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Rhetorical Moves in Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*: A Genre Analysis

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Abstract

*This study investigates the rhetorical structure of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* through the lens of genre analysis. Drawing on Swales' and Bhatia's frameworks, it applies rhetorical move theory, typically used in academic discourse analysis to a literary narrative. The study addresses three questions: first, what rhetorical moves and steps are present in *The Little Prince*? second, how do these moves contribute to the narrative and thematic development? third, what communicative purposes do these moves serve within the context of children's literature? The analysis adopts a qualitative approach, in which each chapter of the novel was examined through close reading and move identification based on structural and thematic cues. Findings show a consistent pattern of Complication and Resolution across the chapters, with other moves such as Abstract and Coda used more selectively to shape reader interpretation. This research contributes to genre studies by extending rhetorical move analysis to narrative fiction, offering a bridge between ESP traditions and literary discourse. The findings also support educators and curriculum designers in teaching narrative structure and rhetorical awareness in literature classrooms.*

Keywords: narrative structure; genre analysis; rhetorical moves; children's literature; literary discourse

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Introduction

Narratives play a central role in children's literature, serving not only as sources of entertainment but also as tools for moral instruction, socialization, and cognitive development. As one of the most widely translated and studied works in the genre, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* occupies a unique position within both literary and educational traditions. Known for its poetic tone, allegorical richness, and philosophical depth, the novel has captivated generations of readers. Its surface simplicity masks a layered narrative that communicates with readers on multiple cognitive and emotional levels.

Previous studies have approached *The Little Prince* from various interpretative angles, highlighting its moral, philosophical, and symbolic dimensions. Nazeer (2020) and



Soy (2020) analyze the novel's spiritual and existential qualities, examining how its narrative conveys ideas related to humanity, love, and transcendence. Wan and Amini (2020) focus on the construction of secondary worlds and the mechanisms of world-building that enhance reader engagement. Zahrok et al. (2024) explore the ways in which child characters in literature are crafted to meet adult didactic expectations. Others, such as Potočárová (2017), Swandari and Markhamah (2023), and Waruwu et al. (2023), have emphasized the novel's capacity to convey moral values, particularly those related to friendship, responsibility, and emotional maturity. Similarly, Mizzaro (2023) and Hale and Fox (2013) examine the symbolic weight of relationships in the novel, interpreting character interactions as allegorical representations of psychological and social constructs.

While these studies offer important insights, they tend to treat the novel primarily as a thematic or symbolic text. Their focus is often interpretive, centered on what the story means rather than how it achieves its effects structurally. In particular, few works address the rhetorical mechanisms by which meaning is constructed, patterned, and communicated through narrative structure. This is a significant oversight. Literary meaning is not only a function of symbols and themes but is also shaped by how events, characters, and conflicts are introduced, developed, and resolved through structured discourse. Understanding the rhetorical organization of a narrative text—how it begins, builds tension, evaluates, and concludes is crucial to a more complete reading of the text.

The Little Prince is a particularly suitable subject for this kind of analysis due to its unique blend of simplicity and structural complexity. Although presented as a children's story, the novel uses concise, episodic chapters that function almost as standalone narratives, each with its own beginning, complication, resolution, and reflective ending. This chaptered structure makes it possible to identify and analyze rhetorical moves with clarity. Moreover, its status as both a philosophical text and a pedagogical tool allows the study to explore how narrative structure contributes not only to literary engagement but also to moral and emotional education. This dual nature makes it an ideal case for testing the applicability of rhetorical move theory beyond academic or informational genres.

This study addresses that gap by examining *The Little Prince* through the lens of genre analysis, specifically rhetorical move theory. It seeks to answer three interrelated questions: first, what rhetorical moves and steps are present in *The Little Prince*? second, how do these moves contribute to the novel's narrative structure and thematic development? third, what communicative purposes do these moves serve in the context of children's literature?

The central research problem addressed in this article is the lack of structural analysis of *The Little Prince* using a genre-based framework that accounts for communicative intention. While the story's philosophical, symbolic, and moral dimensions have received significant attention, the narrative's organizational features—such as how plot points are introduced, how narrative tension is structured, and how conclusions are delivered—remain underexplored. This study aims to analyze the rhetorical structure of the novel systematically, identifying its constituent moves and their roles in shaping the reader's understanding.

To conduct this analysis, the study applies the rhetorical move framework developed by Swales (1990, 2004) and expanded by Bhatia (1993). These frameworks were originally developed within the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) tradition to analyze professional and academic texts—such as research articles, business reports, and legal documents—based on their communicative purposes. According to Swales (1990), a genre is defined by its purpose and the regularities in structure and language that fulfill that purpose. Bhatia (1993) extends this framework by introducing the concept of “genre-mixing” and “genre-bending,” where texts draw upon elements from multiple genres to achieve complex communicative goals. While these theories were not originally intended for literary texts, they offer a powerful lens

for analyzing the rhetorical architecture of any discourse, including narrative fiction.

In applying rhetorical move theory to *The Little Prince*, this study positions each chapter as a functional unit and analyzes how recurring structural patterns—such as orientation, complication, resolution, evaluation, and coda—organize the narrative. These patterns draw on frameworks proposed by Labov (1972) and Gerot and Wignell (1995), who both emphasize the role of narrative moves in guiding reader interpretation and creating coherence. By identifying the frequency, position, and function of each rhetorical move and its smaller steps, the study reveals how the novel achieves narrative flow, thematic coherence, and reader engagement. The relevance of genre analysis to children's literature lies in its ability to uncover how structure contributes to accessibility and interpretability. Children's literature often adheres to conventional narrative forms, which help readers of varying developmental stages navigate complex themes. In this sense, rhetorical move analysis can explain how such texts fulfill both literary and pedagogical functions. By treating *The Little Prince* not just as a literary artifact but as a rhetorically constructed narrative, this study contributes a structural understanding of the story's enduring power.

The novelty of this research lies in its methodological orientation. Unlike previous studies that center on the symbolic or moral content of the novel, this study foregrounds the rhetorical strategies used by the author to construct meaning. In doing so, it offers a new perspective on a widely studied text and demonstrates the adaptability of ESP-based genre analysis to the field of literary discourse. It also provides a model for how rhetorical move theory can be expanded beyond its traditional domains to examine fiction, particularly texts that are deceptively simple in form but complex in meaning.

The implications of this research extend to both theoretical and practical domains. Theoretically, the study contributes to genre studies by showing that rhetorical move theory can illuminate narrative structure in literary texts. It highlights the compatibility between ESP-informed discourse analysis and literary studies, encouraging further interdisciplinary exploration. Practically, the findings are relevant to educators and curriculum designers seeking to improve students' narrative literacy. By making explicit the textual strategies used to organize and deliver meaning, the study can inform pedagogical practices in literature instruction. For example, teachers might use rhetorical moves as a framework to help students analyze or even compose narrative texts with greater awareness of structure and purpose. The study also offers insights for scholars working at the intersection of discourse analysis, genre theory, and children's literature, pointing to new directions in structural literary research.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative approach using content analysis to examine the rhetorical structure of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*. Following Krippendorf (2018), content analysis in qualitative research seeks to derive contextual interpretations from written or spoken material, particularly when the aim is to uncover latent meaning through recurring structures or patterns. In the context of this study, content analysis facilitates the identification of rhetorical moves and steps that shape the narrative structure and communicative purpose of the novel. The data consist of the entire English version of *The Little Prince*, segmented into 27 separate units based on the novel's chapter divisions. Each chapter was treated as a distinct unit of analysis.

The first stage of the analysis involved close reading and preliminary identification of rhetorical moves across the chapters. Drawing from Swales' (1990, 2004) and Bhatia's (1993) genre frameworks, as well as narrative models by Labov (1972) and Gerot and Wignell (1995), the study categorized six major moves: Abstract, Orientation, Complication, Resolution, Evaluation, and Coda. Each move was further examined for sub-steps based

on patterns of realization found across chapters. Once preliminary coding was completed, the researchers re-read the entire corpus to refine the classification of each move and step. The identification process was guided by repeated syntactic and thematic markers typical of each move. For instance, Complication moves were identified when a specific problem or challenge was introduced often signaled by modal verbs (had to, couldn't, worried) or evaluative language indicating emotional strain. Resolution steps were identified when actions were taken to address these complications, typically signaled by shifts in narrative action or outcome.

To ensure analytical consistency, each move was further broken down into steps that reflected micro-level realizations. For instance, the Orientation move was realized in four distinct steps: introducing character(s), setting the time, setting the place, introducing multiple elements simultaneously. These steps were not always present in every chapter but were identified when they occurred. Their variation across chapters allowed for deeper insight into how structure supports communicative function. The next phase of the analysis involved quantifying the frequency of each move across the 27 chapters. Following Swales (2004), moves were categorized as obligatory, quasi-obligatory, or optional based on their occurrence: Obligatory moves appeared in all chapters (100%) and formed the structural backbone of the narrative (e.g., Complication, Resolution); Quasi-obligatory moves appeared in approximately 75% of the chapters (e.g., Orientation); and Optional moves appeared in fewer than 50% of the chapters (e.g., Coda, Abstract).

Results and Discussions

The findings reveal that the novel incorporates all six narrative moves: abstract, orientation, complications, resolution, evaluation, and coda (See Table 1). Notably, complications and resolutions appear in all 27 chapters, establishing them as obligatory moves within this novel. These moves are essential in driving the narrative forward and resolving the central conflicts. Abstracts and orientations, despite not being present in every chapter, occur frequently. Abstracts appear in 18 out of 27 chapters (66.7%), and orientations are found in 22 chapters (81.4%). These moves contribute to setting the scene and engaging the reader, providing essential context and background information. The evaluation move, which adds depth and introspection to the narrative, is also present in a significant portion of the text.

On the other hand, the coda, which appears in only about 18% of the chapters, is less frequent compared to the other moves. However, its recurrence still indicates its relevance in providing moral or philosophical lessons to the narrative. Although only appearing a few times in the whole novel, the inclusion of it in multiple instances highlights its importance in reinforcing the story's themes. These findings highlight the prominence of complications and resolutions, emphasizing their central role in the narrative. Abstracts and orientations, although not always present, play a crucial role in setting up the story's context. The evaluation move offers insights into character reflection and thematic exploration. The detailed analysis of these moves and their step realizations will be discussed further below.

Table 1:

Frequency and Distribution of Moves in *The Little Prince* (27 Chapters)

Moves	Total Occurrences	
	F	%
Abstract	18	66.7%
Orientation	22	81.4%
Complication	27	100%

Resolution	27	100%
Coda	5	18.5%

An abstract provides a preliminary insight into a narrative, offering a hint or clue about what the story will entail (Mesthrie et al., 2009). In this novel, 18 out of 27 chapters (66.7%) contain this move; this is noteworthy because abstracts are typically only found in the beginning of a story and are optional (Toolan, 2013). However, the abstract occurs 18 times, placing it a grey area between quasi-obligatory (75% occurrence) and optional (50% occurrence). This suggests that despite being labeled as a children's story, the novel's complexity makes it necessary to provide the reader with brief summary at the beginning of several chapters.

All abstracts in this novel appear in either the first or second sentence of the chapters, which introduces the reader to the chapter's content. Interestingly, these abstracts only appear when the story discusses the origin or adventure of the Little Prince before arriving on Earth. In contrast, chapters detailing the narrator's time with the Little Prince in the desert do not include abstracts. This observation indicates a deliberate narrative strategy to manage reader expectations and maintain engagement. This aligns with Bhatia's (1993) notion of "genre-bending," where elements from multiple genres are selectively employed to serve layered communicative purposes. While abstracts are not typically prominent in literary narratives, their strategic recurrence here signals a blend between narrative storytelling and didactic signaling, a symbol of hybrid genres like children's literature.

The presence of abstracts in the novel can be categorized into two forms: Step 1.1 which provides a complete description of the chapter, and Step 1.2 which is vague in nature – leading to suspense and heightening readers' interest. Step 1.1 describes the entire chapter in one or two sentences in detail. For example, the beginning of Chapter 4 uses the sentence "I had thus learned a second fact of great importance: this was that the planet the little prince came from was scarcely any larger than a house!" This sentence informs the reader that the chapter will focus on the size of the Prince's planet, which the chapter subsequently elaborates on in detail. Similarly, Chapter 9 begins with an abstract explaining that the Prince leaves his home planet by means of a flock of birds ("I believe that for his escape he took advantage of the migration of a flock of wild birds").

In contrast, some chapters give only a vague description of the chapter's content and thus give the reader a sense of curiosity and suspense. These abstracts often appear in chapters describing the Prince's journey between planets. For instance, Chapter 11 starts with "The second planet was inhabited by a conceited man," which piques the reader curiosity about the forthcoming event. Chapter 14 is even more cryptic; it only begins with "The fifth planet was very strange without any additional information. This vague introduction enhances the narrative's suspense and keeps the reader engaged. In the instances, the function of the abstracts shifts from informative to suspense-building, supporting Bhatia's concept of promotional strategies embedded in narrative—generating anticipation in the reader. This also supports Swales' (1990) idea that rhetorical moves adapt to the expectations of a discourse community, in this case, child readers and adult interpreters alike.

Another noteworthy finding is the lack of repetition of abstracts within the same chapter; this means that each abstract appears only once at the chapter's beginning. However, as a whole complete novel, since this move recurs, it can be categorized as a cyclical move – demonstrating its integral role in the narrative structure. This cyclical nature challenges Labov's (1972) model of narrative as a linear series of moves, suggesting instead a recursive use of abstract that punctuate and preview narrative turns. In children's literature, such recursion is functional as it supports both comprehension and anticipation, which are

essential for developing reading engagement in younger audiences.

Hence, the analysis of Move 1: Abstract reveals a strategic use of this narrative element to manage reader engagement and provide essential context. The distinction between detailed and vague abstracts highlights the novel's complexity and the author's intent to balance clarity with suspense. This cyclical use of abstracts underscores their importance in enhancing the reader's understanding and maintaining interest throughout the story. Moreover, this finding supports the argument that *The Little Prince* performs a genre-blending communicative role: it both narrates and teaches. The abstract, typically absent from conventional literary narratives, here functions similarly to introductions in expository texts—suggesting that Saint-Exupéry adapts rhetorical strategies from informational and moralistic genres to support the pedagogical goals of the narrative. Orientation move is a critical component of a narrative's generic structure. In this novel, it is realised in three steps: (1) orientation of time; (2) orientation of place; and (3) orientation of characters. Throughout the novel, the orientations of time and place are consistently provided in the chapters where this move appears. However, the orientation of characters is less frequent, likely because the main story does not introduce many new characters as it progresses.

The novel presents the orientation steps in various sequences, either by altering the order in which the move is realized or by omitting one or two steps altogether. This finding aligns with Toolan's (2013) description that the introduction of a narrative involves depicting the time, place, and characters of the story in any sequence at the beginning of the narrative text. From a genre-analysis perspective, this flexibility reflects Swales' (1990) view that move order is often guided by the expectations of a discourse community. In the case of *The Little Prince*, the shifting order and omission of certain elements suggest that orientation is adapted to maintain reader interest and narrative flow rather than rigid genre conventions. Thus, the 22 chapters with this move can be said to follow a pattern that familiarizes readers with the significant characters, settings, and temporal context of the story.

The narrative's orientation can be introduced in three different sequences: all three steps (introduction of time, place, and characters) are mentioned in any order (Sequence 1); only two out of the three steps appear (Sequence 2); or only one of the steps appears (Sequence 3). Table 2 below provides the example of each sequence.

Table 2:

Step Sequence Realizations of the Move 2: Orientation

Step Sequence	Example
Sequence 1: All three steps appear	<u>Chapter 2</u> “So I lived alone, without anyone that I could really talk to, until I had an accident with my plane in the Desert of Sahara, six years ago. ... And I saw the most extraordinary small person, ... And that is how I made the acquaintance of the little prince.”
Sequence 2: Only two out of three steps appear	<u>Chapter 10</u> “He found himself in the neighborhood of the asteroids 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, and 330. ... The first of them was inhabited by a king.”

Sequence 3:	<u>Chapter 16</u>
Only one step appears	“So then the seventh planet was the Earth.”

Each sequence appears several times throughout the novel. A pattern emerges wherein Sequence 1 is predominantly found in the earlier chapters (e.g., Chapters 1-4), while the later chapters primarily employ either the introduction of time and place, place and character, or time and character. Often, these later chapters orient the reader only to the time and/or place without introducing new characters. This gradual reduction in orientation detail can be interpreted as an example of Bhatia’s (1993) concept of “genre simplification” and audience accommodation. Once the reader has become familiar with the narrative framework, minimal cues are sufficient to maintain coherence.

The finding shows that the orientation of time always appears first when it does appear in the chapter. However, the settings of time in *The Little Prince* itself are a little vague. The story never specifies an exact period (e.g., a particular year or century). Instead, it uses phrases like “six years ago” or “when I was a child.” According to Conrad (2014) such settings are common as they provide a “continuity of form and content across unfolding time and space” (p. 326), creating a sense of timelessness. This narrative timelessness is also consistent with the communicative goals of children’s literature, which often seeks to universalise moral and emotional experiences across time and culture. On the contrary to the settings of time, in chapters where the orientation move appears, the settings of place are often clearly defined, helping readers visualise the physical context of the story. Meanwhile, since the primary characters are already established early in the story, the orientation of characters occurs less frequently. As a result, the later chapters focus more on reorienting the reader to new settings rather than introducing new characters.

The orientation move in “The Little Prince” effectively sets the scene by providing temporal and spatial contexts in various sequences. The orientation of time, although vague, creates a timeless narrative quality, while the orientations of place and characters ensure readers remain grounded in the story’s evolving settings. This strategic use of orientation moves helps maintain reader engagement and provides essential context as the narrative unfolds. When viewed through Bhatia’s lens, the flexibility and variation of orientation strategies reveal an intentional genre-mixing approach—balancing narrative immersion with pedagogical clarity. These findings support the argument that the story blends the structural economy of fable with the psychological depth of modern allegory, thereby extending genre expectations within children’s literature.

The third move, Complications, is identified as a cyclical move—a move which can occur multiple times within a single corpus (Abaalkhail, 2015), or, in this case, a single chapter. This move is realised through three steps: (1) introduction of a problem/crisis; (2) the decision taken by the character(s); and (3) the actions (not) taken by the character(s). It is crucial to differentiate between Step 2 and Step 3; Step 2 focuses solely on characters’ decision, representing mental action, while Step 3 involves the physical actions the characters undertake in response to the problem.

Table 3:
Move 3 Cyclicity Example from Chapter 8

Steps	Story Content
Cycle 1	
3.1 Intro of Problems	A new type of seed was flown by the wind into the planet.
3.2 Actions (not) taken	The Prince let the seed grow instead of getting rid of it.
Cycle 2	
3.1 Intro of Problems	The flower became very conceited and demanded the Little Prince's full attention to tend to her wishes.
3.2 Actions (not) taken	The Prince tended to her day and night.
Cycle 3	
3.1 Intro of problems	The flower boasted too much about her knowledge and ability.
3.2 Character(s) decision	The Prince decided to not believe in the flower that much anymore.
3.3 Actions (not) taken	The Prince left the flower in his planet.

Step 1 involves introducing the central problems or crisis that drives the narrative forward. This step is present in all instances of the complication move, underscoring its necessity in the narrative structure. For example, in Chapter 5, the problem is introduced when the Little Prince expresses concern about the baobab trees growing on his planet, threatening its safety. When (a) character(s) make(s) a decision about something in response to the problem, it means that Step 2 is realised in that part of the text. This step is more sporadic, appearing less frequently than Step 2. It represents the characters' internal deliberations and mental resolutions. For instance, in Chapter 7, the Little Prince decides to confront the narrator about the thorny flowers, revealing his inner turmoil and decision-making process. Step 3 encompasses the actual actions taken by the characters, which may or may not resolve the introduced problem. This step is crucial as it demonstrates the characters' physical responses and behaviors. An example is found in Chapter 9, where the Little Prince acts by leaving his planet to explore the universe, seeking solutions beyond his immediate environment.

The analysis shows that Steps 1 and 3 appear in all instances of the complication move, while Step 2 appears less consistently. This indicates that the essential components of a complication in a narrative are the introduction of problems and the subsequent actions taken (or not taken) by the characters. According to Gerot and Wignell (1995), complications can recur throughout a story as characters' actions and decisions may exacerbate the problems rather than resolve them (Dzikriya, 2019). This recurrence aligns with Bhatia's (1993) observation that certain communicative purposes—such as problematisation and response—require strategic repetition within a genre to fulfill their function. In this context, the cyclicity of complications reinforces the protagonist's emotional and psychological growth, central to the novel's moral narrative.

As an example, Table 3 above discusses the cycle happening in Chapter 8, in which the complications revolve around the Little Prince's relationship with his rose. The first cycle begins with the introduction of a problem when the Little Prince discovers a new sprout on his planet, which turns into a beautiful yet demanding rose. He decides to care for

the rose, providing her with water, a screen, and a glass globe for protection, demonstrating his commitment to her well-being. However, the rose's vanity and contradictory behavior create emotional turmoil for the Little Prince. This leads to the second cycle, where the Little Prince, seeking to resolve the tension, questions the rose about her behavior. Despite his attempts to communicate, the rose's pride and vanity only complicate matters further, leaving him feeling unappreciated and confused. The third cycle culminates in the Little Prince's decision to leave his planet to gain new perspectives. Before departing, he tends to the rose one last time, ensuring her safety. This decision reflects his emotional struggle and the complexity of their relationship, as he feels a deep sense of sadness and attachment to the rose. These cycles highlight the recurring nature of complications in their relationship and the impact of the Little Prince's actions and decisions on the unfolding narrative.

This example illustrates how narrative cycles not only advance the plot but also construct the emotional arc of the protagonist. According to Swales (2004), rhetorical moves may repeat within a genre to meet communicative needs. In literary narratives—especially in children's literature—such repetition supports both developmental progression and didactic reinforcement. The complications in *The Little Prince* serve as moments of conflict, reflection, and decision, teaching readers moral and relational lessons while maintaining narrative engagement. The complication move in this novel is characterized by its cyclical occurrence, driven by the introduction of problems, the decisions made by characters, and their subsequent actions. The presence of this move at multiple points in the story highlights the characters' struggles and growth, adding to the overall complexity of the narrative.

The resolution is defined by Both Gerot and Wignell (1995) and Labov (1972) as the end of a story where the conflict(s) is/are resolved, either leading to new, more complicated problems or providing a complete resolution. In literature, narratives often end either openly, where readers can interpret the conclusion themselves, or with a closed ending, where the narrator provides a definitive closure (Baroni & Revaz, 2016). However, in this study, the steps are categorized based on whether the conflicts are resolved positively or negatively. This distinction is important in understanding not only structural closure but also communicative purpose. Bhatia (1993) highlights that genre moves should be understood through the communicative functions they serve; here, the resolution move contributes not only to plot closure but also to the author's broader goal of offering philosophical reflection through storytelling.

There are three steps in the realization of the resolution move: (1) Step 4.1, which typically appears near the end of the story when the main characters find a way to resolve their conflicts successfully; (2) Step 4.2, which is usually found more than once throughout the story, indicating ongoing or worsening problems before things improve; and (3) Step 4.3, which provides closure and concludes the narrative. For example, in Chapter 8 (as is illustrated in Table 3), the first cycle of complications ends with the Little Prince failing to get rid of an alien seed (Step 3.3). This unresolved problem leads to a vain flower that torments him, representing Step 4.2, where the matter worsens. Similar patterns are observed across other chapters, where each complication cycle ends with either a positive or negative resolution. This supports Wang's (2020) assertion that each complication in a narrative text relates to the resolution, conveying tension and outcomes before the story's true end. More importantly, this reflects the communicative duality of children's literature, which often aims not only to resolve narrative tension but also to guide moral and emotional reflection.

The cyclical nature of complications and resolutions in this novel is evident. For instance, in Chapter 8, the resolution moves through three steps: the conflict ends negatively when the Little Prince feels unappreciated by the rose (Step 4.2), he decides to leave (Step 3.2), and finally, he takes action to depart (Step 3.3), resolving his immediate conflict but

leading to new challenges, as can be seen in the next chapters. This pattern of Step 4.2 and Step 4.1 moves leading to the final resolution (Step 4.3) illustrates the typical narrative structure where the story becomes more complicated before reaching a final resolution. Swales (1990) noted that the presence of overlapping and recursive rhetorical moves is not a deviation but a reflection of discourse community expectations. Here, the repetition of tension and partial closure across chapters mirrors the expectations of a child audience gradually learning about emotional nuance and consequence.

Therefore, this novel follows the common schematic structure of a narrative genre, where the resolution moves effectively bring closure to the conflicts, whether positively or negatively. The resolution steps provide insights into how the author systematically resolves tensions, contributing to the overall narrative progression and thematic development. From Bhatia's perspective, this pattern reflects genre-mixing: while the story is presented as a simple narrative, the varied resolutions introduce philosophical ambiguity more typical of reflective or even allegorical discourse. This adds depth to the communicative intent of the text—encouraging not just understanding of plot, but interpretation of value and meaning.

The last move—coda—explicitly presents the moral of the story (Toolan, 2013). Mesthrie et al. (2009) further define a coda as a narrative element that “signals the end of the narrative and may bridge the gap between the narrative and the present time” (p. 192). Given this definition, codas are typically not divided into smaller units or steps.

While not all stories include a written moral lesson, children's literature often aims to impart wisdom to young readers. Initially, it was expected that *The Little Prince* would contain numerous codas. However, the analysis reveals that only five out of the 27 chapters contain a coda (Chapters 1, 4, 5, 21, and 27). Interestingly, these codas do not always convey traditional moral lessons. Instead, they sometimes deliver messages that are humorous or satirical.

For example, in Chapter 5, the coda reads, “‘Children,’ I said plainly, ‘watch out for the baobabs!’” This statement does not offer a straightforward moral lesson. Instead, it indirectly advises readers about the importance of not neglecting responsibilities, suggesting that small issues, if ignored, can grow into significant problems. This use of subtlety aligns with Bhatia's (1993) view that genres often incorporate strategic ambiguity when serving reflective communicative purposes. Rather than instructing explicitly, the coda invites reader interpretation—shifting the burden of meaning-making onto the reader, which is a more dialogic and less didactic mode of engagement.

Although explicit moral lessons are sparse, the novel still contains implicit morals that readers must interpret for themselves. This subtlety may be attributed to the novel's genre, which leans more towards adventure than traditional folklore or fairy tales, which are typically more explicit in their moral teachings. From a genre-mixing perspective, the coda functions as a narrative device borrowed from traditional storytelling but recontextualized within a philosophical and allegorical frame. This reflects a shift from the “instructional” to the “reflective,” marking a departure from the didactic tendencies of classic children's tales.

Swales (2004) also emphasizes the importance of reader positioning in discourse. The sparse use of codas in *The Little Prince* positions the reader as an active meaning-maker rather than a passive recipient of moral closure. This approach not only aligns with the author's philosophical tone but also challenges the structural expectations of the genre, inviting the reader into a deeper, co-constructive engagement with the text.

The codas in *The Little Prince* serve to wrap up certain chapters with reflective or humorous remarks rather than direct moral instructions. They exemplify Bhatia's notion of evaluative genre moves, used to fulfill deeper communicative aims—especially those associated with reflection, irony, and introspection. This approach aligns with the novel's

overarching narrative style, which encourages readers to derive their own meanings and lessons from the story. This finding resonates with studies by Soy (2020) and Waruwu et al. (2023), who emphasize the novel's moral and philosophical depth. However, while those studies interpret the story's moral content thematically, this research adds structural insight by showing how codas—though infrequent—function as deliberate narrative strategies for moral reflection. Unlike traditional children's literature where codas are more explicit, *The Little Prince* blends reflection and irony to invite readers into a more interpretive moral engagement.

Conclusion

The frequent recurrence of Abstracts, Complications, and Resolutions demonstrates that the narrative aims not just to entertain, but also to guide the reader through patterns of tension, emotional growth, and resolution. While the novel contains implicit moral and philosophical lessons, these are not delivered through didactic coda-like statements typical in traditional children's stories. Instead, the story positions readers as interpretive agents, aligning with Bhatia's model of communicative purpose and genre-mixing. These conclusions answer the research questions as follows: First, the study identified all six moves and their variant steps, showing their structural placement and distribution across chapters. Second, it showed that these moves contribute to narrative progression, character development, and thematic coherence, especially through the cyclical use of Complication and Resolution. And third, it found that the communicative purpose of the novel aligns with narrative conventions but also reflects a reflective, philosophical approach to storytelling, reinforcing moral and emotional learning through structure rather than explicit instruction.

Despite the contributions of this study, there are several limitations. The analysis focused on a single literary text, which, while rich and complex, may not reflect the full range of rhetorical strategies in children's literature. Additionally, due to space constraints, the study did not fully explore how implicit messages are shaped by socio-cultural or historical contexts. Future research may compare rhetorical move structures across multiple children's narratives or include reader-response studies to understand how different audiences interpret these structures. In conclusion, *The Little Prince* demonstrates that even within a traditional narrative framework, rhetorical moves can be deployed with strategic variation to produce complex, multi-layered stories. Its blending of narrative structure and reflective purpose offers valuable insights for literary discourse analysis, genre studies, and the teaching of narrative literacy in educational contexts.

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