

Genre Analysis of MA ELT Theses: A Case Study of National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad

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Abstract

Writing a thesis efficiently in an educational setting for attaining an academic degree is a hard task particularly at the graduate level since students at this stage happen to be novice researchers. As thesis writing is a special genre of writing having its own mechanics, conventions and norms, the graduate students have to really battle in order to meet the requirements of this genre. Moreover, their problems multiply when they have to write thesis in a second language, i.e. English. Writing is also highly culture-bound that throws further intricacies and complexities to students. This study aims to explore the discrepancies found in the theses written by the MA ELT (English Language Teaching) students at the National University of Modern Language, Islamabad, Pakistan. The study makes use of qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. The researchers have probed these difficulties with a particular reference to CARS model given by Swales. The researchers have analyzed twenty randomly selected theses completed by the students over a period of two years (2011-2012). It has been found that the students confront serious problems, e.g. inability to build a coherent case, state a research problem, and relate the findings to the conclusion besides other genre-related problems. The researchers also found some glaring inconsistencies in the thesis writing patterns which can have serious mythological implications. Understanding these inconsistencies would enable supervisors to furnish more targeted guidance to students and to make them follow the conventions of thesis writing more successfully.

Keywords: Genre-analysis, CARS model, moves, thesis

1. Introduction

Pakistan has a long history of English language teaching which predates its independence. In spite of this long-standing teaching tradition, ELT in Pakistan is fraught with numerous problems. At each level, the nature and scope of these problems vary and students who enter universities have to deal with a new culture with its own rites and rules. The ELT graduate students are supposed to acquire new academic practices and skills which are expected to enable them to operate effectively in educational as well as professional life. Not only are they required to master the four language skills, but they are also required to study other subjects such as vocabulary teaching, syllabus designing, testing and English for Specific Purposes, to mention just a few. Further, they have to study the subject of research methodology with reference to applied linguistics as well as thesis writing. Krause (2001) and Lillis (2001) are of the view that academic writing is one of the most important competencies on campuses since the assessment methods used in ELT are mostly writing-based either in the shape of assignments and term-papers or theses and written exams.

In Pakistan, like elsewhere, students are also supposed to produce good written texts such as essays, summaries, theses, and reports in order to display their understanding and internalization of the knowledge (Hyland, 2006; Shahzad, 2017). Moreover, they have to demonstrate their skills to amalgamate and maneuver the knowledge they have acquired during the academic term in order to performance in real world. In this regard, whatever they write have to correspond to the norms and conventions of different genres of writing, chief among them is thesis-writing, which is the topic of the present research. Lillis (2001) maintains that term papers and theses should be evaluated at different levels such as organization and argumentation. Furthermore, another aspect of academic writing is the classic notion of coherence. It proposes that ideas presented in the thesis should hang together. This way the “reader can follow the overall position that the writer takes, the arguments that are given to support the writer’s position, and the evidence that the writer provides in support of these arguments” (Paltridge, Harbon, Hirsch, Shen, Stevenson, Phakiti, & Woodrow, 2009, p. 134).

Genre as defined by Swales (2004) and Devitt (2004) is a kind of text which has peculiar and distinct communicative features. It has distinguishing and identifiable conventions and principles of organization and constructions that result in a conventionality of practice by its consumers. The genre of thesis-writing has its own distinct and recognizable sections, functions, organization and content. These discursive practices are usually inter-related. Swales (2004) and Kwan (2006) maintain that the essential preliminary point for a move analysis also known as the analysis of the units of content is to reflect on the purposes or functions of the target genre (chapter) in order to regulate its propositional content, organizational composition and choice of register. It means that students are not only supposed to understand the functions of each sub-genre (chapter) but also know how the content and structure of the theses are functionally related. The discursive practices of thesis writing, furthermore, show that the units of content are denoted as *discourse moves*. These moves are also known as *steps* or *strategies*. Moreover, these discourse moves are categorized into a variety of sub-moves. Students need to understand the exact and appropriate use of these sub-moves in their thesis writing praxis in order to be successful academically and professionally.

1.1 Delimitation

The study is delimited to the genre analysis of the theses of ELT graduate students at one of the leading universities of Pakistan—National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad. The study focuses only on two chapters of the theses: *introduction*, *research methodology*, and *data collection tools*. This research does not survey the relationship between supervisors and supervisees. Nor does it study the problems faced by students while conducting their research.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To investigate the thesis writing practices followed by the ELT graduate students at NUML.
2. To find out the ways students state their statements of the problem, objectives, research questions/hypotheses.
3. To find out how students elaborate their research methodology.
4. To find out how the students develop their data collection tools and draw conclusion.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the prominent discursive practices used by the ELT graduate students in thesis writing at NUML?
2. How do they usually state their research problems, objectives, research questions/hypothesis?
3. How much coherence is there in their theses?
4. How do they develop their research methodology chapter and data collection tools?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Approaching writing problems of the students from the perspective of genre analysis is particularly significant in order to better the compositional skills of the graduate researchers. *It will help* them to be clear of the *communicative purposes* of their writing, thus aiding them in the organization of their analysis, interpretation and development of data collection tools. The study will also help students appreciate how the various structural choices interact to achieve the communicative purposes of a genre. The study is expected to help students discover and overcome inconsistencies and discrepancies in thesis writing. The study would also help guide teachers and advisors to pay attention to these typical problems of students and provide them focused assistance so they may produce well-structured and well-patterned theses.

2. Literature Review

A considerable number of writers and researchers have discussed genre analysis with reference to thesis writing. John Swale (2004, p. 47 & 1990, p. 36) maintains that the genre of thesis writing consists of sets of *communicative events*. These communicative events have different constituent parts which share certain “set of communicative purposes”. Since academic genre writing is culture specific, its different purposes are identified by the professional associates of the parent discourse community, and thus they form the underlying principles of the genre. He further states that these underlying principles not only form the schematic structure of the discourse but also affect and restrict the choice of style and content. To him, a “communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of a genre as narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action” (Swale, 1990, p. 58).

As regards the genre of thesis writing and its purpose, its examples reveal different patterns of similarity in terms of content, structure, style and proposed addressees. If all the requirements are met, the associates of the discourse community will consider it a perfect example. Therefore, not only should teachers understand these patterns and ground their courses in these features but students should also develop competence in thesis writing from the viewpoint of genre. However, it is also significantly important to admit that thesis writing is not just one genre as we have different disciplines and correspondingly, we have various set of conventions as well. Therefore, given this multiplicity of disciplines, there is no one-size-fit-all approach which could take into account all the requirements and conventions of thesis writing with reference to different related areas of research. In this way, the job of a teacher is to motivate students to develop competence in the genre of their respective fields of research with the help of basic sets of guidelines (Hyland, 2000).

Hyland (2003) is of the view that the professional associates of the discourse community establish the common traits of the academic writing in that particular discipline. These set principles help

guide the *whats* and the *hows* of writing and they also assist readers of that discourse community to interpret and evaluate the writing practices. Thus, we can say that students' approaches to thesis writing are formed as they make their way through the intricacies of the genre(s), fully appreciating what their respective discourse community likes, values and rewards (Bruce, 2008). Swales elaborates the following criteria for genre (1990, p. 44):

1. A genre consists of communicative events, which share a set of communicative purposes.
2. Examples related to genre differ in their perfectibility.
3. Imposition of restraints on the acceptability of content, structure and organization.
4. Categorization and organization of genres is a significant source of understanding of a discourse community.

Language has a vital role to play as regards the *communicative events*, for they contain participants, narratives and historico-cultural backgrounds in which discourses are produced, circulated and received. The genre of thesis writing is also considered a class of communicative events as the role of language is well foregrounded in it. The second principle which is about the commonality of communicative purposes is also applicable to the genre of thesis writing as the theses are situated in the domain of research with a shared set of communicative purposes. The third underlying principle of a genre deals with dimensions and attributes which are required to be present in every exemplar of a genre. These attributes and dimensions should not show much disparity in substance, structure and organization (Swales, 1990). The fourth underlying principle of genre is, in fact, its *raison d'etre*. It not only guides about the content, structure and organization, but also informs the researcher about the lexical and syntactic choices and certain constraints on their operations. The last criterion relates to the naming practices of discourse community. Since the associates of discourse community have greater knowledge of the conventions of a genre, they name different sets of communicative events.

Swales (1990) has further elaborated the characteristics of a discourse community. To him, these are:

1. It has a generally established set of widespread public purposes.
2. It has means of communication which are used by its members.
3. It utilizes its participatory apparatuses mainly to give information and feedback.
4. It makes use of one or more genres in communication which could promote its aims.
5. It has its own terms of reference and jargon.
6. It has got a "threshold level" of associates with appropriate qualifications in order to sustain a balance between the experts and the novice members (p, 25).

Having talked about the criteria of genre, Vijay Bhatia describes the following goals of the genre theory (1993):

1. It elaborates and characterizes apparently disordered and disorganized world of realities.
2. It explains personal motives of the author besides socially acknowledged communicative purposes.
3. It makes clear how language is utilized within the socio-pragmatic environment.
4. It offers valuable solutions to educational and academic problems.

Bhatia (2002, p. 140) takes the genre of thesis writing as a source of "the knowledge of procedures, practices, and convention that make the text possible and relevant to a particular

socio-rhetorical context". Morley-Warner (2011, p. 45) is of the view that arguments presented in a thesis should proceed, in a logical order, from "introduction through body to conclusion". This in turn will shape the quintessence of coherence of a thesis. Similarly, Paltridge and Starfield (2007) have talked about the traditional-simple and the traditional-complex thesis writing. But, to them, regardless of the type of thesis, the moves employed in thesis writing have to be cohesive and coherent. Or else, they will create no impact on the readers and will not be likely to contribute to the existing knowledge.

3. Methodology

The researchers have used both qualitative and quantitative research to conduct this study. The qualitative approach has been used to provide an interpretivist and experiential framework to the baseline data.

3.1 Sample

The researchers selected 20 theses written by male and female students which dealt with different sub-fields of ELT. The topics of these theses are given in appendix 1. These students hailed from different parts of the country and belonged to various sub-cultures. These students had the formal instruction for conducting research and writing a thesis. Likewise, they were also instructed in other ELT subjects.

3.2 Conceptual Background

Though there exist various approaches to study thesis writing, genre analysis is uniquely suited for this purpose. It describes and enlists the organizational features and structures, which the researchers need to comprehend in order to fulfill the requirements of thesis writing. Moreover, Hyland maintains (2009, p. 158) "genre analysis has the potential to offer descriptions and explanations of both texts and the communities that use them".

3.3 Research Design

This research is primarily a case study where the case is a "single instance of a class of objects or entities" (Nunan, 1992, p. 79). Therefore, the present study is an investigation into this single exemplar, i.e. the thesis writing practices of the ELT graduate students at NUML. The genre of thesis writing is an essential component for MA ELT degree at NUML since the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) has made it compulsory. The researchers requested the head of the department for the access to research theses written during 2011 and 2012. In this way, they selected twenty theses submitted by students out of a total number of 35. The researchers coded these theses by giving them numbers from 1 to 20 as they have been enlisted in the appendix for data analysis.

Since it is a case study related to MA ELT students at NUML and the sample size is small, we are not in a position to generalize the following study to a wider population. Moreover, the researchers maintain that the following findings should help guide the prospective practitioners and researchers about the issue (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Hence, the research was carried out on the supposition that its readers, university teachers and supervisors, would inspect the results conscientiously and relate the findings to their experiences in order to generate more replicable insights. In this study, the researchers have used the Swales' Model of Rhetorical Moves in Research Articles (CARS), which is as follows:

Move 1. Establishing a territory

Step 1. Claiming centrality and/or

Step 2. Making topic generalization(s) and/or

Step 3. Reviewing items of previous research

Move 2. Establishing a niche

Step 1A. Counter-claiming or

Step 1B. Indicating a gap or

Step 1C. Question-raising or

Step 1D. Continuing a tradition

Move 3. Occupying the niche

Step 1A. Outlining purposes or

Step 1B. Announcing present research

Step 2. Announcing principal findings

Step 3. Indicating Research thesis structure

4. Data analysis

Taking into consideration Swales' model of genre analysis, the researchers analyzed the data. For this purpose, the introductory chapter of the theses was analyzed as follows:

4.1 Analysis: The Introductory Chapters

The analysis of the introductory chapters of the selected theses has been done below which is based upon this table. All the genre-based moves along with their steps have been charted on the table and their inclusion or exclusion in the theses has also been presented.

	Move 1			Move 2				Move 3			
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Thesis 1	1	1	--	--	1	1	1	2	1	--	--
Thesis 2	1	2	--	--	1	2	1	2	1	--	--
Thesis 3	1	1	--	1	1	4	--	1	1	--	--
Thesis 4	1	2	1	1	--	1	1	1	1	--	--
Thesis 5	1	1	--	--	--	1	1	2	1	--	--
Thesis 6	--	--	1	1	1	1	--	3	1	1	1
Thesis 7	--	1	1	--	1	2	1	--	--	--	--
Thesis 8	--	--	1	--	1	1	--	3	1	--	--
Thesis 9	1	1	1	1	1	4	--	5	1	--	--
Thesis 10	--	2	3	--	--	1	1	--	--	--	--
Thesis 11	--	1	--	--	1	1	--	--	--	--	--
Thesis 12	--	4	--	--	1	1	1	6	1	--	--
Thesis 13	1	2	1	--	--	1	3	--	4	1	--
Thesis 14	2	3	1	1	--	--	1	4	2	--	--
Thesis 15	2	1	4	2	1	--	1	2	3	1	1
Thesis 16	--	1	2	3	1	--	1	2	3	1	1
Thesis 17	--	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Thesis 18	--	1	1	--	1	1	--	2	1	--	--
Thesis 19	2	2	--	--	1	--	1	3	--	--	--
Thesis 20	1	1	2	--	1	--	1	2	1	1	--

As the table shows that all twenty theses did not have all the genre moves proposed by Swales which they were supposed to have. Besides, the genre moves which were present in the theses did not follow the sequence given by Swales. Some of the moves were repeated over and over again

and, at the same time, some of the essential moves were missing altogether. The table shows that in move *three* of the introductory chapter, the third and fourth steps are mostly missing. For example, the heading “Significance of the Study” usually came after the “Objectives of the Study” and before the “Research Questions” whereas some of the theses had the heading “Significance of the Study” after the “Research Questions”. Similarly, in certain other theses, the “Delimitation of the Study” was stated after “the Objectives of the Study”.

The table also shows a wide array of discipline-based (i.e. research) writing practices. Following the CARS model, one can also detect the organizational patterns recurrently found in the theses of students at NUML. But most of these patterns show a major lacuna, i.e. demonstrating how the introductory chapters fit within the broader structure of the study. Some of the student seem to have successfully establish the territory (e.g. theses 4, 9, 20, etc.), but failed to occupy the niche. Some others, interestingly seem to have successfully occupy the niche without establishing a territory (e.g. theses 14, 15, 18, etc.). However, it is very rare that one could see a student going by all the moves and steps sequentially and successfully. The table also illustrates some of the patterns in which, though the niche was successfully established, it was not adequately occupied (e.g. theses 11, 13, 18, etc.). This is how the table enables us to bring forth an important generalization: though sometimes students may succeed in applying certain moves and steps to their writing practices, they mostly do it unconsciously and with an inadequate knowledge of the writing conventions premised upon Swales’ model.

In the first chapter of all the twenty theses, the sub-genres within the (main) genre had lengthy, circumlocutory and recursive discussions about the various aspects of the research topic. Most of these documents had irrelevant headings in the first chapter. These headings had nothing to do with the research topic as such. Moreover, some of the headings were repeated after a few pages in the same (first) chapter. For example, the topic of thesis 1 was: “The Role of IRI [Interactive Radio Instruction] in Improving Speaking Skills” and it began with the heading “Importance of English Language”. Interestingly, the same heading repeated after five pages with almost the same discussion. The topic of thesis 2 was: “A Comparative Study of Pakistani and British English” and in this thesis the researcher started enumerating at length the problems of the Pakistani students while learning English, e.g., the researcher began with such headings as: “Syllabus”, “Interference by Parents”, “Lack of Motivation”, “Influences of Mother Language”, “Incapable Teachers”, etc.

Moreover, as far as the sub-genre of thesis, i.e. the introductory chapter, is concerned, the researchers did not find any coherence in it. There were huge gaps between the objectives of the study and research questions/hypotheses. For instance, the thesis “Teaching of the English Language through Collaborative Language Techniques”, which seems to be an experimental study, states the objectives of the study as follows: (1) “to evaluate the effectiveness of using collaborative language learning and teaching techniques, (2) to promote the use of these techniques”. Another thesis about a comparative study of Pakistani and British English, the researcher stated the objectives: (1) “Students come to know the about British [sic] and its dialect Pakistani English, (2) Students come to know about vocabulary used in British and Pakistani English and their sense of usage”. The research questions for this thesis ran: (1) “Do students know the difference between British and Pakistani English? (2) Are students aware about their vocabulary used in both languages?” It is not difficult to discern the gap between the research

objectives and the research questions. This leads to a confounding of the genre moves by violating their sequence which, in turn, results in an absence of coherence.

Another researcher stated the hypothesis as follows: “Powerpoint Presentations are Effective in Teaching Appearance Description at Foundation Level at NUML”, whereas he described his research objectives as follows: “To measure the effectiveness of Powerpoint presentations as teaching aids for learning vocabulary of appearance description”. In this instance, the research objective presupposes the effectiveness of the Powerpoint presentations which is not what is spelled out by the topic. One of the researchers who selected to evaluate the 6th grade English textbooks stated the research objective: “To find out whether speaking and listening skills are ignored because according to curriculum objectives evaluation only 10 percent weightage is given to these skills [sic]”. For this objective to achieve, the researcher set the following research question: “To what extent does the 6th grade English textbooks meet the specific objectives set for the students of that level for developing listening and speaking skills?” One can easily find out the extremely circumlocutory and iterative nature of the research question and a discrepancy between the objective and the topic.

Similarly, another researcher selected the topic: “Teaching Vocabulary with the Language Games through Flashcards at Elementary Level”. In this thesis also the objectives did not align with the research question. The research question ran: “What is the effect of using flashcard games in a language class while teaching new vocabulary items?” On the other hand, the objective read: “To compare and contrast the results and game-based teaching to reveal the effects of flashcards in vocabulary teaching [sic]”. Another researcher stated the research question: “How the students’ aural performance is developed through teachers’ useful practices of interpersonal skills [sic]?” Contrarily, the research objective read: “To check the effect [of] interpersonal skills of teachers in the development of aural skills of students for secondary level”.

Hence, it can be concluded from the preceding discussion that the discursive moves of genre writing are not stated as they ought to be stated as per Swales’ coherence model (1990). This lack of coherence affects the *communicative purposes* of most of the theses which do not turn out to be unified entities semantically as well as functionally. Besides, the circumlocutory nature of language used by the researchers prevents these documents from appearing as syntagm of—discursively defined—linguistic units (phrases, clauses, sentences).

4.2 Analysis: The Methodology Chapters and Research Tools

In the methodology chapters of the theses also, the researchers found many discontinuities and gaps. In most of the theses, this chapter lacked design, structure and a coherence of moves and sub-genres. Most of the time, the moves just serve the purpose of headings and subheadings. The research methods and the data collection tools do not quite match with the topics, objectives and research questions.

For example, in a thesis titled as “Role of IRI in Improving Speaking Skill at 5th Grade”, the student stated the research objective: “How long IRI is helpful to speak Standard English language properly and smoothly”. This violates the genre conventions of a research objective as it should not be in the form of a question. Now look at its research question: “Is IRI program fulfilling the needs of the learners of Federal Government Girls’ Middle School Bharakahu, Islamabad?” Here

also the genre conventions of a research question are being violated as a research question should be a *wh*— question. Besides, under the heading “Significance of the Study”, the researcher wrote this paragraph:

This research is going to evaluate the role of IRI in improving the speaking skills of the students. The speaking skills are very important skills and constitute an important part of our linguistic competence. Without well rounded speaking skills, our ability to use language is questionable.

Once again it can be clearly seen that as per the genre conventions, this is not the way to write the significance of the study as it does not signify the topic of research. It is broad and general. The methodology of the study was stated in an unsalvageable way:

This research methodology is qualitative, but there is quantitative analysis as well. This research follows the paradigm and survey method to be used for this research. The researcher has used questionnaires, observation, pre-test and post-test for the collection of the data. As far as data analysis was concerned, the statistical treatment percentage method is used [sic].

This way of describing a research methodology is quite problematic, sketchy and esoteric. Once again, the researcher is disregarding the important genre conventions, which characterize the writing of research methodology. One can only conjecture as to the exact meaning of “the statistical treatment percentage method”. Similarly, what the rationale for so much inclusion is: qualitative paradigm, quantitative analysis, questionnaires, observations, pre-tests, post-tests. The research might have viable rationale but that has not been made clear here. This is a case of skipping the essential genre moves which, in turn, results in the production of an incoherent research discourse.

In another thesis titled “A Comparative Study of Pakistani and British English”, the researcher wrote a very long chapter on methodology, discussing qualitative and quantitative approaches, comparative study and survey approach at length. The researcher enlisted the benefits of these approaches extensively. The researcher stated on page 34 for example:

There are basic six types of researches and the researcher has adopted descriptive paradigm. The researcher has selected it along with some aspects of the causal-comparative and qualitative study.

Similarly, on page 37, the researcher said: “The researcher has selected a combination of qualitative and quantitative paradigms to maximize the scope of his research”. Nonetheless, on page 40 the researcher stated that the “field-survey method had been used to collect data”. Later on, the researcher in the study also used the questionnaires to collect the data. The problem with this thesis is that although the researcher has lavishly employed a volley of big nomenclatures, the trajectory of investigation is not determined at all. Likewise, in one of the theses titled “Teaching Reading Skills through Novel as a Text at Primary Level”, the researcher claimed to have used lesson plans as research tool. However, nowhere is it made clear as to how exactly the data will be analyzed. The same problem characterized another thesis titled “Teaching Vocabulary with Language Games through Flashcards at Elementary Level” in which the researcher maintained:

The required data was collected step by step to achieve the objectives. The researcher distributed the pre-tests. After teaching through lesson plans the post-tests among the respondents were distributed.

However, the researcher did not state how data were collected and analyzed. Likewise, the thesis “An Evaluative Study of the English Textbook at 6th Grade in Federal Government Secondary schools with a Focus on Listening and Speaking Skills” suffered from serious methodological problems. The researcher designed the questionnaire which had the following statements on it:

- The textbook fulfills the general objectives of ELT in Pakistan.
- The textbook fulfills the general objectives of ELT at elementary level.
- The textbook objectives are related to learner’s needs and interests.
- The textbook objectives are clear and precise.
- The textbook objectives suite the level of 6th graders.
- The topics covered in the textbook allow the students to think critically and avoid potentially embarrassing and disturbing topics.

Each of these statements was followed by three options: (1) Yes (2) No (3) Undecided. One wonders what these statements have to do with listening and speaking skills. Even worse, in the thesis titled “Role of IRI in Improving Speaking Skills at the Fifth Grade”, the researcher used a questionnaire with such statements:

- I learn speaking lesson in less time if it is taught through the IRI program.
- IRI helps not only in improving the speaking skills of the students but also their listening skills.

Each of these statements was followed by such bizarre options: (1) Very satisfied (2) Satisfied (3) Don’t know (4) Dissatisfied (5) Very dissatisfied. The lacuna between the statements and the option needs no elaboration. So, what is demonstrated from this genre analysis of the methodology chapters of theses is that mostly the data collection tools and procedures did not match with the moves of thesis writing. A considerable number of researchers did not seem to have clear idea as to how to construct and administer the research instruments.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Having analyzed the data, the researchers would like to discuss it in the light of Swales’ model of genre moves. Most of the studies did not have the essential moves of the genre of thesis writing. In certain cases, the moves were present but they were not in the right sequence. Even the vertical arrangement of these moves was problematic as most of the sub-genre moves were placed under the wrong headings. The introductory chapters did not have clearly stated methodology regarding the overall scheme of genre moves and a certain number of moves were not in sync with the broader methodology of the theses.

In some cases, the researchers found huge discontinuities and lacunae between the research topics and the methodology employed, i.e., the topic, for instance, necessitates some kind of experimental study and the researcher was using filed-surveys. In some of the cases, the data collection tools used by the researchers were also inadequate and flawed. The gaps between the research questions and the objectives were also noted. Sometimes the research questions immediately followed by the objectives and sometimes they were at wide variance. All of these

moves are very far-reaching when viewed from the perspective of genre analysis. Some of the researchers also included the moves which were largely irrelevant. Sometimes there were additional moves included by the students due to the disciplinary requirements.

Besides all these methodological and technical aspects, what complicates the situation manifold are the serious language issues faced by the researchers. A considerable number of researchers used structures which were ungrammatical, asyntactic and circumlocutory. This is evidenced from the excerpts given above from the theses of the students. What makes the grammatical issues of the students more alarming is the fact that Swales' approach to move-analysis is located in the larger framework of ELT which places considerable emphasis on the notion of correctness. This, among other things, affected the overall coherence and the quality of the syntax of most of the theses. Poorly designed questionnaires having questionable validity and reliability are yet another problem in most of the theses.

Similarly, major violations of the genre conventions have also been traced in the methodology chapters. Some of the essential genre moves were skipped and the discursive scheme of certain others was disrupted which affected the methodological trajectory of the research. Theses not having the required number of genre moves are likely to have structural lacunae and discontinuities. Structuralist theorists define genre as a set of expectation that a reader brings with him/her while dealing with a text. These expectations constitute important part of all the interpersonal negotiations taking place within a discourse community (Lee, 2016). In most of the cases discussed above, these expectations of the reader are likely to get thwarted given the cyclic, convoluted sequencing of moves.

The move-based genre analysis of the theses shows that quite a few documents are not likely to meet the expectations of the readers (i.e., fellow researchers, students and scholars). This, in turn, is likely to have serious implications for the interpersonal negotiations of the discourse community, i.e. the ELT department, National University of Modern Languages. Disturbing the proper sequencing of the moves (headings) or making them mutually incompatible by putting irrelevant details under them has led to a subversion of genre codes and conventions.

It has been seen how the specific communicative functions, supposed to be performed by different genre-related codes and moves, get largely affected not following the move pattern. It is also noticeable in the data analyzed above that the relationship between moves and steps is poorly conceptualized by the students (if it is conceptualized at all). As per Swales' theorization, the steps have to be subsumed under the moves and by virtue of this placement they should be generic. This is a crucial distinction but in many of the cases studied here, it gets obliterated.

Moreover, these codes and expectations govern the knowledge of discourses and at the same times define their generic boundaries. Therefore, a sufficient regard for them is important in order to keep the institutional recognition of knowledge discourse intact. This is true of all the societal discourses as well.

The social occasions of which texts are a part have a fundamentally important effect on texts. The characteristic features and structures of those situations and the purposes of the participants have their effects on the form of the texts which are constructed in those situations, which are always

conventional. That is, the occasions on which we interact, the social relations which we contract, are conventionalized and structured, more or less thoroughly, depending on the kind of situation it is. They range from entirely formulaic and ritualized occasions, such as royal weddings, committee meetings, to family rituals such as breakfast or barbecues or fights over who is to do the dishes. Other, probably fewer occasions are less ritualized, less formulaic; casual conversations may be an example.

Similarly, the discourse community of ELT research has its own text structure, syntax and lexis which are actualized by a conventional sequencing of the genre moves. Obviously there might well be certain situational variables but they are not likely to disturb this sequencing in most of the cases (or, at least, not the cases discussed above). Therefore, it is paramount for the researchers to take care of the generic arrangement of their discourses in order to fulfill their communicative purposes in a systemic way.

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APPENDIX: TITLES OF THE SELECTED THESES

No.	Title	Submission Date	Gender
1	Role of IRI in Improving Speaking Skill At the Fifth Grade	01/12/2011	F
2	A Comparative Study of Pakistani and British English	01/06/2011	M
3	An Evaluative Study of the English Textbook at 6 th Grade in Federal Government Secondary schools with a Focus on Listening and Speaking Skills	05/06/2011	F
4	Teaching of the English Language through Collaborative Language Teaching Techniques	10/12/2011	M
5	The Effectiveness of Powerpoint Presentations in Teaching Appearance Description	13/12/2011	F
6	Problems Faced by the Master's Students in Speaking English during the Classroom Interaction	09/06/2012	M
7	An Evaluation of Microteaching Practices in MA ELT at the National University of Modern Languages Islamabad	21/12/2011	F
8	Language Anxiety among Science Teachers of Private Schools while teaching in English	19/06/2012	M
9	Effectiveness of Microteaching in the Teacher Training Programs at the National University of Modern Languages Islamabad	03/06/2012	F
10	Significance of the Special Diploma Program for the English Language Teachers at the National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad	10/12/2012	M
11	Teaching of Reading Skills through Novel as a Text at the Primary Level	06/01/2011	F
12	The Effectiveness of CIDA Teaching Training Program by FDE with Respect to the English Language	10/12/2012	F
13	Teaching Vocabulary with Language Games through Flashcards at Elementary Level	02/06/2011	F
14	The Impact of Interpersonal Skills of Teachers in Developing Aural Performance of Students for at the Secondary Level	11/07/2012	F
15	Needs Analysis of the Nurses with Reference to the Language Skills	21/12/2012	F
16	Teaching Articles through Error Analysis by Using Newspapers	11/12/2012	F
17	Correlationship between Sound and Spelling: A Comparative Study of English and Turkish	01/12/2012	F
18	The Effectiveness of Worksheets for Teaching English Grammar at the Primary Level	11/12/2011	M
19	Evaluation of English Syllabus at the Primary Level	13/12/2011	M
20	Significance of Project Based Language Learning and Its Implementation at the National Universities of Modern Languages, Islamabad	07/12/2012	M