RESEARCH ARTICLE

Genre Analysis of Movie Reviews in Malaysian English Online Newspapers: Uncovering Structural Patterns

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ABSTRACT - Movie reviews are an important indicator of the quality of a movie and help cinemagoers in their decision-making process. With the advent of technology, the consumption of movie reviews has shifted primarily to online platforms, including newspaper websites, blogs and established movie domain sites such as the Internet Movie Database (IMDB). Consequently, it provides more room for the audience to express their opinions about the movies. Despite this shift, there still needs to be more research on the structural nuances of online film reviews in newspapers, particularly in the Malaysian context. To address this gap, this study examines movie reviews published by local newspapers from a genre-based perspective, focusing on their underlying structures. Ten movie reviews were collected from a local newspaper's website and analysed to identify recurring patterns and moves within the genre. The analysis shows that the genre comprised eight steps, ranging from providing information about the movies to making recommendations to readers. The identified moves are M1: Title of the Movie Review, M2: Providing information about the movie, M3: Grabbing readers' attention, M4: Describing the movie, M5: Giving criticism, M6: Offering recommendations to the readers, M7: Concluding the review and M8: Relating to other movies. Notably, Move 5, which involves criticism of the movies, was the most elaborated step with various steps and sub-steps. Further, the analysis also shows a few structural patterns of the genre. This study provides valuable insights for readers who want to understand the elements that shape movie reviews in local newspapers.

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Genre analysis has caught the attention of researchers and language experts in the last few decades. Swales (1990) defined genre analysis as the study of language use in particular settings. Language scholars have utilised this area of discourse analysis to help connect different text types and linguistic features. Besides identifying a specific genre's linguistic and structural characteristics, genre analysis also highlights the social characteristics pertinent to a genre. Furthermore, it provides an understanding of how these elements contribute to the text's broader meaning and purpose. So far, much prior research has focused on investigating the rhetorical structure of genres, including academic, professional, and homely genres.

Although research incorporating genre analysis and move analysis has formerly been carried out in a broad spectrum of disciplines and fields, such as academic, business and law, texts in the art industry have received less attention than texts in other disciplines (Damrongmanee & Rojanaatichartasakul, 2023). As the movie review is a genre that discusses films and guides the readers to comprehend and analyse the work, it plays a significant part in the film industry as it publicises the movie and enhances the public's appreciation of the artwork.

Watching movies has been one of the most popular leisure activities in modern cultures (Rana et al., 2018). The rapid development of the internet has made it possible to watch movies in many ways, such as by paying for online streaming services like Netflix, Disney Hotstar, and Viu, going to the cinema, or renting DVDs. Due to the easy access to movies, discussing the movies watched among family members, colleagues, or friends has become a common topic of conversation these days.

Literary reviews have long been established within the review genre, and the movie review genre has adopted many norms from literary reviews as movies gained popularity (Taboada, 2011). A movie review is a text that evaluates and criticises a motion picture and may appear in a magazine, newspaper, or academic publication (Gemser et al., 2007). These reviews are still published in print and are written by qualified movie critics, such as journalists, who usually write reviews and share their thoughts on the film. The reviews can include recommendations or a rating (4 out of 5 stars). As a result of the explosive growth of the internet, more and more websites and online platforms for reviews and discussions have emerged. Yeap et al. (2014) claimed that people prefer to get movie reviews from review websites, and the most popular websites include Epinions and Rotten Tomatoes (Taboada, 2011).

Over the years, more and more amateur critics have been publishing their movie reviews online as "everyone is a critic in the digital age" (Jacobs et al., 2015, as cited in Koreman, et al., 2023, p. 2). To some extent, the opinions of numerous critics are considered by cinemagoers when deciding whether a film is worth watching. These movie reviews influence readers' decisions about which movies

to see. This was also confirmed by Zhang and Dellarocas (2006) when they found that the intention of others to watch a movie is statistically positively and significantly influenced by the online ratings of amateurs.

With this in mind, this study aims to shed light on the structure of online movie reviews in English newspapers, a relatively under-researched area, especially in the context of Malaysia. To guide this investigation, the following research questions are formulated:

1. What are the typical moves and steps that shape the structure of movie reviews

2. To what extent are these moves and steps obligatory, conventional or optional?

3. What are the typical patterns observed in the structure of movie reviews?

By answering these questions, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the genre of online movie reviews in newspapers and their impact on readers.

1.1   Review as a Genre

Review is the evaluation and suggestion of alternatives to something (Chigbu et al., 2023). A review can be either written or verbal and can consist of positive or negative inputs, depending on the topic. As a critical analysis and evaluation of something that can provide valuable insights, review is a genre that involves the process of evaluating certain content such as art, games, books, products, and movies. Some previous studies have focused on art or game reviews. A study on art reviews by Damrongmanee and Rojanaatichartasakul (2023) examined the move analysis of 70 review texts from online art magazines and online newspapers that feature a section for art reviews. The results demonstrated a lack of consistent move patterns, suggesting that the genre allows for flexibility and creativity in organising the content. At the same time, a notable study in the field of game criticism suggested that examining these genre variations could have an impact on how scholars and practitioners of technical communication support the goals of user-generated genres (Thominet, 2016). Indirectly, it can be inferred that both game and art reviews stimulate critical debates among researchers concerning their fluidity and implications.

In addition, the previous decade witnessed an increase in studies on book reviews, most of which focused on the rhetorical moves or structures of at least two different subject areas. These studies showed that there were significant differences between the reviews of professional and online consumers (Dachoviboon, 2019), Arabic and English reviewers (Al-Ali, 2018), and ESL and EFL book reviewers (Nodoushan & Montazeran, 2012). Dontcheva-Navratilova (2016) found cross-cultural variations such as the rhetorical pattern in book reviews by Anglophone and Czech linguists. This is in line with Junqueira's findings that book reviews are more critical in English than in Brazilian Portuguese (2013). The same applies to Sandova (2018), who compared English and Czech book review articles in the field of linguistics. The results show that there are notable differences due to different rhetorical preferences in the two cultures and different cultural expectations of the genre. Other studies on book reviews are concerned with examining criteria for evaluating online commercial and non-commercial book reviews (Huang et al., 2012) to distinguish their authenticity.

On the other hand, previous studies on product reviews have analysed consumers' opinions and reviews in general according to patterns and sequences. Pollach (2006) examined the genre of online product reviews from four different angles: (1) content and format, (2) content, (3) audience engagement, and (4) choice of sentence and style details, while Skalicky (2013) found that experience-based information is favoured over search-based information in the Amazon.com community. This suggests that there are differences in the rhetorical structures of positive and critical reviews. Other studies on movie reviews have focused on several different analysis. For example, Rana et al., (2018) in her study examined the evaluative language employed which has been portrayed in Move 5 (opinion making). On the other hand, the sequencing of content or 'moves' has been reported by Charoenchasri (2007). The moves are interchangeable and can be inserted elsewhere depending on the authors' preference or the specific format of the review itself. A study conducted by Taboada (2011) also found that there are two main stages in writing a film review, namely the descriptive (in turn, Subject Matter, Plot, Character and Background) and evaluative stages (Connectives, Causal Makers). These stages play an important role in structuring the review itself and differ in terms of the evaluative words and connectives used. In addition, there is also an earlier study on movie reviews which examined the differences between the reviews according to the style of the reviewers. According to a mixed-method study by de Jong and Burgers (2013), professional critics and consumers have different styles when writing a review, which could have an impact on online discourse. Their reviews differ in terms of content, with consumer critics primarily reviewing films and are inclined to take subjective perspectives in their writing. In contrast, reviews by professional critics tend to focus on describing the film rather than criticising it. The reviewed literature helps readers to understand how reviews play an important role in different contexts and industries.

1.2   Moves and Move Analysis

Move, a sub-unit of genre analysis, expresses the communicative function of a text (Ampaigoon, 2022). This term originates from Swales' (1981, 1990) introduction of the textual analysis method as a pivotal element in his genre analytical framework. Swales (2004) defined moves as "discoursal or rhetorical units that perform coherent communicative functions in written and spoken texts," with varying linguistic realisations. Moreno and Swales (2018) further described moves as rhetorical constructs ranging from sentence to paragraph length, serving specific communicative functions. Kanoksilapatham (2007) noted that moves are sections of text performing particular communicative functions and serve to connect authors' intentions to their conveyed content (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

Move serves as the central element in Swales' Move Analysis framework (1981), functioning as a text analytical method (Moreno & Swales, 2018). Sandova (2018) highlighted how move analysis categorises rhetorical units by specific communicative functions, determining the overall communicative purposes of a text. Swales (1981) argued for the versatility of move analysis, applicable to various purposes, including movie descriptions. Bhatia (1993) supported this notion, suggesting that structural move analysis can be

applied across text types. Move analysis extends beyond academic writing, contributing to critiques of artworks, films, and music (Ampaigoon, 2022).

Genres consist of move structures identifiable through move sequence (Swales, 1990). Swales distinguished four move structures: linear, cyclical, embedded, and anomalous. Linear structures involve sequential moves (e.g., 1-2-3-4), common in academic genres like abstracts (see Kanafani et al., 2022). Cyclical patterns entail repeated moves within genres (e.g., 1-2-3-4-3-5-3), prominent in non-academic genres (see Bhatia, 1993). Embedded structures show move overlap within sentences (see Dos Santos, 1996), often briefly presented as they play a subordinate role (see Wei et al., 2022). Lastly, anomalous structures, with irregular move sequences (e.g., 1-3-2-6-4-5), represent the opposite of linear moves. In this study, the move structure analysis addresses the final research question.

Move analysis significantly contributes to understanding genres, genre sets, genre systems, and meta-genres, along with their connections and differences (Cotos et al., 2015). Moreno and Swales (2018) emphasised that move analysis aims to identify the linguistic features of specific discourses. However, space limitations prevent further discussion in this study. Izdihar et al. (2022) underscored the importance of analysing moves to examine rhetorical goals and social functions. Kumar et al. (2023) also highlighted move analysis as essential for analysing written texts and revealing genre-specific stages and structures.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Ten reviews were collected as data for this initial study of movie reviews in online newspapers. A local newspaper released them online, where interested readers could access them for free. The reviews were randomly selected from an English newspaper published in 2023 and dedicated to international movies only. The reason for choosing the English newspaper lies in the availability of movie reviews. Malay newspapers do not publish as many as movie reviews and most of them review local movies only. For this study, the name of the newspaper and movie reviewers were kept anonymous. All movie reviews used as data in this study were labelled MR followed by a number, such as MR1. The labels were located after each quotation of the movie reviews, which were used as examples in the following section. Table 1 presents the names of the movies reviewed and the publication dates of the reviews.

Table 1

Movie titles and the publication dates of the reviews

Code	Movie	Publication date of review
MR1	Expend4bles	23/09/2023
MR2	A Haunting in Venice	13/09/2023
MR3	The Nun II	08/09/2023
MR4	The Equalizer 3	05/09/2023
MR5	Blue Beetle	21/08/2023
MR6	Gran Turismo	12/08/2023
MR7	Meg 2: The Trench	07/08/2023
MR8	Talk to Me	02/08/2023
MR9	Haunted Mansion	29/07/2023
MR10	Oppenheimer	25/07/2023

In the present study, a mixed-method approach was employed, in which the data analysis was conducted in two phases. The first phase involved qualitative analysis of the movie reviews to find moves and steps by manually annotating the data. The method was used to answer the first research question. The second phase involved quantitative analysis to determine the frequency of moves and steps in the data and answer the second research question.

In the first phase, the researchers employed a methodology used by Biber et al. (2007) to conduct the analysis, which included identifying the rhetorical purpose of the genre, determining and grouping features in text segments, refining the coding of moves with inter-rater reliability checks, and finally developing a protocol for moves and steps. The coding involved assigning attributes or categories (in this case, labelling moves or steps with gerunds to highlight primary authorship) to specific, meaningful units of analysis such as a sentence, phrase, or word in the documents. These meaningful units or segments must each contain at least one statement. In conjunction with Moreno and Swales (2018), the segments were interpreted based on the communicative functions derived from the sentences used and with reference to linguistic cues from Bhatia's move structure of advertisements and secondary literature on movie reviews (1993). Unambiguous cases occur when a meaningful unit contains a single attribute or proposition. However, each new proposition is labelled as a step when it is embedded in a meaningful unit along with many other new propositions.

Movie review is not an established genre that has acquired a solid analytical framework, unlike academic genres such as research article abstracts. It requires revisions of existing analytical frameworks from other studies. Thus, the move-step patterns by Charoenchasri (2007), de Jong and Burgers (2013), and Rana et al. (2018) acted as prominent references in establishing the analytical framework for this study. The initial analysis phase yielded a structure of moves and steps, which was later compared with the three

previously described research. This method ensured that the framework comprised similar elements of the genre. Upon identifying the moves and steps, the researchers coded all movie reviews individually to avoid influencing each other's coding (see Cotos et al., 2015). The individual coding also took place to increase the reliability of the coding scheme. Later, the researchers discussed the moves and steps found in their analysis to gauge percentage agreement among the researchers. Percentage agreement was sufficient in determining the reliability of move coding in genre-based studies (Rau & Shih, 2021). In this study, the percentage agreement among the researchers was 85% and was later resolved through discussion to achieve unanimity (Kim et al., 2024).

The second phase commenced upon completion of the coding scheme. This phase was also crucial in addressing the second research question. The researchers counted all occurrences of each move and step and converted them into percentages to determine their typicality. They were regarded as obligatory if the proportion of occurrence was 100% (Bhatia, 1993), conventional if the proportion was between 60-99%, and optional if it was below 60% (Kanoksilapatham, 2007). Bhatia's (1993) and Kanoksilapatham's (2007) were used to guide the percentage agreement since there has been no established framework for movie review genre. Further, previous studies on the review genre also used similar frameworks (see Damrongmanee & Rojanaatichartasakul, 2023). Later, the arrangement of the moves and steps was observed to answer the last research question. The observation involved identifying how they appeared in the genre. From this, the researchers concluded the typical structure of the genre.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section answers all research questions presented above. It is divided into two parts. The first part describes the moves and steps found in the movie review genre and discusses their typicality while the second part pays attention to the typical structure of the genre. From the analysis, eight moves were found to shape the genre. Five of the moves were obligatory, while three others were optional. Some of the moves could stand on their own (Moves 1, 3, 7 and 8) while others were realised by several steps. Table 2 summarises the moves and steps of the data.

Table 2

Summary of the moves and steps in movie review genre

Moves and steps	Percentage of occurrence	Typicality
M1: Title of the movie review	100.0	Obligatory
M2: Providing information about the movie	100.0	Obligatory
M2S1: Title of the movie	100.0	Obligatory
M2S2: Director's name	100.0	Obligatory
M2S3: Movie cast	90.0	Conventional
M3: Grabbing readers' attention	100.0	Obligatory
M4: Describing the movie	100.0	Obligatory
M4S1: Plot	80.0	Conventional
M4S2: Characters	30.0	Optional
M4S3: Movie direction	10.0	Optional
M5: Giving criticism	100.0	Obligatory
M5S1: Positive criticism	70.0	Conventional
M5S1SS1: The whole movie	40.0	Optional
M5S1SS2: Plot	30.0	Optional
M5S1SS3: Characters	40.0	Optional
M5S1SS4: Cast	70.0	Conventional
M5S1SS5: Movie direction	20.0	Optional
M5S2: Negative criticism	60.0	Conventional
M5S2SS1: The whole movie	60.0	Conventional
M5S2SS2: Plot	30.0	Optional
M5S2SS3: Script	30.0	Optional
M5S2SS4: Characters	40.0	Optional
M5S2SS5: Cast	30.0	Optional
M5S2SS6: Movie direction	40.0	Optional
M6: Offering recommendations to the readers	20.0	Optional
M7: Concluding the review	40.0	Optional
M8: Relating to other movies	30.0	Optional

3.1 Moves and Steps in Movie Review

3.1.1 Move 1: Title of the Movie Review

Titles often fulfil certain communicative goals within a genre. For example, academic titles announce the topic and the central argument (Swales, 1990). In the context of genre theory, moves refer to the functional units or phases within a text that serve specific communicative purposes or fulfil certain rhetorical functions (Bhatia, 1993). Titles play a crucial role in indicating the topic, focus and sometimes even the target audience of a text (Swales, 1990). They provide a concise preview of the content and help setting the readers' expectations of the genre (Hyland, 2004). The title of the review indicates the beginning of the review. Thus, it is not surprising to see 100% of occurrences of the move which makes it obligatory for every movie review. As the name suggests, the communicative purpose of the move is to inform readers of the title of the review. However, it is interesting to note that the titles were written with some hints indicating the biasness of the authors. For instance, 'Expend4bles' review: Excruciating expansion of franchise in need of extermination (MR1) signals the author's dislike towards the movie. In contrast, another title of the review shows the author's favour of the movie. This can be seen in the following example: 'Blue Beetle' review: A bolt out of the blue that's brilliant fun (MR5). Therefore, Move 1 can be regarded as an overview of the genre which helps readers to understand the overarching opinion of the authors.

3.1.2 Move 2: Providing Information of the Movie

It is common for a review to have the background of the movie reviewed. By doing so, the review can provide some relevant information to the readers. Similar findings were also found in Charoenchasri (2007), de Jong and Burgers (2013) and Rana et al. (2018). In the analysis, this communication purpose shapes Move 2. The move was obligatory with 100% of occurrences. Further, the move was realised by three steps which were also obligatory except for M2S3 which was conventional with 90% of occurrences since it was missing from MR3. The first step, M2S1 provided the title of the movie, M2S2 addressed the movie director and M2S3 listed the main casts of the movies. An example of a complete Move 2 extracted from MR2 is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Example of Move 2 (MR2)

A Haunting in Venice **(M2S1)**
Director: Kenneth Branagh (M2S2)
Cast: Kenneth Branagh, Michelle Yeoh, Kyle Allen, Camille Cottin, Jamie Dornan, Tina Fey, Jude Hill, Ali Khan, Emma Laird, Kelly Reilly, and Riccardo Scamarcio. (M2S3)

3.1.3 Move 3: Grabbing Readers' Attention

All pieces of writing require a statement which hooks readers to read further. In the present study, this purpose was served by Move 3. In fulfilling the move, the authors often placed a statement usually in a sentence or two after offering brief information of the movie. The statement could be in the form of cynical, humorous, or complimentary remarks. Due to its purpose in enhancing readers' interests, the move was found in all reviews which makes it an obligatory move. This move is unique to the data of this study as it was not discussed in previous studies of the movie review genre. The examples of Move 3 are shown in the excerpts below:

When the first Expendables movie came out way back in 2010, the gimmick of bringing together iconic action stars like Sylvester Stallone, Jason Statham, Jet Li, Dolph Lundgren, Randy Couture, Bruce Willis, and Arnold Schwarzenegger into one film was exciting. The end result was far from excellent, but at least it was entertaining. (MR1)

"It worked." Those are the quiet words spoken in Oppenheimer after the Los Alamos trial of the atomic bomb, the whispery quality of the remark in dramatic contrast to one of the most momentous events of the 20th century. (MR10)

3.1.4 Move 4: Describing the Movie

The next move, Move 4 served a purpose of giving description of the movies. It should be noted that this move differs from Move 2 in a few ways. Firstly, it was not written in tables which allows longer descriptions of the movies. Secondly, Move 4 discussed other aspects of the movies which could be segregated as its steps. Similar results also took place in de Jong and Burgers (2013) who noted that it was more likely to be found in professional reviews rather than consumer reviews. This move had 100% of occurrences, making it an obligatory move. It is realised by two steps which described different elements of the movies. Five movie reviews contained both steps to fulfil the move while the rest comprised only a single step.

The first step, M4S1 elucidated the plot of the movies. It has the highest percentage of occurrences, which is 80%. This has made the step to be recognised as conventional. An instance of the step can be seen in the following excerpt:

"In 2006, a Nissan marketing executive had a truly insane idea to create a competition and an "academy" to turn gamers into race car drivers. Darren Cox saw an untapped market of potential car-buyers in Gran Turismo enthusiasts - the popular PlayStation racing simulator that first came on the market in 1997. And in the third year of the "GT Academy," an actual star emerged in a 19-year-old British kid named Jann Mardenborough, who would go on to become a professional driver, just like he dreamed." (MR6)

Additionally, M4S2 described the characters in the movies. The description might include the background of the characters or their development. This step was found in 70% of the reviews, making it conventional. The following excerpt serves as an example of the step:

"If you're a DC Comics fan, you would recognise the name "Kord" – it is actually the name of the original Blue Beetle, Ted Kord, whose legacy plays a big part in this movie. You see, Jaime's version of the Beetle was created in 2006, which is relatively new compared to the two other characters who previously held that title – Dan Garret (created in 1939!) and the aforementioned Ted Kord (who debut in 1966). Tying Ted's legacy with that of Jaime is actually a nice touch that I hope will continue on into the "new" Gunn-led DC Universe (which will actually include a TV series starring Booster Gold, who is in turn the best friend of Ted Kord)." (MR5)

3.1.5   Move 5: Giving Criticism

The following move presented the main gist of movie reviews which are criticisms offered by the authors (Taboada, 2011). This move provided readers with comments by the authors on some aspects of the movies which include the entire movie, plot, script characters, cast and the direction of the movies. It should be noted that the move varies in length and not all aspects mentioned above could be found in one review due to limited space of review provided in the newspaper. Previous studies acknowledged the move with different names such as providing comments (Charoenchasri, 2007), evaluation, (Taboada, 2011) and analysis of movies (Rana et al., 2018).

Move 5 incorporated two steps which are segregated based on the positivity or negativity of the criticism. While most of the reviews contained either one of the steps, three of the reviews (MR3, MR4 and MR9) had both types of criticism. This situation occurs since the authors offered both compliments and harsh critiques to the movies. Both steps were further divided into sub-steps following the aspects of the criticism. Table 4 summarises Move 5 and its constituents. The percentage and typicality of each step and sub step can be found in Table 2.

Table 4

Summary of Move 5

Code	Step/Sub step (Aspect)	Communicative Purposes	Example
M5S1	Positive criticism	Provides positive criticism of the movies	-
M5S1SS1	The whole movie	Offers compliments to the whole movie	"Rather than thinking of Blue Beetle as a remnant of the old DC cinematic universe, the opposite is more true – it's fun, breezy tone and smaller, standalone stakes actually make it the perfect springboard for the new DC universe." (MR5)
M5S1SS2	Plot	Offers compliments to the movie plot	"The first hour leans heavily into the brand mythologising as it sets everything up and it is dreadful. It's almost in spite of everything that the second half, which focuses on the actual racing, is more successful." (MR6)
M5S1SS3	Characters	Provides admiration for the movie characters	"The young, adrift characters' anguish feels real, for better and worse: There are times when the filmmakers seem to be walloping their main players, and the audience, just because." (MR8)
M5S1SS4	Cast	Gives recognition to the cast of the movies	"Nolan has cast the movie beautifully, including a tiny role that makes a big impact because of the actor he chose – and, especially, including Emily Blunt as Oppenheimer's brilliant wife Kitty. Hers could be one of those thankless, you-were-so-busy-saving-the-world-that-my-pot-roast-burned roles (see Sissy Spacek in JFK) but Blunt's career-redefining performance hints at what Kitty contributed to her husband's success, and what it costs her." (MR1)
M5S1SS5	Movie direction	Gives credit to the directors of the movies	"It's clear Fuqua has been watching his Italian mafia movies, and he revels in the visual drama offered by the setting and subgenre. His compositions are stuffed with religious iconography, baroque embellishments, claustrophobic medieval alleys, and lots and lots of pasta." (MR4)

Code	Step/Sub step (Aspect)	Communicative Purposes	Example
M5S2	Negative criticism	Provides negative criticism of the movies	-
M5S2SS1	The whole movie	Critiques the entire movie	"At least the first three films had the novelty of having all those iconic action stars in one movie. This one doesn't even have that. I'm not sure it's even an Expendables movie anymore – more like a Statham movie that just happens to have some random action stars in it." (MR1)
M5S2SS2	Plot	Disparages the plot of the movies	"Not even the action can redeem it either. There's lots of guns, explosions, fighting and knife-throwing, but most of it is pretty unmemorable, with only one standout fight in the entire lot. In this age of fast paced John Wick-styled non-stop action, Expend4bles' sequences seem antiquated in comparison. It's not even 'old-school', it's just... boring." (MR1)
M5S2SS3	Script	Provides negative criticism of the script	"Jokes about bodily fluids, genitals, short people, old people, obnoxious social media influencers... you name it, they've got it (surprisingly, there are no fart jokes – did the screenwriters think that would lower their standards TOO much?)." (MR4)
M5S2SS4	Characters	Condemns the movie characters	"And maybe the ghosts would be scary, if we could see them, but for most of the movie we barely get a glimpse — until the arrival of a weird creature called the Hatbox Ghost, played by Jared Leto (so unrecognisable you wonder if he sent in a pinch-hitter) and looking oddly like the Grinch on a bad hair day." (MR9)
M5S2SS5	Cast	Discusses the poor performance of the movie cast	"Sounds potentially fun, right? Shouldn't all movies feature a disillusioned astrophysicist, particularly one as charmingly doleful as Stanfield's character? But alas, Haunted Mansion is yet another reminder that the assembling of a great cast does not guarantee a great movie." (MR9)
M5S2SS6	Movie direction	Provides negative criticism on the direction of the movies	"Director Ben Wheatley, chained to a screenplay no better with its wisecracks than its straight-ahead plot, is stuck telling a weak story, heavy on underwater and computer-generated visual murk. Scene to scene, jump scare to jump scare, Meg 2 gets a D-minus for clarity. Half the time, you don't know who's where, or who's for lunch." (MR7)

3.1.6 Move 6: Offering Recommendations to the Readers

Recommendations by the reviewers may somehow influence the readers on the quality of the movies and the worthiness of watching them. This premise has been established as the communicative purpose of Move 6. However, this move was not widely used as it could be found in two reviews only. This is similar to the studies by de Jong and Burgers (2013) and Rana et al. (2018). Both recommendations in the data of the present study were found to influence readers to watch the movies rather than skip them. An example of Move 6 can be seen in following excerpt:

"This, and coupled with Branagh's mastery of the role at long last, makes A Haunting in Venice well-worth the watch, and also gives hope that this would not be the last time we'll see Monsieur Poirot on the big screen." (MR2)

3.1.7 Move 7: Concluding the Review

Move 7 offered the conclusion of the reviews. The purpose of the move was to provide remarks to the whole movies or in some cases, parts of the movies. The conclusions were written to express the expectations of the sequels, to provide summary of the reviews or to ask rhetorical questions. The move is regarded as conventional since it was found in 80% of the data. Examples of the move are presented in the following excerpts:

"Sure, there's another Aquaman movie still to come, but if this is the sort of movie that DC can turn out under Gunn, I'm all for it." (MR5)

"Oppenheimer is a movie with power, texture, and grace. By the end, we begin to understand its subject, even if we remain baffled by a genius who somehow divorced himself from the damage his theoretical project would do. Maybe Strauss sums him up best: "How could this man who saw so much be so blind?"" (MR10)

3.1.8   Move 8: Relating to other Movies

The last move identified in this study was Move 8 which connects the movies being reviewed to other movies – either their prequels, sequels or other movie franchises. The move was peculiar compared to other moves since it has an inclination to appear anywhere in the reviews. Unlike other moves which showed a pattern of occurrences, Move 8 could appear after Move 2 and Move 3, as the last move or in between Move 5. Presumably, this happened since the authors intended to strengthen their arguments in the reviews. In terms of typicality, this move is regarded as optional with 40% of occurrences. The following examples show how the move took place in the data:

"In The Nun, set in 1952, a young novitiate, Sister Irene (Taissa Farmiga) travels to Romania to battle the demon Valak at Saint Cartha's monastery, in Romania. Director Corin Hardy and cinematographer Maxime Alexandre brought an operatic Gothic horror style to the movie, which was light on story but heavy on jump-scares." (MR3)

"In television terms, you could say that 2017's The Murder on The Orient Express was his awkward Season One. In that film, it often felt as though Branagh was playing a mere caricature of Poirot – with a little too much emphasis on the accent, and his little gestures and movements a little too rehearsed." (MR2)

3.2   Typical Structure of Movie Reviews

In genre analysis, a structure refers to how a genre is rhetorically organised. The structure usually comprises moves which realise the genre from the beginning until the end (Mežek & Swales, 2016; Rugen, 2019). Thus, to determine a typical structure of movie review genre, the present study investigates the sequence of moves. Table 5 summarises the move structure of each movie review. From the move structure presented in Table 5, a few types of move structures have been identified. Discussion on typical move structure was discussed in the literature review section. The most frequent move structure is 1-2-3-4-5-7, which is known as linear structure. Three reviews, which are MR7, MR8 and MR9 applied the structure. This was followed by a cyclical structure of moves. This type has a few patterns which includes 1-2-3-5-4-5-7 (in MR 1 and MR10) and 1-2-3-4-5-4-5-7 (MR4). Both patterns have a repetition of Move 4 and Move 5.

Table 5

Move Structure of Each Movie Review

Code	Move structure
MR1	1-2-3-5-4-5-7
MR2	1-2-3-5-4-5-(8)-5-6
MR3	1-3-2-(8)-4-5-4-5-8
MR4	1-2-3-4-5-4-5-7
MR5	1-2-3-(8)-4-5-7
MR6	1-2-4-3-4-5-4-7
MR7	1-2-3-4-5-7
MR8	1-2-3-4-5-7
MR9	1-2-3-4-5-7
MR10	1-2-3-5-4-5-7

The reviews of the present study also show the use of embedded move structure. The only move embedded in the structure is Move 8. An example of the structure is evident in MR2 (1-2-3-5-4-5-(8)-5-6), MR3 (1-3-2-(8)-4-5-4-5-8) and MR5 (1-2-3-(8)-4-5-7). As can be seen, MR2 also has a feature of cyclical move with repetition of Move 5 while MR5 is linear with an insertion of Move 8 in the middle of the structure. MR3 is the only review with an anomalous structure with an embedding Move 8. The structure of the review is 1-3-2-(8)-4-5-4-5-8.

The findings of this study show that movie review is another flexible genre. This argument is made based on two reasons. Firstly, in terms of the move structure. As shown in Table 5, there are vast differences in terms of the structure for all reviews. Despite having linear move patterns, most of them are not in sequence. Secondly, findings from previous studies did not show many similarities with the present study (Charoenchasri, 2007; de Jong & Burgers, 2013; Rana et al., 2018; Taboada, 2011). This could be due to a few factors which include the space given for the reviews, the objectives of the reviews and the cross-cultural differences (Bhatia, 2016).

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this study, the researchers investigated ten movie reviews published in an online newspaper in 2023. This paper explored the movie review genre by analysing its moves and steps and the typical structure observed in the discourse of movie reviews. The analysis reveals eight moves that shape the genre, with five being obligatory (Moves 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5) and four optional (Moves 6, 7 and 8). The analysis also presents a detailed breakdown of the moves, their steps, and the frequency of occurrence, highlighting the typicality of each move. The analysis of movie reviews also reveals the general structure of movie reviews by analysing the sequence of moves in each review. It identifies various structures, including linear and cyclical patterns, and noted the genre flexibility. The findings suggest differences in move structures compared to previous studies, possibly influenced by factors such as review space, objectives, and cross-cultural variations.

In conclusion, the analysis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the movie review genre, outlining its moves, steps, and typical structures. This genre analysis exhibits flexibility, allowing for variations in the arrangement of moves within reviews. Drawing on the study's objective to investigate online movie reviews from a genre-based perspective by paying attention to their structure, these results help to provide aspiring movie reviewers with an overview of what they should expect to incorporate in their reviews. The exploration of the movie review genre is relatively new compared to other genres that have been the subject of substantial study using genre analysis. Therefore, researchers could collate more data to construct a vast corpus for the movie review analysis. Consequently, it will build a more representative corpus and generate more trustworthy results. Additionally, conducting a cross-border comparison of movie reviews could help reviewers to learn about the variations in move patterns and language characteristics.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Khairul Firhan Yusob (Conceptualisation, Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation, Investigation, Resources, Visualisation, Writing, Supervision)

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