

# **Diachronic Genre-Based Investigation into Rhetorical Categories and Linguistic Resources in the Discussion Sections of Communication Research Articles**

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Writing research papers is difficult when novice writers lack the language proficiency and intercultural competence needed in the process of crafting the different sections concerned. The Discussion section, in particular, can be difficult to write as it involves many different rhetorical moves and steps requiring various linguistic expressions. Previous researchers have proposed schematic structures for the Discussion sections of research articles in various disciplines, such as Applied Linguistics, Forestry and Empirical Law, but no research has yet to focus on the Discussion sections of research articles in Communication, an important social science discipline. The research gap is especially evident so far as the comparison of the Discussion sections written in different time periods are concerned. This means that despite the recent progress in understanding the Discussion sections in disciplines, it is not clear (i) whether the aforementioned structures are applicable to Communication research articles, and (ii) whether move frequencies and linguistic resources in Communication research articles differ from those in the other social science disciplines. Using a genre-based textual analysis and inputs from special informants, this diachronic study looked to whether the rhetorical moves and steps in the Discussion sections of research articles published in the 1980-1981 period differ from those published in the 2020-2021 period. It also looks into the extent to which the rhetorical categories and linguistic resources used are different from those reported for other disciplines. The findings of this study can be used to guide novice writers and second language learners in the comprehension and writing of the Discussion section in the field of Communication.