writing task more efficiently, they were allowed to do the task at home and deliver it the following session. It is worth mentioning that, the summary writing task was recommended by students' writing professor (one of the researchers in the current study) and hence the learners were supposed to do the task as their home assignment. This was done to prevent students from delivering hastily-written summaries for an out-of-class spare activity, as they might feel.

Out of the whole population of 55 students supposed to do the task of summary writing, only 45 returned their writings. This remaining group of learners was, in itself, composed up of 11 boys and 34 girls, which demonstrates the absolute dominance of girls. Two series of summaries written by male students were exactly the same and, therefore, one of them was excluded; thus the sample of male students was further reduced to 10. Although most of the students had summarized all four recommended stories, a few of them had written summaries just for two or three stories. Therefore, the total number of written summaries was counted to be 141.

The summaries of short stories were rated by two different raters. The first rater was an MA student of applied linguistics (one of the researchers in the current research) and the second was a BA graduate of English Literature with an experience of several years of teaching in different institutes. Having in mind three characteristics of written summaries presented by Johns [9], each of the raters scored the summaries, assigning marks for (1) weak, (2) average and (3) strong writings. The Pearson correlation coefficient computed for two series of scores showed a value of $r = 0.73$ which confirmed a high degree of inter-rater reliability.

Data Analysis: The data analysis procedure was done both descriptively and statistically. To answer the first research question, a descriptive approach was taken to the analysis of data. Accordingly, in a top-down approach to move analysis, the data was narrowly studied to find patterns of moves being used by the sample. It is worth mentioning that this study has taken the Swalsian definition of move as its basic reference in finding the moves.

As its second step, the study tried to demonstrate the relationship between students' performance in summary writing and the moves they utilized in their writings. This relationship was worked out by the use of God-fitness test and Kramer correlation coefficient. To use the God-fitness test, the expected values of students' performance were obtained applying a statistical formula. Then, using the God-fitness test, the expected values were compared with the frequencies obtained from data. The value obtained from this test was compared to the chi-square distribution with the degree of freedom of $(l-1)(k-1)$ in which l stands for the number of lines and k stands for the number of columns. The Kramer correlation coefficient was also used to reassure the results obtained. This relationship was displayed taking advantage of bar graphs.

In the third and the last step, the same procedure and formula used in replying the second RQ was applied to verify the effect of students' gender on pattern and frequency of moves used in their written summaries. This relationship was also displayed taking advantage of bar graphs.

RESULTS

Findings Obtained for the First Research Question:

- C Is there any significant move pattern in Iranian academic EFL learners' written summaries of short stories (WSSS)?

The first research question was replied descriptively through a line by line narrow study of students' written summaries of short stories. Based on the definition presented by Swales and Feak [8], the communicative function of sentences was utilized as a basis in extracting the moves. The same communicative function also played a critical role in naming each move. Accordingly, seven moves were found to be commonly used by students in their summaries. These moves are presented below together with related examples taken from students' writings;

C Establishing the Setting

Example: in a little Italian village of Passagno
From the village of Eisen, 300 men went to war...

C Characterizing the Main Characters

Example: Pisano was a poor, humorous, lovely, stone
cutter who lived with his frail little grandson named
Antonio Canova

C Theme

Example: the whole story is about the fact that why men
can have so many wives but women can not

C Plot

Example: they were all the time doubtful about each other
The man tried his friend's advice who said to be kind with
her

C Stating the conclusion

C Stating the climax

C Personal interpretation

Example: in my opinion she wants to show us that
imagination is the bridge to reality.

Unfortunately the all men agreed with this idea.

The story is about a *strange* occurrence in a village.

Table 1 and Figure 2 aim to exhibit the frequency by which
each move was employed in students' written summaries
of short stories.

It is worth mentioning, at this juncture, that not all
moves can be found in a single written summary of a short
story, neither are all of these moves obligatory. From
seven moves found in students' written summaries,
moves 4 and 6 can be regarded as obligatory while the
remaining moves are considered as optional.

Findings Obtained for the Second Research Question:

- C Is there any significant difference between move
patterns in weak and strong written summaries of
Iranian academic EFL learners?

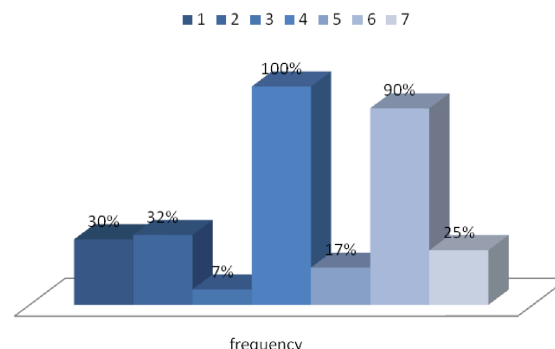


Fig. 2: Frequency of Moves Used in Students' Written Summaries of Short Stories

In order to reply the second question, two
different raters scored the students' written
summaries of short stories and assigned the values
1, 2 and 3, respectively to weak, average and strong
summaries. The inter-rater reliability computed for
the two series of ratings showed a value of $r = 0.73$
which expresses a high degree of reliability. To
display the correlation between the two variables of
degree of strength of written summaries of short
stories and the moves used in them, the God-fitness
test was applied to compare the expected values
with the frequencies obtained from data. The value
obtained from test was compared to the chi-square
distribution with the degree of freedom of $(l-1)(k-1)$
in which l stands for number of lines and k stands
for number of columns. The comparison of the result of
test ($X^2 = 26.33$) with P^2 showed that with a confidence
level of 0.90 the null hypothesis is rejected. This means
that there is a significant relationship between degree of
strength of written summaries of short stories and the
moves used in them. The result was confirmed by the
value of ≤ 0.177 attained from Kramer correlation
coefficient.

To provide readers with a more tangible
interpretation of results, the writers took advantage
of Bar graphs. So, once a bar graph was drawn
independently for every one of four stories and
then the total relative frequencies obtained
were presented in an isolated Bar graph. The
following figures show the relationship between the
degree of strength of summaries and the moves applied
by students.

Table 1 Frequency of Moves Used in Students' Written Summaries of Short Stories

Moves	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Frequency	30%	32%	7%	100%	17%	90%	25%

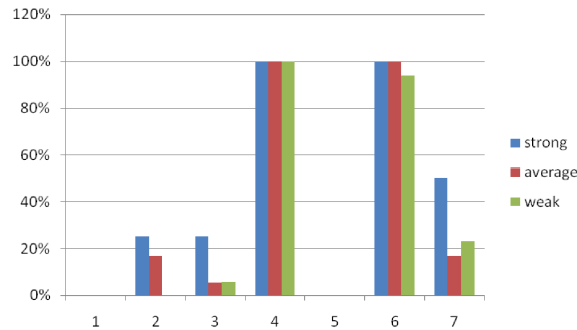


Fig. 3: The Relationship between Moves and Ratings in Story 1, "the Fable of Why Sweetie Flew the Track"

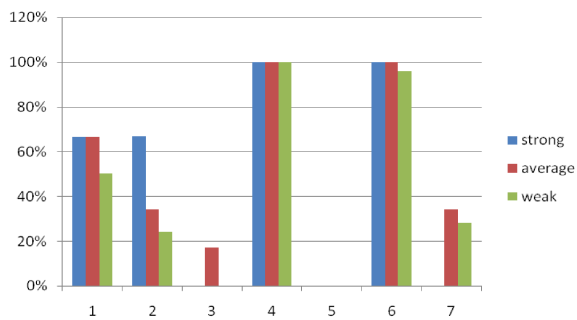


Fig. 4: The Relationship between Moves and Ratings in Story 2, "the Gretchen Plan"

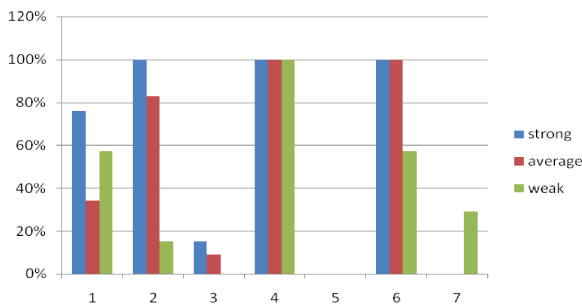


Fig. 5: The Relationship between Moves and Ratings in Story 3, "the Scullion Who Became a Sculpture"

As can be inferred from Figure 7 and Table 2, there is a significant positive relationship between frequencies of moves found in students' written summaries of short stories and their degree of strength based on marks assigned by raters. As mentioned before, moves 4 and 6 are regarded as obligatory. The frequency of use of move

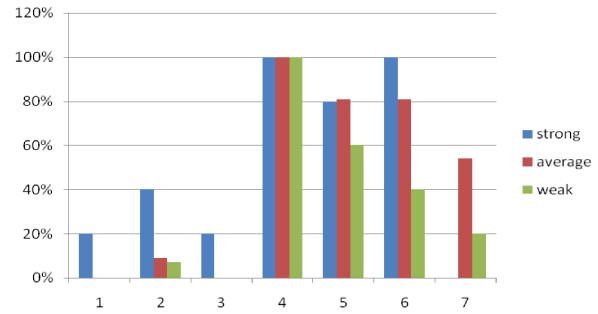


Fig. 6: The Relationship between Moves and Ratings in Story 4, "About Ideals"

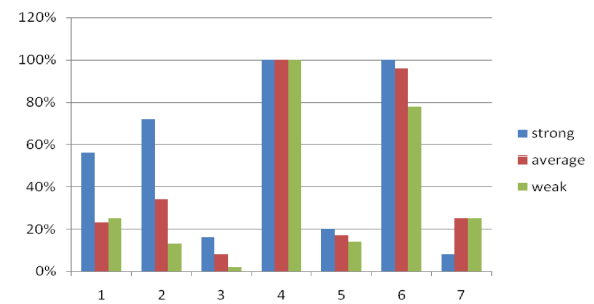


Fig. 7: The Relationship between Moves and Ratings in Total

4 is the same in all three groups of writing, but while move 6 is used in all writings of group 1 (strong), its frequency decreases in group 2 (average) to 96% and in group 3 (weak) to 78%. Although moves 3 and 5 are the most rarely-used ones, their frequency is higher in the first group and gradually reduces in weaker groups. Also, moves 1 and 2 are more frequently found in writings of group 1. Move 1 is applied in 56% of writings of group 1, while this amount decreases to less than half in group 2 and 3 by a percentage of 23% and 25%, respectively. The contrast is even more significant in move 2. While the frequency of use of move 2 is 72% for group 1, its application reduces to less than half (34%) in group 2 and shrinks to almost 1/6 (13%) in group 3. The story is completely reverse about move 7. While 1/4 of the population of groups 2 and 3, which can be considered as a large proportion, have applied move 7 in their writings, just an 8% proportion of group 1 has used this move.

Table 2: The Relationship between Moves and Ratings in Total

Column1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strong	56%	72%	16%	100%	20%	100%	8%
Average	23%	34%	8%	100%	17%	96%	25%
Weak	25%	13%	2%	100%	14%	78%	25%

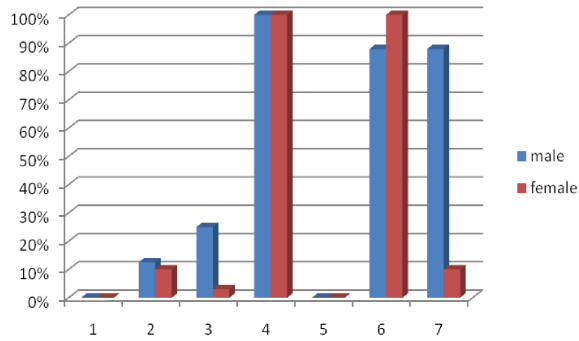


Fig. 8: The Relationship between Gender and Frequency of Moves in Story 1

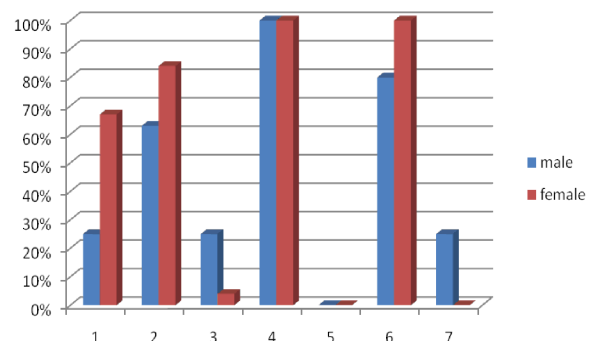


Fig. 10: The Relationship between Gender and Frequency of Moves in Story 3

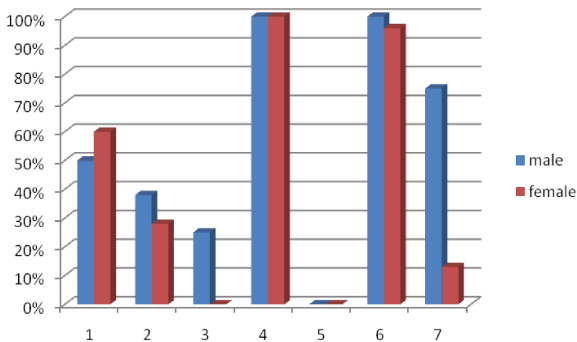


Fig. 9: The Relationship between Gender and Frequency of Moves in Story 2

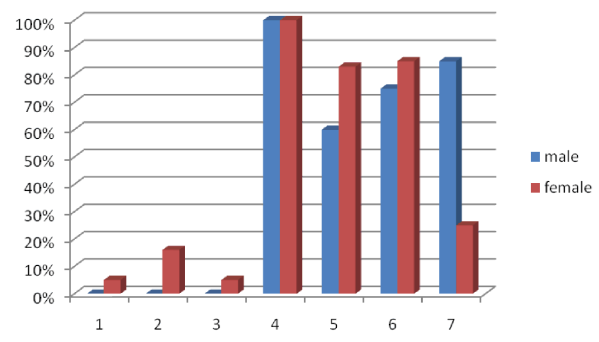


Fig. 11: The Relationship between Gender and Frequency of Moves in Story 4

Table 3: The Relationship between Gender and Frequency of Moves in Total

Column1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Male	19%	29%	19%	100%	13%	90%	68%
Female	33%	33%	3%	100%	18%	91%	12%

Findings Obtained for the Third Research Question:

- C Is there any significant difference between move patterns in written summaries of male and female Iranian academic EFL learners?

To reply the third research question, the sample was divided upon students' gender and frequency of moves used by each gender was worked out. Using the formula and procedure applied for second RQ, the degree of correlation between the variables of students' gender and frequency of moves applied was computed. The comparison of result of Good-fit test ($X^2 = 40.78$) with P^2 the null hypothesis was rejected with a degree of confidence of 0.90. This means that there is a significant relationship between students' gender and the moves used in their WSSS. The result was confirmed by the value of ≤ 0.31 attained from Kramer correlation coefficient.

To make the results taken from gender differences more tangible for readers to compare, the writers made use of Bar graphs. Accordingly 4 Bar graphs were drawn for stories and then the total results taken from all 4 stories were demonstrated in a separate Bar graph.

Figures 8 to 11 show the bar graphs relating to gender differences. Moreover, the frequency of moves used by each gender is exhibited in Table 3 for the ease of comparison.

As it is evident from Table 3 and Figure 12, both genders have a parallel performance regarding the moves 2, 4, 5 and 6. On the contrary, there is a significant difference between male and female students' performance considering the moves 1, 3 and 7. As can be seen in Table 3, move 1 is found to be two times more frequent in girls' written summaries of short stories than in boys' (33% versus 19%). On the other hand, boys outperform girls in their use of move 3 and 7. Move 3 can be said to be overlooked by girls (only 3%), while 1/5 of

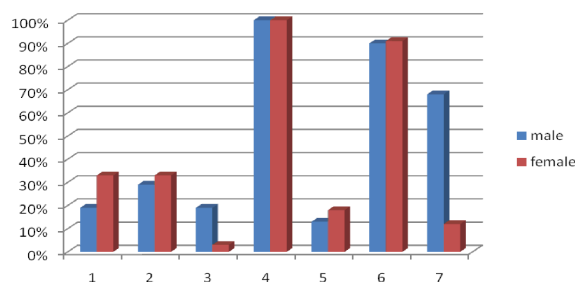


Fig. 12: The Relationship between Gender and Frequency of Moves in Total

boys have used it in their written summaries of short stories (19%). Among other optional moves, move 7 is witnessed to be the most- frequently-used one by male students (68%), in contrast to female students who are observed to rarely use this move (12%).

DISCUSSION

As mentioned earlier, move analysis was originally developed as a tool to teach non-native speakers the rhetorical structures of research articles [3]. It has also been adapted to a variety of academic genres, including university lectures [28] and textbooks [29]. More recently, it has been examined through legal [7] and philanthropic discourse – focusing on direct mail letters ([30]; [31]) and grant proposals [32]. Initially originated from academic writings by the work of Swales on the introduction parts of written articles, move analysis has also found its way through other areas of academic writing like ESP by the works of Kanoksilapatham [33] on biochemistry, Samraj [34] on biology, Posteguillo [35] on computer sciences and Williams [36] on medicine, to name only a few. Move analysis extended its territory by entering different novel fields such as E-mails analysis [24] and legal discourse [7].

The current study sought to first descriptively extract the moves applied by Iranian academic EFL learners in their written summaries of short stories and then show the differences in application of moves in weak versus strong written summaries as well as written summaries of male versus female students. This part is to present an analysis of the abstract statistical results to make them more tangible and comprehensible for readers. The descriptive analysis of data led to extraction of 7 moves which were inclusively introduced in the proceeding part. From this amount, moves plot (move 4) and climax (move 6) which had a frequency of 100% and 90% respectively, were recognized as the obligatory moves. The remaining 5 moves were considered as optional. Among other optional moves, moves 1 and 2 had the highest frequency

which shows that stating the setting and characterizing main characters were the most important optional moves utilized by summary writers. With a frequency of 25%, move 7 which refers to students' personal interpretation, gained the third place among optional moves. Moves 3 and 4 which referred to theme and conclusion, were shown to be the less-likely-to-be-used by students in their WSSS.

As its second objective, the current study sought to compare the move patterns of Iranian academic EFL learners' weak and strong written summaries of short stories. Whereas move 4 (plot) was found in WSSS of all students, move 6 (climax) was seen to be used in all strong WSSS but overlooked by some of writers in weaker groups. The same story goes on with 4 of the remaining optional moves. The frequency of use of the setting, characterization, theme and conclusion was higher in strong WSSS but it gradually decreased in WSSS of average and weak groups. However, the condition overturned when it came to move 7, i.e. personal interpretation. Strong summary-writers were found to be less likely to thrust their personal views and interpretations to the story. In other words, strong summary-writers are more loyal to the text they are summarizing.

In sum, strong WSSS were those which surely included plot and climax of the story, which cared for setting and characterization, which concerned story's theme and conclusion and were more loyal to the original story in that they rarely attached their personal views and interpretations to the text's summary. A similar route has already been tracked by Halleck and Connor [22] in their study of a corpus of accepted and rejected proposals submitted to the 1996 TESOL Conference. Also, Huiling Ding [12] had an analysis of medical and dental students' edited versus unedited online personal statements.

Ultimately, the last research question of the study addressed differences in the move patterns employed by each gender. A preceding work done on this issue goes back to a study by Lu, *et al.* [26] on the patterns of move structures used by male versus female high school students during computer mediated communication. They found remarkable results which showed significant difference in pattern of moves used by each gender. Both genders had a relatively parallel performance in characterization (move 2), plot (move 4), climax (move 6) and conclusion (move 5). The gender differences appeared in stating the moves 1, 3 and 7 which respectively correspond to setting, theme and personal interpretation. Whereas girls showed more concern for stating the setting (the time and place in which the story

happens), boys were found to be more concerned with what they personally get from the story which was exhibited in their frequent use of moves theme and personal interpretation. It can be concluded that, girls are more concerned with details of a certain story while boys are more interested in the idea hidden behind a story.

Concluding Remarks: The results of this study have implications for teachers, writing instructors, students and researchers. Since summary writing can be regarded as an influential writing exercise especially for beginning level students, teachers and writing instructors may apply the results of this study in leading students through primary stages of writing. It can also give university students a benchmark for what to include in their WSSS in order to have an excellent summary. Finally, this research paves the way for other researchers and discourse analysts to further investigate different aspects of move analysis of summaries.

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