

Writing tips for medical students/researchers following a comparative study

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Madam, writing, especially the writing of highly-cited research papers, is a breathtaking process which needs a lot of time and energy. In Iran, a country of the Middle East, there are a large number of students and professors working on medical projects in an attempt to bridge more gaps in the literature. Due to the importance of publishing Research Articles (RAs) in ISI-indexed journals for Iranian academics, the authors of this report decided to carry out a full-scale research study comparing 40 randomly-selected ISI-cited articles written by Iranian and English medical experts (i.e., 20 of them written by Iranians and 20 of them written by English native writers) in terms of Moves/Sub-moves (informational units) in the Introduction, Method, Results and Discussion (IMRD) sections. To attach the goals of the study, we counted the frequencies of Moves/Sub-moves deployed by authors in the IMRD by using Nwogu (1997)'s model.¹ Then relevant statistical tests (i.e., Chi-square tests) were run to analyze the papers published in 7 Iranian ISI-indexed journals and 14 English ISI-indexed journals. The results showed that the articles published in Iranian ISI-indexed journals between 2011 and 2013 lack cohesion in the Introduction and Discussion sections. To put it simply, Iranian authors ignored a number of Moves and Sub-moves while writing the Introduction and Discussion

sections of their RAs. For instance, in the Introduction section, an overwhelming majority of Iranian authors did not write about Limitations of Previous Research. Moreover, they ignored a number of Moves such as Research Implications in the Discussion section. However, Iranian authors used nearly the same number of Moves and Sub-moves in the Method and Results sections of the papers, compared to English native writers. As Kallestinova² states, "Moves are traffic signs that lead the reader through the road of your ideas. Each move plays an important role in your paper and should be presented with deep thought and care."

Recommendations

The results of this study imply that Iranian medical scholars should pay attention to some Moves/Sub-moves in the Introduction and Discussion sections of their RAs. They are recommended to study medical RAs published in prestigious journals of the field and use them as their models mainly in writing the Introduction and Discussion sections. They can also use Nwogu's¹ framework in order to increase their chance for publishing their RAs in ISI-indexed journals with high Impact Factors.

References

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2. Kallestinova E. How to write your first research paper. *Yale J Biol Med* 2011; 84:181-90.

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