A GENRE ANALYSIS OF ELECTRONIC MANUALS

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Abstract: Manuals are very important documents so far as the use of electrical appliances is concerned. This paper focuses on the move analysis of manuals of electrical gadgets. The main focus of this type of genre is to provide a series of instructions to users of appliances to enable them to put the appliance to effective use. This paper presents an analysis of 20 manuals of different companies and different electrical gadgets. The findings of this study show that the rhetorical and discursive features of electronic manuals of different companies and appliances seem to have a systematized or a typified structure with no particular order in respect of the various sub-moves identified. Four moves were identified. Moves 1 to 3 were captured as core or obligatory moves whereas move 4 was captured as an optional move. The study also revealed that writers of electronic manuals write with the sole aim of directing users of the appliance on how to put the appliance to effective use. This was shown in the massive textual space given to move three (directive). It was realized in the study that simple imperative sentences which are mostly negatives were mostly found in the electronic manuals. Users of electrical gadgets must follow the instructional manual to the latter to ensure their safety as well as the effective use of the appliance. This will enable them to save energy and resources. Future research can pay attention to a particular company or a particular type of appliance or gadget or better still cross-cultural studies can be conducted on electronic manuals.

Keywords: Electronic, Cross-Cultural, Gadgets, Genre, Manuals

1. INTRODUCTION

What motivation is there for a company or producers of electrical gadgets to design or write a manual? The response lies in the fact that the producers have the impression that users of the gadgets or appliances may not have a full grasp of how the appliance works and for that matter; they may need assistance as to how to put the appliance to effective use. Hence, the need for enactment of some direction and guideline contained in a document called manual. Therefore, the very purpose that drives those who write this type of discourse is to provide support for users of appliances or gadgets so that they can put the gadgets they have bought for a particular reason or purpose to effective use. For this reason, Mifflin (2015) asserts that reading what features a product has and how to set them up is more time-saving, energy efficiency and convenience features than you may think.

A user guide or user's guide commonly known as manuals is a technical communication document that is intended to assist people using a particular system. The Macmillan English for Advanced Learners Dictionary defines electronic as "using electricity and extremely small electrical parts such as microchips and transistors. So we may have electronic calculators, electronic equipment". Electronic could also mean things that are related to or accessed through a computer or computer networks. In this case, we may talk about electronic voting, electronic mail, electronic banking etc. This study will, therefore, focus on manuals of gadgets or appliances that make use of electricity.

With particular regard to the writing of manuals, it can be realized that there are no standardized or official processes that enjoin writers or producers or gadgets to follow. This is because producers of various appliances are of different companies and therefore there seems to be autonomy in the writing of manuals. Thus, unlike the academic community and some other discourse communities which have a typified or a formal and general way of presenting information, this type of discourse community in particular electronic manual, does not have any official body that ensures that certain precepts and tenets of the community are adhered to. It is worthy to note here also that genre analysts seem not to pay particular attention to this type of genre. It is in light of the above that this research seeks to do move analysis of electronic manual by paying particular attention to gadgets or appliances that make use of electricity (electrical gadgets).

1.1 Research Questions
1. What is the generic structure of an electronic manual?
2. What is the frequency of occurrence of the moves identified in electronic manuals?
3. What kind of lexico-grammatical resources are employed in electronic manuals?

2. LITERATURE OF REVIEW

According to Hyland (2002) genre is abstract, socially recognized ways of using language. In his view, genre analysis is based on two central assumptions which are the features or a similar group of texts depending on the social context of their creation and use, and that those features that can be described in a way that relates a text to others like it and to the choices and constraints acting on text producers. Language is integrated into social realities since it is through recurrent use and typification of conventionalized forms that individuals develop relationships, establish communities, and get things done. Genre theorists locate participant relationships at the heart of language use and assume that every successful

text will display the writer's awareness of its context and the readers which form part of that context (Hyland, 2002). A genre can also be said to be the effects of the action of individual social agents acting both within the bounds of their history and the constraints of particular contexts and with knowledge of existing generic types (Kress, 1989 as cited in Hyland, 2002).

Swales (1990) on the other hand describe the genre as a shared set of communicative purpose. These ideological perspectives point to the fact that the purpose for which language is used determines the distinctive type of text or the kind of community. Thus, every area that applies language has a communicative intent. This study was be guided by English for Specific Purpose theory of genre, by paying particular attention to Swales (1990) exposition of a discourse community that make use of and produce the genre text, the communicative purpose of the text as well as the structural linguistic features of the genre text. Bhatia maintains that English as the language of business, science and academia is so widespread that as Bolton (2008) states "English is now an Asian language." According to her, there is the question about proficiency levels and in her view, this concern about proficiency is important in ESP (English for Specific Purposes) because the language used must effectively and efficiently receive and convey messages for work or professional purposes. For example, a businessperson may need a suitable command of English to forge relationships and finalize business contracts, while a scientist would need it to write effectively for research publication.

Studies have explored various areas associated with or related to electronics by paying particular attention to computer or computer networks. Thus, Herring, Scheidt, Bonus and Wright (2005) conducted a study on weblogs as a bridging genre and provided an empirical evidence to the fact that blog authors, journalists and scholars alike exaggerate the extent to which blogs are interrelated, interactive, and oriented towards external events and underestimates the importance of blogs as individualistic, intimate forms of self-expression. This study will thus explore electronic manuals taking into consideration gadgets that make use of electricity.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study employed the mixed-method approach to research; thus, the combination of both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms. The quantitative research approach was adopted to report findings in the form of tables, percentages and frequencies. The qualitative approach was used to make a thorough description of the findings. The study corpus or population comprised manuals of all electronic gadgets or appliances. Using random sampling, twenty (20) different electronic manuals were selected from diverse companies. Thus, the study used manuals of stand fan, steam iron, rice cooker, 13 amp single le pole switched socket outlets, printer, microwave, coffee machine, kitchen blender, television set, water pump, electronic heater, radio set, doorbell, electric kettle, ceiling fan, refrigerator, sandwich maker and another rice cooker. I included another manual of rice cooker because that one was found to be odd concerning the Lexi-grammatical features. These appliances were collected from sellers of electrical appliances as well as some users of these appliances.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of data was based on the move structure, the lexico-grammatical features, and the textual space assigned to the moves. Particular attention was given to the fourth move regarding the textual space as well as lexico-grammatical resources to each of the sub-move.

After a careful examination of the various electronic manuals, the following moves were ascertained: Move 1 - Informative, Move 2 - Purpose, Move 3 – Request, Move 4 – Directive and Move 5 – Warranty. Moves 1 to 5 were found to be core or obligatory moves whereas move 5 was noted to be an optional move. In all the electronic manuals considered for this study, I found out that in terms of the five moves identified, there was consistency or typification regarding the move structure. The moving structure followed a linear order in all the manuals as represented below.

| 1 | ➡ | 2 | ➡ | 3 | ➡ | 4 |

The linear order of the moves in the manuals is just a matter of chance since there is no standardized or a formal structure that enjoins writers to follow. Thus, unlike the academic community whereby there is a documented and an established order or structure that entreat writers or members of the community to follow, there is no such established way of doing things in this type of community. Hence, this linear order of the pattern of moves is an indication of how human beings go about their things. Thus, naturally, before someone would present to you whatever he/she has for you, such a person would, first of all, prepare your mind. Let us take for example the academic discourse particularly proposal defence. The main intention of defending one's proposal is to demonstrate to a panel in the academic community that the topic chosen for the research is viable and that he/she is capable of conducting better and meaningful research. However, before this intention is done, he/she, first of all, mentions his/her name, the topic to be presented on and some other important information. Thus, it will seem very weird for someone to go to another person's office for the first time without even greeting before presenting whatever information he/she carries. This is the case in this genre; electronic manual. The main purpose of this genre is to give directions to users so that they will be able to put the gadget to effective use. Nonetheless, before that is done, they inform users about the company, the nature of the appliance and others. That notwithstanding, if this practice continues over and over again, it becomes typified of this genre which will enjoin members of the community to go by that. It is for this reason that Swales define move as a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs (Swales, 1981b as cited in Bhatia 199). the fact still holds that since there is no governing body that ensures that members of this community adhere to this norm, there could be variation without any recourse to punishment in any form.

The moves as having been explained above were found to follow a linear order. This was not the case with the sub-moves or the steps concerning the move 1 (information). Thus the sub-moves or steps took this order.
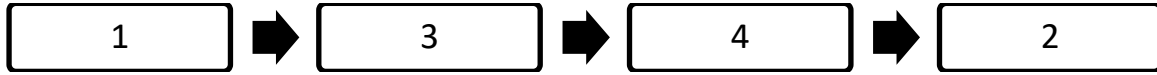
Five of the manuals selected for this study took this order of the steps.
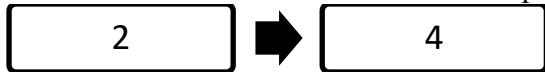
| 1 | ➡ | 2 | ➡ | 3 | ➡ | 4 |

Six others took these order interns of the steps.

| 4 | ➡ | 1 | ➡ | 3 | ➡ | 2 |

Six also took this format

| 1 | ➡ | 3 | ➡ | 4 | ➡ | 2 |

Two of the manuals had this order of sequence
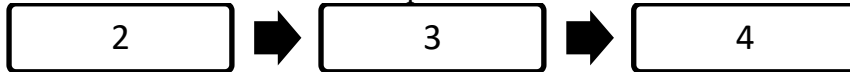
| 2 | ➡ | 4 |

It only one of the manual which only had just one step as in the inclusion of the appliance name.

A thorough consideration of the sequence as presented above suggests that there is no typification of sub-moves or steps with particular regard to moving 1 (information).
When it comes to the ordering of steps in move 3, there is also no typification as manuals of the appliances garnered for the study had a different order of sequencing. This is represented below.

18 of the manuals took this order

| 1 | ➡ | 2 | ➡ | 3 | ➡ | 4 |

The other two also took this sequence

| 2 | ➡ | 3 | ➡ | 4 |

This also shows that there is no typification of the sub-moves identified in the various moves. This goes to prove the earlier submission made in this piece of work that writers of electronic manuals are not enjoined by any standardized form of writing and hence the typification of the moves identified in the manuals considered for this is just a matter of chance. Table 1 presents the moves identified together with the steps.

Table 1: Moves and Steps

Core moves	Move 1 Information	Move 2 Purpose	Move 3 Directive
Sub moves or steps	Company name Appliance name Nature of appliance: Visuals		Operational guide: parts or visuals Safety precaution Maintenance
Optional moves	Move 4 warranty		

As can be realized from the Table 1, five moves were identified. Move 1 to move 3 were core moves whereas move 4 was captured as an optional move. Two of the core moves had sub-moves or steps. Move 1 (information) had a company name, appliance name, and nature of appliance which comes with a visual or picture of the appliance as steps. The nature of

appliance sometimes comes with the model of the appliance. Also, an operational guide which Mifflin (2015) refers to as set up instruction (parts or visuals of the appliance), safety precaution and maintenance. Table 2 shows the frequency of occurrence of the moves.

Table 2: Frequency of occurrence

Moves	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage
One	20	100
Two	15	75
Three	16	80
Four	7	35

Table 2 shows the frequency of occurrence of the moves. It is clear from the Table that moves 1 which I labelled information is a core move simply because it appeared in all the manuals gathered for this study. It appeared in all the 20 manuals representing 100%. Move 2 which I labelled purpose also appeared in 15(75%) of the manuals used in this study, which qualifies as a core move. Move 3 (directive) was also captured as core in that in all the manuals used in this study, it appeared in 16 of them which represent 80%. Move 4 which I captioned warranty was considered as an optional move because it appeared only 7 times representing 35%. The possible interpretation that can be given to moving 4 being an optional move is that no law or clause enjoin any company or producers of electrical gadgets to spell out terms and condition of the purchase of the appliance in case there is a fault in using it. It is equally true for the core moves that there is no law entreating producers of electrical gadgets to follow, however, the three core moves seem to be typified by that community of producers and so deviation such norm makes the document (manual) awkward.

Table 3: Frequency of occurrence of Move 1 steps

Move 1--Steps	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage
One	18	90
Two	20	100
Three	17	85

Table 3 shows the frequency of occurrence of the steps under move 1. It can thus be realized that the most frequent step is step two which is the Appliance Name. This is followed by step one which is labelled Company Name and lastly step 3 which is Nature of Appliance. One most significant thing concerning the frequency of occurrence of these steps is that they can all be referred to as core or obligatory suggesting that writers of electronic manuals mostly adhered to these steps making it a norm for this genre.

Table 4: Frequency of occurrence of Move 3 steps

Move 3--Steps	Frequency of occurrence		Percentage
One	19		95
Two	16		80
Three	14		70

As can be seen from Table 4, step 1 (operational guide) under move 3 had the highest frequency of occurrence. Thus it appeared 19 times in all the manuals which represent 95%. Step 2 which I labelled safety precaution also appeared in 16 of the manuals used for this and this represents 80%. Step 3 (maintenance) also appeared in 14 of the manuals considered for this study representing 70%. This shows that most writers of electronic manuals write intending to guide users to be able to put the appliance to effective use. Since the other steps appeared frequently, it can be deduced that users do not only need to know how to operate the appliance but must also be abreast with some measures that can help avoid injury and also ensure that the appliance lasts longer.

4.1 The Communicative Purpose of Moves

The communicative purpose of Move 1 (information) is to provide users with the general information of the appliance. That is to provide users with the details of the gadget. The details are thus realized in the steps under this move. These are the name of the company that produced the appliance, the name of the appliance, the nature of the appliance which is realized by the picture of the appliance as well as the model type of the appliance. It must be made clear here that name of the company as a step under this move can also be referred to as the brand name of the appliance. The picture of the appliances as a step under Move1 provides a physical/visual representation of the appliance.

Move 2 (communicative purpose) is just to indicate what the user is about to read. Thus this movie tells the kind of document. For example, some companies indicate manual, whiles others write a user's guide. The writers try to enjoin or entreat users to pay particular attention to the information provided or contained in the document. For instance, some write save these instructions, whiles others indicate read these instructions. The communicative intent of the move 3 (directives) is to alert customers how they can operate or use the appliance, the maintenance measures they can put in place to ensure that the appliance lasts longer and also how they can be safe as they use the appliance. These purposes are realizable in steps like an operational guide: parts, safety precaution, and maintenance respectively. The purpose of the inclusion of the visuals parts of the appliances in the manuals is to provide a vivid picture of the various parts of the gadgets to users and show how each part functions. Since such gadgets make use of electricity, they add some electrical data to assist clients' safety in using the appliance. The visuals and the electrical data are imbedded in step 1: an operational guide which is to assist users to be able to know each part of gadget and the kind of electrical power appropriate for the gadget so that the users can operate the gadget effectively to be able achieved whichever purpose he bought the appliance. Move 4 (warranty) has the purpose of explaining the terms and conditions to users in case the appliance develops a fault. Moves 1

to move 3 can be said to constitute the preliminaries such that they set the stage for the actual thing.

4.2 The Amount of Textual Space Given to Each Move

Table 5: Textual Space

Moves	Number of words	Percentage
One(I)	4	0.5
Two(P)	6	0.7
Three(D)	694	80.2
Four(W)	161	18.6
Total	865	100

Using words as a unit of measurement, it became clear that move 3 which I labelled directive has the highest textual space. Table 5 above, provides details of the amount of textual space given to each move.

It can be realized from Table 2 that an overwhelming textual space is given to move 3(Directive). Thus out of the 865 average numbers of words, 694 representing 80.2% was given to move 3. Again, the visuals or parts of the appliance which enables writers to provide a vivid picture of the gadget and to show various parts of the appliance and each part functions are sometimes given half a page or a full page. This amount of space given to the labelling helps users to have a clearer and a better view of the various parts of the appliance. In terms of textual space, move 4 had the second-highest space with 161 average numbers of words representing 18.6%. The massive textual space given move 3 (directive) presupposes that electronic manuals specifically direct users concerning the appliance. Thus it suggests the main intention of the writers of manuals with is give a series of directions to users so that they can put the appliance to use without any try and error. Moves 1 and 2 were given the lowest textual space and this means that those moves do not need many words to be able to realize their communicative intent unlike moves 3 and 4. The fact that move 4 did not appear frequently in all the manuals suggests that most writers of electronic manuals do not place a premium on warranty as to the fourth move in the enactment of the document, however, those who do need enough space to be able to communicate their intention to readers. Considering the whopping textual space given to move 3 (Directive), it becomes very necessary to delve into the various steps under this move to decipher among the steps which one is given much textual space.

4.3 The amount of Textual Space Given the Steps Under Move 3

Having realized that much textual space is given to move 3 (Directive) coupled with the fact that it has some steps, it became pertinent to find out the amount of textual space given to each of the steps. The sentence happened to be the most appropriate unit of measurement for this exercise since it provides uniformity and also words had already been used for the moves. Table 6 presents detail information about the amount of textual space given to each of the steps under move 3.

Table 6: Textual space of the steps under move 3

Move -steps	Sentences	percentage
S. P	18	32.7
O. G	31	56.4
MAIN.	6	10.9
Total	55	100

As can be realized from the Table, the total average number of sentences found in all the electronic manuals is 55. Out of this 31 (56.4%) was given to operational guide which is the highest textual space. This was followed by safety precautions which had 18 sentences representing 32.7%. Maintenance had a low textual space with 6 (10.9). The highest textual space given to operational guide suggests to me that writers of electronic manuals write with the sole aim of instructing users on how to use the appliance. However, for the safety of the individuals, they include some safety measures as well as some measures that can be put in place to ensure that the appliance keeps long. Also, visuals and labels of the various parts of the appliance were included in the manuals. Sometimes, they are given half a page or a full page in the electronic manuals used in this study. The aim is to tell users how each part of the appliance functions.

4.4 Lexico-Grammatical Features.
Move 1(informative) employs the use of words or some letters of the alphabets and sometimes numbers (eg. Saachi, NL-IR-128). Apart from move 1 which was mostly found to be words or some letters of the alphabets and sometimes numbers, move 2 (purpose) mostly adopt phrases as in "instructional manual". It also makes use of simple imperative sentences to politely request or entreat users to pay particular attention to the information contained in the document. For example, "Please save these instructions". Move 4(Directive) made enormous use of the imperative sentences which come in negative and positives as well as simple sentences and diminutive complex sentences. Thus, out of the 367 sentences identified, 347 (94.5%) were simple sentences. Drawing on examples from the combination of all the electronic manuals, these types of sentences were found to be predominant:
Do not touch hot surfaces (negative simple imperative sentence)
Put the lid on the rice cooker (positive simple imperative sentence)
Always preheat before use (complex but imperative)
The use of the imperative sentences in this sense, satisfy the purpose of manuals. In this case, electronic manuals aim to direct or instruct users on how to use the appliance, how to adopt safety measures and how to maintain the appliance. This is the communicative intent of move four (Directives) which is satisfied in the mammoth use of the imperative sentences. It must also be pointed out that the use of negation suggests prohibition and it was mostly adopted in the safety precaution which is a step under move 3.
In terms of the Lexi-grammatical resources, I found something very interesting which is in connection with the second manual of the rice cooker I included in the study. First of all, it did not include company name as part of the steps in move 1which I am not bordered that much but the massive grammatical errors in the manual make me think that that product is a

fake good which might come from some unscrupulous people who only wants something to fill their belly. The reason that no renowned company will ever write English the way this manual book has. For example, structures like "Put the rice and some water into the input", "when it cooked, you will. Listen" when you opeh the pot plate, use the rice scoop" are so annoying when reading and this perceptibly cannot be the case of a confidential company.

5. KEY FINDINGS

The study depicted that manual writers of different companies and appliances have a systematized or a typified move structure but with no typified structure of the sequence of the various sub-moves or steps. This is revealed in the consistency of the core moves as captured in most of the electronic manuals considered for this study.

The study also revealed that writers of electronic manuals write with the sole aim of directing users of the appliance on how to put the appliance to effective use. This was shown in the massive textual space given to move three (directive).

It was realized in the study that simple imperative sentences which are mostly negatives were mostly found in the electronic manuals notably move three (directive).

6. CONCLUSION

Thus, the analysis of the electronic manuals has depicted that manual writers of different companies and appliances seem to have a systematized or a typified move structure. In all, four moves were identified with move 1 to 3 being core or obligatory moves whereas move 4 was captured as an optional move. Thus, the following captions were given to moves 1 to 4 respectively: information, purpose, directive and warranty. Move 1 was realizable by the following steps: company name, appliance type, visuals and model. Move 4 also had an operational guide, maintenance, and safety precautions as steps. Move 4(directive) was found to contain the highest textual space and in respect of the steps or sub-moves, it was found out that writers of electronic manual give much textual space to operational guide which aims to direct or guide users on how to use or install the appliance for use as captured by Mifflin (2015) as set-up instructions . Regarding the lexico-grammatical features, electronic manuals adopt mainly imperative sentences which help to achieve the communicative intent of instructing users on how to go about the appliance. The visual representations and the labels are there to show users how each part of the appliance functions. Most people when they buy any electrical gadgets do not pay particular attention to the manual, and it seems to me that it is very reason why when we buy gadgets for the use they do not last long.

Electrical appliances make use of electricity and since electricity can sometimes be very dangerous to people, users of electronic gadgets or appliance should not assume to know the uses or how to use the appliance but must follow the instructional guide or the directives given in the manual. This will help ensure the safety of the user, maintenance of the appliance and how to set it up. This will, in turn, help e safe energy and resources as well time as posited by Mifflin (2015).

This study sought to establish if there is a typification of the move structure of electronic manuals from different companies and different appliance type, future research can pay attention to a particular company or a particular type of appliance or gadget or better still cross-cultural studies can be conducted on electronic manuals.

6.1 Implications

This is study is very implicational in that it will provide empirical data for future researchers who will want to conduct a genre analysis of this nature.

The study also provides the rubrics of electronic manuals and hence knowledge of this study will privy users of electrical gadgets of what is so crucial in the manual so that attention would be given to such areas.

This study will help users to know some relevant information about the companies that produce electrical appliances so that any fake product will be detected easily, as revealed in the odd manual of the rice cooker included in the study.

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