



Move analysis of UN women research papers within ESP

Yasmeen Gamaleldeen Abuelsoued

Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts, Cairo University, Jizah, Egypt;

yasmeengamaleldeen@gmail.com

Original Research Article

Date of Submission: 03 November, 2023

Date of Acceptance: 01 January 2024

Abstract

This study explores how gender perspectives influence the institutional discourse through a genre analysis of UN Women's online publications. The purpose is to examine how gender-focused content is structured and communicated within an established ESP genre. Drawing on Swales' (1990, 2004) move-step framework, the research examines the structure of gender-based research papers. A corpus of selected UN Women texts was analyzed qualitatively to determine how gender discourse appears within established ESP genre. The analysis reveals a high degree of structural stability at the macro level alongside systematic variation in the labeling, positioning, and realization of moves, particularly in the front and end matter. These variations reflect functional adaptation to institutional and policy-oriented communication rather than deviation from academic conventions. Linguistically, the papers consistently adhere to UN Women's gender-inclusive language guidelines through lexical choices, reference patterns, and ordering of gendered terms, aligning discourse practices with organizational values. The study contributes to genre-based ESP research by broadening Swales' genre analysis to international institutional communication and by offering pedagogical guidance on integrating social engagement into academic and professional writing pedagogy.

Keywords: Genre analysis, move analysis, institutional communication, English for specific purposes (ESP), gender discourse, UN women, English for research publication purposes (ERPP)

1. Introduction

Research on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has increasingly emphasized the importance of understanding how institutional actors construct knowledge and shape discourse through genre-specific conventions. Within this domain, English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP) has emerged as a critical branch concerned with the rhetorical, linguistic, and communicative practices that support effective research writing across diverse academic contexts and professional settings like scientific research articles (Cargill & O'Connor, 2021). Yet, despite the extensive attention ERPP has received, comparatively little research has examined how ERPP operates within international organizations engaged in social advocacy, particularly those addressing gender equality.

This paper explores the genre of gender-focused institutional discourse through an analysis of research papers (RPs) published by UN Women, a UN organization dedicated to advocating women's rights and promoting gender equality. UN Women's research papers (RPs) constitute a distinctive genre that blends institutional authority, evidence-based advocacy, and socially engaged discourse. According to the research by Ledin and Machin (2020) and Rogerson-Revell (2021), the rhetorical structure is shaped not only by the conventions of ERPP but also by the organization's broader ideological mission, which often requires integrating technical reporting with persuasive strategies aimed at shaping global gender equality agendas. Applying genre analysis facilitates the investigation of the moves and the linguistic features that characterize UN Women's research paper for ERPP.

The study aims to identify the rhetorical moves and linguistic features that characterize UN Women's research publications by applying Swales' (1990, 2004) move-step framework. The framework continues to be a cornerstone of contemporary research, informing recent publications in genre analysis and applied linguistics, where Biber and Egbert (2019) draw upon foundational genre theory, including Swales' work, in their analyses of language use across different contexts. Li and Flowerdew (2020) have also referenced and applied Swales' framework in their exploration of academic discourse and genre studies. By examining a corpus of UN Women published research papers, the analysis seeks to uncover how gender discourse is constructed, how institutional identity is projected, and how genre conventions are adapted for advocacy-oriented research communication.

This investigation is significant for ERPP pedagogy. Although recent research in academic writing, including works by Ding and Bruce (2020) and Bao and Wang (2023), highlights how institutional research writing is profoundly shaped by disciplinary variations and institutional research writing, especially within gender advocacy organizations, remains underexplored. The findings of this study contribute to closing this gap by offering a pedagogical framework that supports learners and practitioners in understanding and producing gender-responsive research writing.

Overall, by combining genre analysis with ERPP principles, this study provides a deeper understanding of how UN Women constructs gender discourse within research publications and offers pedagogical implications for integrating socially engaged communication into ESP and ERPP training.

2. Literature Review

This section presents an overview of genre analysis and its relevance to English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP). It includes two main subsections that assist in constructing UN Women research papers: the analysis of rhetorical moves and the identification of linguistic features.

2.1 Genre Analysis

Genre occupies an important position in language studies and language education for several reasons. One reason is that it serves as a useful descriptive and interpretive framework that enables ESP researchers and educators to understand how texts are constructed to fulfill specific purposes. Recent studies continue to affirm the centrality of genre as a tool for understanding disciplinary communication and institutional discourse (Bruce, 2021). Another reason is that genre conventions provide novice writers with structured guidance for constructing texts according to disciplinary expectations (Xia, 2020). Li and Flowerdew (2020) support the idea that genre conventions are not

just arbitrary rules but socially meaningful rhetorical structures that help novice writers (especially in L2/EAP contexts) learn how to write in line with disciplinary norms. In his “Application of Swalesian Genre Analysis to Academic Writing Pedagogy”, Flowerdew (2022) discusses how corpus-based analysis of genre helps novice or less-experienced academic writers understand the rhetorical structures of their discipline. He argues that through identifying moves and the linguistic features associated with them, teachers can help writers internalize “genre conventions”.

Swales (1990) conceptualizes genre as a recognizable communicative event defined by shared purposes and conventionalized structures, while Bhatia (1993) emphasizes the role of socio-cultural and cognitive constraints in shaping genre realization in an attempt to identify pedagogically utilizable form-function correlations. More recent scholars have expanded Bhatia’s approach to examine how institutional ideologies shape genre practices across global organizations. The work of Bao and Wang (2023) shows how genres in international organizations and academic contexts evolve in response to institutional demands and globalized communication norms. In their work, Ledin and Machin (2020) examine how organizations use discourse, visuals, and design to circulate institutional ideologies. Their focus is usually on how texts and visuals combine to project institutional identities and shape how audiences are meant to interpret social issues.

Further, Bhatia (1993) argues that genre analysis offers a very powerful system of analysis. It uses linguistic analysis from linguistic description to explanation considering not only socio-cultural but psycholinguistic factors too. This explanation is crucial to the understanding and construction of professional and academic genres. This aspect of genre analysis is of great significance for any form of communicative language teaching, particularly ESP.

Recent pedagogical studies like, Ding and Bruce (2020) and Cheng and Xu (2022), reaffirm that explicitly teaching learners about the conventional structures and language patterns (often described as moves and steps) of specific genres is crucial for developing their genre awareness and improving their ability to produce appropriate and effective communication in academic or professional settings. Despite this growing attention to institutional discourse, genre-based ERPP research has largely focused on academic research articles, with comparatively limited attention to how international organizations such as UN Women adapt research genres to advance advocacy-driven and gender-responsive agendas.

Cotos (2018) describes move analysis as a discourse analysis approach used in the research and teaching of genres within the area of language for specific purposes (LSP). Within genre analysis, moves are rhetorical units that realize specific communicative functions, while steps represent the strategies through which these functions are achieved (Swales, 2004; Santos, 1996; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). Move–step analysis remains a core analytical tool in ERPP for examining the organizational logic of research writing across disciplines (Biber & Egbert, 2019). However, its application to institutional research texts that combine academic reporting with policy advocacy remains underexplored.

Singh and Shauki (2016) emphasize that move-based analysis enables English researchers to understand both the macro level organization of the linguistic features structures in the genre as well as the micro level of linguistic features naturally used in the texts of their chosen disciplines.

This leads us to another significant part of genre analysis which is the structural linguistic analysis. Structural linguistic analysis complements move analysis by examining the lexical and

grammatical resources through which rhetorical functions are realized (Singh, 2014; Gurmit & Singh, 2019). Recent studies show that features such as frame markers and stance expressions play a key role in guiding readers' interpretation of institutional and academic discourse (Hyland & Zou, 2020). In the context of UN Women research publications, such analysis is essential for understanding how linguistic choices support both epistemic authority and gender-inclusive positioning.

2.2 Research Papers' Typical Model

Swales (1990) identifies the Introduction-Method-Results-Discussion (IMRD) model as the most commonly adopted among standard research articles (RAs). Swales and Feak (2012) similarly describe the IMRD model as the overall rhetorical framework of typical research papers (RPs). More recent empirical analyses demonstrate that although the IMRD model persists, hybridized versions of this structure are increasingly common across interdisciplinary and institutional reports (Kanoksilapatham, 2015; Rogerson-Revell, 2021). However, some papers follow a slightly different pattern in which the Results and Discussion sections appear within the same section.

Swales (2004) further outlines five key components of a research paper:

- (1) Front Matter, including “title or cover page”, “abstract”, and “table of contents (for long papers)”;
- (2) Introduction;
- (3) Background, typically a literature survey;
- (4) Description of proposed research, including methods, approaches, and evaluation instruments); and
- (5) Back Matter, including “description of relevant institutional resources” and “references” (p. 186).

2.3 UN RP Moves

UN Women follows the United Nations Editorial Manual in addition to a Linguistic Style Guide. The United Nations Editorial Manual is intended to provide the rules to be followed in drafting, editing and reproducing United Nations documents, publications and other written materials. The general structure of research papers at UN organizations should include the following: (1) front matter, (2) body of the text, and (3) end matter. Recent studies on institutional documentation confirm that UN agencies maintain highly standardized rhetorical formats to ensure clarity, neutrality, and policy alignment. In his article, “Translation at the United Nations as Specialized Translation”, Zhao (2022) discusses how UN documents are produced under a highly regulated institutional system, with specific formatting and linguistic standards. In addition, UN documents must follow procedures and rules for orderly work flow and effective document management, where there are specific standards and requirements for the format of different types of documents.

The front (or preliminary) matter of a United Nations publication may contain some or all of the following elements, normally in the order shown: cover and spine, half-title, title page, reverse of the title page, symbol note, letter of transmittal, foreword or preface, acronyms, table of contents, errata list, explanatory notes, and Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations.

The body of the text includes an introduction and the substantive chapters. The introduction may state the subject-matter and the authority under which the document has been prepared and may explain the organization of the material.

The end matter may include any or all of the following elements, normally in the order shown: annexes, appendices, notes, glossary, bibliography or reference list, index, and back cover.

2.4 UN Women RP Linguistic Features

UN Women Style Guide provides guidelines on the adopted linguistic features and gender-inclusive language. Writing in a gender-inclusive way promotes gender equality. Gender-inclusive language or gender-neutral language avoids bias towards a particular sex or social gender which is the core of the organization's mission. In their paper "Pronouns Beyond the Binary: The Change of Attitudes and Use Over Time", Lindqvist et al. (2021) highlight that language is not merely a reflection of reality but a powerful agent for change that can shape perceptions and influence social action. International bodies such as the United Nations and the European Institute for Gender Equality provide guidelines and resources to help individuals and organizations adopt gender-inclusive language, further emphasizing its importance in fostering inclusivity and combating bias. Accordingly, it is less likely to convey gender stereotypes in an attempt to conform to the missions of the organization.

To achieve this, UN Women employs three main linguistic strategies:

- (1) Gender-neutral expressions;
- (b) Inclusive language; and
- (c) Both feminine and masculine forms.

In order to use gender-neutral expressions, avoid gender-specific nouns when making generic references. Writers should avoid expressions that use the masculine form when making generic references to both men and women, like using congressmen when referring to both female and male legislators. Whenever possible, a gender-neutral alternative should be used. For instance, chairman should be replaced by chair, chairperson, or head and another example is man-made disaster which should be replaced by human induced disaster.

The second strategy of inclusive language is achieved through avoiding the generic masculine form to refer to both genders which creates a gender bias. Whenever possible, writers should modify the sentence to make it gender-neutral though omitting the masculine reference word, using plural forms for both nouns and reference words, using "they/their" to refer back to singular nouns ("singular they"), or using the passive voice.

Achieving the third strategy of adopting both feminine and masculine forms happens when the writer wants to retain both the feminine and masculine forms of the words through using both feminine and masculine reference words, alternating genders and pronouns, using slashes when writing both forms of words.

3. Research Questions

1. How does genre analysis help in identifying the rhetorical moves and linguistic features of research papers published by the UN Women organization?

2. How does genre analysis inform the teaching of gender-based English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP)?

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design grounded in genre analysis. The aim is to examine how gender perspectives are linguistically and rhetorically represented in UN Women research papers (RPs). The design involves analyzing textual structures, rhetorical moves, and linguistic features within institutional research papers to identify patterns that reflect both genre conventions and gender-inclusive practices. By combining qualitative move-step analysis with structural linguistic analysis, the study provides insights into the communicative strategies employed in socially oriented, gender-focused research writing.

Rather than treating textual features as independent or dependent variables, the study employs analytical categories and focal constructs, including rhetorical moves, genre stages, and gender-inclusive linguistic features. These constructs are examined to reveal how UN Women aligns research communication with its institutional mandate on gender equality.

The analysis combines move–step analysis with qualitative linguistic analysis to identify how genre conventions intersect with gender-sensitive discourse practices in research publications.

4.2 Units of Analysis

This study focuses on the analysis of institutional discourse and genre conventions in UN Women research papers. The units of analysis include:

- **Genre and Discourse Features:** The institutional discourse and genre conventions of UN Women research papers (e.g., adherence to IMRD structure, Front/Back Matter, and move-step organization).
- **Rhetorical Moves:** the functional stages in the research texts (e.g., Introduction, Background, Methods, Results, Discussion, Recommendations).
- **Linguistic Features:** specific language choices including gender-inclusive expressions, lexical patterns, and syntactic constructions that convey institutional identity and gender sensitivity.

4.3 Data

The corpus was compiled through systematic filtering of the UN Women website to include only documents explicitly categorized as research papers, while excluding working papers, evidence reviews, policy papers, discussion papers, and other non-research outputs. Priority was given to recent publications that met this criterion. Although several recent items, most notably multiple documents published in April 2024 under the overarching title *Engendering Fiscal Space*, appeared in the search results, these were treated as a thematically linked research series rather than independent, standalone research papers and were therefore excluded from the final corpus. Other research papers were excluded due to their composite format and brief econometric paper structure, which limits comparability with full-length, unified research reports, or because their primary function is legal

guidance and documentation practice, rather than broad analytical research comparable to the selected studies. Consequently, the selected texts represent distinct, full-length research publications produced between 2017 and 2021, ensuring both methodological consistency and comparability across documents. The final corpus was thus designed to ensure genre consistency, comprising standalone research papers with comparable analytical scope, structural organization, and institutional positioning, while excluding modelling-focused, legal-guidance, series-based, or composite-format publications.

The corpus of this study comprises five research papers published by the UN Women organization on its official website. The papers were selected for their relevance to gender equality and their representativeness of UN Women's research papers at the time of data collection. Together, they amount to approximately 300 pages. The titles and publication details are as follows:

1. Financing Gender-inclusive Peace: Gaps in Implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, June 2021, 36 pages.
2. Gender and Age Inequality of Disaster Risk, December 2019, 84 pages
3. Towards a Gender-responsive Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, February, 2018, 52 pages
4. Towards a Gender-responsive Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, November, 2018, 42 pages
5. At What Cost? Women Migrant Workers, Remittances and Development, January, 2017, 86 pages

4.4 Analytical Framework

The adopted framework to analyze this paper is Swales' (2004) typical model of research papers which outlines five major components of research papers:

(1) Front Matter, (2) Introduction, (3) Background, (4) Description of proposed research (including methods, approaches, and evaluation instruments), and (5) Back Matter.

Each paper was first segmented according to these macro-sections. Subsequently, a bottom-up move-step analysis was conducted to identify recurrent rhetorical functions within and across sections.

4.5 Coding Procedures

- Moves and steps were identified based on communicative purpose, drawing on Swales (2004) and subsequent genre-analytic studies.
- Coding was conducted manually and iteratively, with categories refined through repeated readings of the corpus.
- Linguistic features associated with each move were then examined to identify patterns of gender-inclusive language and institutional positioning.

To enhance analytical reliability, move identifications were checked for internal consistency by revisiting ambiguous instances across texts and ensuring alignment between rhetorical function and linguistic realization.

In addition, the analysis incorporates guidelines from the United Nations Editorial Manual and the UN Women Linguistic Style Guide to account for institutional conventions and gender-inclusive language practices. By combining these frameworks, the study connects genre structure with institutional discourse practices.

In order to apply this to the selected research papers (RPs), the current paper is intended to answer the following research questions.

5. Results

This section presents the results of the genre analysis based on Swales' (2004) model for research papers and the UN Editorial Manual, supplemented by the UN Women Linguistic Style Guide. The dual framework facilitates the identification of structural moves and linguistic conventions across the selected research papers (RPs), with the aim of developing a practical pedagogical framework for gender-based English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP)

Overall, the analysis reveals a high degree of structural consistency at the macro level, alongside systematic institutional adaptations reflecting the applied, policy-oriented nature of UN Women research. Table 1 summarizes the distribution of major moves and sub-moves across the corpus according to both UN Editorial Manual and Swales' (2004) model.

Table 1

Presence of Moves in UN Women Research Papers

UN Moves		1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	Swales' 2004 Moves		1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	
<i>Front Matter</i>	<i>Cover</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	<i>Front Matter</i>	<i>Cover page</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<i>Spine</i>													
	<i>half-title</i>													
	<i>title page</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		<i>Title</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<i>reverse of the title page</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓								
	<i>symbol note</i>													
	<i>letter of transmittal</i>													
	<i>foreword or preface</i>							<i>Abstract</i>						✓ (After TOC)
	<i>Acronyms</i>	✓	✓ after TOC	✓ In appen dix	✓ In appen dix	✓ LOA after TOC								
	<i>table of contents</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		<i>Table of Contents</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<i>errata list</i>														
<i>explanatory notes (Executive summary)</i>	✓	✓												

	<i>Summary, conclusions and recommendations</i>	✓ C	✓ C+R	✓ R	✓ R	✓ C+R In the back cover								
Body of text	Introduction	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (with in another section)	Introductio n		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ (wit hin anot her secti on)	
	substantive chapters	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Backgroun d (literature Survey)							
							Description of research (methods, approaches , evaluation instruments)		✓ (w ith in int ro)	✓		✓		
The End matter	<i>Annexes</i>		✓				Back Matter							
	<i>Appendices</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓								
	<i>Notes</i>	✓	✓	✓					Descript ion of relevant institutio nal resource s					
	<i>Glossary</i>													
	<i>bibliograph y or reference list</i>	✓	✓ Biblio graph y	✓ In Appe ndix	✓ In Appe ndix	✓			Referen ces	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<i>index</i>													
<i>back cover</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓									

5.1 Swales' (2004) Moves

The findings indicate that the analyzed UN Women RPs broadly conform to Swales' (2004) macro-structural framework, particularly with respect to the inclusion of core sections such as the Introduction and References. All RPs include a reference list, though one paper labels this section as "Bibliography" instead of "References." However, notable deviations emerge in how these moves are realized and positioned.

A key pattern concerns the absence or relocation of Abstracts. Only one RP includes an Abstract, and it appears after the Table of Contents (TOC), diverging from Swales' structure. Similarly, while all papers contain an introduction, one RP integrates it within a thematically titled section rather than presenting it as a standalone move.

Another recurring deviation involves the replacement of conventional "Background" and "Methods" sections with thematically organized substantive sections. Although methodological information is present across the corpus, it is sometimes embedded within the "Introduction" section rather than explicitly labeled. This reflects a preference for content-driven organization over strict adherence to academic section labels.

Overall, these patterns suggest that while UN Women RPs retain the functional logic of Swales’ model, they adapt its formal realization to align with institutional and disciplinary modifications reflecting the UN Women’s publication norms.

5.2 UN RP Moves

Applying the UN Editorial Manual, the results provided in Table 1 reveal that, in terms of the “Front Matter”, all RPs conform to certain sub-moves which are the cover, title page, reverse page, and TOC, demonstrating strong institutional consistency.

Variation emerges most notably the placement and labeling of acronyms, executive summaries, and concluding sections. Lists of acronyms appear in different locations (after the TOC, within appendices, or under alternative labels such as “List of Abbreviations”), suggesting functional rather than prescriptive adherence to the manual.

Similarly, the last sub-move within the “Front Matter” which is “Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations” exhibits notable variation. One paper contains a standalone “Conclusions” section, another combines “Conclusions and Recommendations”, while the remaining papers present “Recommendations” without an explicit “Conclusions” section. Notably, this sub-move is frequently repositioned toward the end of substantive chapters rather than retained within the Front Matter. This relocation reflects a functional rather than formal adherence, where recommendations are grounded in empirical findings instead of serving as prefatory summaries.

In the “End Matter”, variation is most evident in the use of Annexes versus Appendices and the labeling of Reference sections. While all RPs include References, deviations such as labeling the section “Bibliography” or embedding references within Appendices indicate institutional flexibility rather than inconsistency.

Taken together, these findings show that UN Women RPs follow a stable institutional genre template, while allowing strategic flexibility to accommodate research scope, audience needs, and policy relevance.

For further clarification, the five selected UN Women research papers were examined in terms of their individual move realizations, with the detailed distribution of moves presented in Table 2. Rather than exhibiting identical structural sequencing, the papers demonstrate a shared macro-organizational pattern alongside localized variation in move labeling, placement, and integration.

Table 2

Move Analysis of Selected UN Women RPs

UN Guide	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
Front Matter	Cover page	Cover Page	Cover Page	Cover Page	Cover Page
	Title	Title	Title	Title	Title
	Reverse page	Reverse Page	Reverse Page	Reverse page	Reverse page
	Title	Title	Title	Acknowledgement	Title
			Acknowledgment	Title	
Acronyms	Table of Contents	Table of Contents	Table of Contents	Table of Contents	

	Table of Contents	Acronyms			List of Abbreviations
	Executive Summary	Executive Summary			Abstract
Body	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	
	Research Findings	Methodology	5 substantive Sections	6 substantive sections, where the second includes the methodology	5 substantive sections, where the first include introduction
		2 substantive sections			
End Matter	Conclusion	Conclusions and recommendations	Recommendation for action	Recommendation for action	Conclusion, includes recommendation
		Annex 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	Appendix I: Acronyms	Appendix I: Acronyms	Appendices: Appendix 1, 2, 3, 4
	References	Bibliography	Appendix II: Select references	Appendix II: Select references	References
	Endnotes	Endnotes	Endnotes		
	Back cover	Back Cover	Back Cover	Back Cover	Back Cover

Across the corpus, the “Front Matter” shows strong consistency, with all RPs including a cover with title-page and copyright notice, reverse of the title-page and copyright notice, acknowledgments. However, variation emerges in the treatment of acronyms and summaries, which appear under different labels (e.g., “List of Abbreviations”) or in different locations (Front Matter versus Appendices), indicating functional rather than prescriptive adherence to the UN Guide.

In the “Body of the Text”, all RPs contain an Introduction and a Conclusion and/or Recommendations section, confirming the stability of core rhetorical moves. However, Methodology and Key Findings are not always explicitly labeled. In several RPs, these moves are embedded within thematically organized substantive sections, where methodological explanation and analytical discussion are integrated under topic-driven headings. This pattern reflects the applied, policy-oriented nature of UN Women research, which prioritizes issue relevance and readability over strict adherence to conventional academic structure.

The “End Matter” exhibits the greatest degree of variation. While all papers include references, differences are evident in labeling (e.g., “Bibliography”) and placement, with some RPs situating References within Appendices. Similarly, Annexes and Appendices are used inconsistently across the corpus, and although some papers include lists of acronyms, none contains a standalone glossary. This absence appears intentional due to separate publication protocols, as glossaries are often issued as separate institutional documents. This practice is explicitly acknowledged in one RP, which draws on an external UN Women glossary: “based on the definition in the UN Women Expert Group Meeting report glossary on women’s participation in peace processes...”.

Overall, the move patterns displayed in Table 2 illustrate a genre that is structurally stable at the macro level yet flexible in its internal organization, reflecting institutional publishing norms and the communicative priorities of UN Women research outputs.

5.3 UN Women RP Linguistic Features

An investigation of the linguistic features in UN Women research papers reveals consistent adherence to the UN Style Guide, particularly in the adoption of gender-inclusive language. However, some inclusive strategies are less applicable due to the empirical and case-study nature of these texts, which describe specific real-life individuals rather than generic roles. The overall approach reflects deliberate linguistic choices that shape ERPP-style research discourse in terms of stance, lexico-grammar, and audience positioning.

Here below are several key linguistic strategies supported by examples from the data:

Table 3

Key Linguistic Strategies

Strategy	Example	Observations
Gender-neutral expressions	Chairperson instead of chairman	All RPs
Inclusive language	Gender-sensitive peace agreement	All RPs
Feminine & masculine forms	Women and men / he/she	Less applicable in case studies
Order of gendered terms	Women before men; boys before girls	All RPs

- “*Gender-Neutral Expressions*” like the use of “chairperson” rather than “chairman”:

The research papers consistently replace gender-specific terms with neutral ones, in accordance with the UN guidelines (e.g., *chairperson* instead of *chairman*). For instance:

While rules over who is a community member vary, they can require that the **person** be the head of the household (typically men) or allow only one **vote** per family (which the man typically makes without necessarily consulting female household members).

Based on the study of the relevant research paper of the data, this sentence is intended to clarify the stereotypical fact that men are typically considered the head of the household and they only are responsible for the vote without consulting female household members. The sentence avoids the mention of “man” and uses “person” and “vote” (in bold) instead. By this, the study highlights that these roles should be “gender-neutral”, however, they are stereotypically considered as the roles of only men, based on the organization’s research results. This becomes clear through the underlined explanatory remarks between brackets that acknowledge existing gendered realities. Such choices shape ERPP discourse by projecting an inclusive stance and promoting objective, unbiased reporting, which is central to institutional research communication.

- “*Inclusive strategy*”: advises to avoid generic masculine form to refer to both genders that creates a gender bias. The RPs also comply with the instruction to avoid the generic masculine form, as seen in expressions such as “gender-inclusive peace” and “gender-sensitive peace agreement.” These examples reflect a conscious linguistic strategy to challenge gender bias and reinforce the

organization's commitment to equality. This strategy shapes lexical choices in ERPP texts, signaling the author's stance in terms of neutrality, inclusivity, and alignment with organizational norms.

- *Use of Both Feminine and Masculine Forms*: it states the necessity of retaining both the feminine and masculine forms of the words through using both feminine and masculine reference words, alternating genders and pronouns, and using slashes when writing both forms of words.

Although the UN Style Guide recommends alternating gendered forms (e.g., he/she, women and men), this strategy is less applicable in the analyzed corpus, as the RPs frequently describe concrete cases involving identifiable persons. Therefore, the simultaneous use of both forms is not always relevant.

- *Order of Gendered Terms*: is the mention of “women” before “men”

An additional and notable stylistic feature—though not explicitly mentioned in the UN Style Guide—is the deliberate variation in the order of gendered terms. For example, phrases such as “*women and men's needs*” and “*equip female and male delegates*” in an attempt to challenge conventional patterns by prioritizing *women* before *men*. In contrast, phrases such as “*boys and girls*” reverse this order to maintain balance. This alternating order reflects the organization's broader goal of linguistic balance and inclusivity, i.e. inclusive language to achieve equality between women and men. This is evident in the following example: “*enhance women's, men's, boys', girls', and sexual and gender minorities*” where the word “women” comes before “men”, while the word “boys” comes before “girls” to restore the balance of gender-inclusive language. Hence, this reflects strategic lexical prioritization. This variation signals a conscious effort to foreground gender equality, influencing discourse prominence and salience in ERPP-style communication.

Through this linguistic analysis, it becomes evident that UN Women RPs genre strategically employs language to accommodate their communicative purpose of the entire genre. That is, the advancement of gender equality through inclusive discourse practices. Deviations mainly occur where the strategy is inapplicable to concrete case descriptions, rather than inconsistent usage.

In conclusion, these findings underscore UN Women's strong alignment between the organization's mission and linguistic practices, demonstrating how stance, lexico-grammar, and institutional norms are integrated, and positioning the genre as an exemplary case for ERPP pedagogy in socially engaged institutional contexts. This alignment is further reinforced by the organization's dedicated linguistic Style Guide available on its official website.

6. Discussion

6.1 Justification of Results

The findings indicate that UN Women research papers (RPs) operate as a hybrid institutional research genre, combining core Swalesian rhetorical logic with flexible institutional realization. Rather than replicating conventional academic sequencing, these texts prioritize communicative effectiveness, policy relevance, and audience accessibility. This explains why certain moves, such as Methodology, Background, or Conclusions, are occasionally embedded within thematically organized sections instead of being explicitly labeled.

This pattern aligns with recent genre scholarship emphasizing that institutional research writing frequently adapts academic conventions to organizational goals (Kanoksilapatham, 2015; Rogerson-Revell, 2021). In the UN Women corpus, the stability of macro-level organization coexists with local variation in move labeling and placement, confirming that functional equivalence, rather

than formal uniformity, governs genre realization. From an ERPP perspective, this reinforces the need to train writers to recognize rhetorical purpose across variable structural forms.

Application of the UN Editorial Manual further demonstrates that institutional guidance functions as a flexible framework rather than a prescriptive template. While core Front Matter elements are consistently maintained, other components, such as acronyms, summaries, and concluding sections, are adapted according to document scope and communicative intent. The frequent relocation of Conclusions and Recommendations toward the end of substantive sections underscores their evaluative and action-oriented role, positioning them as outcomes of analysis rather than preliminary summaries.

6.2 Genre Clarity and Pedagogical Significance

Although variation occurs in the use of Annexes, Appendices, and Reference labeling, these practices do not undermine genre coherence. Instead, they reflect institutional prioritization of readability and usability over terminological precision. Importantly, such variation has pedagogical implications: ERPP instruction should focus on how structural decisions shape reader navigation and genre recognition, rather than on enforcing rigid definitional distinctions.

Similarly, the selective use of endnotes illustrates how institutional research genres manage supplementary information while maintaining textual flow. These adaptive practices confirm that UN Women RPs privilege communicative clarity and policy relevance, supporting the view that institutional research genres are inherently context-sensitive and audience-driven.

Overall, the discussion highlights that conformity and divergence from Swales' model and UN guidance are not contradictory but complementary. Together, they illustrate how institutional research genres maintain rhetorical stability while allowing strategic flexibility, an insight that is central to advanced ERPP pedagogy.

Comparison with Recent Literature (2020–2025)

- The observed flexibility in structuring RPs aligns with findings by Kanoksilapatham (2015) and Rogerson-Revell (2021) who note that institutional research often prioritizes content relevance and audience understanding over conventional IMRD labeling.
- Beyond structural organization, the consistent deployment of gender-inclusive linguistic strategies reinforces the alignment between rhetorical form and institutional mission. Choices such as gender-neutral expressions, inclusive lexical framing, and strategic ordering of gendered terms contribute to stance construction and ideological positioning. As noted by Lindqvist et al. (2021), such linguistic practices actively shape institutional authority and credibility. In this respect, UN Women RPs exemplify how lexico-grammatical choices function as integral components of ERPP-style research discourse.

7. Conclusion and Implications

This study set out to explore the genre of gender-based research writing within the framework of English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP), with a specific focus on UN Women research papers. Drawing on Swalesian genre analysis, the study identified the rhetorical organization, move realizations, and linguistic features that characterize this form of institutional research discourse.

The findings demonstrate that genre analysis provides an effective approach for uncovering the communicative structure and inclusive linguistic strategies employed in UN Women's research discourse. The organization's strong adherence to gender-inclusive language reinforces its mission of equality and empowerment, illustrating how linguistic practice can embody institutional values.

From an ERPP perspective, the study proposes a context-specific rhetorical model tailored to UN Women research papers (Table 4). To the researcher's best knowledge, no prior model has been developed for this specific institutional research genre. The proposed model therefore contributes to the expanding repertoire of ERPP frameworks by addressing a socially engaged and policy-oriented research context that is not adequately covered by existing academic publishing guidelines. This

contribution is especially significant given that the UN Editorial Manual serves as a general publication guide for multiple document types (e.g., briefs, policy papers, projects), without tailored guidance for research papers.

The proposed UN Women-specific model organizes research papers into Front Matter, Body, and End Matter, foregrounding rhetorical function rather than strict adherence to conventional IMRD labeling. To maintain analytical focus and pedagogical clarity, highly procedural or formatting-specific details associated with individual sub-moves are best relocated to Appendix A, allowing the main text to emphasize genre interpretation and instructional applicability rather than technical specification.

Table 4

Suggested Pedagogical Implications

1. **The Front Matter** should include the following elements: cover page, reverse page including copyright information, half-title, reverse page, acknowledgment, acronyms, table of contents, and executive summary.
2. **The Body** of the text should include the following elements: introduction and substantive chapters or sections based on the content and subject matter of the study.
3. **The End Matter** should include the following elements: conclusions and recommendations, annexes or appendices, references, endnotes, and back cover.

Several concrete ERPP classroom applications emerge from this model. These include:

- **Move-analysis tasks**, where learners identify how Swalesian moves are realized through institutional adaptations.
- **Rewriting exercises**, in which students transform conventionally labeled academic sections into thematically organized institutional formats.
- **Comparative genre tasks**, contrasting UN Women RPs with academic journal articles to highlight hybridity and audience orientation.

Such activities align with genre-based pedagogy by fostering rhetorical awareness, adaptability, and institutional sensitivity (Kanoksilapatham, 2015; Rogerson-Revell, 2021). The integration of authentic UN Women research texts into ERPP instruction thus prepares learners for real-world research communication beyond strictly academic publishing.

It is worth noting that the UN Editorial Manual contains a structural inaccuracy by categorizing *Conclusions and Recommendations* within the *Front Matter*. The findings of this study, alongside Swales' (2004) model, indicate that these sections function more appropriately as components of the *End Matter*, as reflected in actual UN Women research publications.

Future research is encouraged to extend the scope of analysis to other types of UN Women publications, such as policy briefs, reports, and advocacy documents, to explore whether similar rhetorical and linguistic patterns persist across genres. Such comparative work could deepen our understanding of gender-sensitive ERPP and enhance pedagogical applications in the teaching of academic and professional writing.

Acknowledgment

We all thank the participants for their time, energy, and cooperation.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have conducted the study, collected data, analyzed and interpreted the data, and written up the manuscript.

Funding

The study did not receive any funding.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

References

- Alharbi, S. H. (2021). A comparative genre-based analysis of move-step structure of RAIs in two different publication contexts. *English Language Teaching*, 14(3), 12–24. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v14n3p12>
- Bao, R., & Wang, H. (2023). A comparison between the preferences for oral corrective feedback of teachers and students of Chinese as a second language. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1112136>
- Bhatia, V. K. (1993). *Analyzing genre: Language use in professional settings*. Longman.
- Biber, D., & Conrad, S. (2019). *Register, genre, and style*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108686136>
- Bruce, I. (2021). Towards an EAP without borders: Developing knowledge, practitioners, and communities. *International Journal of English for Academic Purposes: Research and Practice*, (Spring) (2021), 23–38. <https://doi.org/10.3828/ijeap.2021.3>
- Cargill, M., & O'Connor, P. (2021). *Publishing research in English: ERPP in global academic contexts*. Routledge.
- Cheng, L., & Xu, J. (2022). Chinese English as a foreign language learners' individual differences and their willingness to communicate. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 883664. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.883664>
- Cotos, E. (2018). Move analysis. In C. A. Chapelle (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics* (pp. 1–8). John Wiley & Sons. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal1485>
- Diffen LLC. (n.d.). Annex vs. appendix – difference and comparison. Retrieved October 19, 2025, from https://www.diffen.com/difference/Annex_vs_Appendix
- Ding, A., & Bruce, I. (2020). *The English for academic purposes practitioner: Operating in transnational contexts*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Dudley-Evans, T., & St John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in English for specific purposes. A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Flowerdew, L. (2022). Application of Swalesian genre analysis to academic writing pedagogy: A corpus perspective. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 15(1), 1–9.
- Gurmit, S. P. S., & Singh, M.K.S. (2019). Crossing the interdisciplinary border: A structural linguistics genre analysis. *Opcion*, 35(21). 568–588.
- Hyland, K., & Zou, H. (J.). (2020). In the frame: Signaling structure in academic articles and blogs. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 165, 31–44. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2020.05.002>
- Li, Y., & Flowerdew, J. (2020). Teaching English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP): A Review of Language Teachers' Pedagogical Initiatives. *English for Specific Purposes*, 59, 29-41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2020.03.002>

- Lindqvist, A., Sendén, M. G., & Renström, E. A. (2021). What is gender, anyway: A review of the options for operationalizing gender. *Psychology & Sexuality*, 12(4), 332–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2020.1729844>
- Kanoksilapatham, B. (2015). Distinguishing textual features characterizing structural variation in research articles across three engineering sub-discipline corpora. *English for Specific Purposes*, 37(1), 74–86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2014.06.008>
- Ledin, P., & Machin, D. (2020). *Doing critical discourse studies: Tools for institutional and ideological analysis*. SAGE.
- Rogerson-Revell, P. M. (2021). Computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT): Current issues and future directions. *RELC Journal*, 52(1), 189–205. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220977406>
- Santos, M. B. D. (1996). The textual organization of research paper abstracts in applied linguistics. *Text*, 16, 481–499. <https://doi.org/10.1515/text.1.1996.16.4.481>
- Singh, M. K. S. (2014). A corpus-based genre analysis of the quality health, safety and environment work procedures in Malaysian petroleum industries [Unpublished PhD thesis dissertation]. Johor: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.
- Singh, M. K. S., & Shauki, N. B. I. (2016). Analyzing generical moves in pedagogical sales reply emails. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Business*. University Malaysia Kelantan.
- Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge University Press.
- Swales, J. M. (2004). *Research genres: Exploration and applications*. Cambridge University Press.
- Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2012). *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks and skills*, (3rd ed.). Michigan University Press.
- United Nations. Department of Conference Services. *UN Editorial Manual*. 1983. ST/DCS/2, available at: <https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/editorial-manual>
- United Nations. UNESCO. *Guidelines on gender-neutral language*. 1999. DRG.99/WS/1, available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377299>
- Xia, S. A. (2020). Genre analysis in the digital era: Developments and challenges. *ESP Today Journal*, 8(1), 141–159. <https://doi.org/10.18485/esptoday.2020.8.1.7>
- Zhao, Y. (2022). *Institutionnel discours and UN documentation*. Discourse & Communication.

Appendix A: Procedural Description of the proposed UN Women-specific Model

This appendix provides a detailed procedural description of selected sub-moves within the *Front Matter* of UN Women research papers. These specifications are included here to support transparency and reliability while allowing the main discussion to foreground rhetorical function and pedagogical relevance rather than technical formatting.

- The cover page includes the type of the publication, i.e. RESEARCH PAPER, (entirely in uppercase letter), the title of the publication (entirely in uppercase letter), the date of the publication, the name of the organization and the logo. The whole cover page should be in uppercase letters.
- The reverse page includes the copyright information, authors' names, any further relevant information, ISBN number, design company name and the editor name.
- The half-title is the title of the publication standing alone on a page accompanied by authors' names, and the city and the date of publication along with the organization's logo and name.
- The second reverse page is blank including only the title of the publication and page number in an extremely small font at the very end of the page.
- Following the preliminary pages, UN Women research papers generally include a list of *acronyms*, a *table of contents*, and an *executive summary*. While the inclusion of these elements is consistent across the dataset, their placement and labeling vary, reflecting flexible institutional conventions rather than strict adherence to a single standardized sequence.



© 2024 by the authors. Licensee Journal of English for Specific Purposes Praxis, Iran. This is an open access article under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0 license) (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>).