METATEXTUAL DEVICES IN PAKISTANI RESEARCH THESES: ENGLISH-ECONOMICS COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Muhammad Asim Mahmood*, Tayyabba yasmin**

* Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan. masimrai@gmail.com Cell # 03007644570

** Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan, yasmin.virk@gmail.com Cell # 03349850827

ABSTRACT: *Solidarity and organization are significant notions in academic writing. The role of research thesis for creation of knowledge is very significant. This study investigates how the research scholars use the metatext strategies to guide their readers through their academic writings. The current research explores the use of metatextual devices (previews & reviews) in M. Phil research theses of Economics and English in Pakistan. These categories are exploited in "writer's responsible language." The distribution of metatextual elements in three sections – introduction, method and conclusion – was examined. Five research theses from the field of Economics and five from the field of English were analyzed. The findings revealed that the use of metatextual devices is higher in the research theses of Economics than in that of English.*

Key Words: Metatext, Preview, Review, Genre, Academic writing.

INTRODUCTION

Metadiscourse is used as a tool to organize the text and capture attention of the reader. Dialogic relationship is maintained through metadiscourse elements. The writer's attitude towards the audience and content of the text is reflected by using metadiscours devices. Numerous researches have been conducted in this domain. Metatext is defined as "the linguistic material in texts, whether spoken or written, that does not add anything to the propositional content but that is intended to help the listener or reader organize, interpret and evaluate the information given" [1]. Metadiscourse is divided into broad classifications i.e. textual and interpersonal dimensions. Vande Kopple (1985) defined metadiscourse a "discourse about discourse" or "writing about writing" [2]. Mauranen (1993) uses the word metatext instead of metadiscourse. She confines the notion of metatext and describes it as; "text about the text itself" [3].Metatext contains the references regarding the evolving text. Her notion of metatext resembles to the idea of Halliday [4].

Taxonomies of Metadiscourse: Various taxonomies regarding metadiscourse analysis have been suggested by researchers. According to Halliday (ibid), metadiscourse serves interpersonal and textual functions of language. He defined that the textual function fulfills the purpose of "an enabling function, that of creating a text" and followed with "it is this component that enables the speaker to organize what he is saying in such a way that it makes sense in the context and fulfills its function as a message" [4]. Vande Kopple (1985) distributed metadiscourse into two types: Interpersonal and textual categories. Interpersonal category includes code glosses, illocutionary markers, text connectives, validity markers, textual markers, attitude markers and commentaries into interpersonal discourse [2].

Crismoret et al. (1993) classified these two groups into subgroups [1]. Interpersonal dimension includes hedges, attributers, certainty markers, attitude markers and commentary whereas textual metadiscourse comprises of two groups i.e. Textual Markers and Interpretive markers.

Textual Markers include logical sequencers, connectives, reminders, and topicalizers. Interpretive indicators contain illocution markers, code glosses and announcements.

According to the researchers, the category of commentary includes the subcategories of previews, reviews and action markers. These subcategories of commentary- previews, reviews and action markers - are taken up and identified as having a textual function by Mauranen [3].

So it is concluded that generally metadiscourse has two main functions i.e. interpersonal and textual functions. The first function describes the emotional and ethical appeals whereas second function deals with the ethical and logical consideration regarding text.

Classification of Metatext

Mauranen (1993) examined metatextual devices which mainly perform the function of organizing the text [3]. Mauranen's (1993) categories are described as:

- Internal connectors are employed to signal the links among proposition in a discourse.
- The category of reviews contains overt indications that the previous phase of text is being reiterating or recapitulated.
- The category of preview comprises of explicit anticipatory signals related to the next stage of the text.
- Action markers illustrate the performances of discourse acts [3].

Metatext and Various Disciplines

There is a dearth of research work on utilizing text organizing strategies for organization of discourse at higher level. Thus it is pertinent to consider what has been done in this field. Mauranen (1993) has investigated cultural dissimilarities in the academic genre in English written by Anglo American and Finnish authors concerning text organizing devices in research papers of Economics. The findings revealed that the writers from Anglo America exploited more textual devices than Finnish writers. Anglo American writers are more self-reflexive and explicit than Finnish writers. The Anglo American authors employed more metatextual elements than Finnish writers. She claimed that Anglo-American writers are following more reader friendly approach than Finnish authors while writing texts in English [3].

Valero Graces (1996) examined the differences of text written by the Spanish and English researchers [5]. The study

was carried out to confirm some already established claims. The results revealed the significant differences in the use of metatextual devices used by the Spanish and English researchers. The writers exhibited different approach to the subject matter and to the readers.

Bunton (1998) explored the use of metatextual devices in the Ph.D theses of thirteen research scholars for orienting and guiding their readers [6]. The study was based on the Mauranen's (1993) classification of metatext, due to its text organizing function for examining the research dissertations [3]. The findings exhibited the consistency of writings in using metatext elements at higher level than at chapter level.

Azizi (2001 quoted in Crismore & Abdollehzadeh, n.d.) investigated the use of textual and interpersonal metadiscourse in English and Persian academic genre by using Crismore et al.'s (1993) model [7]. Findings that the use of textual markers was higher in Persian writings whereas more interpersonal markers were used in English writing of nonnative students.

Dahl (2004) examined the writer's manifestation in three languages of three fields i.e. linguistics, economics and medicines, to explore the most significant variable (from discipline and language) for governing the metatextual conventions of academic genre [8]. The corpus of the study consisted of 180 research articles from the disciplines of linguistics, economics and medicines. Results revealed that the variable of language was very prevalent in economics and linguistics.

Peterlin (2007) conducted a contrastive analysis of the Text-Organising grammatical forms of Slovene and English PhD theses [9]...The author adopted two metatextual categories, previews and reviews to find out the differences between two texts. The findings of the study exhibited significant differences in the use of tenses with reference to previews and reviews.

Zarei and Mansoori (2011) discovered the use of metadiscourse in the academic genre of computer engineering across two languages: Persian and English [10]. The model of Hyland and Tse' (2004) was employed for analysis of the selected corpus [11]. The findings established that two languages are different in the use of metadiscourse strategies. Persian language exhibited more interactive devices than English language. However, reader responsible trend was exposed by English language. The function and distribution of textual resources (MDMs) in scientific English and Persian texts has been investigated by Bagheri (2013) [12]. The comparison between the texts of these two languages exposed that occurrence of the textual markers was higher in the texts of Persian.

In spite of the importance of metatextual categories, the researches in this area are almost nonexistent in Pakistani context. The present study is very significant in the sense that matatextual analysis of academic genre across disciplines is still an un-explored area. The present paper focuses on using metatextual devices- preview and review - to guide as well as orient the audience for the interpretation of academic genre. This study carries out an empirical analysis of 5 research theses in Applied Linguistics and 5 research theses in Economics. It is conducted to explore this fact that

metatextual elements enhance the explicitness of text organization. So, this research paper discovers the use of metatextual elements in the three sections of M.Phil research theses genre across two disciplines.

Research Questions
This research work explores the answer of following research questions:

1. Is there any difference in the use of metatextual devices in M. Phil research theses of English and Economics?
2. Is there any variation in the division of metatextual devices in M. Phil research theses of English and Economics?

METHODOLOGY
Selection of Corpus: Corpus used for this study consists of ten M. Phil research theses. Research theses were selected from two academic disciplines i.e. English and Economics. The main reason for selecting these two disciplines was to explore the representative of the two major academic branches: humanities and social sciences. All the major parts of the theses including introduction, methods and results are analyzed in the current study. Footnotes, captains and endnotes are not included in the analysis. The length of the research theses varied from 3999 to 22528 words.

Procedure: Mauranen's Taxonomy (1993) being textual in nature is appropriate for linguistics comparison of texts. According to this taxonomy, linguistic expressions can perform various textual functions. Therefore, two metatextual elements of Mauranen (ibid) Taxonomy - previews and reviews – were used as instrument to analyze and compare the data in the current study. According to Mauranen (1993), previews are used as explicit anticipatory signals which indicate the next stage of the text whereas reviews contain overt markers which tell us that the previous stage of text is being reiterating or recapitulated [3].

Ten research theses were selected representing two academic disciplines, English and Economics. To calculate the number of words, word count was run on the corpora. In the initial phase, the research theses were meticulously read and examined to identify the instances of higher level metatextual devices. This phase was repeated three times in order to eliminate any chance of mistakes. In this study, it is decided that the whole sentences (containing metatextual element) should be taken as a piece of metatext. In the last phase, percentages of metatextual elements were calculated in order to find the difference in the research theses of Economics and English.

RESULTS
With regard to the research question whether any difference exists in the use of metatextual devices in the research theses of English and Economics, the following table presents the division of metatextual elements in the corpora.

Table 1: Comparison of Metatextual Elements in Corpora

Thesis No	Percentage of previews & Reviews in Economics	Percentage of previews & Reviews in English
1	12.5	6.06
2	13.3	4.71

3	7.44	13.86
4	8.81	17.06
5	11.1	11.69
Total	10.39	8.32

The table 1 exhibits the percentages of preview and reviews in the English and Economics research theses. This comparison exhibits that there are more instances of metatextual elements identified in the research theses of Economics in comparison with the research theses of English. Data exposed that there are more previews and reviews in the subject of Economics with 10.39% than in English with 8.32%.

Table 2: Division of Previews and Reviews in research theses of English and Economics

Disciplines	Preview	Review
English	3.66%	4.66 %
Economics	2.67%	6.1%
Total	3.88%	5.26%

Table 2 elaborates the division of previews and reviews in each discipline of corpus with regard to second research question. There are more previews in the research theses of English than in the theses of Economics whereas on the whole 5.26% of reviews are higher than previews which are 3.88%. In these two disciplines, reviews are more frequent than the previews.

Following sentences are the examples of Metatextual devices (previews & review) from the English and Economics.

a) The topics used in the first phase of study are given below: (preview immediate)
b) The questions that guided this study are given below: (preview immediate)
c) The scale illustrates five points at equal distance as given below: (Preview immediate)
d) The study in hand has following objectives. (Preview immediate)
e) The graphical representation of the table 2.1 is given below (preview immediate)
f) The graph 2.5 which was drawn above… (Review immediate)
g) The constructions of the variables were given below. (Preview immediate)
h) This test is also based on the sequence of the hypothesis test thus; the testing sequence is as follows: (preview immediate)
i) In the light of above analysis, it is summarized that… (Review immediate)
j) The following tools were used to collect data. (Preview immediate)
k) The second chapter reviews literature on second language writing; research, theories and practices around the world.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the study was to investigate that how disciplinary language choices may have an influence on academic genre of research theses across disciplines. Genres depend upon metatextual devices as it helps the reader to navigate within the text. The findings exhibited the cross linguistic dissimilarities across two disciplines. According to the findings of this research, the frequency of metatextual elements was greater in the subject of Economics than in English. English is a literal language so it represents a minor dependence on metatextual elements. In the texts of English, metatextual information is implicit, the reader is not guided by metatextual devices, he/she can infer from the text. So liberty is given to the reader. Generally, a text is considered as reader's responsible one, if it exhibits less metatextual devices and is labeled as writer's responsible if more metatextual elements are exploited. However, the written discourse of Economics may be less textual and more statistical in nature. Visual information including tables, charts and diagrams are integral part of Economics' texts. This information is also used to direct and inform the reader. These metatextual elements are configured in the discourse of Economics by combining graphs and texts to accentuate the reader's and writer's relationship. So, the findings of the study lead to say that in relation to metatextual devices, the discipline of Economics has propensity towards the writer's responsible rhetoric. The results of the study correspond to Dhal's study (2004) on textual metadiscourse in research articles across three languages: French, English and Norwegian. Dhal's study (ibid) also reflected that the percentage of metatextual devices is higher in the research theses of Economics than that in the research theses of English. According to the findings of Dahl's study (ibid), the disciplinary practices of Economics and English are not stable as compared to other areas [8].

The findings revealed that in both the disciplines, the number of reviews is greater than the number of previews. However regarding the use of reviews, both the disciplines follow the same pattern. In this respect, this study is in contrast with Peterlin's (2005) study on Solvene and English Mathematics RAs, in which frequency of previews was greater than reviews in research articles of English mathematics [14]. Mathematics' research articles are shorter in comparison with English and Economics. So due to longer texts, the researchers of these disciplines pay more heed in reviewing and mentioning what has been said earlier.

It is concluded that use of metatextual elements is not homogeneous across the disciplines. This study can be considered as a starting point for upcoming researches in this field. The findings of this study may be useful for English language learners, educators and curriculum planners. English is not our native language. Most of the Pakistani students are not aware of the rhetorical choices of English language. They are required to be familiar with the rhetorical norms exploited by the native discourse community of this genre. In Pakistani context, academic writing is not the part of the curriculum or instruction at post graduate level. It is suggested that English for Academic purpose courses may be offered for the post graduate learners for acquisition of academic writing skills of this particular genre. The awareness of metatextual resources can also be developed by conducting further research in the field of oratorical competence. There are few limitations of the study. The categories of preview and reviews are employed from Mauranen's taxonomy [3]. The future researches can cover

all the aspects of the classification including connectors and action markers. Furthermore, future studies can investigate metatextual devices in other disciplines with a more representative sample to generalize the results.

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