

LAYOUT PATTERNS OF ENGLISH TEXTS DESCRIBING ENDANGERED WILD MAMMALS

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Abstract - Nowadays, wild mammals are on the brink of extinction; some of these species are in danger of disappearing forever. Hence, endangered wild mammals must be protected and saved so that future generations can experience their presence and values. Protecting endangered wild mammals has been an urgent problem at present. On the official websites of reputational organizations in the United States, there are texts describing endangered wild mammals which help readers know more clearly about the mammals' features as well as arouse the readers' awareness in appealing for protection of the endangered wild mammals. In writing a good text, the layout plays an important role in arranging ideas as well as sections, and it can also have either a positive or negative effect on readers.

Key words - layout; species; protect; urgent problem; endangered wild mammals.

1. Rationale

All mammals share at least three characteristics not found in other animals: three middle ear bones, hair, and the production of milk by modified sweat glands called mammary glands. Hair has several functions, including insulation, color patterning, and aiding in the sense of touch. All female mammals produce milk from their mammary glands in order to nourish newborn offspring. Thus, female mammals invest a great deal of energy caring for each of their offspring, which has important ramifications in mammalian evolution, ecology, and behavior. Although mammals share several features, they come in a vast diversity of forms. The smallest mammals are found among shrews and bats, and can weigh as little as 3 grams. The largest mammal, and indeed the largest animal to ever inhabit the planet, is the blue whale, which can weigh 160 metric tons (160,000 kg). Mammals have evolved to exploit a large variety of ecological niches and life history strategies and, in concert, have evolved numerous adaptations to take advantage of different lifestyles.

Habitat destruction, uncontrolled hunting, trading spreading of diseases and drastically changing climates are prominent causes of mammal extinction. Wild mammals are part of our ecosystem; they contribute to the ecosystem and help to balance the ecosystem. They also have many uses in our daily lives, as a source of nutrition, research, pets and trading. But human greediness, selfishness and also over-population are causing the population of the mammals to decrease up to the point that they are in danger and eventually disappear from the Earth. Yet, this issue is ignored or sidestepped as we care more of what affect us directly, when we should know that sooner or later, as part of the mammal species, these phenomena will also happen to us. Habitat fragmentation, destruction or loss, unsustainable hunting and wildlife trade, global warming and diseases are factors that lead to mammal extinction.

Facing the danger of wild mammal extinction, mainstream organizations in the United States have been founded and they have built up websites in which there are plenty of texts describing endangered wild mammals. According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services organization (<https://www.fws.gov/>), there are 103 texts describing endangered wild mammals in the U.S from which we collected forty six samples whose lengths range from 300 to 700 words.

As for the study of texts, it is important to identify its layout in which the writers organize and arrange the parts or ideas in the discourse of English texts describing endangered wild mammals (ETEMs). Layout is one of the major elements that attract and make readers keep reading through ETEMs. The results of this research can be beneficial for teaching and learning of English language. This research is helpful for the readers in getting the detailed information of endangered wild mammals and appealing to their protection.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Texts Describing Endangered Wild Mammals

Brown and Yule [2] define "text" as the verbal record of communication act. Stubbs [4] refers to "text" as an instance of language in use, either spoken or written.

Description is used in all forms of writing to create a vivid impression of a person, place, object or event. Descriptive writing is usually used to help writers develop an aspect of their work, create a particular circumstance or atmosphere in which their characters live, or develop objects, characters' mood, etc. A descriptive text is a text which says what a person or a thing is like. Its purpose is to describe and reveal a particular person, place, or thing.

In brief, English texts describing endangered wild mammals in this research are defined as English texts which describe not only the appearance of the mammals but also their habitat, their distribution, their population and threats to their lives. These texts provide readers with essential information of the endangered wild mammals in order to help the readers fully understand about what the writers intend to convey.

2.2. Definition of Layout

A layout is part of a whole design that deals with the arrangement and style treatment of elements in the writing. According to Hornby [3], layout is the way in which the parts of something are arranged. Moreover, layout is defined on *Dictionary.reference.com* [5] as a plan or sketch, like that of an advertisement or a page of a newspaper or magazine, indicating the arrangement and

relationship of the parts, as of type and artwork.

There are varieties of layout patterns that depend on different genres of texts. The layout of ETEMs is the way in which the writers organize and arrange the parts or ideas in the discourse of ETEMs. On examining forty six collected samples of ETEMs, we come to the conclusion that the layout of ETEMs consists of 3 main parts: the Headline, the Illustration and the Body Copy.

2.3. Methodology

This paper only focuses on examining the ETEMs collected from three official websites of reputable organizations which are founded in the United States namely U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Environmental Conservation Online System ECOS), Encyclopedia of Life (EOL). There are 103 endangered wild mammals in the United States. Consequently, I decided to choose 46 samples of ETEMs that consist of 300 to 700 words for detailed investigation.

The study aims at identifying layout patterns of English texts describing endangered wild mammals by combining several methods namely descriptive, analytic, deductive and inductive ones. Among them, the

descriptive method and the inductive one are the most crucial.

The descriptive method is used through the examples in ETEMs which are chosen, described and presented to pick them out and sort them into different categories of layout in ETEMs.

The analytic method is used to clarify and justify a certain feature or characteristic concerning aspects of discourse features of ETEMs.

The inductive method is used to synthesize the findings from which conclusions are drawn out.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. Layout patterns

ETEMs are varied in their layouts. However, they are organized with a relatively standard format. Based on an analysis of the collected samples of ETEMs, the layout of ETEMs consists of three main parts: the Headline (H), the Illustration (I) and the Body Copy (B). Below is a typical sample:

(3.1) *Peromys cuspolionotus ammobates*

Mouse, Alabama beach



Overview

- *Brief Summary*

The Alabama beach mouse lives only in coastal sand dune areas of the Fort Morgan Peninsula on the Alabama Gulf coast. This mouse used to be more widely distributed, but coastal development and human recreation have had great impact on its habitat, and populations have greatly declined in recent years.

- *Distribution*

Global Range: <100-250 square km (less than about 40-100 square miles) Disjunct tracts of sand dune system from Fort Morgan eastward to the western terminus of Alabama Highway 182, including the Perdue Unit of the Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge, Baldwin County, Alabama. Specific sites include Ft. Morgan, Gulf Highlands, Pine Beach, Gulf States Park, and Romar Beach.

Physical Description

- *Morphology*

Peromys cuspolionotus has a small head and body that is between 209 and 258 mm; the hind foot is less than 40 mm; This species is sexually dimorphic, with males about 2.5% larger than females. Weight varies seasonally, and can be between 109 and 258 g. The dorsal pelage of *P. polionotus* is dark reddish-gray in color, which is the result from a mixture of black unbanded, and yellowish-red banded guard hairs. It has an off-white eye ring.

- *Size*

Length: 22 cm, Weight: 33 grams

- *Description*

The Alabama beach mouse is one of several subspecies of old field mice living only in coastal sand dune areas. These small light-colored mice burrow and nest in dunes and are primarily active at night. They eat various plant seeds and insects. They prefer sand-covered slopes with patches of sea oats, beach grass, other grasses and herbs.

Ecology

- *Habitat*

Favors dunes with grass/shrub cover: primary dunes, inter-dune areas, secondary dunes, and scrub dunes; sites with all of these components are optimal. In fact, although highest densities occur within primary dunes, scrub dunes are probably essential for the long-term survival of these mice since they provide higher elevation refuges during major storm events. Occupies

underground burrows when inactive or rearing young; entrances are in clumps of grass or beneath sheltering vegetation

- *Migration*

No. All populations of this species make significant seasonal migrations.

- *Trophic Strategy*

Eats fruits and seeds of dune plants, especially sea oats and sea rocket; feeds on invertebrates when seeds are scarce.

- *Associations*
- *Population*

Populations fluctuate seasonally and annually, most abundant in winter and spring.

Life History

- *Behaviour*
- *Cyclicity*

Primarily nocturnal

- *Reproduction*

Breeds year round, but the percentage of reproductively active females is highest in fall and winter (71-84%) and lowest in summer (36%). Produces 2 or more litters per year. Gestation averages 23-24 days (nonlactating) or 28-29 days (lactating). Litter size averages 3-4. Young weaned in about 18 days. Minimum age at conception 5 weeks. Very few live longer than 12 months. Apparently monogamous mating system.

Conservation

- *Status*

Reasons: Very limited range along the dune systems of the Gulf Coast of Alabama; threats include competition with house mice and predation by cats.

- *Trends*
- *Threat*

Threatened throughout its range communities directly exploited or their composition and structure irreversibly threatened by man-made forces, including exotic species.

Habitat has been lost as a result of construction activities and recreational use. Threats include competition from house mice and predation by cats

(<http://www.eol.org/pages/1225979/details>)

In the typical example above, it can be seen that in each text the Headline is the name of a mammal. It has two parts which are the scientific name and common name respectively and these names are in bold. Right under the Headline is the picture of the mammal. This picture is used to support the contents described in the Body Copy and it also makes the ETEMs more attractive, interesting and convincing. The Body Copy in ETEMs is very special thanks to its headings. There are five subheadings in the Body Copy namely **Overview (O)**, **Physical Description (PD)**, **Ecology (E)**, **Life History (LH)** and **Conservation (C)**. Among these parts, the Overview and the Conservation are always obligatory. The Physical Description, Ecology, Life History can be sometimes present or absent in ETEMs. However, the

above components do not always come in a fixed order. In this research, five patterns of ETEMs are discovered as follows:

- Pattern 1: **H+ I +B** (O + PD + E + LH + C)
- Pattern 2: **H +B** (O + PD + E + LH + C)
- Pattern 3: **H +B** (O + PD + E + C)
- Pattern 4: **H +B** (O + E + LH + C)
- Pattern 5: **H +B** (General Information)

After examining the collected samples, we realize that among these five patterns, pattern 1 is frequently used in ETEMs, thus I only take one example of pattern 1 as follows:

(3.2) Leopardus (=Felis) pardalis

Ocelot



Overview

- *Brief Summary*

Ocelots occur in a wide range of habitats, from rain forest to savanna to dry, scrubby terrain, at mid- to low elevations from Texas and Arizona to northern Argentina. They feed on small mammals, and also frequently include birds, reptiles, amphibians, and insects in their diet. Males occupy territories of 4-18 square km that may encompass the territories of one or more

females, who use home ranges of 2-11 square km. Ocelots have litters of 1, 2, or occasionally 3 kittens, and raise them in a den. The den can be a bare area in a dense thicket, a hollow tree, or a cave. The young are born fully furred, but with their eyes closed. When they are about a year old, males disperse to lead solitary lives. Young females, who are sexually mature at about 15-22 months of age, often settle on or near their mother's territory.

- *Distribution*

The ocelot is widely distributed from Mexico through Central and South America south to NE Argentina and southern Brazil and Uruguay, found in every country except Chile.

Physical Description

- *Morphology*

- *Size*

Length: 125 cm, Weight: 14000 grams

- *Description*

Differs from the jaguar in much smaller size and pelage spots not forming distinct rosettes. Differs from *Felis Wiedii* and *F. Tigrina* in being larger (hind foot longer than 145 mm vs. shorter, greatest length of skull more than 120 mm vs. shorter, length of P4 more than 12.7 mm vs. shorter). Differs from young mountain lion in having spots arranged in rows or in a chainlike pattern.

Ecology

- *Habitat*

This taxon can be found in the Chocó-Darién moist forests eco-region, one of the most species rich lowland areas on Earth, with exceptional abundance and endemism over a broad range of taxa including plants, birds, amphibians and arthropods. The biological distinctiveness is exceptional, with considerable biodiversity.

- *Migration*

At least some populations of this species do not make significant seasonal migrations. Juvenile dispersal is not considered a migration.

- *Tropic Strategy*

Ocelots are highly skilled hunters, tracking prey by odor trails, and have an average of 0.9 prey captures per kilometer traveled. Once a prey item is captured, they eat at the kill site and cover the remains when they are finished. Similar to other felids, ocelots are well-adapted to their carnivorous diet, shearing ingested tissue from carcasses with their carnassials, while depending on strong digestive enzymes to help break down ingested proteins.

- *Associations*

Ocelots significantly impact their environment as predators. Although they feed primarily on terrestrial vertebrates, ocelots are opportunistic hunters and prey upon many types of animals.

- *Population*

Estimated Number of Occurrences: 21 - 80

Life History

- *Behaviour*

Ocelot has keen senses of smell and vision. It uses its sense of smell to locate, track, and approach prey as well as to determine territorial boundaries. They have acute binocular vision that is well-developed for hunting at night. Ocelot communicates with conspecifics using chemical signals to demarcate territorial boundaries and vocalizations to attract and communicate with potential mates.

- *Cyclicality*

Nocturnal and diurnal; mainly nocturnal

- *Reproduction*

Ocelots are solitary with a single male home range overlapping those of several females. During estrus, females attract potential mates by making loud yowls, similar to those made by domestic cats. After mating pairs are formed, ocelots copulate between 5 and 10 times daily. The likelihood of conception per estrus, which lasts approximately 5 days.

Conservation

- *Status*

Due to their abundance and broad distribution, ocelots are listed as a species of "least concern"

	<p>according to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Major threats to their persistence include habitat loss and fragmentation, illegal trade as pets and pelts, and retaliatory killings by poultry farmers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Trends</i> <p>Ocelot population densities throughout its entire range and are typically much higher than other small sympatric felids. Ocelots exert a negative effect on the population of the smaller sympatric species</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Threats</i> <p>The ocelot has been described as being tolerant of disturbed habitat and persists in wooded patches near human settlements. Although widespread commercial harvests for the fur trade ceased decades ago, some illegal trade still persists. At present the major threats are habitat loss and fragmentation, illegal trade and pelts, and retaliatory killing due to depredation of poultry.</p>
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(<http://www.eol.org/pages/313991/details>)

The layout patterns in ETEMs are illustrated in the following table 1.

Table 1. Layout Patterns of ETEMs

Patterns (P)	Occurrence	Rate
P1: H+ I +B (O + PD + E + LH +C)	18	39.15%
P2: H +B (O + PD + E + LH + C)	12	26.08%
P3: H +B (O + PD + E + C)	8	17.39%
P4: H +I +B (O + E + LH + C)	3	6.52%
P5: H +B (General Information)	5	10.86%
Total	46	100%

As shown in Table 1, Pattern 1 takes the largest proportion with 39.15%. In this pattern, all the components such as Headline, Illustration and Body Copy (Overview, Physical Description, Ecology, Life History and Conservation) are mentioned. This means that the writers wanted to provide more detailed information that helps the readers to know more clearly about the endangered wild mammals. Although sometimes the Headline and the Body Copy themselves are enough to build up an ETEM, it can be seen that an ETEM gains its success based on those two main elements.

3.2. Layout Components

3.2.1. The Headline

Headline or Title is an indispensable part of any type of discourse, especially written texts. It contains the words that will be read first and usually appears in bold letters bigger than those of the other parts. According to Brown and Yule [2, p.33], what the speaker or writer puts first will influence the interpretation of everything that follows. With regards to the functions of headline, The Headline in ETEMs is the names of mammals. The names of the mammals include Scientific Name and Common Name whose function is to attract the readers' attention, to arouse the readers' interest to continue reading the remaining body text and to make ETEMs more attractive and readable. Below is a typical example of a headline:

(3.3) **Spermophilus brunneus brunneus**

Squirrel, Northern Idaho ground

(<http://www.eol.org/pages/327992/details>)

In ETEMs, we only examined the common name that consists of the main name, and other characteristics including habitat or the main feature of that species. In the example (3.3), **Squirrel** is the main name of the mammal; **Northern Idaho** is the name of the place where the Squirrel mainly distributed and focused. This helps the readers know the places where this mammal lives with a large number. **Ground** in the common name shows the most suitable habitat in which Squirrel has places to find food, shelter and raise its young. With the use this type of name, ETEMs make the readers easy to get the detailed information mentioned in the Body Copy.

3.2.2. The Illustration

The Illustration in ETEMs is the pictures of the mammals. These pictures are usually put right after the Headline. The picture is a vivid one for the description illustrated in the texts. This helps the readers know, identify and distinguish this species from others.

Here is a picture of the Key Deer:



(<http://www.eol.org/pages/1240158/details>)

3.2.3. The Body Copy

The Body Copy is considered to be the principal part of a text and it is also the important part that gives detailed information about the mammals. Arens [1] states that the body copy comprises the interest, credibility, desire and often even the action steps. In ETEMs, the Body Copy of each text about mammal has five main headings namely **Overview (O)**, **Physical Description (PD)**, **Ecology (E)**, **Life History (LH)** and **Conservation (C)**. Among these parts, the Overview and the Conservation are always obligatory. The Physical Description, Ecology, Life History can be

sometimes present or absent in ETEMs. The Body Copy in ETEMs is generalized in the Table 2.

Table 2. Structure of a Body Copy in ETEMs

Heading 1 (Overview)	Subheading 1: Brief Summary
	Subheading 2: Distribution
Heading 2 (Physical Description)	Subheading 1: Morphology
	Subheading 2: Size
	Subheading 3: Description
Heading 3 (Ecology)	Subheading 1: Habitat
	Subheading 2: Migration
	Subheading 3: Trophic Strategy
	Subheading 4: Associations
	Subheading 5: Population
Heading 4 (Life History)	Subheading 1: Behavior
	Subheading 2: Cyclicity
	Subheading 3: Reproduction
Heading 5 (Conservation)	Subheading 1: Status
	Subheading 2: Trends
	Subheading 3: Threats

- **Overview:** Overview is one of the most important components in ETEMs. In this section, a brief summary and distribution about the mammals are mentioned and they usually appear at the first position of the texts. This makes a positive impact on the readers as well as draws their much attention to the generalized information in the overview section.

- **Physical Description:** In this part, the writers describe the appearance, size and morphology of the mammals. This makes the readers focus on the outstanding features of the mammals such as length, weight, colour, the features of hair, legs, etc.

- **Ecology:** This section highlights main characteristics that make ETEMs worthwhile for the readers to keep reading. It consists of habitat, migration, trophic strategy, population, associations and general ecology of the mammals.

- **Life History:** The information of mammals about behaviour, cyclicity, life expectancy and reproduction are mentioned in this section. Life History is also an indispensable part in ETEMs.

- **Conservation:** This is a very important section which helps the readers know more information about mammals relating to conservation status, trends and

threats. Thanks to this part, all the readers know the emergency status and threats to the endangered wild mammals. People need to become more aware of what they are doing to the environment. This makes the readers take prompt actions in protecting the endangered wild mammals.

4. Discussion

This paper aims to investigate the layout features of ETEMs. According to the findings, an ETEM has a structure of three main parts namely the Headline, the Illustration and the Body Copy; each of them has its own role in forming an ETEM. The findings of this research can provide teachers with some basic knowledge of the layout features of ETEMs. Mastering layout features will certainly aid teachers in designing their lesson plans so as to transmit knowledge to students more effectively.

A good knowledge about layout types of ETEMs helps students to improve both their writing and reading skills. Furthermore, students and readers can know more about the present status of endangered wild mammals so that they can make contributions in appealing for the protection of this species.

5. Conclusion

The study reveals that ETEMs are mainly constructed in a frame of three parts: the Headline, the Illustration and the Body Copy. The Headline is the name of the mammal. The Illustration in ETEMs includes the pictures of mammals which may enhance the effectiveness and make the whole text more vivid and more convincing. The Body Copy – an indispensable part with the most informative features, functions as awaking the readers' interest and drawing their attention to the whole text. It consists of headings namely **Overview, Physical Description, Ecology, Life History** and **Conservation**. These help the readers focus on the specific information of a mammal in its own section.

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