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An Approach to Corpus-based Discourse Analysis: The Move Analysis as Example

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Abstract:

This article presents a seven-step corpus-based approach to discourse analysis that starts with a detailed analysis of each individual text in a corpus that can then be generalized across all texts of a corpus, providing a description of typical patterns of discourse organization that hold for the entire corpus. This approach is applied specifically to a methodology that is used to analyze texts in terms of the functional/communicative structures that typically make up texts in a genre: move analysis. The resulting corpus-based approach for conducting a move analysis significantly enhances the value of this often used (and misused) methodology, while at the same time providing badly needed guidelines for a methodology that lacks them. A corpus of 'birthmother letters' is used to illustrate the approach.

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