CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.

2.1 The Definition of Genre.

Early interpretation of genre is that of Hymes (1974), who sees genre as categories such as poem, myth, tale, riddle etc. To him "the notion of genre implies the possibility of identifying formal characteristics, traditionally recognised" (Hymes 1974: as cited in Helen Leckie - Tarry 1993: 30). Genres involve "characteristic ways of 'text making' and characteristic sets of interpersonal relationships and meanings" (Threadgold 1989: 96 as cited in Helen Leckie Tarry 1993: 31).

"Genre theorists stress the interactive and cyclic nature of text-context relationship, and perceive context in its broadest sense as reaching out to the wider culture. Threadgold asserts that it is insufficient to discuss the linguistic process in terms of situation types and their corresponding genres" (Helen Leckie Tarry 1993: 33). They seek to 'understand the ways in which lexico-grammatical patterns in texts are globally contextualised so as to [realise particular important social functions]' (Kress and Threadgold 1988: as cited in Helen Leckie Tarry 1993: 33). Genres are seen to derive their conventions 'from a general and differentiated semiotics rather than from linguistics' (Freadman 1988: 91, as cited in Helen Leckie Tarry 1993:33).
Swales (1981) carried out an analysis of research article introductions as well as abstracts. The moves-analysis approach originated in Swales's (1981) study of 48 research article introductions. He adopted an approach using moves to define the structure of the articles. Swales suggested that a general macro-structure exists for these research article introductions in the form of a series of moves. These series of moves are said to occur in a predictable manner.

He assigned a typical four-move cognitive structure to article introductions from a variety of disciplines ranging from physical sciences, biological sciences, social sciences to linguistics. He posited the following four-move structure for a typical article introduction.

**Move 1: Establishing the research field.**

**Move 2: Summarizing previous research.**

**Move 3: Preparing for present research.**

**Move 4: Introducing the present research.**

The research article introduction is meant to "motivate the present work and to justify its publication" (Swales 1990: 138). However there were certain apparent defects on the difficulties of separating Move 1 and Move 2.
Several analysts (Lopez, 1982; Bley-Vroman and Selinker, 1984; Crooks, 1986a) have commented on the difficulty of separating Move 1 and Move 2. The fact that the original corpus was deliberately restricted to short introductions led to the creation of a separate citational category (Move 2 - Summarising Previous Research) clearly at odds with the increasing practise of spreading of references throughout the introductions (Jacoby, 1986).

(Swales, 1990: 140)

The difficulty of demarcating Moves 1 and 2 led Swales to create a new model, the (CARS) *Create a research Space Model*, a three-move model which is presented below. Here Swales (1990) conflated the two moves into one, thus bringing the number of moves in the Introduction section down to three.

**Move 1**  
**Establishing a territory**

- **Step 1**  
  Claiming centrality
  and/or

- **Step 2**  
  Making topic generalisation(s)
  and/or

- **Step 3**  
  Reviewing items of previous research.

**Move 2**  
**Establishing a niche**

- **Step 1A**  
  Counter-claiming
  or

- **Step 1B**  
  Indicating a gap
  or

- **Step 1C**  
  Question-raising
  or

- **Step 1D**  
  Continuing a tradition
Move 3   Occupying the niche
Step 1A   Outlining purposes
          or
Step 1B   Announcing present research
Step 2    Announcing principal findings
Step 3    Indicating article structure

No definition of move was given by Swales in his study of research articles but it can be understood as a 'semantic unit which is related to the authors purpose' (Mc Kinley, 1993 as quoted in Dudley Evans, 1986: 131). The communicative purpose of the article introduction is accomplished through the four rhetorical moves, which gives the genre its cognitive structure. Just as genre has a communicative purpose that it intends to serve, each move also serves a typical communicative intention which is always an elaboration of the overall communicative purpose of that genre. In order to realise this particular communicative intention at the level of the move, an individual writer may use different rhetorical strategies innovatively.

Swales has the following definition of 'genre'

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognised by expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of a genre as here
conceived focused on comparable rhetorical action. In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience.

(Swales, 1990: 13)

A working definition of genre is offered by a series of short critical observations. A list of these is provided below.

A. A genre is a class of communicative events.

B. The principal criterial feature that turns a collection of communicative events into a genre is some shared set of communicative purposes.

C. Exemplars or instances of genres vary in their prototypicality.

D. The rationale behind a genre establishes constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their content, positioning and form.

E. A discourse community’s nomenclature for genres is an important source of insight.

(Swales 1990: 45-57)

Swales is concerned with rhetorical functions: ‘Why is an author offering a classification at this point and what is its purpose?’ (Swales 1990: 10-11). Thus for Swales ‘genre’ involves not only text type but also the role of
the text in the community which produces it, thus implying some study of institutional culture.

The main notion of genre is the notion of 'communicative purpose', a property which Swales identifies as determining the choice of linguistic styles and the choice of text structure. Thus a communicative event is defined in terms of language, frequency and the cotextual environment of the text. A genre is a social activity, oral and written which is staged into a distinctive structure and has a purpose or goal. When writing or speaking, a particular purpose is achieved and this is known as the communicative purpose.

This purpose determines the shape or structure of the text. It also determines the choice of words or sentences within the text. Different purposes result in different text types or genres which are distinguished by particular text structures and linguistic features. A writer has the freedom to use linguistic resources in any way he or she likes but he or she must conform to certain standard practises within the particular genre.

Discourse communities are thought as "sociorhetorical networks that form in order to work towards sets of common goals. Genre-type communicative events consist of texts themselves plus encoding and decoding procedures" (Swales 1990: 9). The place of genres in the discourse community is that the members of a particular community will be familiar with those genres that help in the fulfillment of their community goals. The
acquisition of genres depends not only on world knowledge, that is content schemata and formal schemata but also on familiarity with appropriate text processing tasks. Communicative purpose is the binding force as

"it is communicative purpose that drives the language activities of the discourse community; it is communicative purpose that is the prototypical criterion for genre identity, and it is communicative purpose that operates as the primary determinant of task".

( Swales 1990 : 10 ).

Bhatia defines professional and academic genre as

"a recognizable communicative event characterised by a set of communicative purposes identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalized with constrains on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. These constrains, however, are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognised purpose(s).

( Bhatia, 1993 : 13 )

Bhatia agrees with Swales definition of genre. In Bhatia's opinion, Swales offers a good fusion of linguistic and sociolingual factors. He however feels that Swales 'underplays psychological factors thus undermining the importance of tactical aspects of genre construction which plays a significant role in the concept of genre as a dynamic social process, as against a static one'

( Bhatia, 1991 : 16 ).
Bhatia (1993: 43) too believes that 'communicative purpose' is the most important factor in genre identification. 'Communicative purpose' is the common ground for establishing the logic behind the internal structure of each text and the regularities of organisation in it. Bhatia (1993: 21) believes that regularities are cognitive in nature. They 'reflect the strategies that members of a particular discourse or professional community use in the construction of that genre to achieve specific communicative purposes'. These is then 'accumulated and conventionalised social knowledge that is available to these communities'.

Bhatia (1993) looks at the role of communicative purpose in the identification and description of two related genres from professional business settings, namely product and self advertising through sales promotion letters and job application letters which are called promotional genre. These examples are from different and yet closely related areas of linguistic activity. Both use the same medium and the participants have a similar role relationship. They both share the same communicative purpose which is reflected in the structural interpretations that were assigned to these genres.

The following structural interpretation was assigned to a bank letter in terms of the moves used by the writer to achieve his communicative purpose.
1. Establishing credentials.
2. Introducing the offer.
3. Offering incentives.
4. Enclosing documents.
5. Soliciting response.
6. Using pressure tactics.
7. Ending politely.

( Bhatia 1993 : 48-49 )

The same seven part structural description could be assigned to a job application letter which Bhatia says is "not very different from that of a sales promotion letter" (1993 : 59). He discovers in the two "a great deal of common ground in spite of the fact that these two types of documents have rarely been treated as instances of the same text variety" (1993 : 74). He finds that the "two genres happen to be closely related and could be termed as sub genres of the same genre more generally known as promotional genre".

(1993 : 76).

Another study on a research genre for academic settings, the research article abstract and article introductions, which are research genres from academic settings, also "appear to be very similar in terms of their contextual configuration: they are associated with the same research setting"
(Bhatia 1993: 76). His study found that the two kinds of academic writing that is professional research writing and student academic writing are associated with “the same communicative context but have different communicative purposes” (1993: 100), and indicated that they have “practically nothing in common except that the two occur one after the other in the same academic setting” (1993: 100).

Research article abstracts were found to have 4 moves:

Move 1  Introducing purpose.
Move 2  Describing methodology.
Move 3  Summarising results.
Move 4  Presenting conclusions.

(Bhatia 1993: 79).

Research article introductions analysed using Swales’s four-move structure were found to have the following moves:

Move 1  Establishing field
Move 2  Summarising previous research
Move 3  Preparing for present research
Move 4  Introducing present research.

(Bhatia 1993: 80).
This analysis indicates that research article abstracts and research article introductions have different move structures. They also show that seemingly similar genres may be very different in their communicative purposes.

2.2. The Definition of genre analysis.

Genre analysis looks at the operation of language within a complete text, seeing the text as a system of features and choices. Selection is made according to the communicative purpose of the text. (Dudley Evans 1986: 126) provides a good introduction to genre analysis. He suggests that ESP needs a system of linguistics that demonstrates differences between texts and text types. Genre analysis can be used as a classificatory system revealing the essential differences between both the genre studied and other genres and also between the various sub-genres (Dudley Evans 1986: 126). He suggests that genre analysis within ESP is prescriptive, that is, able to make useful recommendations. Genre analysis exemplifies the current importance of content particularly the social and institutional aspects of that content. The term was used by Swales (1981) to mean 'a system of analysis that is able to reveal something of organisation of a genre and the language used to express those problems' (Dudley Evans 1986: 1).

Some studies of genre analysis in applied linguistic are;


d. The investigation of qualification in legal documents (Bhatia, 1981).

Swales (1981, 1990) considers the main aim of genre analysis as being 'to gain insights into the nature of genre that will be useful in ESP materials writing and teaching. Another aim is to provide a means of classifying both genres and sub genres. Salanger- Meyer et. al. (1985: 202) did a 'principal component analysis' of Medical English scholarly papers, divided into editorials, research papers and case reports, which are referred to as both sub genres and text types. The results suggest a systematic difference between each text type or sub genre according to the attitude of the writer to the reader; offering pure description in case reports, advise and suggestion in the research papers and judgement, value and instruction in the editorials. Salanger- Meyer; et. al. appear to indicate that they see editorials etc as sub-genres of the 'genre' of medical English. The genre of editorial might have the sub genres of medical editorial, physics editorial, economics editorial and so on.

Genre analysis emphasises the communicative purpose of a particular text genre, unlike discourse analysis which emphasises description and concentrates on the linguistic aspects of text construction and interpretation (Bhatia; 1993: 43). This is to determine whether communicative purpose recognized by the members of a particular community are the motivating factor in shaping the structure of a text enabling us to recognize texts with similar communicative purpose as belonging to a particular class. Genre analysis
relates to discourse analysis as it gives an explanation for the convention of genre construction and interpretation.

Genre analysis as an insightful and thick description of academic and professional texts has become a powerful and useful tool for significant form-function correlations. With good awareness and mastering of the genre, one is in a better position to exploit the rules and conventions for the sake of creativity. By this however, Bhatia does not mean that the derived generic conventions must always be used prescriptively; as Hart states (1986:280, as cited in Bhatia 1993:40) "genre analysis is pattern seeking rather than pattern imposing".

Bhatia in his study on professional and academic writing (Bhatia 1993:17) has linked genre analysis with three aspects, being:

1. Linguistics and genre analysis.
2. Sociology and genre analysis.
3. Psychology and genre analysis.

Swales considers only the linguistic and sociological aspects in genre analysis and underplays the psychological factors. The psychological factor is also of importance because it offers an explanation for the tactics or strategies used in genre construction. The linguistic aspect refers to analysis of texts 'with any above average incidence or even a lack of certain linguistic features' (Bhatia
1993:17). The sociological aspect allows 'the analyst to understand how a particular genre defines, organises and finally communicates with social reality'. It provides answers to the question 'why do writers write the way they do?'. The third psycholinguistic aspect emphasises the tactical choices, also known as strategies that are adopted by writers to make writing more effective and successful.

There are many approaches to genre analysis. Bhatia's study on genre in legislative documents is on the function of qualifying expressions in legislative documents based on text patterning. His study was based on *easification*, and he points out that *easification* "attempts to make the text more accessible to the learner by using a variety of what he calls *easification devices"* (Bhatia 1993:146). This is to "make legislation more easily assessable to a larger specialist audience without, in any serious manner, neutralising the general integrity of legislative statements" (Bhatia 1993:209). In this way the texts become reader friendly and provide an "access structure around the text to help the reader process the text appropriately without sacrificing its originality, authencity or generic integrity" (Bhatia 1993:209).
2.3. Review of literature on medical writing.

There have been very few studies on medical writing. Language research within medicine is heavily biased towards spoken communication skills. Cecilia Fredericks in her study on "Doctor - Patient Communication and Cognitive Outcome" (1997), investigates how doctors communicate with their patients and how well the patients recall this medical information. This study investigates the verbal interaction and outcome of that communication from the perspectives of the patient, the doctor and a third party observer.

The findings show that about a quarter of the patients failed to recall information on diagnosis and medication and more than half the the patients could not recall the advice given by the doctor. Recall depends on how well patients and doctors communicate with one another. Communicative effectiveness was associated with the ability of doctors to speak the patients language and patients with higher educational levels had higher abilities of recall. The findings also indicate that although differing language background did not necessarily result in poor cognitive outcome, "patients who could not communicate with their doctors in a mutually intelligible language were more likely to have difficulty verbalising their problems and symptoms and in understanding what the doctor said" (1997: 242).

The study also reveals that "independent of the language variable, the majority of the patients failed in the recall of one or more kinds of medical
information they received from their doctors” (1997: 239). It is the communication difficulty during the consultation with the doctor rather than the language background of the patient that results in this recall failure.

This study combines empirical data from doctor patient questionnaires, checklists and audio recordings of sixty three consultations in order to provide a “coherent and multifaceted description, explanation and analysis of the consultation process and outcome” (1997: 238). She confirms the problem that “patients were sometimes unable to fully verbalise their problems and needs to doctors in a mutually intelligible language and both parties encounter problems in communicating with one another” (1997: 237). The ability to communicate effectively was found to be associated with the doctors’ ability to speak the patients language and the higher educational levels of the patient.

Pettinari C.J. did a study on “Medical Action Into Surgical Text: A Discourse Analysis of The Production and Acquisition of a Particular Genre (1985). She examined one type of reporting, reporting on operations, from a linguistic point of view and unfolded the matrix within which these texts were created by examining the text from various points of view.

She examined the role of the learner in the process of text building in the creation and final writing of the operative report. This includes the context and stages which combine to create the final report which is:
1. The operation itself
2. The dictation of a record of the operation
3. The transcription of the record of the operation.
4. The final revision (if necessary) and signature of the typewritten text by the physician.
5. The final signed official document.

The findings indicate that there are two macrolevels in this text:

1. The formatting of certain information outside the narrative summary of the operation itself, including identification data of the patient, surgeons, type of operation and pre and post operative diagnoses, along with information central to the dictation and transcription of the report.

2. The episodic nature of the narrative summary (Pettanari 1985: 156).

Pettanari also examined the process of change of reporting styles over time by surgical residents as they progress through their training. Her findings indicate that operative reports do change over a five year period of residency training. "The change can be seen in both what is reported on and in how it is expressed linguistically" (Pettanari 1985: 217). The reports of new residents were found to be of a 'procedural narrative' type, describing the recount of the operation performed. The fifth year resident however summarised the procedural sections of the narrative and 'amplified the descriptive sections of
the report'. The focus of the report shifted from 'This is what I did' to 'This is what I observed' (Pettanari 1985:218).

Her approach of examining from three perspectives of 1) the relationship between the operative report and the surgical event, 2) the internal structure of the text and 3) the change in reporting styles over time gives an interpretive explanation of both the text and context surrounding the operative report.

Azirah Hashim (1996) in her study on "Syntactic Choices and Text Organisation in Medical Research Articles" examined twenty four medical articles for the organisational features present in each section of an article. Ten of these articles were further examined for the lexicogrammatical analysis of mood, transitivity and theme. A combination of Swales' Move analysis and Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar is used as a method of analysis.

The findings of this study indicate that:

1. Each of the Abstracts, Introductions, Methods, Results and Discussion sections follow certain conventions in the order of presentation of content.

2. Each unit of information or Move is made up of language particular to that move, and the linguistic features vary from one Move to another depending on the writer's communicative purpose.
The Moves illustrate how the medical research article is structured and the description of the lexicogrammar in terms of mood, transitivity and theme enables the Moves to be seen interpersonally, experientially and textually. This research shows that medical articles are constructed according to a set of conventions which define the genre.

The results of the research affirm that "rhetorical and linguistic characteristics are associated with the different sections and Moves in articles. Identifiable similarities and differences seem to exist in the sections and Moves" (1996: 341).

John Skelton (1997) in his paper "The Representation of Truth in Academic Medical Writing" explored the manner in which facts are represented in medical research articles. The purpose was to provide a way of thinking and talking about the representation of truth as a way of helping and assisting academic writers and readers in the scientific field.

He is of the opinion that "scientific writers have a position with respect to the facts as well as to an audience, that the purpose of scientific writing is therefore to express claims and relationships in matters of fact and logic rather than of interaction" (Skelton 1997: 120). This is done in the following ways:

1. By constructing facts of different kinds at different stages of the published paper.
2. By distinguishing between the propositional value of what authors write and the comments they make on these propositions. Decision making is seen as essentially a branch of cognitive science or logic.

Skelton argues that there are three significant versions of truth which operate in medical research writing which can be identified in the rhetorical patterns through which propositions are expressed. These are identified as follows:

1. contextualised truth; which is truth as the research tradition states it to be.
2. evidential truth; which is truth as the statistical evidence states it to be.
3. interpreted truth; which is truth as a matter of deriving possible non statistical meaning from findings.

These three versions of truth can be identified in the rhetorical patterns through which the propositions are expressed. Their representation is evidence of the way in which scientists manipulate their readership by shaping the information.

This paper argues that in “medical writing and probably in many scientific disciplines, the representation of truth is highly formalised” (Skelton 1997: 135). Context, evidence and interpretation and their realisation through the commentative system are at the heart of scientific writing. An understanding of this system is useful for the following reasons.
1. It can be of assistance in training people how to write.
2. It can assist anyone involved in writing or teaching academic language.
3. It is useful for critical reading.

Good writing needs a balance of thought and the words that describe the thought. For teaching purposes “there are sets of texts which behave in broadly similar ways, which cluster round some central notion……” (Skelton 1997: 136). It makes sense then to teach this central notion although there is no precise mirror of this ‘central notion’.

However the concept of teaching the ‘central notion’ will be understood by those who are sophisticated learners and the pattern itself will at best teach adequate rather than good writing. The justification for this kind of approach is that it can provide a base from which independent learners will start their exploration.

Kevin Ngozi Nwogu in his paper “The Medical Research Paper: Structure and Functions” (1997: 119-138) studies the organisation of information in the medical research paper using Swales’ (1981, 1990) genre analysis model. This study characterises the structure of information in medical research papers and identified an eleven Move schema out of which eight Moves were found to be compulsory; occurring in all the texts and, three Moves (Moves 1, 6, 8) were optional, or occurring with less frequency.
The eleven Moves provided by Nwogu (1997:123) are

Move 1 Presenting Background information.
Move 2 Reviewing Related Research.
Move 3 Presenting New Research.
Move 4 Describing Data Collection Procedure.
Move 5 Describing Experimental Procedure.
Move 6 Describing Data-Analysis Procedure.
Move 7 Indicating Consistent Observations.
Move 8 Indicating Non-Consistent Observations.
Move 9 Highlighting overall Research Outcome.
Move 10 Explaining Specific Research Outcomes.
Move 11 Stating Research Conclusions.

Results of this study show that a typical medical research paper may be made up of "eleven schematic units or 'Moves', consisting of three each from the Introduction and Methods section, two from the Results section and three from the Discussion section" (Nwogu 1997:134). It was also found that the Moves and their constituent elements assign "functions to segments of information which together in the research paper constitute the overall semantic macrostructure of such texts" (Nwogu 1997:135). This study therefore contributes to an understanding of the organisation of discourse and
demonstrates how the overall Move analysis can give insight into the shape of texts.

2.4. Conclusion.

This chapter has explored the definition of genre. The concept of genre has been discussed at some length but the most useful definition is that provided by Swales. The essence of the concept of genre as now used in applied linguistics and ESP is an emphasis on the communicative purpose and the ways in which communicative needs shape or influence both surface form and deeper rhetorical structure.

Genre analysis is a system of analysis that is able to reveal patterns of organisation of a genre and the language used to express these patterns. This enables insights into the nature of genre and is helpful in making suggestions about layout and language used.

Studies on medical discourse have tended to focus on the communicative skills (Pettanari 1985, Fredericks 1997). Others such as Swales (1990), Skelton (1997) and Nwogu (1997) looked at medical research articles and adopted a genre analysis approach to characterise the structure of information in the research articles. There has been no study as yet on the organisation of information in medical reports and this is what the present study attempts to do.