



Variation in Rhetorical Moves in Grant Proposals of U.S. Humanists and Scientists

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Variation in Rhetorical Moves in Grant Proposals of U.S. Humanists and Scientists

[Connor, Ulla, 1948-](#)



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Abstract:

Grant proposals are a significant part of professional writing. Described as 'the most basic form of scientific writing' (Myers 1990: 41), they are the key to obtaining research funding and support for professional activity. Recently, grant proposals have been included among promotional genre studies by applied linguists, and 'moves' have been suggested for the rhetorical structures in the texts of EU grant proposals (Connor and Mauranen, 1999). The present study uses these moves to analyze rhetorical variation in 14 research grant proposals written by five humanities and science researchers for US

government and private funders. The major purpose of the study was to determine the accuracy with which the moves were identified with the writers; the use of the moves among the five different disciplines and by male and female writers was also studied. Text-based interviews were conducted with the writers following the text analysis of grant proposals. The results showed that the system of moves was clear and meaningful to the researcher-writers, but that US grant proposals required an additional 'institutional commitment claim', a hypothesis statement in addition to goals, and more metatextual transitional statements than the proposals in the earlier EU study.

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