

Move Analysis of Death Row Statements: An Explanatory Study Applied to Death Row Statements in Texas Department of Criminal Justice Website

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Abstract : Linguists have analyzed the rhetorical structure of various forensic genres, but only a few have investigated the complete structure of death row statements. Unlike other forensic text types, such as suicide or ransom notes, the focus of death row statement analysis is not the authenticity or falsity of the text, but its intended meaning and its communicative purpose. As it constitutes their last statement before their execution, there are probably many things that inmates would like to express. This study mainly examines the rhetorical moves of 200 death row statements from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice website using rhetorical move analysis. The rhetorical moves identified in the statements will be classified based on their communicative purpose, and they will be grouped into moves and steps. A move structure will finally be suggested from the most common or characteristic moves and steps, as well as some sub-moves. However, because of some statements' atypicality, some moves may appear in different parts of the texts or not at all.

Keywords : Death row statements, forensic linguistics, genre analysis, move analysis

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