

## Genre Analysis of Postgraduate Theses and Dissertations: Case of Statement of the Problem

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**Abstract :** This study reports a descriptive research in the form of a genre analysis of postgraduates' theses and dissertations at three Iranian universities, including Ferdowsi, Tehran, and Tarbiat Moddares universities. The researchers sought to depict the generic structure of "statement of the problem" section of PhD dissertations and MA theses. Moreover, researchers desired to find any probable variety based on the year the dissertations belonged, to see whether genre-consciousness developed among Iranian postgraduates. To obtain data, "statement of the problem" section of 90 Ph.D. dissertations and MA theses from 2001 to 2013 in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at above-mentioned universities was selected. Frequency counts was employed for the quantitative method of data analysis, while genre analysis was used as the qualitative method. Inter-rater reliability was found to be about 0.93. Results revealed that students in different degrees at each of these universities used various generic structures for writing "statement of the problem". Moreover, comparison of different time periods (2001-2006, and 2007-2013) revealed that postgraduates in the second time period, regardless of their degree and university, employed more similar generic structures which can be optimistically attributed to a general raise in genre awareness.

**Keywords :** genre, genre analysis, Ph.D. and MA dissertations, statement of the problem, generic structure

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