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## **THE FRAMEWORK OF ACADEMIC ESSAYS SEEN THROUGH A SWALESIAN ‘CARS’ LENS**

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### ***Abstract***

*This paper reflects my endeavor of applying the insights derived from literature review to the analysis of academic essays produced in the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) context. As a subgenre of academic writing, to my knowledge, at least, they seem to be less researched from a genre perspective, as compared to other EAP genres. This study is based on Swales' (1990) 'CaRS' ("Creating a Research Space") model of analysis, with the main focus on identifying genre characteristics at macro-level in argumentative essays. The centrepiece of this research is, thus, the macro-level analysis of a corpus of IELTS essays, selected from various sources, designed to provide models for students who want to achieve a Band 7 (or above) score. Thus, I have based my analysis on the organizational structure of 109 IELTS Writing Task 2 essays, which were divided into five categories: Opinion essays, Discussion essays, Problem and Solution essays, Advantages and Disadvantages essays and Opinion and-Problems and Solution essays. These essays were analysed in terms of their structure indicating the 'moves' and 'steps' displayed by each of them. The resulting macro-level structures were then compared, in order to identify similarities and differences. Building on Swales' (1990) CaRS model of analysis and having the main focus on identifying the genre characteristics at macro-level in argumentative essays, the findings of this paper may provide relevant insights both for EAP teachers and for students aiming to improve their academic writing competences.*

**Keywords:** EAP; Academic writing; Genre Analysis; 'Move' structure; Argumentative essays.

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### ***1. Introduction***

The essayist literature or what is also known as academic writing comes to emphasize its role in academic settings. Lillis (2001) states that this type of genre "is not a specific genre but institutionalized shorthand for a particular way of constructing knowledge which has come to be privileged within the academy." (Lillis, 2001, 20) Hyland (2009) adds that the academic essay is part of the acculturation practice in any university context, and so he comes to emphasize the definition of an argumentative essay which can be "by its purpose which is to persuade the reader of the correctness of a central statement. This text type is characterized by a three-stage structure which represents the organizing principles of the genre: thesis, argument and conclusion." (Hyland, 2006, 68)

Therefore, I will focus on a specific academic essay type found in the framework of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). This type of essay is a stepping stone for students who

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want to learn how to write an Academic Essay. However, the IELTS test may not be an EAP test in the traditional sense, it is widely used for EAP or university entry purposes, because it provides useful information in an academic context.

Building on Swales' (1990, 2004) genre-based approach and on the analysis of written communication in different contexts (Cortes, 2011; Flowerdew, 2022; Muresan, 2000, 2012; Paraschiv (Panait), 2018; Sheldon, 2011), I want to identify the relevance of genre features at macro-level in argumentative essays. Thus, I have based my analysis on the organizational structure of 109 IELTS Task 2 essays, which were divided into five categories: *Opinion* essays, *Discussion* essays, *Problem and Solution* essays, *Advantages and Disadvantages* essays and *Opinion -and-Problems and Solution* essays. These essays were analysed in terms of their structure, indicating the 'moves' and 'steps' present in each of them. The resulting macro-level structures were then compared with a view of identifying similarities and differences among them.

## 2. *Theoretical considerations*

The academic essay has currently become an assignment genre in university writing. However, studying such an essay does not mean that the university essay genre is common to all disciplines. Bruce (2010) comes to reinforce that idea when citing from Moore and Morton (1999) who characterize an essay as "a task with a variety of features and specifications" (Moore & Morton, 1999, 206). 'Argument', as a term, is used in numerous ways in academic discourse. (Toulmin, 1958; Mitchell et al., 2008). When referring to individual claims it is supported by grounds and warrants. Davies (2008) claims that this type of argument can be explained by syllogisms. However, when one refers to the argument as a whole text, Andrews (1995) emphasizes a clear explanation of it as "a process of argumentation, a connected series of statements intended to establish a position and implying response to another or more than one position." (Andrews, 1995, 3)

Toulmin, Reike and Janik (1984) offer a similar definition of the argument as "the sequence of interlinked claims and reasons that, between them, establish content and force of the position for which a particular speaker is arguing." (Toulmin et al., 1984, 14)

Thus, based on all these definitions, the main step in writing an argument is the development of a position. Another component is the presentation of that position through the logical arrangement of statements that build on this position or what Andrews (1995) defined as the "connected series of statements" (Andrews, 1995, 77) and in Toulmin et al. (1984) "as the sequence of interlinked claims and reasons". (Toulmin et al., 1984, 14)

Johns (2008) points out that defining the argument as a genre is exceedingly difficult because it is usually used as a term which covers various types of discipline-specific writing. However, the essay has low prestige as being a student genre, not one in which disciplinary experts have to write.

Hyland gives a clear definition of an argumentative essay which can be "by its purpose which is to persuade the reader of the correctness of a central statement. This text type is characterized by a three-stage structure which represents the organizing principles of the genre: thesis, argument and conclusion." (Hyland, 2006, 68)

The usefulness of the description of an argumentative essay is shown by its schema characteristics and the stages of describing how an essay is developed, all of which help the students to independently construct their own essays. Moreover, the framework resulted can be used for guided writing practice. Also, research skills can be enhanced as being part of assembling an 'argument' stage. This can be done by focusing on the connection between claim and support moves and showing how they are related to skills, materials, note-taking, which become central aspects of essay writing. Finally, writing should be a collaborative task where the students consult the teachers, and they work together.

### 3. Methodological approach

The IELTS is a large-scale public test used for university entrance selection. The IELTS test consists of four components, each of them meant to evaluate proficiency in another skill area, namely two focusing on receptive skills (Listening and Reading), and two on productive skills (Writing and Speaking). The writing part asks the learners to produce two samples of writing in the 60 minutes allocated.

The writing part of IELTS, especially Task 2, is assessed according to four main descriptors: "task response, cohesion and coherence, lexical resources and grammatical range and accuracy"<sup>2</sup> for a band scale which ranges from 0 (non-user) to 9 (expert user).

For the purpose of this study I have decided to focus my analysis on essays which are considered to correspond to Bands 7-8 on the IELTS scale. In the task response category, the students must be able to address all the requirements, express a clear position and extend it accordingly, with a focus on supporting the main ideas of the issue under discussion. For the coherence and cohesion part, the candidate's ideas should be logical and clear, with appropriate cohesive devices and each paragraph must have a clear topic. In what concerns the lexical resources unit, the student is expected to use a sufficient range of appropriate vocabulary with focus on style and collocation. The section on grammatical range and accuracy points out that the use of complex structure, error-free sentences, good grammar and punctuation are a prerequisite for attaining a high score.

In this part I will analyse the organizational structure of IELTS Task 2 essays to identify their 'move' patterns and to explore if the essays divided into five categories - *Opinion* essays, *Discussion* essays, *Problem and Solution* essays, *Advantages and Disadvantages* essays and *Opinion -and- Problems and Solution* essays- have comparable macro-level structures. The aim was that of going beyond the mechanics of paragraphing and lexis focused guidelines provided in exam preparation materials, with a view to identifying rhetorical moves and steps, as well as to exploring their relatedness to content aspects.

For this purpose, 109 short academic essays written in response to IELTS "Task 2" rubrics have been downloaded. I wanted to see if these essays share the same structure or if there are visible differences among them, which of these patterns are compulsory in building an essay and which are optional. Also, I will present the main structure for the argumentative essays which resulted from the layouts of the five different essay categories.

My research is based on a corpus of 109 sample essays selected from the following sources: *IELTS examination Blogspot*<sup>3</sup>, *IELTS Trainer*<sup>4</sup>, *IELTS Academic volume 13*<sup>5</sup> and *14*<sup>6</sup>. All these essays can be considered examples for learners who want to achieve a Band 7 or 8 score.

After a close analysis of the rubrics of all these essays, I was able to group them into five main categories. The following table includes both the essay types identified and the number of sample essays in each category.

**Table 1: Essay types in the corpus**

Discussion essays	Opinion essays	Advantages and disadvantages essays	Problem and solution essays	Opinion- and-problem and solution essays
35 essays	47 essays	12 essays	11 essays	4 essays

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ielts.org/-/media/pdfs/writing-band-descriptors-task-2.ashx> Accessed last on 04.08.2022

<sup>3</sup> <http://ieltsexamination.blogspot.com/> Accessed last on 14.06.2022

<sup>4</sup> <https://bayanebartar.org/file-dl/library/IELTS2/IELTS-Trainer/IELTS-Trainer.pdf> Accessed last on 04.08.2022

<sup>5</sup> <https://ielts.oxinchannel.app/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/IELTS-Cambridge-13.pdf> Accessed last on 04.08.2022

<sup>6</sup> <http://ielts-house.net/Cambridge-IELTS-14/Cambridge-IELTS-14-General.pdf> Accessed last on 04.08.2022

The next chapter presents the main findings of the genre-based analysis of the essays included in the corpus and discusses the similarities and differences identified.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion: ‘Move’ structures in academic argumentative essays

In *Opinion* essays, candidates have to state their own opinion regarding the statement from the rubric meanwhile, in *Discussion* essays candidates are required to analyze both sides of an argument and state which one of them they prefer. These types of essays are also known as for and against essays, but one should not confuse them with *Advantages and Disadvantages* essays. *Problem and Solution* essay have the same structure as the *Advantages and Disadvantages* essays. The smallest category of essays I found is *Opinion and Problem and Solution* essays which display a mixture of features and characteristics found in the previous essays.

After closely analyzing the essays, I established two main structures for *Discussion* and *Opinion* essays, and only one layout for the rest of the sample essays. The analysis revealed that all the structures consisted of five or six moves. For *Opinion* essays, the difference is in the layout. The first structure has six moves, while the latter has only five. In what concerns the *Advantages and Disadvantages* essays have the same moves and steps that I have discovered in the other types of essays, however they display small variations. Similarly, the *Problem and solution* essays have the same structure as the *Advantages and Disadvantages* essays. They present six moves in total, and in this corpus, I have discovered 11 essays of this type. The last type of essays, *Opinion and Problem and Solution* essays, display a mixture of features found in *Opinion* essays and features characteristic of *Problem and solution* essays. In all of my corpus, I found only four essays that fit this category.

**Table 2: An illustration of Move 1 and its Steps**

<b>M1: Generalising, paraphrasing the rubric. Preparing the ground for discussing alternatives</b>	S1- generalizing and paraphrasing the rubric
	S2- expressing own view (implicitly or explicitly)
	S3- bringing arguments in support of the view expressed
	S4- exemplifying
	S5- expanding the explanation (optional)
	S6- introducing concessions or contrasts to balance views (optional)
	S7- showing causality relations (optional)
	S8A- preparing the ground for discussing alternatives (optional)
	<b>OR</b>
S8B- adding more points and expanding the explanation (optional)	

After a closer look, I noticed that some of the *Discussion* essays have as a first step a generalization of the topic and a representation of it through a general statement. Others, present only the generalization and paraphrase of the rubric. Step two is present in all the essays, although it has a slightly variation which is found in the author’s voice, which can be implicitly or explicitly. Bringing arguments to support the view is what usually comes natural after one has expressed a personal preference. Another aspect I established is that the steps do not follow the same order in all the essays and also, some of the steps are optional.

In *Opinion* essays, the first move has six steps. In the first structure there are two optional steps, while in the second structure there are three steps which are not compulsory. The first three steps are the same for both structures. This move is completely missing in one essay.

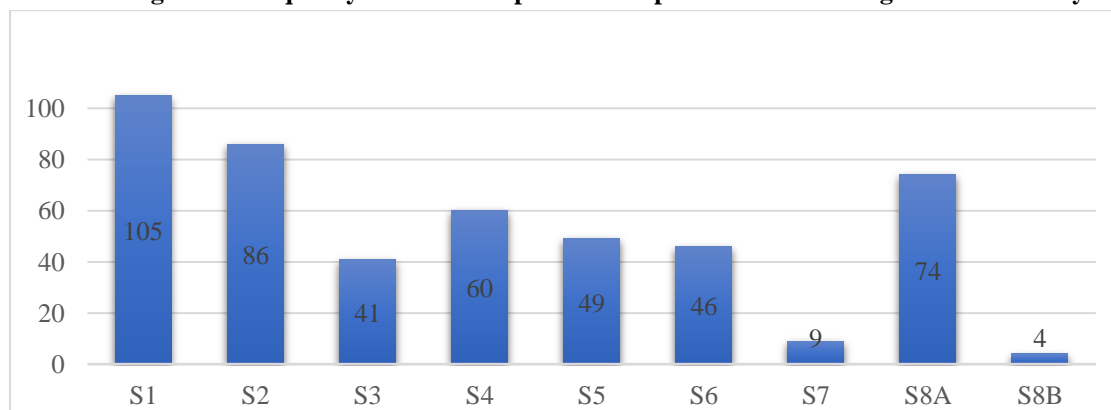
In *Problem and Solution* essays, the first move consists of seven steps, the same as the *Advantages and Disadvantages* essays, some of which are optional, and some are compulsory. The first and second step are alternated, meaning, in some essays the author is setting the scene, and then moves on to expressing his personal views, or shows causality relations, without making a broad statement regarding to his or her first alternative. Meanwhile, in other essays, the author begins with a main utterance and then moves on to the other steps. The first and second move are combined in two sample essays.

For the *Opinion and Problem and Solution* essays, the first move has six steps from which only two appear in all the essays and the remaining steps are considered optional, because their appearance varies according to that the writer wants to emphasize. The steps which are the same for each essay is step one and step six the rest is left to the authors' choice if they appear or not in the essay. Step two is found in two of the essays and step three in only one essay. Step four appears in only one essay. Step 5 is also not compulsory, it appears in only one essay where it introduces a concession and tries to introduce the reader into the problem.

In all 109 essays, this move is only combined with Move 2 in no more than six essays. The majority of essays present 1-4 steps. Furthermore, step 1 presents some variations. That is in three essays the first step is generalising, paraphrasing the rubric and making a general statement regarding the problem presented. In two essays, I found as a first step only paraphrasing the rubric and in one essay, step 1 is making a general statement linked to the main topic and giving reasons. My research has revealed that, although this move should be present in all the essays, it is missing in one: in an Opinion sample essay.

Step 2 has also some variations; in that it can be expressed through exemplifications in four essays and conditions in only one essay. Rhetorical questions are also sometimes used, and so, this step is used with a rhetorical question in one essay. Such a question is also used with Step 6. The third step has also another layout in one essay, where bringing arguments was done through the use of causality results and consequences. Another aspect I noticed was that if S2, expressing a personal view, was missing from an essay, then S3, bringing arguments, will also be absent.

**Figure 1: Frequency of Move 1 steps in the corpus of Academic Argumentative essays**



As it can be seen from the chart above, the appearance of steps varies, and it depends on what the writer wants to express. Step 1, generalizing and paraphrasing the rubric, appear in 105 of the essays, followed by the second step which is, expressing the writers' own view. The second step which appears in 74 of the sample essays, is S8A, which asks for the writer to prepare the ground for further discussions. Exemplifying, or S4 is also very important because the writer has to illustrate his opinion through examples. Step 3, 5 and 6 are somehow similar in their appearance rate, because bringing arguments and expanding the explanation are related and the use of concessions or contrasts is what helps the writer to balance the views which will be discussed. Step 7 and 8B appear in only 9 and, respectively, in 4 essays. This low rate shows that these two steps are optional, and even so the writer tends to omit showing causality relations in the beginning of the essays or adding more points and expanding the explanation.

In conclusion, the first move is specific for all the essays, regardless of their type. It implies a reiteration of the rubric after which the writer expressed his or her personal opinion, which can be implicitly or explicitly. After expressing the own view, the writer brings arguments to support their choice and exemplifies. Sometimes, the explanation is expanded and because the essays fall into the argumentative type, then contrasting elements are introduced to balance the views and to show causality relations. The last step is preparing the ground for the following discussions. The last step has two versions, either the

writer simply prepares the ground for discussing alternatives or adds more points and expands the explanations. Either way, this step is optional, as well as step 5, 6 and 7.

**Table 3: An illustration of Move 2 and its Steps**

<b>M2: Presenting one alternative</b>	S1A- making a general statement regarding one alternative (the use of listing and ordering is optional) <b>OR</b> S1B- setting the scene
	S2- expressing own view (optional)
	S3- bringing arguments in support of the view expressed
	S4- exemplifying
	S5- explaining, showing causality relations
	S6A- expanding the explanation through a more specific exemplification (optional) <b>OR</b> S6B- expanding the explanation through a concession/ contrast/ consequence/ result (optional) <b>OR</b> S6C- introducing concessions/ contrasts/ consequences and showing causality relations. <b>OR</b> S6D- using concessions/ consequences to balance views (optional)
	S7- presenting additional points and exemplifying them (optional)

In *Discussion* essays, the second move consists of five steps, the first three being recurrent, while the last steps are optional. There are eight essays which have only the first and second steps and, also, there is an essay where the entire move is missing. Furthermore, move 2 from the second structure has only three steps. Whereas, in *Opinion* essays, the second move shows two possible structure versions: the first version with four steps while the latter has six steps. This move is intertwined with the first one in four essays. This interlacing is not unusual and it was also signaled by Swales (1990) in the interpretation of the “Creating a Research Space” (CaRS) model. Therefore, such merger of steps may be justified within the internal logic of an academic essay, when taking a holistic approach to the development of the line of argumentation.

In the third category of essays, respectively in *Advantages and Disadvantages* essays, the second move has eight steps, some of which are optional. This move is interlaced with Move 4 in one essay. The same number of steps can be found in *Problem and Solution* essays.

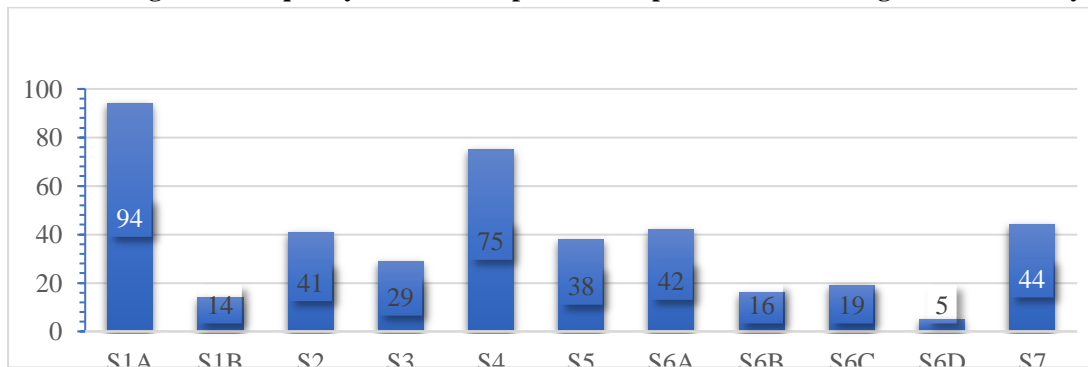
In *Opinion and Problem and Solution* essays, the second move is where the authors present the first advantage. This move has again five steps, of which only three are compulsory and two are optional. In my research sample essays I have discovered that this move is combined with M1 in six essays and with M4 in one essay. It is also missing in one essay. The average number of steps is between 1-5 steps, although there are a few essays which have 6 or even 8 steps.

I realized that the same situation happened in this move, concerning the steps as it did in the first move. That is, Step 1 has some variations, setting the scene or making the main statement was done by the use of consequences or results. Also, in some essays appeared listing and ordering linkers. Another important discrepancy was that in some essays I found both S1A and S1B. However, these essays which contain both forms of S1 are not numerous.

As shown from the chart below, step 1A is visible in almost all of the 109 sample essays, meanwhile step 1B, setting the scene, is not characteristically used by writers. Another important step, S4, is used in 75 of the essays, and this shows that an idea should be sustained by examples. Step 2, 5, 6A and 7 have similar values, meaning that it is important for the writer to express his opinion, show cause-effect relations, expand the explanation and add more points and exemplify them. Step 1B, 6B and 6C, are not so often used by the writers, however, they do appear in 14 essays, 16 essays and 19 essays. During

my analysis I noticed that the use of concessions and contrasts or even consequences is important and help to classify an essay into the argumentative category. Step 6D appears in only 5 essays, the use of concessions or consequences to balance views, which made me observe that every move comes to add more alternatives in line with the previous one, or to contrast the previous move, but I have rarely found two distinctive and contrasting views in the same move.

**Figure 2: Frequency of Move 2 steps in the corpus of Academic Argumentative essays**



Therefore, in the argumentative essay structure, the first step has two different forms, in some structures, the writer makes a general statement about the first view. Also, in some sample essays listing or ordering was used, so that the views presented are more visible for the reader. In other essays, the writer simple sets the scene and slowly moves on to the next step. Expressing a personal opinion is not mandatory, and if the writer decides to include his own view in the essay, then arguments and examples must be brought to strengthen the opinion. During my analysis I have discovered that step 6 has various forms, all depending on the writer’s choice. So, expanding the explanation may be done by adding more examples, or using concessions/ contrasts or consequences to balance views and showing causality relations. The last step is adding more points and, as it can be seen, is not compulsory.

**Table 4: An illustration of Move 3 and its Steps**

<b>M3: Presenting another alternative (contrasting view or in line with M2) - optional</b>	S1A- making a general statement (using listing and ordering) regarding the view expressed <b>OR</b> S1B- setting the scene <b>OR</b> S1C- introducing a 2 <sup>nd</sup> alternative (in line with M2 or not) <b>OR</b> S1D-describing contrasting conditions (as compared to M2)
	S2- expressing own view
	S3- bringing arguments in support of the view expressed
	S4- exemplifying
	S5A- expanding the explanation through more specific examples <b>OR</b> S5B- expanding the explanation through a concession/contrast/consequence/result (optional)
	S6- introducing concessions or contrasts to balance views (optional)
	S7-showing cause-effect relations through concessions/ consequences/ results
	S8A- relating the scenario to the one presented in M2 and adding more points (optional) <b>OR</b> S8B- adding more points to strengthen views. <b>OR</b> S8C- explaining and adding additional points

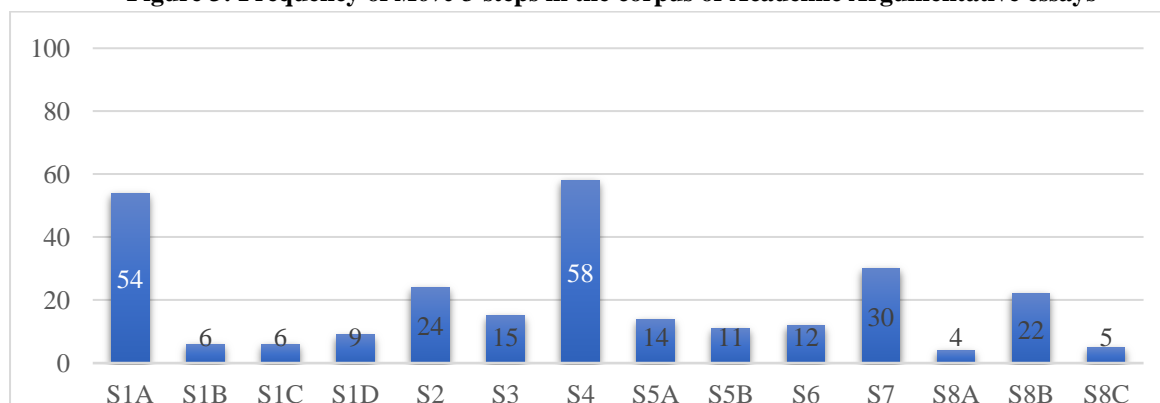
The third move, for the first category of essays, is different for the two structures. If in the first structure it presents a contracting point of view, in the second structure this move is in line with the second view, presenting another alternative. Another discrepancy is that in the first version the writer presents cause-

effect relations using concessions and consequences, while in the second version the explanation is expanded, and more examples are given to sustain the points made. However, for *Opinion* essays, the structure is identical for both structures. It is present in almost two thirds of the essays and missing from 16 samples.

In *Advantages and Disadvantages* essays, the third move is an optional one, thus, it is missing from four of the essays. It presents a view which is in line with the second move, meaning it presents more benefits of the topic. It is comprised of five steps. This move is also combined with the fifth one. Similarly, move 3 in *Problem and Solution* essays is also optional. It is closely related to M2, because it (M3) *presents a view in line with M2*. However, it lacks in more than half of the essays. This move has 7 steps, some of which are the same as in the previous move. Apart from adding more points, the other steps are similar to M2. However, if in M2 most of the steps are optional, here the situation is reversed. Furthermore, in the last category, this move is missing in half of the samples.

Presenting another alternative (contrasting view or in line with M2) is absent from 32 essays. It has between 1-4 steps and it is combined with M5 in only one essay.

**Figure 3: Frequency of Move 3 steps in the corpus of Academic Argumentative essays**



The results of my analysis showed that this move is not compulsory. Steps 1A and 4 are similar when referring to their appearance rate in the sample essays. As in the above move, making a general statement and exemplifying are the main steps which appear in the majority of essays. They are followed by step 2, expressing a personal view, step 7, showing causality relations through concessions and step 8 B, adding more points. Other four steps have similar values, S3, S5A a, S5B and S6. These steps refer to bringing arguments, expanding and explaining the reasons for choosing an alternative and contrasting the views. Steps 1B and 1C have the same appearance rate, they appear in only 6 essays, and they refer to setting the scene or presenting a second alternative which can be or not in line with the second move. Step 8A can be found in 4 essays, relating the scenario to the one presented in M2 and adding more points, 8C is found in 5 essays, explaining and adding additional points and step 1D, describing contrasting conditions is observed in 9 essays.

Thus, this move is optional and its appearance through the essays vary. This move either presents a second alternative, which can come in contrast with the view from the second move, or the view presented is in line with Move 2. As it can be seen from the Table 4, the first step has different forms, starting from making a general statement, to setting the scene, introducing a second alternative which comes as a continuation of the view stated in the second move, or describing contrasting conditions in comparison with Move 2. The steps are similar with the second move. Expressing own view and bringing arguments and examples to reinforce the opinion expressed are what logically follows. Step 6 has two forms: expanding the explanations through more examples or through the addition of concessions/ consequences/ results or contrast. Step 7 is showing causality relations and step 8 comes



to add more points. It has 3 different structures. Taking a closer look at the first 3 moves, the similarities concerning their steps is easily visible.

**Table 5: An illustration of Move 4 and its Steps**

<p><b>M4: Presenting further cause-effect relations</b></p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p><b>Presenting a further alternative</b></p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p><b>Presenting a contrasting view</b></p>	<p>S1A- making a statement regarding another alternative (contrasting with those in M2 and M3)</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>S1B- setting the scene</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>S1C- making a general statement regarding cause-effect relations (using listing and ordering) (optional)</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>S1D- making a general statement (using listing and ordering) and introducing a concession/ consequence to contrast views presented in M2 and M3</p>
	S2- expressing own view
	S3- exemplifying
	S4- personalizing the examples to strengthen the points made (optional)
	S5- bringing arguments in support of the view expressed (optional)
	<p>S6A- explaining, showing causality relations/ contrasts</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>S6B- showing cause-effect relations</p>
	<p>S7A- expanding the explanation through consequences/ results/ concessions (optional)</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>S7B- expressing consequences/ contrasts/ results</p>
	S8- making reference to solutions for solving the problems.

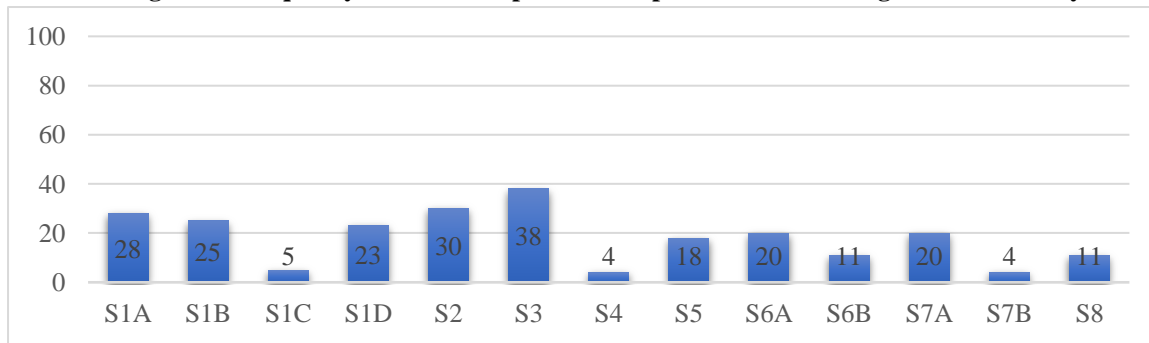
In the first structure of the *Discussion* sample essays is about presenting further cause-effect relations, whereas in the second structure it presents further alternatives. This move is not present in ten essays. This move is absent in more than half of the *Opinion* sample essays, respectively in 24 of the essays.

In the third category, respectively in *Advantages and Disadvantages* essays, in the fourth move, the author shifts the focus of attention on establishing the drawbacks of the issue in question. It has five steps, two of which are optional. Move four (M4) for the fourth essay type, comes to contrast all the views discussed until now. This move does not appear in almost half of the essays, respectively in five of them. It comprises five steps, one of which is optional.

In *Opinion and Problem and Solution* essays, it comes to balance the views, to contrast them. It has five steps, all of which are the same as the one from M3. However, the difference between the M3 and M4, is that if in M3 the author presented the benefits, in M4, he or she starts talking about the drawbacks. This move is present in only half of the essays.

Although it is not an optional move, it is still missing in 40 essays. It presents 1 up to 5 steps in general, and it is combined with in one essay with move 6 and move 2.

**Figure 4: Frequency of *Move 4* steps in the corpus of Academic Argumentative essays**



The chart shows that step 3 appears in the majority of essay, respectively in 38 of them. It is closely followed by step 2 which appear in 30 essays and step 1A, in 28 essays. Their appearance rate is so similar because you need a main statement regarding the alternative which one is going to express, expressing a personal opinion and giving examples is what normally follows. Step 1B, setting the scene, is found in 25 essays, and step 1D, making a general statement and introducing a concession or consequence to contrast the views already presented, can be noticed in 23 essays. Apart from step 1C, which has the second low value, respectively in 5 essays, all the other three forms of this step have close appearance rate. This reveals that making a general statement regarding the cause-effect relations is not usually done by writers. Step 6A and 7A have the same value, they can be observed in only 20 essays of 109, and the same is for step 8 and 6B, which are found in 11 essays. Another similarity, respectively in 4 essays, the lowest value rate, implies step 4 and step 7B, which refer to the use of personalized examples and reinforce the points made and express consequences, contrasts or results. Bringing arguments in support of the view expressed, S5, appears in 18 sample essays. Although S2, where the writer states his or her own view is integrated in 30 essays, bringing arguments is not a necessity, this being also emphasized by the low number in which step 5 appears. In almost half of the essays in which S2 is present, S5 is lacking.

The fourth move of the argumentative essay can have three forms where the writer decides to present further cause-effect relations, a further view or a contrasting view. As already discussed above, this move is similar in structure to the previous moves, thus, the first step present various differences. In this step the writer either makes a general statement, which can be introduced through listing or ordering linking words or using concessions or consequences and contrasting the views from move 2 or 3. Or, the writer simply sets the scene. The following steps are the same as in the former move. The sixth step has two forms. The first is explaining and showing causality relations or contrast, and the latter is simply showing causality relations. The same is for the next step also, the writer decided to expand the explanation through concessions or consequences or merely expressing consequences/contrast or results.

**Table 6: An illustration of *Move 5* and its Steps**

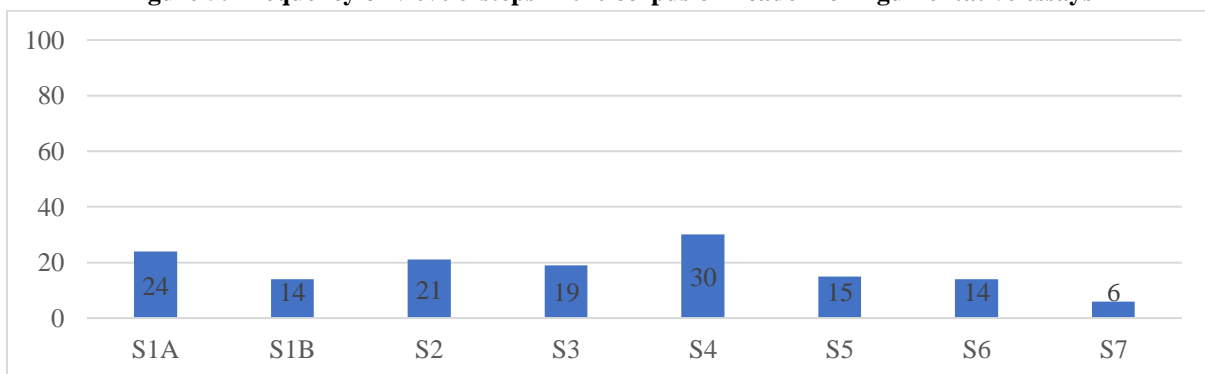
<b>M5: Presenting further views (optional)</b> <b>OR</b> <b>Presenting a second view in line with M4 (optional)</b>	S1A- making a general statement regarding the view expressed
	<b>OR</b>
	S1B- setting the scene
	S2- expressing own view
	S3- bringing arguments of the view expressed
	S4- exemplifying (optional)
	S5- expanding the explanation and showing causality relations (optional)
S6- adding more points to strengthen the views (optional)	
S7- introducing concessions/ consequences/ contrasts to illustrate the effects of the previous scenarios (optional)	

The fifth move is completely missing from all *Discussion* essays. Whereas, in *Opinion* essays it is an optional one. The steps are the same for both structures and it is present in two thirds of the sample essays, thus missing in one third of my subcorpus.

The fifth move, in *Advantages and Disadvantages* essays, is optional, so it is missing in half of the essays. It comes as a supporting paragraph in which the author points out the negative effects of the issues. It has the same steps as the previous move, with small differences, in that the first step is making a general statement regarding the view expressed, meanwhile in M4, this was the second step. Thus, here appears another step, which is showing causality relations. All the other three steps are the same as in M4. In *Problem and Solution* essays is missing from four essays. Most of its steps are similar to the above moves, and most are also optional. This move blends with the last move in three essays. Similarly, in *Opinion and Problem and Solution* it occurs in only one essay.

Move five is missing in 67 essays, therefore, it is clear that it is not a compulsory move. This feature is emphasized by the fact that this move is not present in any discussion sample essay. It has between 1 to 5 steps. It is combined with M6 in five essays, and with M3 in only one essay.

**Figure 5: Frequency of Move 5 steps in the corpus of Academic Argumentative essays**



Step 4, exemplifying is again the most predominant, as in move 4 and move 3. It appears in 30 sample essays. In 24 essays I found step 1A, making a general statement regarding the view expressed, while the second version of this step, setting the scene, is found in only 14 essays. Step 2, expressing a personal view was discovered in 21 essays which is closely followed by S3, where the writer brings arguments to support the view. Steps 5 and 6 have almost the same value, the former appears in 15 essays, while the latter is present in only 14. The two steps refer to expanding the explanation, showing causality relations and adding more points to strengthen the view. Step 7, introducing concessions, consequences or contrasts appears in only 6 essays.

This move is the same as the third one. It is an optional move, and this is clearly reflected in the chart, and thus, its presence in the sample essays is left to the writer’s decision. As already stated, the first step has two forms. The other steps have similar forms as in the above moves.

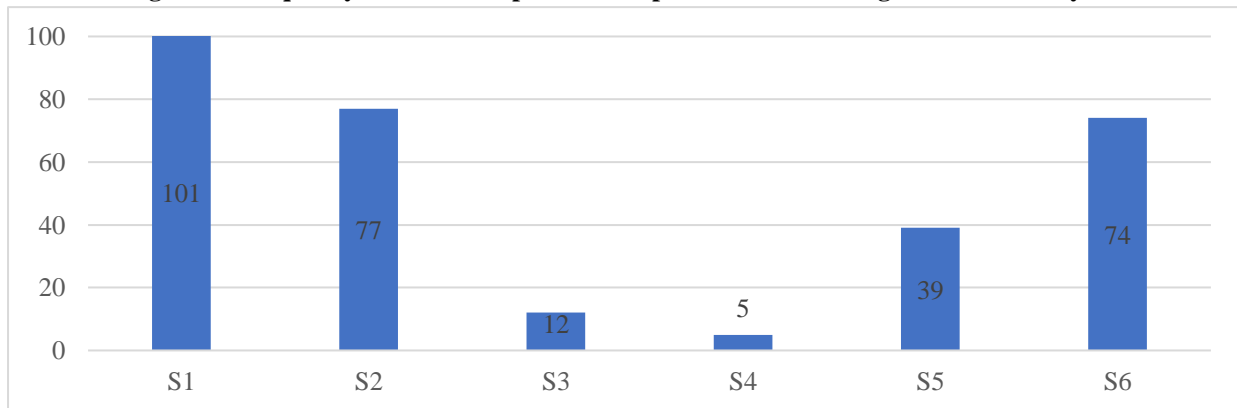
**Table 7: An illustration of Move 6 and its Steps**

<b>M6: Drawing conclusions</b>	S1- summarizing, generalizing, adding evaluative statements
	S2- expressing own view
	S3- bringing arguments of the view expressed
	S4- exemplifying (optional)
	S5- consolidating the conclusion by adding a concession/ consequence/ results (optional)
	S6- making recommendations for solving the problem including evaluative elements (optional)

The concluding move for *Discussion* essays also presents differences. This move appears in all the essays. It was mandatory and optional steps. Likewise, in *Opinion* essays the last move appears in all the essays, although there are some essays where this move is intermingled with the fifth or fourth move.

Although being an important part of any essay and it is combined with M5 and M4 in five essays and in one essay. It has 1 up to 3 steps.

**Figure 6: Frequency of Move 6 steps in the corpus of Academic Argumentative essays**



This move appears in almost all the essays. From all the 109 sample essays, it is missing in only one essay, respectively in a *Problem and Solution* essay. The steps are similar for all the essays, the writers start with a generalization and a summary of the topic, then he or she express a personal opinion, after which arguments and examples are brought to reinforce the view. Thus, step 1 appears in almost all the essays, respectively in 101 samples, expressing own view is found in 77 essays and step 6 is making recommendations for solving the problem by adding an evaluative element can be observed in 74 essays. Step 3, bringing arguments is observed in 12 essays, meanwhile the fourth step is found in 5 samples. Sometimes, the conclusion is combined with concessions/ consequences or results and recommendations are made on how to solve the problems, step 5, and I noticed it in only 39 essays. This last step includes evaluative elements compared to which the views offered can improve or not the issue under discussion.

To sum up, the structures of the essays are similar, and thus, I managed to discover a main preferred structure for the argumentative essay. Some moves are compulsory, while others are optional. These moves sometimes combine together and usually the steps do not appear in the same sequencing in the essays.

## 5. Conclusions

The main focus of this research report has been on analysing and identifying the macro-level structuring of academic essays written in response to Task 2 rubrics in the IELTS context, using a Swalesian genre-based framework.

For the purpose of this study, I have compiled a corpus of over 100 sample essays from IELTS essay collections intended as examples for candidates aiming to attain a Band 7 or 8 score. All these brief academic essays can be considered to belong to the main group of argumentative essays, as the candidates are expected to examine both sides of an issue or a situation and to formulate arguments to justify their point of view.

In the attempt of going beyond the mechanics of paragraphing or lexical choice, which constitute the main focus of IELTS oriented guidelines and materials, I have carefully analysed the rubrics of the 109

sample essays in the corpus, in order to be able to streamline the essays into categories. As a result of this exercise, I have been able to identify five main types of essays, which I then grouped into five subcorpora, each associated with an essay type:

- *Opinion* essays (47 exemplars)
- *Discussion* essays (35)
- *Advantages and disadvantages* essays (12)
- *Problem and solution* essays (11), and
- *Opinion and Problem - solution* essays (4)

As a next step, each essay sample in a subcorpus has been analysed at macro-level, in order to identify its move-structure and the steps included in each move. All the resulting move structures in a subcorpus have been compared in order to explore the degree of similarity among them and to see if there are certain patterns that can be identified. This comparative analysis of the sample texts in each subcorpus yielded the following results:

- a) there are visible similarities in the structuring of the sample essays belonging to a subcorpus, and therefore, it has been possible to identify preferred patterns of moves and steps in each subcorpus;
- b) in two of the five subcorpora - the *Opinion* essays and the *Discussion* essays - two possible patterns of move structuring could be identified in each of them;
- c) in each of the other three subcorpora, there is only one move-pattern present;
- d) the main structure of the Academic Argumentative essay.

Despite overall similarities at macro-level within each subcorpus, as expected, there is variation in terms of both moves and steps, in line with Swales' (1990) observations in relation to the CaRS move-structure. The comparative analysis of the sample essays in each subcorpus has revealed that some moves are compulsory, whereas one or two moves appear to be optional within a certain essay type. The same is true for the structuring of the moves into steps, some steps are always present, and some appear to be optional.

Both the similarities and the slight variations are justified through the content aspects and the line of argumentation developed in each of the essays, in response to the specifications and questions included in each rubric.

Building on the partial conclusions derived so far, I hope this article will give insights into the process of drafting, revising, redrafting academic IELTS essays in the endeavour of attaining a certain quality level of academic writing.

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