A Critical Analysis of Structuralist Variations in Academic Writing

Shahla Qasim, Zahida Hussain, Muhammad Asim Mahmood

ABSTRACT: *This paper investigated the generic features of conclusion sections in M Phil theses written by the University students of Pakistan. The corpus constituted 60 M Phil theses from Science and technology (ST) and Humanities and Social sciences (HSS) disciplines. Models presented by Yang and Allison (2003) and Bunton (2005) were used as guiding principles. Findings revealed that most of the conclusion sections exhibited four- move structure: consolidation of research space as an obligatory move, introductory restatement, practical implication and future research as optional moves. Difference was observed in the occurrence of Move 4 (future research) in ST conclusions of this study (19.9%) and Bunton's (80%) inferring that Pakistani students seemed unaware of the importance of relating their findings with the outer world. Move-5 (concluding restatement in Bunton's model) was not found in Pakistani corpus suggesting the variability in written discourse specific to context. The study may serve as a useful material from pedagogical perspective for the students to get familiarized with the generic features of concluding chapters.*

Keywords: Genre, Academic writing, Pakistani students, M Phil thesis, M Phil thesis conclusion section.

Introduction

Thesis writing is deemed to be a challenging task by the Pakistani research students at MA, MPhil and PhD level. Concluding section assumes crucial importance in thesis writing as it involves the vital crux of the whole task. "The conclusion section is where students both summarize and wrap up their work" (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007, p. 150). This section not only presents an integrated and well-connected overall review of the previous sections but also establishes a tangible connection between the current findings and the outer world. Dudely-Evans (1994) demonstrated that, "conclusions summarize the main results and claims before making recommendations about future work" (p. 225). Thompson (2005) described in a nutshell that concluding chapter is an evaluation of the whole research project. The achievements as well as the limitations of the research are identified to forestall criticism.

Keeping in view the inherent significance of conclusion chapter, the present study sets out to analyze the generic features of the conclusion sections of MPhil theses written by Pakistani students from different disciplines. The study also aims to explore the textual variation they displayed in comparison with the prevalent established conventions of conclusion writing.

Literature Review

Research on genre studies has expanded enormously since its inception. The researchers have addressed a wider range of subjects, introduced new fields and started working within multiple disciplines. Genre, defined by Swales (1990) refers to a type of communicative act with a particular purpose and used by members of specific discourse community. He further explains that the purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. Genre analysis is the analysis of language use in a broader sense in order to account for not only the way text is constructed but also the way it is likely to be interpreted, used and exploited in specific contexts to achieve specific goals (Bhattia, 1993).

The generic structure of conclusion section of MPhil or PhD Theses/ dissertations is not a widely researched area. An influential study conducted by Bunton (2005), analyzed 45 PhD conclusions, 42 of them were presented as separate chapters. The study revealed that conclusion

chapters may be divided into two categories: thesis-focused conclusions and field- oriented conclusions. The majority of the thesis- focused conclusion started with the move of "Introductory restatement", then proceeded to "Consolidation of research space" and finally ended at "Recommendations". On the other hand, field-oriented conclusions advanced either along a problem-solution text structure or an argumentative structure. The occurrence of moves and steps was not linear but cyclical in nature. Bunton (2005) suggested two separate models to identify variation in recurrent moves and steps prevalent in the concluding chapters of Science and Technology and Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines.

A comparatively recent study conducted by Lewkowicz (2009), explored the schematic structure of conclusions of Master level theses from the perspective of providing a guideline to the Polish students that how to approach the writing of such a document. The study, not only determined the rhetorical structure of this genre but also compared it with guidebooks available to the students within the Polish context. The data of this study comprised only 15 Master's level theses, which may not be sufficient to achieve significant results.

It seems pertinent to mention here that Research Article, an important areas of academic discourse, has been extensively investigated in the past few decades far more than thesis and dissertation. The structural organization of different parts of research articles have been examined by a number of linguists, such as Swales (1981, 1990, 2004) and Meurer (1997), RA introductions, Swales and Feak (1994), methods, Posteguillo (1999) and Nwogu (1997), results; and Yang and Allison (2003), Holms (1997) and Hopkins and Dudely- Evans (1998), discussion sections. Concluding section in a research article was never considered to possess a separate existence. It was taken as the last part of the Discussion section. Almost all the past studies described conclusion as a last adjacent sub- segment of Discussion part.

The study conducted by Moritz et al., (2008), presented a comparative analysis of three corpora of conclusion sections of research articles, written by three groups of different authors (Portuguese L1, English L1, and English L2). Six moves were identified: Restating the introductory statement, consolidating the research space, summarizing the study, commenting on results, evaluating the study and Making deductions from the study. The last move was found to be the most frequent move. The mutual comparison of three corpora showed that the

English L2 writers made more elaborated expressions than the English L1 writers and the Portuguese L1 writers.

The recent study conducted by Jahangard et al., (2014) drew a comparison in conclusion sections of research articles in Mechanical Engineering and Applied Linguistics written by native and non- native writers. The study applied Dudely-Evans' (1994) model established for discussion section of RA and found no significant difference between native and non- native writers in their application of moves. Dudely-Evans' (1994) model was found inadequate to suit the analysis of conclusion section, so a new model was suggested containing 5 moves: Information move, Finding, Claim, (De) limitation and Recommendation.

A potential study, which identified the rhetorical structure of conclusion section of research article was conducted by Yang and Allison (2003). The corpus constituted conclusion sections of Applied Linguistics articles. Three moves were identified, Move 1, summarizing the study; Move 2, evaluating the study and Move 3, deductions from the research. The move model, suggested by this study influenced a great deal of subsequent body of research. It provided a sound framework to explore similarities and differences across disciplines and cultures, in terms of generic structure of concluding chapters.

The studies mentioned so far clearly reflect that a substantial volume of research has been carried out regarding the rhetorical organization of different sections of RA, but comparatively lesser attention is directed to the other equally potential academic genre "thesis" writing. In Pakistani context especially, thesis writing is an area which is least researched, further creating a need to be explored in depth. Therefore, the present study sets out to investigate the schematic structure of conclusion section of M Phil theses written by Pakistani University students in the years 2012 and 2013 to find out whether they adhered to the accepted norms of writing conclusions, supported by literature or displayed variation in their generic characterization.

Research Methodology

The study constituted a corpus of 60 MPhil level theses submitted by the students of Government College University Faisalabad, Pakistan during the period of 2012 and 2013. The theses were collected from a wide range of disciplines: Applied linguistics (2), English

Literature (7), Sociology (4), Economics (7), Law (4), Clinical Psychology (3), Environmental sciences (2), Physics (1), Chemistry (12), Applied Chemistry (1), Botany (6), Zoology (3), B. Pharmacy (8). All the theses writers and their supervisors were the speakers of non-native variety of English. For further categorization of the collected theses the study adopted the precedents existed in literature. Swales (1981) study selected RA introductions from three fields: Hard sciences, Biology/ medical field and Social sciences. Casanave and Hubbard (1992) classified their collected material into Science and technology disciplines (ST) and Humanities and Social sciences (HSS). Bunton (2005), following the practice of Casanave and Hubbard (1992), divided his corpora of 45 PhD theses into ST and HSS groups. This study also

Titles	No. of conclusion sections

adopted the same criteria. The collected data of MPhil theses were categorized into Science and technology disciplines (ST) and Humanities and Social sciences (HSS).

Before starting the analysis of sixty theses (33 from ST and 27 from HSS), it was assumed that the final chapter will be identified as conclusion chapter. But at the time of making text files, it was noticed that in 8 theses of HSS and 15 theses of ST, conclusion sections were presented under different title such as suggestions and recommendation, summary and policy recommendation, results and discussion and summary etc. (Table 1). Nevertheless they were given the status of concluding chapters. As Even and Gruba (2002) argued that the conclusions may be presented as a separate chapter or may be combined with the discussion chapter, labelled "Discussions and Conclusions".

In two cases of HSS disciplines, conclusions were presented under three headings; conclusion, discussion and recommendation for future research. Three theses from ST discipline had no chapters having concluding remarks. So they were excluded from the analysis and the number of theses from ST discipline was reduced to 30. Now the corpus left for analysis comprised 57 theses conclusions (30 from ST and 27 from HSS).

Table 1. Different titles of conclusion sections of Pakistani MPhil theses

Conclusion and Recommendation	**3**
Results and Discussions	**9**
Conclusion, Discussions and **Recommendation**	**2**
Summary	**4**
Suggestions and Recommendations	**1**
Discussion	**2**
Summary and Policy Recommendations	**1**
Conclusion	**20**
Result and Discussion	**1**
Conclusions	**14**

This study analyzed the generic structure of conclusion sections on move and step level. The models suggested by Yang and Allison, (2003, conclusions of research articles) and Bunton (2005, conclusions of PhD theses) were taken as starting points. Bunton (2005) divided his corpus in thesis-oriented conclusions and field-oriented conclusions and proposed two different models for them. This study, informed by Bunton (2005) model for thesis-oriented conclusion, developed a modified version, which could best illustrate the purpose of moves and steps in the selected Pakistani corpus of ST and HSS disciplines. Analysis started with manual tagging of moves and steps by the researchers. In order to ensure the inter-rater reliability of tagging procedure, a peer review of the move and step analysis was managed to discuss possible disparities. Little disagreements regarding tagging of Move 3 appeared, which were later resolved by mutual negotiation. In order to have sentence wise verification of manual tagging, a software Ant mover was trained by the researchers to ensure maximum accuracy in tagging process. The tagged data was again reviewed by the researchers and the peer. The occurrences of major moves along with their realizations in the form of

steps were recorded and interpreted in terms of percentage and frequency.

Percentage of moves and steps was calculated as

Percentage = Number of moves or steps / Total number of conclusions X 100

The frequency of moves and steps was calculated as

Frequency = Number of moves or steps / total number of conclusions

Data Analysis

The overall rhetorical pattern of concluding chapters was investigated in terms of Move and Step analysis (as adopted by Swales, 1990). The moves were further articulated by multiple array of steps, which corresponded to "more narrowly specified moves" (Yang and Allison, 2003). A Move deals with major content in general terms and step, is comparatively more specific in the treatment and organization of content. An all-inclusive comment about the difference of Move and Step comes from Yang and Allison (2003), "The concept of move captures the function and purpose of a segment of text at a more general level, while steps spell out more specifically the rhetorical means of realizing the function of the Move". The percentage and frequency of the occurrence of move throws light on the status of move whether it is obligatory or optional in nature. After seeking guidance from literature, this study adopted following criterion to label the moves.

- Moves showing 100% occurrences were identified as obligatory.
- Moves having less than 100% occurrences in representative data were labeled as optional.

Major moves incorporated by Pakistani students in Conclusions of ST and HSS disciplines are discussed separately under following heading.

Move structure in ST and HSS theses conclusions

Analysis of major moves in ST and HSS theses conclusions reflected the dominant rhetorical pattern of moves utilized by Pakistani students at MPhil level. Four major moves were identified in Pakistani

corpus. The detailed description of distribution of moves in conclusion sections of both disciplines is presented below. Citation from the original text is included in examples.

Table 2. Moves found in ST and HSS M Phil conclusion sections.

	ST (N= 30)		**HSS (N=27)**	
MOVES	N	%	N	%
M-1. Introductory restatement	17	56.6	20	74
M-2. Consolidation of research Space	30	100	27	100
M-3. Practical implication	9	29.97	12	44.47
M-4. Future research	6	19.99	1	3.7

N- No of conclusions % - percentage of occurrence

Move 1: *Introductory Restatement*

This move is a distinctive move "that restates the overall issue being researched". Bunton (2005). Move-1 aims at reiterating the general topic being researched (Moritz et al., 2008). This move appears in the very beginning of the conclusion and can be clearly identified. Thompson (2005) argues that thesis is a long and extended document. In order to aid the reader's memory and to help him recollect the starting point of research, this move may serve as an effective reminder.

Many of the conclusions started with the purpose and the restatement of the whole work carried out in the current study. This move occurred in 56% of ST theses and 74% of HSS theses. The analysis of representative data indicated that Move-1 was employed as an optional move in ST and HSS conclusions.

Following are the citations from the beginning parts of ST and HSS conclusions illustrating Move-1 (the introductory restatement)

Example-1

> To assess the influence of foliar-applied varying levels of 5-aminolevulinic acid (5-ALA) in improving growth and oxidative defense system of wheat (Triticum aestivum) under drought conditions, a pot experiment was conducted in the growth chamber at the Department of Botany, Government College University Faisalabad .(ST-C 6)

Example-2

> This study estimated technical efficiency, technical change and total factor productivity growth of small, medium and large scale wheat grower of the Faisalabad district. (HSS-C 8).

Move 2: *consolidation of research space*

This move was found to be the most frequently used move, as it appeared in 100% conclusion sections of ST and HSS theses of Pakistani MPhil students. The basic idea of this important move was borrowed

from Swales and Feak's (1994) term, "Consolidate your research space". This significant move encapsulated all substantial procedural phases, the research went through, during the course of its proceeding. Move-2 was entitled to be given the status of obligatory move, as it occurred in all 57 concluding chapters of ST and HSS disciplines. As far as the incorporation of Move 2 was concerned, the results of present study were found in line with Bunton's (2005) which also presented it as the most dominant move having 100% rate of occurrence in ST and HSS theses.

The examples of the existence of Move- 2 from original text follows:

Example-1

> In this study, computational calculations were performed using Hyper Chem and Gaussian programs. The drawing tools were used to build the structure and geometry was optimized with Hyper Chem program using Polak Ribiere optimizer and Ab initio method. When molecule achieved the convergence limit on the potential energy surface than value of energy was noted -1332.27399 (kcal/mol). This molecule possess C1 point group symmetry. Dipole moment calculated by Hyper Chem is 1.1795 Debye. Hartree-Fock (HF) and Density Functional Theory (DFT) methods were used with Gaussian program to optimize the molecule using 6-311G++(d,p) basis set. Bond lengths, bond angles and dihedral angles were noted from optimized geometrical parameters. (ST-C 8).

Example-2

> Total 150 wheat growers were selected as a sample then this sample size further divided into three categories of farmers' small, medium and large scale farmers and portions of these farmer groups decided according to National Statistics i.e. 60% small scale farmers, 24% medium scale farmers and 16% large scale farmers. Data from these farmers were collected through questionnaires. (HSS-C 12).

Move 3: *Practical application and recommendations*

Move 3 has a sound standing due to its purpose of underscoring the significance of current research by connecting the findings with outside world. This move illustrates best the essential purpose of conclusion section. "The purpose of writing conclusion is to explain ……what importance and significance the achievements (of study) have for the theory, research and practice" (Bitchener, 2010, p. 197). Analysis presented in table 2 displayed that move-3 showed its appearance in 29.97% of ST theses and 44. 4 % of HSS conclusions, hence to be entitled as an optional move in both disciplines. The mutual comparison reflected higher frequency of this move in HSS discipline suggesting that writers of HSS theses are more inclined to present recommendations for the purpose of exhortation of the readers.

Examples from ST and HSS conclusions are given below.

Example-1

> On the basis of this study, we can recommend the use of low concentration of sugar mill waste water for irrigation. It not only fulfills the need of water but also a good source of nutrients essential for plant growth and development. Higher concentrations contain toxic metals that inhibit plant growth. In addition, cv. Pak Afgoi was more tolerant to higher concentrations of effluents than that of Cv. EV-5098. (ST-C 21)

Example-2

> Policies / Recommendations
>
> 1. To promote private investment, effective strategies should be there.
>
> 2. Long run policies should be adopted to control high interest rate.
>
> 3. Government should take step to control the inflation without affecting the private sector consumption.

> 4. Government should invest on the structural projects, to promote the private sector activities. (HSS-C 16)

Move 4: *Proposing future research*

The main purpose of Move 4 is to indicate new avenues to be investigated by the upcoming studies. Conventionally, this move is preceded by a statement about the limitations of present study which further leads to suggesting recommendations for future research. Move 4, proposing future research appeared more frequently in ST theses (19.99%) as compared to its occurrence in HSS theses (3.7%). Placed in contrast against the frequency of the preceding moves, move-4 exhibited the least frequency of occurrence, so may be graded as an optional move.

Examples from original text are presented below.

Example-1

> Further work is recommended in future to scientifically evaluate more indigenous herbal products in order to rationalize their use in country. (ST-C 24)

Example-2

> However, in keeping with my suggestions for future research, I feel a structural analysis of this genre deserves much richer exploration, as research to date is limited. Lastly, based on the findings in my study, I believe that there is a need to raise the awareness of learners in Pakistani society about media discourse and the interests it promotes. It is only through such awareness and, particularly, through becoming critical readers that such learners can challenge media representations and what lies behind them. (HSS-C 26)

To trace down the findings regarding the frequency of different moves in overall M Phil theses' conclusions, Move 2, consolidation of research space appeared as an obligatory move showing 100% appearance in all conclusions of ST and HSS disciplines. Moves 1, 3 and

4, with lesser frequency of occurrence were graded as optional moves. Variation was recorded in the frequency of occurrences of different moves across the disciplines. Move 1 and 3 appeared with comparatively high frequency in HSS conclusions and move 4 was found slightly dominant in ST conclusions.

Description of Distinctive Steps

After identifying the communicative purpose and status of major moves, micro level examination of the internal structure of the representative data was conducted. For this purpose, the realization of moves in the form of steps were taken into account. Previous studies presented different interpretations of move and steps. Yang and Allison (2003) have best illustrated, that the concept of "move" captures the function and purpose of a segment at a more general level; while "step" provides a more detailed rhetorical means of realizing the function of a move.

The percentage and frequency of move and steps in ST and HSS conclusions are shown in table 3 and 4.

Table 3:

Percentage and frequency of move and steps in ST Conclusions (Total number-30).

MOVES	N	%	Freq.
M 1- Introductory Restatement	17	56.6	.51
S 1- work carried out	16	53.28	.53
S 2- purpose	3	9.99	.10
S 3- method	2	6.66	.66
S 4-reference to previous research	2	6.66	.66
S 5-research questions	0	0	0

M 2-Consolidation of research space	30	100	1.00
S 1-method	24	80.00	0.6
S 2- findings/ results	28	93.24	0.93
S 3-claims	15	49.9	0.5
S 4-explanation	7	23.3	0.23
S 5-information	1	3.33	0.03
S 6-limitation	0	0	0
S 7-reference to previous research	1	3.33	0.03
M 3-Practical Implications	9	29.9	0.3
S 1-implication	4	13.3	0.13
S 2-recommendation	6	19.9	0.2
M 4-Future Research	6	19.9	0.2
S 1- recommendations	6	19.9	0.2

N- No of conclusions %- percentage of occurrence of moves/steps

Freq. - Rate of occurrence of moves/steps

Table 4:

Percentage and frequency of move and steps in HSS Conclusions. (Total number- 27)

MOVES	N	%	Freq.
M 1- Introductory Restatement	20	74	0.74
S 1- work carried out	18	68.6	0.66
S 2- purpose	4	14.8	0.14

S 3- method	0	0	0
S 4-reference to previous research	0	0	0
S 5-research questions	1	3.7	0.037
M 2-Consolidation of research space	27	100	1.00
S 1-method	15	55.5	o.55
S 2- findings/ results	25	92.5	0.92
S 3-claims	12	44.4	0.444
S 4-explanation	13	48.1	0.48
S 5-information	6	22.2	0.222
S 6-limitation	3	12.1	0.12
S 7-reference to previous research	7	25.9	0.25
M 3-Practical applications	12	44.4	0.444
S 1-implication	4	14.8	0.14
S 2-recommendation	10	37	0.37
M 4-Future Research	1	3.7	0.037
S 1- recommendations	1	3.7	0.037

N-No of conclusions %- percentage of occurrence of moves/steps

Freq.-Rate of occurrence of moves/steps

Move 1 was articulated by exhibiting the work carried out, main purpose, methods and reference to previous research, etc. in both disciplines. Based on the percentages and frequencies presented in Tables 3 & 4, Step -1 (work carried out) of Move- 1 was the most prominent step in ST and HSS conclusions (53.28% in ST conclusion sections and 68.6 in HSS conclusions). Examples from original text are given below.

Example of (Move-1) Step-1, *Work carried out*

> The present study was carried out to compute 2-[2-(4-iodophenyl)-2-oxoethyl] -1, 2-benzothiazole-3(2H)-one-1, 1-dioxide theoretically. Basic information of this compound is very limited and no literature or experimental data was found. In this regard the theoretical calculations will be useful to carry out various reactions, to study its antibacterial, antitumor, antifungal and anti-inflammatory action of this compound. (ST C 9)

Example of (Move-1) Step-1, *Work carried out*

> The research exposes the economic dissipation of society where economic status and material standards are the only valuable commodities. Marx's consciousness (Marxism) helps to dismantle the existing double-standards of economic life. The research shows that intricate socioeconomic web is man-made, not natural. (HSS C 18)

Step 2, Step 3 and 4 including purpose, method and reference to previous research respectively were less prominent in ST conclusions. Step 3 and 4 were altogether absent in HSS conclusions.

Move 2 was realized through a fairly broad array of steps such as methods, finding / results, claims, explanations, information, limitations and reference to the previous research. This move appeared in all

conclusions and Steps 1 and 2, methods and findings/ results were particularly prominent in both corpora. In ST conclusions, the percentage of Step 1, methods and Step 3, findings/results remained 80 and 93.24 respectively. HSS conclusions exhibited 55.5% occurrence for Step 1 and 92.5% for Step 2.

Example of (Move-2) Step-1, *Method*

> In the currently studied nano fluids two different samples were considered, the first (S1) obtained from commercial Fe3O4 nano powder, they were already characterized and their company has declared their diameter size, and the second (S2) from synthesized Fe3O4 nanoparticles obtained using a co-precipitation method. (ST C 15)

Example of (Move-2) Step-2, *Findings/Results*

> The research proves that the social construction of standards (Double Standards) leads towards the social inequality and division of Oppressed and Oppressor. Marxist Consciousness helps to listen the voices of the oppressed class. It helps to render the moral decay and bankruptcy of the elites, a source of constant pain for the poor oppressed class. (HSS C 18)

Step 1(Methods) appeared with more frequency in ST data because methodological procedure with systematically designed steps were pre requite in scientific experimental studies. Step 4 and 5 explanation and information seemed more dominant in HSS conclusions implying the tendency of researchers to present extensive details. Reason may be the qualitative mode of inquiry adopted by most of the social studies students, which required a comparatively detailed account.

Move 3 "Practical application" was articulated by two steps, implication and recommendation. Both steps are directed to highlight the practical significance of current research in the related fields. Tables 3 & 4 show the relatively prominent appearance of both steps in HSS conclusions inferring the inclination of the HSS researchers towards exhortation of the readers.

Example of (Move-3), Step-2, *Recommendation*

> 1. To promote private investment, effective strategies should be there.
>
> 2. Long run policies should be adopted to control high interest rate.
>
> 3. Government should take step to control the inflation without effecting the private sector consumption.
>
> 4. Government should invest on the structural projects, to promote the private sector activities. (HSS C 16)

Move 4 "Future Research" was realized by one step regarding recommendations about future research, which appeared more prominently in ST data.

Example of (Move-4), Step-1, *Recommendations about future research*

> Further work is recommended in future to scientifically evaluate more indigenous herbal products in order to rationalize their use in country. (ST C 22)

Results of present study are consistent with Bunton's (2005) findings on thesis-oriented PhD conclusions in many respects. A remarkable difference is observed in the frequency of occurrence of Move-4 in ST conclusions of this study (19.9%) and Bunton's (80%). Another difference is observed

Findings

Present study analyzed the generic features of conclusion sections of MPhil theses from ST and HSS disciplines. The results show that students of both disciplines follow an almost similar structural pattern at the level of moves. Variation is observed in the ratio of the realization of these move in steps. For Example. Move 1, Introductory Restatement, appears as an optional move in both corpora. Difference is

perceived in the occurrence of step 3 "methods" and step 4 "reference to previous research", which are totally absent from HSS data. The students of HSS disciplines are inclined to focus on step 1, "work carried out". The frequency of occurrence of Move 1, showed inconsistency with Bunton (2005) study of PhD theses (thesis-oriented conclusions). His work recorded 92% appearance of move-1 in ST conclusions and 100% occurrence in HSS disciplines. Present study demonstrated that Pakistani students incorporated move-1 as an optional move.

Move 2, consolidation of research space is identified as an obligatory move with 100% occurrence in ST and HSS conclusion sections. The findings on move 2 are in perfect coordination with Bunton (2005) study which reported 100% occurrence of Move 2 in thesis-oriented PhD conclusions. Differences are noticed in the occurrence rate of moves 3 and 4. Pakistani HSS conclusions exhibit comparatively dominant inclination (44.4 %) for stating practical implication of the findings. Whereas Pakistani ST conclusions show less focus on this move (29.9%), implying lesser amount of interest of the ST students to relate their findings with the outer world. Conversely, the occurrence rate of Move 4 "recommendations for future research" is higher in ST conclusions than those of HSS. The study shows variation with Bunton (2005) findings in the occurrence of move 4, which is considerably higher (80%) in ST conclusions and in HSS concluding chapters (36%). Pakistani students seem unaware of the importance of relating their findings with the outer world. They do not tend to highlight the issues generated by their study for promoting future research in the field.

Present study identifies four major Moves in Pakistani corpus. Bunton (2005) identified an additional Move 5 "concluding restatement" in the ending part of his thesis-oriented conclusions. This move does not exist in the corpus of present study, suggesting the variability in written discourse specific to the context. Another reason of this variation may be attributed to the fact that Bunton study (2005) utilized the conclusion sections of PhD theses, whereas present study exploited data from M.Phil theses. PhD thesis is more elaborated and extended in volume, as compared to an MPhil thesis. Bunton (1998) discusses the size of PhD dissertation that it "is far longer than the RA and rather longer than the master dissertation" (p. 18). Therefore the moves incorporated in writing conclusions of PhD level thesis may be additional in number.

Conclusions

This paper identifies the overall rhetorical pattern of the conclusion sections of M Phil theses written by Pakistani students in Science and Technology (ST) and Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) disciplines. It also highlights the variation between the two disciplines at move and step level. Models proposed by Yang and Allison (2003, for research article conclusions) and Bunton (2005, for thesis-oriented PhD conclusions) are used as starting points and afterwards a modified model is developed to suit the variation of pattern employed by Pakistani writers in writing theses' conclusions. According to the analysis of the representative data, Move-2 Consolidation of research space is found to be obligatory with 100% occurrence in the conclusions of both ST and HSS disciplines. This move occupies the maximum space in both corpora. Moves 1, 3 and 4 are incorporated as optional moves. Disciplinary variation is found in the demonstration of Move-3 and Move-4. Writers of HSS conclusions seemed more inclined to present practical implication of the work carried out and their counterparts tended to emphasize recommendations for previous research. The whole corpus constitutes thesis-focused conclusions. No specimen of field-oriented conclusion is observed (as suggested by Bunton, 2005) in present study.

The results of the study confirm that Pakistani students tend to follow a uniform pattern of writing conclusions at MPhil level. Moves are presented in a linear manner, but at step level, the presentation is found embedded and cyclical. Another noticeable finding emerged from the study is the remarkably low rate of occurrence of Move 3 "practical application" and Move 4 "future research" in the conclusion sections of both ST and HSS disciplines. The evidence backs the idea that Pakistani students need to be more conscious about the incorporation of these moves which are very important in terms of their communicative purposes. By improving their knowledge about genre analysis in general and academic writing in particular, they can adequately improve their writing skills. Teachers and research advisors can also provide sound guidance to help the students organize their conclusions logically.

The present study has certain limitations too. The corpus is limited to a small size of 60 conclusion sections. Therefore it may not be possible to generalize its findings to the conclusion sections of all disciplines. Further research with a larger corpus, covering wider range of disciplines would be of considerable value. In addition, present study

analyzed the generic structure of only one section of thesis writing, i.e. conclusions. Further studies may be conducted to explore the rhetorical pattern of other important sections of Pakistani theses, such as, abstract, literature review and methodology sections. This may be useful in providing clarity and precision to the students about the conventional pattern of writing different sections of a thesis systematically. Several problems regarding structure and content of sections would be possibly resolved. Moreover, along with generic analysis, lexico-grammatical analysis would also be beneficial to explore appropriate lexical choices suitable for materializing targeted communicative purposes.

Anyhow, from pedagogical perspective, the study may increase the awareness of students about the generic features of concluding section of thesis. It may also serve as a useful material for researchers to improve their thesis writing skill in general and conclusion section in particular. Findings may provide a guideline to them to be comfortable with the writing conventions of this complex section of MPhil thesis, "conclusions".

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