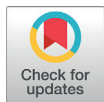




АКАДЕМИЧЕСКОЕ ПИСЬМО ACADEMIC WRITING



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Rhetoric of Promotion and Persuasion in Grant Proposal Abstracts

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Abstract

Introduction. Grant proposal abstracts represent a pivotal academic genre aimed at persuading experts in a specific field of research to fund the proposed projects. Being considered a “behind-the-scenes” genre, it has received little attention in academic discourse analysis and pedagogy. This study addresses this gap by analyzing rhetorical moves employed in grant proposal abstracts with a particular focus on their promotional and persuasive nature.

Materials and Methods. A corpus of 90 successfully funded linguistics grant proposals from the Russian Science Foundation was analyzed. The texts were derived from the official website of the fund. The analysis included a comprehensive procedure of extracting texts and conducting interpretative and quantitative analyses of the rhetorical moves using Matzler’s taxonomy. The corpus was chosen to provide insights into how persuasive and promotional language is used in a funding context.

Results. The analysis revealed a consistent pattern of moves indicative of persuasive language and strategic promotion. The study identified that the most frequent moves found in the corpus were Territory, Goals, and Benefits, which underline the importance of establishing a clear context, articulating research aims, and highlighting the significance and novelty of the proposed research. The most frequent move structure in the corpus was “Territory – Goal – Means – Benefits”, which indicates the conventional approach taken in the abstracts.

Discussion and Conclusion. Through a move analysis of grant proposal abstracts, the present study contributed to a deeper understanding of this persuasive and promotional academic genre. The analysis suggests a strong link between the successful use of specific rhetorical moves and securing funding, with variations in the types of moves identified in 90 abstracts. The findings highlight the persuasive and promotional nature of scientific communication and their implications for pedagogy. Explicit training in move analysis is recommended to improve researchers’ capacity to create convincing proposals.

Keywords: grant proposal abstract, rhetorical move, Matzler’s taxonomy, patterns of rhetorical moves, genre, academic discourse, presentation strategy, persuasion

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Риторические механизмы убеждения и продвижения в аннотациях к заявкам на грант

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Аннотация

Введение. Аннотации к заявкам на грант – персуазивный жанр академического дискурса, ключевой задачей которого является убеждение адресата в необходимости финансирования предлагаемого исследовательского проекта. Однако среди ученых, изучающих академический дискурс, он считается «закрытым» жанром, в результате чего отмечается дефицит научных работ, посвященных его систематическому анализу. Цель исследования – провести комплексный анализ риторических ходов, используемых в текстах русскоязычных аннотаций к заявкам на гранты, направленных на убеждение экспертов и эффективное продвижение проекта.

Материалы и методы. Эмпирическую базу исследования составили 90 русскоязычных аннотаций к заявкам на гранты в области лингвистики, поддержанных Российским научным фондом. Методика исследования включала процедуру извлечения текстов аннотаций, последующего интерпретативного и количественного анализа риторических ходов с использованием таксономии П. Мацлера.

Результаты исследования. По итогам анализа были выявлены наиболее частотные риторические ходы, а также их устойчивые паттерны, используемые в аннотациях с целью убеждения экспертов и продвижения исследования. Установлено явное преобладание ходов «Территория», «Цели» и «Преимущества», что указывает на критическую важность определения контекста исследования, четкого формулирования цели и обозначения значимости и новизны исследования. Выявлен наиболее частотный паттерн риторических ходов, представленный последовательностью «Территория – Цель – Методы – Преимущества», что указывает на преобладание традиционного подхода к структурированию аннотации.

Обсуждение и заключение. Теоретическая значимость работы заключается в том, что она вносит вклад в изучение презентационно-персуазивных жанров академического дискурса и расширяет современное представление о персуазивных механизмах научной коммуникации. Эффективное использование риторических ходов в данном жанре увеличивает шансы на поддержку предлагаемого проекта и получение необходимого финансирования на его реализацию. Практическая значимость статьи состоит в том, что ее результаты могут применяться в процессе обучения аспирантов и соискателей исследовательских грантов стратегиям эффективной научной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова: аннотация к заявке на грант, риторический ход, таксономия Мацлера, паттерны риторических ходов, жанр, академический дискурс, презентационная стратегия, убеждение

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Introduction

Academics worldwide are increasingly required to publish high-impact research both to advance their careers and to secure their employment. In the increasingly competitive landscape of academic research funding, the ability to write persuasively is crucial. As E. V. Tikhonova et al. claim, academic writing is a powerful tool for transparent, rhetorically conditioned, and linguistically exact communication, which allows for maximal communicative effect at the lowest cost [1]. While persuasive strategies are employed in many academic genres, grant proposal abstracts

exhibit a greater reliance on explicit promotional rhetoric driven by the need to convey a clear message within the limited space, where applicants must effectively convince reviewers of the significance of the proposed research.

The field of academic communication has seen extensive research on persuasive rhetorical strategies with a particular focus on research articles and their various components [2]. Previous studies have examined research article abstracts [3–5], introductions [6–8], discussions [9], and conclusions [10], using either move [11] or metadiscourse analysis [12; 13].



While research articles have been extensively analyzed for their rhetoric and metadiscourse features, they represent just one component of a larger network of “research-process genres”¹. According to A.R. Mehlenbacher, academic culture is strongly reliant on sponsored research; therefore, what comes before “publish or perish” is “fund or fail” [14]. Grant proposals share a close relationship with research articles. In line with A.R. Mehlenbacher, G. Myers argues that they are the most basic form of scientific writing, enabling all subsequent research². Regarding grant proposal abstracts, unlike those accompanying research articles, they bear an unequal proportion of responsibility for success or failure³, representing the initial rhetorical test for funding applicants and being especially crucial given the competitive nature of grant proposals and the time-pressured context in which they are evaluated⁴.

This indicates that the promotional function of grant proposal abstracts entailing higher levels of marketization than other academic genres [15] may require a greater degree of rhetorical complexity than the promotional aspects of full proposals, underscoring the unique persuasive challenges inherent in this concise format [16]. Grant proposal abstracts represent a critical genre that most academics must engage with to advance their research and careers⁵.

However, not all scholars, particularly novice researchers, are familiar with the intricacies of securing funding, lacking grant-writing training [16]. This can disadvantage grant applicants with valuable ideas but limited grant-writing skills, potentially

marginalizing innovative projects. Analyzing successful applications can help identify a balanced approach, revealing how to effectively promote the proposed research using certain rhetorical moves. Therefore, given the complex nature of grant proposal abstracts, corpus-based study is needed to illuminate the genre-specific characteristics of these texts through an analysis of their rhetorical structures.

Despite recent exceptions like M. Charles and K. Whiteside [17], P. Matzler [18], N. Millar et al. [19; 20], M. Kessler [21], and F. Wang [16], the genre of grant proposal abstracts has not received scholarly attention. What is more, while this kind of research has gained some traction within English-speaking contexts, the rhetorical dynamics of this genre within other settings remain largely understudied. Specifically, the rhetorical moves employed in Russian grant proposal abstracts have received no scholarly attention.

Examining 90 successful linguistics grant proposals granted by the Russian Scientific Fund over the last five years. The present study aims to identify the most commonly used rhetorical moves and move structures serving the promoting purpose. For this purpose, the study seeks to achieve the following tasks:

1. To identify the rhetorical moves most commonly used by the Russian linguistics grant applicants who secured funding for their projects.
2. To identify the most common patterns found in grant proposal abstracts.
3. To provide pedagogical implications to help novice grant writers improve their performance through the correct use of the rhetorical moves.

Literature Review

Rhetorical Moves in Academic Genres.

Using rhetorical moves in academic genres, particularly in research articles, has been a significant focus of scholarly inquiry. Much research⁶ [22–24] has adopted

¹ Swales J.M. *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1990.

² Myers G. *Writing Biology: Texts in the Social Construction of Scientific Knowledge*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press; 1990.

³ Locke L.F., Spirduso W.W., Silverman S.J. *Proposals That Work: A Guide for Planning Dissertations and Grant Proposals*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications; 2014.

⁴ Swales J.M. *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*.

⁵ Connor U., Mauranen A. *Linguistic Analysis of Grant Proposals: European Union Research Grants. English for Specific Purposes*. 1999;18(1):47–62. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0889-4906\(97\)00026-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0889-4906(97)00026-4)

⁶ Connor U., Mauranen A. *Linguistic Analysis of Grant Proposals: European Union Research Grants*; Tardy C. *ESP and Multi-Method Approaches to Genre Analysis*. In: Johns A., Paltridge B.R., Belcher D. (eds) *New Directions in English for Specific Purposes Research*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press; 2011. p. 145–173. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.371075>

a genre analysis approach, often drawing on Swales' model⁷. This methodological framework involves dividing texts into discourse units referred to as rhetorical moves associated with specific communicative purposes. By identifying these moves, researchers can gain insights into the persuasive strategies employed in academic contexts and uncover the conventions that guide successful communication within specific disciplines.

J.M. Swales first proposed a four-move model for introductions comprising moves to create the field, report previous research, prepare for the current research, and present it⁸. This was subsequently revised in J.M. Swales' "Create a Research Space" (CARS) model, which proposed a three-move approach, including the following moves: 1) establishing a territory, 2) establishing a niche, and 3) occupying the niche⁹. The CARS model has become a widely adopted framework in subsequent studies analyzing the structure of research introductions and abstracts [11; 25; 26].

V.K. Bhatia proposed an alternative framework¹⁰, also employed in the academic discourse studies [20–22], suggesting that abstracts typically provide information on the four key aspects of a research article, which can be reduced to four moves: introducing the purpose, describing the

methodology, summarizing the results, and presenting the conclusions.

Relying on the J.M. Swalesian model and using a corpus of research articles, promotional genres, and grant proposals, U. Connor and A. Mauranen developed a ten-move framework, including components such as "Territory", "Gap", "Goal", "Means", "Reporting previous research", "Achievements", "Benefits", "Competence Claim", "Importance Claim", and "Compliance Claim"¹¹. This framework has been developed for both full-length research articles and grant proposals. Almost all the subsequent studies have taken this model as a basis, adopting it for their data and purposes. For example, using this framework for their study of grant proposals and grant proposal abstracts, H. Feng and L. Shi identified different move structures for these genres: a three-move structure for abstracts and a ten-move structure for full proposals [15]. In her later study, H. Feng developed a framework of six moves, which covers all the semantic and functional units that appeared in the data: establishing a territory, establishing a niche, outlining research objectives, describing research means, explanation and justification, and claiming potential contributions [23]. Similar to H. Feng, C. Tardy also identified six moves in her grant proposal abstracts: announcing the project, describing context (background, problem, and or/motivation), describing objectives, describing methods, identifying project outcomes (expected results), and identifying impacts of the project (benefits to society)¹². Also building

⁷ Swales J.M. Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings.

⁸ Swales J.M. Aspects of Article Introductions. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press; 2011.

⁹ Swales J.M. Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings.

¹⁰ Bhatia V.K. Analyzing Genre: Language Use in Professional Setting. New York: Routledge; 2004. Available at: https://api.pageplace.de/preview/DT0400.9781317896548_A24275662/preview-9781317896548_A24275662.pdf (accessed 15.12.2024).

¹¹ Connor U., Mauranen A. Linguistic Analysis of Grant Proposals: European Union Research Grants.

¹² Tardy C. ESP and Multi-Method Approaches to Genre Analysis.

Table 1. Moves in Feng and Shi's, Feng, Tardy's, Flowerdew's, Matzler's, and Wang's frameworks

H. Feng and L. Shi (2004)	H. Feng (2006)	C. Tardy (2011)	L. Flowerdew (2016)	P. Matzler (2021)	Y. Wang (2025)
Need Means Contributions	Territory Niche Objectives Means Explanation and justification Potential contribution	Project announcing Context Objectives Methods Outcomes Impacts	Territory Gap/ Niche Goal Means Achievements Benefits Recommendations	Territory Niche Goal Means Benefits	Territory Niche Goal Means Benefits Expected outcome

Source: Hereinafter in this article all tables were drawn up by the author.



on U. Connor and A. Mauranen's model, L. Flowerdew developed a slightly different framework for analyzing moves in grant proposal abstracts. The framework includes seven moves: Territory, Gap/Niche, Goal, Means, Achievements, Benefits, and Future recommendations [24]. Later, P. Matzler reduced L. Flowerdew's seven-move model to five constituent moves, such as "Territory", "Niche", "Goal", "Means", and "Benefits" [18]. Finally, F. Wang slightly adopted P. Matzler's model by including an additional move – Expected outcome [16]. Table 1 summarizes the five frameworks proposed by U. Connor and A. Mauranen, H. Feng and L. Shi, H. Feng, L. Flowerdew, P. Matzler, and Y. Wang for analyzing grant proposal abstracts.

While using different terminologies, the six analyzed frameworks exhibit certain commonalities. All of them encompass the five moves identified by P. Matzler, suggesting that these moves are core to the genre of grant proposal abstract [17]. However, unlike the other researchers, C. Tardy distinguishes "Announcing the Project" as a separate move¹³. H. Feng's framework differs by adding the "Explanation and Justification" move, used in her corpus to explain the rationale or the basic principles of the proposed research, or to justify the validity and feasibility of the proposed objective [23]. In addition to the Benefits move, Y. Wang has added "Expected outcomes" resembles the "Results" move in a RA abstract.

Although all six frameworks consider the sequencing of moves, they show limited agreement in their findings. Feng and Shi observed a relatively sequential "Need – Means – Contributions" structure in their abstracts, with an almost equal split in whether the authors began with the "Need" or "Means" move [15]. H. Feng found a "Territory – Niche – Objectives" sequence to be most common, and C. Tardy identified more variability in sequencing, likely influenced by discipline, with linguistics abstracts often following "Context – Methods – Outcome/Impact" and mathematics abstracts tending to begin with Methods. She also identified "Context" and "Outcomes/Impact" as obligatory

moves¹⁴. P. Matzler found most abstracts to be "near-prototypical", with limited variations, but highlighted the flexibility of the "Goal" move and the use of "Means" at the end of the abstract [17]. Y. Wang's analysis revealed that Move 2 (Niche) and Move 1 (Territory) are heavily emphasized in the abstracts. Move 2 serves as an implicit promotional strategy, outweighing the explicit promotional nature of Move 6 (Benefits) [16].

Yet despite significant progress in the study of rhetorical moves in academic genres, there remain a number of methodological and conceptual difficulties, as well as unresolved issues that require further research. First, as can be seen, there is no uniform terminology, and researchers use different names for similar structural elements, which makes it difficult to compare results. Second, there are variations in the number and composition of moves: even within the same genre, scholars propose models with different numbers of moves, which indicates the subjectivity of their selection. Third, the order of moves can vary depending on the discipline and the genre but systematic cross-disciplinary studies are lacking, and most research focuses only on research articles and their move structure. Fifth, the functions of the moves are often mixed. Finally, the research on the pragmatics of moves is insufficient, particularly in the Russian academic context.

To contribute to the studies in this field, the present article fills a gap in the study of the move structure of Russian-language grant abstracts as a persuasive genre, confirming the flexibility of the moves models, but identifying stable patterns.

Materials and Methods

Corpus. The current study was conducted on a corpus of 90 successful linguistics grant proposal abstracts submitted in 2021–2024. The abstracts were derived from the official website of the Russian Science Foundation (www.rscf.ru/project). The two criteria for selecting the abstracts were the field – linguistics – and the time span – 2021–2024. The abstracts are similar in length, averaging around 390 words each.

Procedure and Instruments. In order to investigate the rhetorical moves in the

¹³ Tardy C. ESP and Multi-Method Approaches to Genre Analysis.

¹⁴ Ibid.

corpus, thus achieving the goal of the study, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was adopted. Move analysis was adopted as the qualitative research method to categorize the discourse units in the abstract by their communicative purpose. Afterward, frequencies were used to determine the dominance of each move and identify the prevailing move patterns in the corpus. A total of 90 grant proposal abstracts, comprising 36,423 words, were manually examined to identify the rhetorical moves.

P. Matzler's framework was selected for this analysis due to its demonstrated utility across diverse disciplines [18]. Unlike L. Flowerdew's or C. Tardy's models, which combine a larger number of sometimes overlapping moves (for example, Achievements and Benefits or Outcomes and Impacts), or F. Wang's taxonomy, which includes an additional move – Expected outcomes – being a separate section of the grant proposal structure recommended by the Russian Scientific Fund, P. Matzler provides distinct categories for “Territory”,

“Niche”, “Goal”, “Means”, and “Benefits”, allowing for a more precise quantification of these elements, and its comprehensive structure and ease of application make it the most suitable choice for this research. Additionally, the five moves identified by P. Matzler are present in two other most recent genre analyses [16; 17], suggesting that his framework offers a generalized account of the core components of proposal abstracts, applicable beyond the engineering field, which was the focus of his inquiry. This broad applicability aligns with the pedagogical aims of the present study, allowing for assessing how well the abstracts meet the expectations of a wider, interdisciplinary audience.

Data Analysis. Table 2 shows a text of the grant proposal abstract to illustrate how the rhetorical moves were identified in the present study relying on P. Matzler's taxonomy. The move structure of each abstract was analyzed by coloring each move in each abstract and then determining the number of these moves in the corpus [16].

Table 2. The move structure in the grant proposal abstract from the corpus

Move	Example
Territory	«Цифровизация как внедрение информационных компьютерных технологий в различные сферы деятельности человека получила широкое распространение и в области коммуникации власти и общества. Специфика подачи информации с помощью электронных технологий столь велика, что вербальная составляющая диалога власти и общества значительно трансформируется. В информационном обществе речевые продукты исполнительной власти приобретают дополнительные специфические особенности (гипертекстуальность, интерактивность, поликодовость и др.), которые существенно отличают электронные материалы от традиционной письменной формы».
Niche	«Интернет-коммуникация порождает новый объект речеведения - медиапродукт, который требует разработки адекватных методов исследования, ориентированных на трансдисциплинарный подход, т.е. привлечение данных ряда смежных с лингвистикой наук: теории управления, политологии, правоведения, социологии, психологии и др.»
Goal	«Проект направлен на решение следующих актуальных проблем: 1) поиск и обоснование подходов к изучению цифровых форматов коммуникации исполнительной власти и общества; 2) систематизацию электронного контента исполнительной власти на коммуникативно-прагматическом и жанрово-стилистическом основаниях; 3) выявление эффективных способов речевого воздействия на адресата в медиасфере как особом сегменте дискурса исполнительной власти; 4) разработку методических рекомендаций для органов исполнительной власти РФ по созданию качественного контента».
Benefits	«Исследование цифрового континуума, сформированного органами исполнительной власти России, научно значимо для понимания дискурсивно-стилистических параметров современной официально-деловой коммуникации. В исследовании впервые в отечественной лингвистике будет обосновано понятие “цифровой дискурс исполнительной власти” и осуществлена поликритериальная классификация репрезентирующих этот дискурс речевых продуктов. Новизна исследования обусловлена не изученным ранее материалом – медиаконтентом органов исполнительной власти РФ».
Means	«В рамках проекта предполагается систематизация континуума (докуверсума) цифровых речевых продуктов, разработка и апробация методов их дискурсивно-стилистического анализа, профессиональный аудит эффективности Интернет-коммуникации исполнительной власти с обществом, а также выработка научно обоснованных рекомендаций по повышению качества цифрового контента для специалистов органов исполнительной власти РФ».



In the abstract, Move 1 (Territory) establishes the general context by referring to the “information society” and highlighting the shift in communication from traditional to electronic formats, which lays the ground for the problem the research addresses. The abstract then describes the specific problem within the broad field, showing the gap (Niche). Move 2 identifies a niche by pointing out the novelty of the “media product” in the context of internet communication and the need for new, transdisciplinary research methods. Move 3 outlines the specific research objectives of the project, such as developing new approaches, systematically classifying content, identifying effective rhetorical strategies, and theorizing the idea of digital discourse. Move 5 explains the significance and value of the research outcomes, who will benefit, and how. This section establishes the importance of the project by stating its scientific significance and the benefit of understanding the parameters of modern official-business communication. Additionally, it identifies the practical benefits for professionals in the executive bodies through improved digital content. Move 4 outlines the methodology that will be used in the research: systematizing the digital content, developing and applying methods of discourse-stylistic analysis, and conducting a professional audit of digital communication.

Results

The analysis revealed that 71 out of the 90 abstracts (79%) contain four moves: “Territory”, “Goals”, “Means”, and “Benefits”. 87 out of the 90 abstracts always contain three moves, including “Territory”, “Goals”, and “Benefits”. “Goal” and “Benefits” appeared in all the abstracts, followed by “Territory” with 87, “Means” (67 occurrences), and “Niche” (19 occurrences).

The examples of each move are presented in Table 3.

Figure shows the frequencies of each move in the corpus.

According to the guidelines provided by the Russian Science Foundation, abstracts should justify the relevance and novelty of the research and explicitly formulate expected outcomes of the project. Thus, it is expected to see a strong emphasis on

Move 1 (Territory) and Move 5 (Benefits) in the data. Below is an example of Move 1 (Territory) used to describe a real-world problem: «Эффективная коммуникация в сфере здравоохранения представляет несомненную значимость для государства и его граждан, позволяя обеспечить максимально здоровую и полноценную жизнь населения страны. Интерес к коммуникации в сфере здравоохранения значительно активизировался в новых условиях ковидного и постковидного периода»¹⁵. Move 1 introduces the general importance of effective communication in healthcare, making it a relevant topic of the study. It establishes the context for the proposal by pointing out the growing interest due to the pandemic and the significance to the government. The use of this move may reflect applicants’ awareness regarding the need to provide context for the reviewers who may be unfamiliar with the field of communication in medical contexts. The background information presented in Move 1 is crucial to the success of grant applications. By clearly establishing the foundations of the project, Move 1 ensures that the reviewers will grasp the relevance, significance, and need for the research, irrespective of their specific expertise.

It is surprising that Move 2 (Niche) was not so frequent in the corpus despite its clear promotional nature. Highlighting a niche in previous studies effectively showcases the need for a new study and its potential contribution to the field. This process of identifying a gap and outlining its significance directly justifies the need for new research, demonstrating its relevance and value to the broader scientific community. F. Wang claims that the emphasis placed on this move in grant application abstracts may be an intentional choice made by the researchers to highlight the significance of the project [19]. By pinpointing a niche, the grant applicant can establish a clear context for the new research. This sets the stage for formulating a research goal, demonstrating how the new research builds upon and expands existing knowledge:

¹⁵ [Discursive practices in healthcare and ways to optimize them: linguistic and ethical-legal aspects]. (In Russ.) Available at: <https://rscf.ru/project/24-18-00371/> (accessed 20.12.2024).

«При этом изучение процессов моделирования образа России в средствах массовой информации стран, вошедших в состав объединения БРИКС, не получило полноценного научного освещения»¹⁶.

Move 2 indicates the insufficiency of research in media image modeling by emphasizing the need to continue studies of the phenomenon. Below is an example of Move 2 indicating the lack of research in the field: «Такие модели будут носить инновационный характер, поскольку системных и многоаспектных исследований советской детской периодики, по

нашим данным, до настоящего времени не проводилось»¹⁷.

The example points to a gap in research, with applicants claiming that no studies exist on Soviet periodicals, thus seeking to persuade the reviewers to give a favorable consideration.

As was mentioned above, Move 3 (Goal) explicitly appeared in all the abstracts. This move states the single purpose of the proposed research, commonly providing the title of the project: «Целью исследования является выявление корреляции между дискурсивными практиками

¹⁶ [Modeling Russia's image in the media discourse of BRICS countries: frames, metaphors, stereotypes]. (In Russ.) Available at: <https://rscf.ru/project/24-18-00049/> (accessed 20.12.2024).

¹⁷ [The mediatized model of Soviet society in children's periodicals]. (In Russ.) Available at: <https://rscf.ru/project/22-28-00775/> (accessed 20.12.2024).

Table 3. Examples of rhetorical moves used in the corpus

Move	Example
Territory	«Инфодемия представляет собой переизбыток как онлайн, так и офлайн информации, характеризующейся наличием противоположных мнений, оценок, слухов, недостоверной информации».
Niche	«Актуальность решения поставленной исследовательской задачи обусловлена отсутствием в современном социально-гуманитарном знании интегрального мультидисциплинарного подхода, который позволил бы исследовать концептуализацию, вербализацию и нарративное оформление угроз на различных уровнях когнитивно-дискурсивной деятельности – в спектре от нейропроцессов до сложной семантики историографических и художественных текстов».
Goal	«Цель проекта – описание явления терминологической “миграции”, в рамках которого реализуется переход терминов из одного типа дискурса в другой».
Means	«Материалом для анализа устной речи в предложенном прагматическом аспекте станут два представительных речевых корпуса: корпус повседневной русской речи “Один речевой день” и “Сбалансированная аннотированная текстовая база”».
Benefits	«Проект будет иметь практическую ценность для исследований в области теории языка, оптимизации диалога с партнерами из стран Латинской Америки, для лингвистической экспертизы, развития профессиональных компетенций, корпусной лингвистики и для других направлений подготовки российских специалистов в области межкультурной коммуникации».

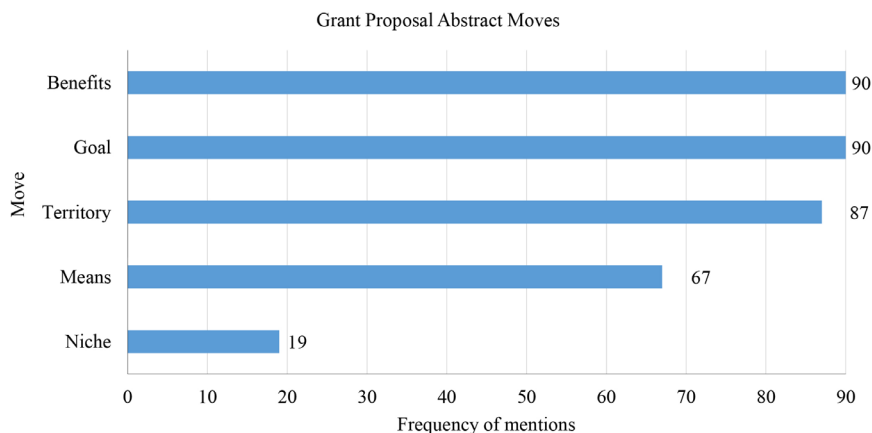


Figure. Rhetorical moves used in the grant proposal abstracts and their frequencies

Source: Compiled by the author.



современных медиа и трансформацией социокультурных норм, а также разработка методологических подходов к изучению указанных процессов»¹⁸.

Move 3 sets the core objective of the study: to explore the relationship between how media communicates and changes in cultural norms. It indicates that the study intends to analyze how language in media impacts the evolution of cultural and societal values and practices. The unclearly stated purpose might prevent reviewers from evaluating the project, forcing them to stop, reread and try to decipher what the applicant aims to communicate. Such grant proposal abstracts force reviewers to guess about the applicant's intended meaning and rarely result in a positive review.

Move 4 (Means) includes the methods, procedures, and plans of action that the grant proposal specifies as leading to the goal [24]: «Кейсы блогеров планируется рассмотреть с позиций лингвоаксиологии (1) в сопоставлении друг с другом как совокупность неодинаковых ценностных конфигураций, отраженных в их текстах, и (2) в единстве, обусловленном общностью лингвокультуры. Интересный аспект может составить выявление динамики ценностного конструирования путем сравнения текстов разных временных периодов, созданных каждым блогером, и/или контента лидеров мнений, оказывавших влияние на аудиторию в разные периоды. Следующий аспект анализа – выявление на основе контент-анализа специфики ценностного конструирования в зависимости от возраста целевой аудитории: детская аудитория, подростковая аудитория, молодежная аудитория»¹⁹.

This part of the abstract specifies the analytical methods and the data segmentation. The applicants are elaborating on the ways that they will collect and analyze the data that is to be gathered in the project and showing the scope of the work. The move shows the reviewers how the

research will be carried out, specifying its procedure, which makes the project clear and easy to evaluate.

Move 5 (Benefits) describes the novelty and explains the potential outcomes of the study, which could be useful to the “real world” or the research field. It serves the promotional purpose, outlining the contributions and tangible positive impacts: «Научная новизна предлагаемой исследовательской программы определяется тем, что ее выполнение позволит точнее определить критерии, по которым должна оцениваться именно политическая коммуникация, в том числе с точки зрения ее соответствия существующему в нашей стране законодательству. Это будет способствовать также осмыслению теории и практики информационных войн, которые ведутся в России и против России»²⁰.

This part of the abstract is effective in fulfilling Move 5. The first sentence focuses on highlighting the novelty and potential benefits of the research. While it is presented as a “novelty” claim, the benefits are interwoven with the claim about novelty. The phrase “научная новизна” (scientific novelty) or the noun “новизна” (novelty) is a common marker for this move, identified in 63 out of the 90 grant proposal abstracts. The second sentence with the semantic core in the verb “способствовать” (contribute) further highlights the benefits by explaining the wider theoretical and practical implications of the research. It focuses on how the proposed research will improve the understanding of both theory and practice, making it more specific. Overall, by connecting the proposed research to pressing issues such as information warfare, Move 5 presents a clear and convincing rationale for funding the project, making the need for project funding convincing for the reviewers.

It should be noted that although all the abstracts featured “Benefits”, the degree of promotion expressed by this move was

¹⁸ [Dialogic communication in new media practices: sociocultural, pragmatic, and communicative specificity]. (In Russ.) Available at: <https://rscf.ru/project/22-28-01963/> (accessed 20.12.2024).

¹⁹ [Value meanings in the personal narratives of Russian youth bloggers]. (In Russ.) Available at: <https://rscf.ru/project/25-28-01168/> (accessed 20.12.2024).

²⁰ [The impact of speech in Russian in conflict and non-conflict political situations and the methodology for its linguistic analysis using modern techniques (linguistic-cognitive, linguistic-rhetorical, psycholinguistic analysis, critical discourse analysis, comprehensive analysis of creolized text, etc.).]. (In Russ.) Available at: <https://rscf.ru/project/16-18-02102/> (accessed 20.12.2024).

different. Below are presented two examples showcasing the difference: «Полученные результаты, а именно: описанные и классифицированные лингвокогнитивные и когнитивно-дискурсивные параметры медицинского дискурса пациентов с ВПС, – вносят определенный вклад в развитие таких новейших направлений научных исследований, как междисциплинарные исследования когнитивных процессов и междисциплинарные исследования языка, тем самым формируя методологическую базу для их дальнейшего развития и совершенствования»²¹. «Кроме того, результаты будут *иметь ценность* для социолингвистики, когнитивной лингвистики, дискурсивного анализа, практической риторики, лингвистической антропологии, лингводидактики и для других научных направлений, связанных с рассмотрением устного дискурса и изучением его законов, и в целом для исследований речевого поведения как одной из базовых форм социального поведения человека»²².

The first sentence seems to be less promotional due to the use of the hedging item “определенный”, which mitigates the illocutionary force of the statement, focusing on less direct results. The second sentence uses much stronger language, highlighting a clear value and listing specific benefits, resulting in a more promotional tone.

²¹ [The problem of cognitive-discursive parameterization of medical discourse among patients with CHD (congenital heart disease) in a cardiac surgery hospital]. (In Russ.) Available at: <https://rscf.ru/project/23-28-00002/> (accessed 20.12.2024).

²² [The system of pragmatic markers in everyday Russian speech]. (In Russ.) Available at: <https://rscf.ru/project/18-18-00242/> (accessed 20.12.2024).

The following analysis was conducted to identify the frequencies of move structures that occur in the corpus. The study revealed ten types of patterns. The frequencies of each type are presented in Table 4.

Table 5 shows that “Territory – Goal – Means – Benefits” with 21 occurrences is the most frequent pattern accounting for 23.4% of all the structures found in the corpus, which suggests a conventional approach to structuring abstracts and indicates a preference for starting with a research area, moving to the specific goal of the project, outlining the methodology, and ending with the benefits of the proposed research. Below is an example of the abstract²³ structured following this pattern. Table 5 shows an example of the four-move structure that occurs starting with “Territory”.

The use of this structure shows that the applicants are following a common four-move template for communicating their research proposals. It also implies that they assume that the reviewers need to understand the context of a problem before being able to understand the goals and benefits of the research. The “Niche” move is absent due to several reasons. First, it might be implicit within the Territory move, establishing the broad context, and the gap is so well-known within that context that explicitly stating the Niche may be redundant. Second, in abstracts, where the space is limited by the Russian Scientific Fund guidelines to two pages, applicants tend to focus on the more critical moves, which must be included – “Territory”, “Goal”, and “Benefits”.

²³ [The poetic syntax of the Russian language in the 18th century from a rhetorical perspective]. (In Russ.) Available at: <https://rscf.ru/project/22-28-00991/> (accessed 20.12.2024).

Table 4. Frequencies of the types of move structure in the corpus

Move structure	Frequency	Percentage, %
Territory – Goal – Means – Benefits	21	23.4
Goal – Territory – Means – Benefits	16	17.8
Territory – Niche – Goal – Means – Benefits	14	15.6
Goal – Territory – Niche – Benefits	13	14.4
Territory – Means – Goal – Benefits	11	12.2
Territory – Goal – Benefits	8	8.9
Goal – Means – Niche – Benefits	3	3.3
Goal – Territory – Benefits	2	2.2
Territory – Niche – Means – Benefits – Goal	1	1.1
Territory – Goal – Benefits – Niche	1	1.1
Total	90	100



Table 5. Move structure “Territory – Goal – Means – Benefits”

Move	Example
Territory	«На настоящем этапе развития отечественной и мировой лингвистики актуальной и новой представляется задача такого комплексного описания риторической системы и синтаксического строя русского литературного языка XVIII века, которое позволило бы не только проверить и уточнить систему складывавшихся в этот период грамматических, жанрово-стилистических и риторических норм и главных тенденций языковой эволюции, выявить корреляцию и динамику соотношения “риторическая теория – поэтическая практика” эпохи на фоне невиданного расцвета научной деятельности и светской литературы, а также создания первых оригинальных грамматики и риторик (С. Яворский, Ф. Прокопович, М. Ломоносов). Проведение комплексного исследования роли синтаксической системы русского литературного языка в процессе фигурирования на материале поэтического дискурса (в эпоху, когда реформаторами русского литературного языка были поэты) призвано обеспечить современных лингвистов, базой данных, посвященной ведущим авторам и стихотворным жанрам эпохи языковых реформ, синтаксически и риторически размеченными текстами, и предполагает создание особой методики анализа поэтического текста на синтаксическом уровне в аспектах структурном и риторическом».
Goal	«Исследование нацелено на максимально полное представление, типологизацию и интерпретацию всего спектра фигур речи, применяемых главными русскими поэтами эпохи русского барокко и классицизма и выяснение, на этой основе, направлений, степени глубины и постоянства взаимодействия риторической теории, изложенной в созданных в России XVIII трактатах по искусству красноречия, и живой поэтической практикой».
Means	«Выбор стихотворного творчества А.Д. Кантемира, В.К. Тредиаковского, М.В. Ломоносова и А.П. Сумарокова в качестве основной эмпирической базы проекта, обусловлен тем, что в эпоху между Кантемиром и Пушкиным именно поэзия была главной ареной формирования лексических, грамматических и стилистических норм русского литературного языка, а ведущими реформаторами русского языка выступали поэты и теоретики в области филологии – Кантемир, Тредиаковский, Ломоносов, Карамзин, Пушкин. Анализ планируется проводить в двух магистральных направлениях: с одной стороны – это выявление, классификация и интерпретация экспрессивного потенциала различных фигур речи, применяемых в поэтическом дискурсе эпохи Кантемира – Сумарокова, с другой – анализ соответствия этих риторических приемов рекомендациям теоретических руководств по элоквиции, созданных С. Яворским, Ф. Прокоповичем, М. Ломоносовым и другими авторами трактатов по искусству красноречия. Один из главных теоретико-методологических постулатов проекта состоит в утверждении особой роли риторик, наряду с грамматиками русского языка XVIII века в описании и регламентации синтаксических норм языка: предложение, в отличие от “словосочинения” (соединения “речений”, словосочетания) относилось в эту и предшествующую ей эпоху в большей степени к ведению не грамматика, а риторики. По этой причине анализ рекомендаций риторических трактатов российских теоретиков красноречия, наряду с изучением практики применения риторических приемов, фигурированием в русской поэзии кантемировской и ломоносовской эпох, позволяет ярче высветить многие тенденции и процессы, протекавшие в синтаксическом строе русского литературного языка выбранного для изучения периода. Сопоставление риторической теории и практики – ключ к пониманию эволюции грамматической и стилистической системы русского языка. Методологические принципы описания – это 1) ориентация на эмпирические данные, извлеченные из поэтических произведений русских поэтов XVIII в., словарей, привлечение сопоставительных данных из грамматик и трактатов по искусству красноречия, а также ранней виршевой поэзии; 2) типологический подход (классификация фигур речи и конструкций, служащих средствами их образования); 3) тесная связь собственно лингвистического анализа риторических приемов с анализом лингвопоэтическим и филологическим, без которой не представляется возможным осуществить интерпретацию фигур речи в аспекте их экспрессивной функции текстообразующей роли, в аспекте взаимосвязи фигурирования с ритмом, мелодикой, строфикой и жанром текста, тесная связь синтаксического и лингвориторического подходов; 5) системный и диахронический подходы к выявлению системы синтаксических, общепозетических и риторических норм эпохи».
Benefits	«Главным итогом проекта должно стать создание корпуса теоретических и эмпирических данных для формирования диахронической риторики русской поэзии XVIII века как нового направления исследований».

Third, to be persuasive, some applicants may choose a solution-oriented approach over a problem-focused one. Rather than focusing on the gap (problem), they might opt to present the goal, means, and benefits.

The “Goal – Territory – Means – Benefits” pattern, which accounts for 17.8% (16 occurrences), deviates from the first one by starting with Move 3 rather than

Move 1. This is a variation on the linear structure, which is more focused on the purpose of the study before situating it in a broader context (Table 6)²⁴:

²⁴ [Manipulative rhetoric in contemporary English-language business media discourse: a functional-pragmatic analysis]. (In Russ.) Available at: https://rscf.ru/prjcard_int?23-28-00505 (accessed 20.12.2024).

Table 6. Move structure “Goal – Territory – Means – Benefits”

Move	Example
Goal	«Целью проекта является теоретико-прикладное исследование манипулятивной риторики современного англоязычного бизнес медиадискурса, ориентированной на управление мнением аудитории через использование языковых технологий воздействия».
Territory	«Актуальность проекта определяется его направленностью на получение новых фундаментальных знаний о языковых технологиях информационного воздействия, отражающих вектор развития и специфику функционирования современного англоязычного бизнес медиадискурса, продуцирование которого зачастую сопряжено с намеренным планированием манипулятивного воздействия».
Means	«Объектом исследования в рамках проекта являются постоянно расширяющиеся функционально-прагматические границы современного англоязычного бизнес медиадискурса, приобретающего стратегическую важность в контексте современных экономических, социальных и культурных реалий. Предметом исследования в рамках проекта является манипулятивная риторика англоязычного бизнес медиадискурса, находящая выражение в используемых им языковых технологиях и отражающая его статус как инструмента воздействия в современном медиапространстве».
Benefits	«Научная новизна проекта состоит в комплексном подходе к изучению манипулятивной риторики современного англоязычного бизнес медиадискурса с позиций функционально-прагматического анализа, результатом которого станет внедрение в научных обиход моделей манипулятивной риторики англоязычного бизнес медиадискурса, репрезентируемых на разных уровнях языка, и получение новых фундаментальных знаний об инструментах манипулятивного воздействия, распространенных в исследуемом типе дискурса».

The third most frequent move structure “Territory – Niche – Goal – Means – Benefits” presented in Table 7 occurred 14 times in the corpus and accounts for 15.6%. This is a full five-move sequence, which explicitly states all of the moves in a linear sequence, starting with a broad context, then identifying a research gap, presenting aims and methods, and finishing with the benefits to the real world or the field²⁵.

The fourth structure with 13 occurrences (14.4%) contains three moves – “Goal – Territory – Benefits”, indicating that the applicants choose to focus on the aims of the study before putting it in a research area and emphasize the potential impact of the project. The lack of the Means move may signal a less methodological project, or the methods are not essential to the reviewer in this context, or they are well-known to any expert in the field. The “Territory – Means – Goal – Benefits” pattern with 11 occurrences (12.2%) contains the moves similar to those in the most frequent structure. However, the ordering of these moves is slightly different with “Means” followed by “Goal”. While this structure is method-driven, emphasizing how the research is conducted before explaining

what it aims to achieve, the most common structure in the corpus is purpose-driven, emphasizing the goal rather than the methods, thus creating a more logical flow of information, which is more common in the humanities. The “Territory – Goal – Benefits” pattern with 8 occurrences (8.9%) omits “Means” and “Niche”, focusing on establishing a field of study, demonstrating the goals and the benefits. Like the structure “Goal – Territory – Benefits”, it implies that a methodological move may not be essential or well-known in the expert community. The analysis also revealed four infrequent move structures, which together account for 7.7%, such as “Goal – Means – Niche – Benefits” with three occurrences, “Goal – Territory – Benefits” with two occurrences, “Territory – Niche – Means – Benefits – Goal” and “Territory – Niche – Goal – Benefits – Means” with one occurrence each. Regarding the first pattern, the unusual placement of the niche may imply that the applicants are focusing on their goals and methods, and then highlighting what is novel about their study before noting the impact. “Goal – Territory – Benefits” is the pattern used when the applicants focus on the research purpose rather than the context and opt not to describe the methodology due to its well-known or not prominent nature in the study. “Territory – Niche – Means – Benefits – Goal” and “Territory – Niche – Goal – Benefits – Means”

²⁵ [Linguistic and cultural digitization: media awareness and media discourse of citizens in modern society]. (In Russ.) Available at: <https://rscf.ru/project/22-28-01623/> (accessed 20.12.2024).



are atypical frameworks, where “Goal” and “Means” are placed at the end of the full structure for the strategic purpose.

Below are two examples of the interpretive analysis of the move structures from the corpus. Due to journal word count limitations and lengthy grant proposal abstracts, this study focuses on an in-depth qualitative analysis of only two texts

selected from the corpus. While a broader quantitative analysis would strengthen generalizability, these cases were chosen to illustrate an analysis of key rhetorical moves and structures.

This abstract illustrated in Table 8 effectively uses the four moves – “Territory, Means, Goal, and Benefits” – to create a persuasive case for the research project.

Table 7. Move structure “Territory – Niche – Goal – Means – Benefits”

Move	Example
Territory	«Современное медиасознание характеризуется набором лингвокультурных маркеров, позволяющих реализовывать эффективное воздействие дискурса массмедиа на сознание носителей языка разных лингвокультур в различных сферах деятельности человека, в т. ч. в политической, деловой и юридической коммуникации».
Niche	«Актуальность исследования обусловлена потребностью в системном осмыслении ценностных основ и семиотики дискурса языковой личности в массмедиа, значимостью»
Goal	«выявления лингвокультурной специфики воздействия медиадискурса на сознание и подосознание носителей языка в политической, деловой и юридической сферах, необходимостью выработки рекомендаций по проведению языковой, информационной и законодательной политики государства, важностью установления средств и приемов ведения эффективной информационной войны и защиты от информационного терроризма в условиях цифровизации».
Benefits	«Научная новизна состоит в формировании фонда лингвокультурных характеристик современного информационного общества, его дискурса, получении новых научных данных о лингвокультурных когнитивно-дискурсивных процессах в современном медиaprостранстве в рамках медиавоздействия в политической, деловой и юридической коммуникации в условиях цифровизации, создании ассоциативной базы выявленных лингвокультурных маркеров современного русского, американского и британского медиасознания, развитие концепции медиавоздействия на сознание адресата в русской, американской и английской политической, деловой и юридической коммуникации. Новым является перечень эффективных средств и приемов воздействия на адресата как носителя русского языка, американского и британского вариантов английского языка в российских и зарубежных массмедиа. Несомненной новизной обладают рекомендации в сфере языковой политики государства, информационной и законодательной политики государства, защиты от информационного терроризма».

Table 8. Move structure “Territory – Means – Goal – Benefits”

Move	Example
Territory	«Проект направлен на решение фундаментальной научной проблемы определения и описания языковых характеристик текстов, которые влияют на интерпретацию этих текстов носителями языка как “простых” или “сложных”, “понятных” или “непонятных”».
Means	«Объект исследования – тексты документов на русском языке. Будут рассматриваться документы, выпущенные государственными учреждениями, а также тексты документов органов государственной власти, органов местного самоуправления, государственных и муниципальных организаций (учреждений, унитарных предприятий). Исследование будет развиваться в двух направлениях: “перцептивно-когнитивном” и “дескриптивном”. Материалом для перцептивного направления станут данные масштабного социолингвистического опроса, направленного на выяснение стратегий восприятия и понимания текстов официальных документов рядовыми носителями русского языка. Дескриптивное направление будет подразумевать описание языка документов, выполненное корпусными методами. Проект мыслится как принципиально междисциплинарный, то есть задуманный и реализуемый в тесном сотрудничестве между лингвистами и юристами».
Goal	«Целью исследования является исследование проблемы доступности и понятности текстов официальных документов во взаимодействии государственных, муниципальных органов и граждан, организаций. Конечной целью исследования станет выработка механизмов преодоления коммуникативного барьера между государством и обществом».
Benefits	«Научная значимость проекта определяется тем, что в его ходе будет выработан и применен научный аппарат определения языковой сложности текстов (на русском языке). Этот аппарат будет основан не на традиционных квантитативных методиках оценки сложности текстов (алгоритмах оценки с применением “формул удобочитаемости”, readability formulas), а на стратегиях носителей языка, полученных в ходе социолингвистического эксперимента, а также на более пристальном рассмотрении собственно языковых свойств текстов (прежде всего, их синтаксической организации)».

The abstract begins by setting the research within its larger academic subject, before introducing a two-pronged methodological approach. This move emphasizes the project's interdisciplinary nature, including the joint synergy between linguistics and legal studies. The next move – “Goal” – presents the specific objectives that the research project is intended to achieve – to investigate the accessibility and clarity of official documents in the interactions between government and the public. The abstract concludes by highlighting the value and broader implications of the study. This move emphasizes the significance of the project, highlighting the creation of a new

apparatus to measure the linguistic complexity of texts. It also emphasizes the practical importance of solving the problem of the incomprehensibility of official documents for lay users.

This abstract presented in Table 9 contains all five moves traditionally ordered by the writer.

It starts by establishing the broad context of the research – “Territory” – highlighting the importance of AI in translation, the use of neural networks for better translations, and the increasing demand for speed and volume in the translation process, signaling that the project will focus on relevant and contemporary issues in translation. The abstract then specifies

Table 9. Move structure “Territory – Niche – Means – Benefits – Goal”

Move	Example
Territory	«На сегодняшний день искусственный интеллект играет важную роль в развитии переводческой отрасли. Новейшие разработки в области машинного перевода связаны с усовершенствованием качества переводных текстов посредством использования искусственных нейронных сетей. Подобное развитие является ответом на значительное увеличение объема контента, который зачастую необходимо не только переводить на большое количество языков, но и адаптировать для иностранной целевой аудитории в условиях дефицита времени. Автоматизация переводческого процесса становится, таким образом, неотъемлемой характеристикой переводческой деятельности во многих профессиональных контекстах».
Niche	«В связи с этим, важной проблемой переводоведения является комплексное описание передовых технологий нейронного машинного перевода, включая такие аспекты данной проблемы, как объективная оценка качества перевода, выполняемого системами ИИ с усовершенствованными нейросетевыми алгоритмами, а также исследование способности данных систем к саморедактированию в процессе многоуровневого обучения или по факту запроса об исправлении неточностей (в формате чатов)».
Means	«Определение возможностей новейших систем ИИ на материале текстов презентационного Интернет-дискурса (официальные сайты различных государственных и коммерческих организаций) на четырех языках».
Benefits	«позволит оценить современный уровень развития машинного перевода и предложить соответствующие данной оценке методики предпереводческого и постпереводческого редактирования презентационных текстов, которые предполагают многоязычную репрезентацию. Актуальность данного исследования обусловлена частотностью практики использования сервисов МП для перевода вербального контента сайтов, как разработчиками сайтов, так и пользователями, на фоне сложности и высокой стоимости создания большого числа локализованных версий. Актуальность настоящего исследования также подтверждается разработкой Национальной стратегии развития искусственного интеллекта в Российской Федерации на период до 2030 года, в рамках которой предусмотрено повышение квалификации специалистов различных отраслей, включая сферу перевода. Научная новизна исследования состоит в том, что в нем впервые изучаются тексты презентационного Интернет-дискурса с точки зрения их перевода в переводческих системах ИИ и транслатологического обоснования, выявляется типология ошибок, допускаемых данными системами при работе с презентационными текстами, и строится четырехязычная модель презентационного текста, максимально оптимизирующая процесс машинного перевода. Впервые исследование роли систем ИИ в процессе машинного перевода предпринимается на материале русского, английского, французского и немецкого языков, занимающих лидирующие позиции в рейтингах наиболее популярных языков Интернета, в том числе в сопоставительном аспекте. С точки зрения научной новизны заявленной темы, большой исследовательский интерес, безусловно, представляет инновационная технология Chat GPT, которая характеризуется высоким уровнем гибкости и адаптивности в решении различных задач».
Goal	«Основной целью исследования, таким образом, является теоретическое обоснование ответа на вопрос о том, в каком варианте использования данные инновационные технологии способны существенно повысить эффективность работы переводчиков, и определение направления стратегического развития систем МП в комбинации его возможностей в системах ИИ».

the gap in current research, identifying the need for a comprehensive description of advanced AI-driven translation technologies, highlighting specific areas within this niche, such as the objective assessment of translation quality and the self-editing capabilities of AI systems, showing that there is a clear gap to be filled by this research. The next move outlines the methods and data used in the research, providing information on the texts used specifying the languages that will be investigated. The “Benefits” move highlights the study’s novelty by stating that this is the first time that the translation of online discourse by AI has been investigated in this way. It also emphasizes its alignment with the Russian national policy to clarify why this study is worth funding. The abstract concludes with the “Goal” move, which is strategically placed to act as a final statement of the abstract, thus creating a strong and memorable finish to the text and serving the promotional purpose.

The analysis therefore found a definite preference for a four-move structure: “Territory – Goal – Means – Benefits”, which appeared in 79% of abstracts. “Territory”, “Goal”, and “Benefits” showed frequently (96–100% frequency), whereas “Means” was significantly less common (74%), and “Niche” was extremely rare (21%).

This implies that effective Russian grant submissions favor context, clear objectives, and explicit benefits over gap discovery. The Russian Science Foundation’s emphasis on relevance and outcomes is consistent with the high frequency of “Territory” and “Benefits” in the abstracts of successful grant applications.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the analysis of a corpus of 90 successfully funded linguistics grant proposal abstracts offer significant insights into the rhetorical moves employed in this persuasive and promotional genre of academic discourse.

Grant proposal abstracts represent a critical platform of academic persuasion and promotion, and the consistent patterns of moves identified in the corpus confirm this assumption. The prominence of the “Territory”, “Goal”, and “Benefits” moves in the corpus underlines the

importance of establishing a clear context, articulating research aims, and highlighting the significance and novelty of the proposed research when aiming to secure funding. This finding aligns with previous research on academic argumentation [16; 17; 23], suggesting that grant writers are aware of the need to situate their work within established fields, demonstrating a well-defined purpose and a clear contribution to knowledge. In doing so, they employ the “Territory” move to set the stage for the rest of the proposal by establishing legitimacy and showing that the research fits within an established body of knowledge. The “Goal” move is intended to persuade the reviewers that the aims of the proposed research are both worthy and achievable and strategically frames the project as a valuable undertaking with realistic objectives. Finally, the “Benefits” move involves convincing the reviewers that the research is worth funding because it will have significant results. The absence of the “Means” and/or “Niche” moves in some successful grant proposal abstracts can be explained by several reasons. It may be assumed that the “Niche” move is implicitly covered within the “Territory” move, or, if the field is well-defined and the problem is widely recognized, a separate “Niche” move may be redundant. This allows the grant writer to save space and observe the maximum two-page length requirement, focusing on other aspects of the research. Regarding the “Means” move, a detailed description of obvious methods may also be seen as taking up valuable space without adding anything to the persuasiveness of the proposal. It can also be assumed that the reviewers are already experts in the field and know the methodology used. In their efforts not to violate the length requirement, applicants may focus on a strong and clear statement of the potential benefits of the research rather than on a lengthy explanation of the method.

All these five moves used in different patterns contribute to making grant proposal abstracts promotional and persuasive. The summary of the communicative purposes of the moves identified throughout the analysis is presented in Table 10.

As can be seen in Table 10, all the moves work together to achieve the overall

communicative purpose of the grant proposal abstract. Grant writers strategically emphasize certain moves depending on the nature of their research. The application of these moves is not strict, and grant writers must learn to use them strategically to achieve the maximum rhetorical effect.

The present study also revealed some flexibility in the arrangement of the rhetorical moves, which may be due to the emerging nature of this genre. This finding aligns with observations by L. Flowerdew, A.R. Mehlenbacher, and F. Wang that move order, even in established genres, can exhibit variation²⁶ [14; 16; 24]. The identification of the “Territory – Goal – Means – Benefits” move structure as the most frequent pattern indicates the conventional approach taken in the abstracts selected for the study. This linear progression, moving from background to benefits, appears to be a reliable template for persuasively conveying the necessary information to the reviewers, indicating that grant proposal writers assume a reviewer who needs to understand the context of a problem before understanding its impact on the field.

It should be emphasized here that when interpreting the obtained data, it is important to consider the potential influence of the requirements of the Russian Science Foundation for the formatting of grant applications, according to which a brief statement of the relevance of the research scientific problem and its scientific novelty is obligatory. Although a direct influence of these requirements on the structure of abstracts and the frequency of rhetorical moves was not identified within the scope of this study, it cannot be ruled out that they exert an indirect impact on the authors’ choice of

persuasion and information presentation strategies.

The findings of the present study have several implications for both research and pedagogy. Firstly, they contribute to a deeper understanding of the persuasive and promotional nature of academic discourse. Grant proposals are not simply objective reports of the proposed research; they aim to secure funding, and to do this the applicants need to use a range of rhetorical techniques. By identifying the ways in which this is done, this study adds to the body of literature examining persuasion and promotion in the academic contexts. Secondly, the findings have clear implications for EAP teaching, particularly to students and novice researchers who need to learn to write effective grant proposals. It is necessary to explicitly teach rhetorical move analysis and to give explicit instruction on the effective use of persuasive and promotional language in academic discourse. Explicit instruction should be part of any academic writing training that intends to teach students how to write effectively [27]. For example, students can be asked to define each move clearly in the text or show examples of each move from successful grant proposal abstracts. EAP practitioners can also ask their students to break down abstracts into constituent moves, explaining how each move contributes to the overall persuasiveness. Further analyzing successful and unsuccessful grant proposal abstracts can show how the moves are effectively or not effectively deployed in each case. Analyzing each other’s abstracts based on the moves model can contribute to critical thinking and awareness of different writing styles. In this context, databases like the Russian Science Foundation website, which contain successful grant applications from various disciplines, are of great significance.

²⁶ Connor U., Mauranen A. Linguistic Analysis of Grant Proposals: European Union Research Grants.

Table 10. Summary of the communicative purposes of the rhetorical moves

Communicative Purpose	Primary Move	Supporting Move
Promotional	<i>Benefits</i> highlights the novelty, emphasizes the positive contributions to theory and practice	<i>Territory</i> shows the relevance to the academic field
Persuasive	<i>Territory</i> establishes credibility and relevance	<i>Goal</i> demonstrates purpose; <i>Benefits</i> emphasizes value; <i>Means</i> assures reviewers that the methodology is sound and the research plan is logical; and <i>Niche</i> highlights a gap to be filled



This study examined the rhetorical structure of grant proposal abstracts in linguistics, a genre that plays a critical yet underexplored role in academic persuasion. By analyzing a corpus of 90 successfully funded proposals from the Russian Science Foundation, the research identified dominant rhetorical moves, such as “Territory”, “Goal”, “Means”, and “Benefits”, and their sequencing, with the “Territory – Goal – Means – Benefits” structure emerging as the most frequent (23.4%).

While the findings show similar patterns in funded abstracts, they should not be viewed as deterministic determinants in winning funding. Without comparing data from rejected proposals, observed move frequencies are more likely to reflect effective text conventions than established cause. Future research should contrast successful and unsuccessful abstracts to isolate the role of move efficiency from other factors.

Additionally, while this study has contributed to our understanding of grant proposal abstracts as a persuasive and promotional genre of academic discourse, other limitations deserve consideration. The sample size of 90 abstracts may not fully capture the move structure diversity typical of this genre, potentially influencing the representation of certain moves. Furthermore, the study’s focus on a single field and a specific funding institution with its own guidelines limits the generalizability of these findings. Future research should therefore explore broader funding contexts and disciplines to better understand their influence on genre practices and rhetorical strategies.

Pedagogically, the findings provide useful insights into academic writing education. Explicit training in move analysis may improve researchers’ capacity to create convincing proposals.

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