GENRE ANALYSIS OF URDU RESEARCH ARTICLE ABSTRACTS

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ABSTRACT: *This study investigates rhetorical structure of RA abstracts written in Urdu in Pakistani context. The study has also focused how far the rhetorical categories and linguistic features of these abstracts come up to the criteria laid down by the genre experts. Mixed method approach has been employed for the investigation of the study. A body of 40 RA abstracts belonging to Urdu as published in IIU research journal MAYAR was selected for investigation. The study has revealed that the abstracts under investigation do not fulfill criteria of informative abstracts[1]. Since these abstracts belong to humanities, their organizational structure has greater level of similarity to descriptive RA abstracts. These abstracts also contain certain discipline and culture specific traits both at micro and macro structure level.. The structural parts are not well sequenced. Moreover, certain breaches to the set pattern of descriptive abstracts have also been noticed. This study has reiterated the fact that genres are discipline specific and experts in the field can innovate new aspects in the already existing genre structures. Moreover, it is impossible to have universal uniformity in generic structures. This research may prove valuable for novice learners, researchers and scholars, who want to assist, guide and assess the learners in the relevant field.*

KEY WORDS :Rhetorical structure , Informative and Descriptive Abstracts ,Macro and micro structure, Discipline Specific

INTRODUCTION

Studies on research genre occupy a very significant place in academic discourse. Recent trends in this regard include cross cultural and cross disciplinary studies of research genre. Either printed or online, research articles owe very significant place in research genre since they are considered the most immediate, easily approachable and highly reliable source of information in a research community. Hence structural organization of research articles and their constituent parts i.e. introduction, methodology, discussion and conclusion section is a frequent subject matter among genre analysts.

Research Article Abstracts hold key position in providing gist of the whole article .Moreover the selection or rejection of an article either for publication or for the purpose of reading is also dependent upon an abstract. Research Article abstracts have been classified both as introductory genre [2], as well as promotional genre [3] because an abstract motivates the readers to read the rest of the article. R.A abstracts though a lately investigated genre in the area of ESP, however the linguists and genre analysts are taking great interest in this sub genre from almost last three decades. The pioneering work was done by Swales [4] with the formation of structural moves for R.A introduction section. Later he revised the model and termed it as (CARS) model. After this initiative he introduced a structural model for R.A abstracts consisting of five moves i.e. 1. Situating the research. 2. Presenting the research. 3. Describing methodology .4. Summarizing the findings. 5. Discussing the findings [5]. This model has been used to analyze the move structure of both R.A's and theses abstracts [6, 7, 8 and 9]. [8, 9] and 10] all the three made a distinction between obligatory and non obligatory moves of abstracts. They found that move 2, 3 and 4 are obligatory moves in the writing of an abstract. A move gains the status of an obligatory move if it is present in 80% of article abstracts [10]. Another model of rhetorical structure of abstracts consisting of 4 moves i.e. IMRD model was used [11,12,13]. These moves can be enumerated as Introduction, Methodology, Result and Discussion. The only difference with Santos, move categories is that the first two moves have been combined here. The use of meta discourse features in R.A abstracts was analysed[14]. According to this study meta discourse features enhance coherence, generate an environment of friendliness by providing guidance and prove a source of involvement in the text. Lexical items like nouns and verbs phrases also serve as research promoting agent.

A linguistic content analysis of abstracts was done [15] which observed that there is a tendency to use past tense in purpose, method and result move in the medical history discourse. Present tense is used to enhance the focus of generalization of findings. Hence the use of this tense was prevalent in Data analysis, Result and Recommendation sections. A study on the use of verb tense was also conducted by Swales and Feak[1]. This study established that the use of present tense is more common in opening sentences and conclusion section. However, considerable variation of tense use exists in the Result section moves. This variation is dependent upon the disciplinary variation and individual article's subject matter.

The structure of R.A abstracts is differentiated from that of research articles by [13]. This difference is found in three aspects: function, rhetorical structure and linguistic realization. This study has also explained why earlier studies did not show an agreement on the rhetorical structure of abstracts. Another study evaluated the discourse structure and linguistic features of abstracts in the disciplines of (surgery, Finance and Engineering) written in English language [16]. The purpose of this study was to improve the construction of abstracts in novice learners in English language. Another comparative study of abstracts from the disciplines of conservation Biology and wildlife Behavior was done almost similar move structure was observed in the both disciplines [17].   Another study was conducted on the rhetorical structure, linguistic content and authorial stance of abstracts [18]. It discovered that three moves i.e. aim of research, summary of findings and methodological framework were present in almost all the abstracts. In a study [19] aimed to investigate fifty research article abstracts in the subject of English based on the analytical framework provided by[12], a string tendency for the reordering of moves, missing moves, inclusion of unconventional moves and embedding subordinate moves in main moves has been noticed in this

study. In another analysis [19] about the use of personal pronouns in R.A abstracts it was found that first person plural pronouns occur far more frequently as compared to other personal pronouns. Moreover, first person plural pronoun can serve and does serve multiple functions within the body of abstracts Another interesting study in the area of genre analysis of R.A abstracts and Author's Identity was done[20]. This study deals with the rhetoric structure of R.A abstracts written by native speakers of Persian writers. This inconsistency of moves is a feature of both soft and hard science. As far as authorial identity is concerned, according to this study, the lack of self reference can be attributed to cultural convention of modesty among Iranian writers.

Another study in the field of genre analysis of R.A abstracts [21] aimed to find out how far R.A abstracts written in Spanish and published in Spanish journals in the discipline of social sciences fulfill the conventions laid down by R.A abstracts written in English. This rhetorical variation was attributed to the difference of expectations between the international research community and Spanish research community. An exploratory study based on rhetorical structure analysis of English and French journal abstracts was conducted[3]. The research found a three level difference; the first difference being that of voice is ascribed to general difference between two languages. The use of personal pronoun, sentence length and choice of transition words, is dependent upon appropriate research style. The difference of style in situating the research is attributed to the difference of discourse community size and its expectations

This research paper aims to investigate the generic structure of R.A abstracts written in Pakistan in the subject of Urdu. The corpus for this study has been selected from the Research Journal MAYAR published under the supervision of Islamic International University Pakistan. The study has investigated the rhetorical move structure and linguistic content that constitute these R.A abstracts. The reason for selecting this specific area is that the earlier work done in Pakistan in the field of genre analysis is either based on the other components of research articles or has been done on the research article abstracts written on the subjects of natural and social sciences ,moreover abstracts and introductions are misconceived as a similar genre . Not a single genre analytical study has been conducted on the research article abstracts in a culture specific subject like Urdu. Therefore, it is deemed befitting to investigate the micro and macro structure of R.A abstracts in Urdu written by Pakistani research community. The analysis in this study has been prompted by the following research questions. Whether the research articles abstracts written in Urdu follow the international abstract writing conventions as outlined in [1] for the informative abstract writing or the rhetorical structure of abstracts under study is closer to the descriptive abstracts moves and how far the linguistic features follow the criteria as provided in the model [1] and in which areas do they deviate from Swales' linguistic categories.

MATERIAL

The corpus has been selected from research journal of Urdu 'Mayar' published by the Islamic International University Pakistan. These RA abstracts have been

selected from the additions of 2014 and 2015.The body of corpus consisted of 40 abstracts. The selection of abstracts was made on stratified random sampling basis. Abstracts were numerically coded without taking into consideration the titles and various sub sections of relevant articles. The reason behind it is that abstracts are conventionally considered as a genre that can stand on its own.The similar stance has been adopted in the earlier studies [6,9,10].These abstracts were taken from the recently published works since the study aims at investigating the latest trends in R.A abstract writing. The text of the abstracts has been written in English language per requirement of publishing body's instructions, though the rest of the articles were written in Urdu. The relevant research journals had instructed about the size of abstracts but not the structure and content. The corpus has been selected electronically from the online available prints of research journals. The discipline to which these abstracts belong is culture specific, belong to humanities and has a specific national context. The articles selected were written by students and co-authored by faculty members of the university, the only mandatory factor being Pakistani writers. Hence the corpus seems to be representative of the research work done in the related field.

METHODS

The study aims at investigating R.A. abstracts in two ways. Initially all the abstracts were analyzed by following move structure model[1] in order to find out the rhetorical organization. After wards all the abstracts were analyzed to find the move structure pattern of descriptive abstracts as provided by Writingcenter@adelaide.edu.au Moreover, an analysis was also made of micro structure based on the criteria laid down by [1]. The purpose behind all this analysis was to find out the generic structure and content categories in RA abstracts written in Urdu. Subjectivity may influence the division of moves particularly in the cases where no linguistic indicators are used by the authors to separate the boundaries of the moves [22] . Hence a double rating of the moves was done by an interval of one month for the purpose of analysis..

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis done by applying model [1] revealed that 98% Urdu abstracts had Introductory move. The second move 'Purpose' was present in 45% of Urdu abstracts. Move 3 Method is present in 20% of abstracts.Move 4, i.e. Result, was present in 10% percent of abstracts. The last one Discussion move occurred in 23 percent of RA abstracts. Moreover the analysis shows that none of abstracts in corpus has complete structural unanimity with moves as given in model [1] and only 13% of Urdu abstracts are having four moves of the model and 15% of Urdu abstracts show complete unanimity as far as application of 3 of the model's structural moves is concerned. 30 % of Urdu abstracts have 2 of structural moves and 30% of Urdu abstracts share just one of model's structural categories. In broader perspective the result categories reveal that the basic structural components of R.A abstracts (I.P.M.R.D.) are not present in most of the abstracts written in Urdu . Though few similarities in the frequency of occurrence and distribution of structural moves have been noticed yet significant statistical differences have also been found. The result indicated that Introduction and

Purpose moves are the most frequently occurring moves rather the obligatory units in all the abstracts in the corpus. Since a move becomes obligatory for if it is present in 80% of abstracts [10]. While the method section is the most neglected move in the corpus. Conclusion unit though again less occurring category has a higher tendency of occurrence. The last move structure Discussion occurs   frequently in Urdu R.A abstracts.

Studies in discourse analysis and cognitive psychology as [15,23,24] have proved that lack of rhetorical structure effects comprehension of a text particularly in the case of non native readers. In a similar vein it can be inferred that this lack of structural pattern implies that researchers intend to communicate meanings other than that intended by the international research community or Swales himself. This stance is further verified by the fact that the instructions given by research journal MAYAR restrict the researchers to provide a summary of the research article rather than a rhetorically well structured abstract.   The term summary with its Urdu equivalents 'Talkhis'or 'Khulasa' implies brief snapshot of the research article .Hence this summary may share some of the features of Swales' abstract model but should not be expected to have all of the rhetorical moves as outlined by Swales and Feak (2009).Moreover as Bhatia has indicated in his six features of genres that genres represent their organizational cultures and relevant disciplines and in doing so they reflect social action embodying discipline, institution and profession specific practice, the subject matter of abstracts under study vary considerably to that given by Swales. Hence the abstracts under research should be viewed in the disciplinary, social and professional constraints within Pakistani context. The analysis [1] has contended that the model is applicable to informative abstracts. So keeping in view the discipline specific nature of Swales model it was decided to apply another model devised for descriptive abstracts. This model was available on the (Writing centre Adelaide.edu.au) Adelaide University Website for analysis of RA abstracts of descriptive nature.

This analysis showed that in the subject of Urdu 96 percent of abstracts have background move. Purpose move occurs in 45 percent of Urdu section. The third rhetoric move Function of research occurs in 96 percent of Abstracts. The Content move is least present of all the four moves. Only 65 percent of Urdu abstracts have Content move. Moreover, the analysis showed that 58 % of abstracts are having all the moves of the descriptive abstracts. While 40% of abstract have 3 of the rhetorical moves. 2% of Urdu abstract have 2 structural moves. And there has been none of the abstracts with a single structural move. The frequency count, distribution of moves and resultant percentageshave revealed that the abstracts have fulfilled the move structure criteria of descriptive RA abstracts i.e. (Background, Purpose, Function and Content)to a great extent. Although a few discrepancies have occurred. The results show that highly occurring move has been M1 background almost all the abstracts under study have Background move in rhetorical structure. Move2 again appears in Urdu abstracts . Move 3 statement of Function has the same tendency of high occurance rate..Move4 has the least occurrence rate in the abstracts. Although a brief summary of overall RA is available in abstracts yet a list of content material as indicated in the structure of Descriptive abstracts is not available in this case. A higher level of consensus between rhetorical structure of Descriptive abstracts and the abstracts under investigation and deviation of Swales informative structural move categories again reiterate the fact already established that all discipline and profession specific genres have their own integrity and this integrity is distinguishable from contextual, discursive and contextual features[13]. Hence it would be unjustified to apply models and designs of one specific discipline to another discipline. As far as discrepancies are concerned they can be attributed to several reasons: Such discrepancies are not only part of this study but similar discrepancies have appeared in earlier studies when abstracts written in one specific research context are compared to another. The comparison between French and English RA abstracts [3] and Spanish and English RA abstracts [21] are clear examples in the point.

Table of comparative study showing Number of structural units in abstracts

	FOREIGN		PAKISTANI
UNITS	ENGLISH	SPANISH	URDU
Abstract having 4moves	54(67.5%)	20(25%)	23(57.5)
3 moves	21(26.25%)	41(51.25%)	16(40)
2 moves	3(3.75%)	13(16.25%)	1(2.5%)
1move	2(2.5%)	6(12.5)	Nil

Another observation that has been made during the analysis is that though higher level of agreement has been achieved in rhetoric structure of Descriptive abstracts and those written in Urdu yet the move structure of these abstract is not sequenced. They do not follow certain moves in any fix order. The reason for this deviation can be attributed to lack of genre based research orientation in Pakistan, particularly in the field of humanities where research work is either altogether a neglected area and if it does exist it does not follow any set conventions. Due to lack of research conventions no cautious attention is paid on the part of research journals publishing these articles to set any generic criteria for the writing. The fact that publishing journal's own criteria, its insistence that criteria should be met by the researcher and, instructions to researchers about the writing of articles do create a difference and can prove to be contributive in having a well structured abstract and corresponding article.

In both of these cases only 54% and 20% complete agreement had been found respectively between both of the comparative categories. Hence the abstract genres are also exploited by the member of research community so it is useless to expect an exact uniformity and agreement between the model and practical implications. As far as the issues of least occurring move i.e. content is concerned if we admit the fact the abstracts written in Urdu have more a connotation of the summary than a well formed piece of research article preliminary introduction, the content would naturally be present within the abstract, though a categorical list of all content items is not given as required by the descriptive RA abstracts criteria. Hence It should be made a formal part of abstract structure.

Thirdly ,micro structure of all the abstracts was also analysed. These content categories are suggestive of certain dimensions of research [1].So an analysis was made to find out the occurrence of the following variables i.e. length of abstract, occurrence of key clause, use of tense, presence of any citation, presence of 1st person pronoun, meta discoursal reference, acronyms, cross cultural references.

1. In this study it was found that 18 abstracts had a length below 100 words while 22 had more than 100 words. The extreme cases had a length ranging from 62 to 240 words. The length of the abstracts has ranged from 100 to 250 words in most of cases. As far the instructions on the part of publishing journal are concerned it was instructed to add an abstract comprising of one paragraph. Though abstracts have not still followed the criteria laid down by publishing authorities. However a major discrepancy might have occurred if there had been two passages in a single abstract since two separate passages indicate that the text of abstract consists of two separate main ideas. But only two cases of such abstracts have been found.

2. The second variable to be investigated was the use of tense. Present tense use has dominated 32 percent abstracts were written in Present Tense. As far as the usage of verb form or tense is concerned 80% of Urdu abstracts have been written in present tense. However 80% of all the abstracts have used passive form of verb. This passive form of verb can be interpreted as specific generic feature of research. If viewed from the perspective of study [1], this use of passive form may be an outcome of differences in the stylistic conventions and linguistic conventions.

3. The third variable to be evaluated in the study was the presence of reference to another study or citation. None of Urdu abstract had any reference at all to any prior other study. As far as the issue of justification of research by offering the answer to the question why this research or referencing some other research by means of specific citation or without specific reference, is concerned none of Urdu abstracts have used it. The tendency to use this referencing technique has been quite high in English language (80%) lesser in French(45%) as indicated by [3]. This high tendency for referencing can be explained in terms of selling research pressure [25]. The French research work had less pressure to compete in international research community hence it refers less [3]. In the similar vein it can be inferred that the work published in Mayar has limited academic community to focus so least tendency has been found for citation and referencing. Writers in English have increased the use such of promotional elements in their abstracts keeping in view the academic community's trends internationally [14].

4. As for as the use of 1st person pronoun is concerned there had not been found a single instance of 1st person pronoun usage in the corpus.

5. Meta discourse references abound in the texts of abstracts. 95 percent abstracts have meta discourse references. All abstracts in the corpus have high tendency of inclusion of meta discourse references. Almost 80% of abstract have any form of meta discourse reference i.e. (this article, following article, the article under discussion or deictics like here or herein etc). However, [10] has described a further distinction between purposive and descriptive meta discourse language. For him the meta discoursal statements that overtly mark the research purpose for using expression like 'this research attempts to elaborate', 'the goal of this research is' belong to purposive category while the statements that aim at dealing with issues like 'why this research' are termed as descriptive meta discourse references. As far as meta discourse references that are the part of this study abstracts they tend to be exclusively purposive. The pragmatic reason behind the fact is that in Pakistani context research unrolls the data and facts.[26,27] have remarked that English abstracts with their focus on placing their research within the scope of previous research, argue, here is why this research is important while French place more emphasis on giving data. Again this diversity of rhetorical and linguistic features can be attributed to lack of publishing pressure, small discourse community size and fact and data based , deductive nature of Pakistani prose. Hence a trait that can be regarded as formative generic feature of this corpus is the use of meta discourse references. This tendency appears to be permanent feature due to a high occurrence percentage i.e 95% in the corpus.

6. Abbreviations or acronyms have not been found in any of Urdu abstracts. As far as the use of abbreviations is concerned all the abstracts are devoid of acronyms. A logical reason behind this trend is that in languages and theologically based subject there is less possibility of occurrence of terminological acronyms as compared to social sciences and natural sciences.

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8. In 24% of abstracts understudy there have occurred cross cultural references. The existence of cross cultural references again can be attributed to the reason that the subject matter has more tendency toward cultural trends and confines as compared to other subjects belonging to humanities and natural and social sciences.

9. The occurrence place of key clause varies in the corpus. As it has been already discussed in the previous research question that abstracts under study lack structural uniformity. This discrepancy in occurrence of key clause can be attributed to the same lack of structural unity.

CONCLUSION

The RA abstracts under study have been evaluated first in terms of informative abstracts. But they do not come up to the stern criteria as laid down by model [1] categorically. However, this non confirmation has reiterated the fact that genres are discipline specific. Though the generic structure of the RA abstracts under study has confirmed the rhetoric categories of descriptive abstracts to a great extant still certain variations have been identified. These variations have reasserted Bhatia's contention that experts in the field can exploit the generic structures and genres are no more

conventionalized contexts. As far as the great deal of diversity in generic structure and large number of generic variations are concerned, all this can be accounted for by the fact that there has not been any set conventions in the field of research particularly in humanities. A uniform generic analysis of ESP and ERP categories is not possible particularly in the context when English is opted as foreign language or second language. The clear instance in this regard is the present study when compared to constituents of abstracts in other disciplines and other contexts. The glaring differences can be accounted for only keeping in view the disciplinary restrictions and contextual background. .Practical research issues can not be enumerated on prescriptive basis, they can be best elaborated on a descriptive paradigm. This observation is dependent on the earlier finding that a uniform generic structure cannot be prescribed for any ESP category. The study [3] on French and English abstracts has referred to the local dimensions of abstract writing like publishing pressure, conventional prose style and characteristic features of grammatical structure. Moreover, similar contextual features have been noticed in the Spanish abstract analysis [21]. Similarly the abstracts under investigation in this study have large number of rhetoric features that have situational, contextual and immediate research community's background. The study has proved statistically and empirically that generic structure in all the research areas generally and in humanities particularly has internal diversity as well as an external diversity of immediate research community conventions producing these genres. Hence generic structures can be followed as guide lines. To view the generic structures as fix rules is to deny the very spirit of genre theory which establishes genres are ever evolving and adaptable. [12].

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