

Linguistic Variation across Pakistani Book Blurbs on Four Textual Dimensions: A New Multidimensional Analysis

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Abstract

Language of book blurbs has been extensively studied as a distinct register in recent times. This study aims at exploring the patterns of linguistic variability in a corpus of Pakistani book blurbs on new textual dimensions identified as a result of employing new factor analysis. A standardized corpus of Pakistani book blurbs was built by using online and print sources. The corpus, comprised 1311 book blurb texts, was categorized with respect to three independent situational variables: Publisher location, Publication medium and Literary source. Data were compared on four dimensions of New MD analysis, generated as a result of applying new factor solution matrix on the whole blurb data. The four new dimensions identified were as follows: 1) Abstract Informational Description versus Concrete Human Focus; 2) Interactive Stance versus Formal Reportage of Facts; 3) Informational Density versus Elaborated Expression; and 4) Expression of Personal Stance and Judgment. The results revealed that the language of Pakistani book blurb register considerably varied across its categories. Of the three variables, literary source was found to be the most potential source of variation as it accounted for maximum shared variance of the whole blurb data. The study provides an important insight into the nature of linguistic variation across different categories of Pakistani book blurbs on new textual dimensions.

Keywords: Linguistic variation, book blurbs, textual dimensions, MDA

1. Introduction

The book blurb is considered to be a distinct register that provides information about the book in order to promote it. It involves description of the content along with positive evaluation

of the book to influence the actions and decisions of prospective buyers (Bhatia, 2004; Gea-Valor, 2005).

Several previous studies have analyzed book blurbs on generic and linguistic level. Generic studies conducted by Bhatia (2004), Gea-Valor (2005, 2007, 2011) and Onder (2013) explored the rhetorical structure of blurbs across various academic disciplines, whereas linguistic studies carried out by Cacchiani (2007) and Gea-Valor and Ros (2009) attempted to characterize blurb texts linguistically. Previous works on book blurb language based their findings on the analysis of individual linguistic features. This approach is questioned by several research studies (Biber, 2004; Biber & Finegan, 1989) which claimed that it was not possible to distinguish among registers by considering the relative distribution of individual linguistic features. Instead, the concept of ‘co-occurrence of linguistic features’ is the most important criterion of any register study because the analysis of the distributional patterns of co-occurring linguistic features and their communicative functions further lead to the identification of linguistic dimensions (Biber, 1988). These dimensions are capable of revealing the complexity of linguistic variability. The idea of co-occurring features has been supported by earlier linguists such as Ervin-Tripp (1972), Hymes (1974) and Halliday (1988). A dominant approach to identify the cluster of features is considered to be Multidimensional approach which identifies the distributional patterns of the sets of co-occurring linguistic features in text and their shared communicative functions, defined as dimensions. This Multidimensional approach was developed by Biber (1988). He used this approach as a research methodology to explore the patterns of linguistic variation that distinguish among registers.

Present study has drawn its methodological insights on Biber’s Multidimensional analysis (1988) and has adopted a new multidimensional analytical approach (based on results of applying new factor analysis) to explore linguistic variation across several categories of Pakistani book blurbs from a wide range of disciplines neglected in previous studies.

2. Literature Review

Language is being described and analyzed since long under the paradigms of register, genre and style. These terms are different ways to study the text varieties. So, ‘the same text can be analyzed from register, genre and style perspectives’, as described by Biber and Conrad (2009). These three perspectives are different from one another on the basis of four factors:

‘textual focus, linguistic characteristics, distribution of linguistic characteristics, and interpretation’ (Biber, 1988). Genre analysis relies wholly on complete text with a dominant focus on the rhetorical structure and specialized expressions of the text. Both register and style analysis use either complete text or extracts and study any pervasive lexico-grammatical features which appear repeatedly in those texts and abstracts. Register and style, though similar in their focus of study, exhibit differences in the interpretations of linguistic features. Style analysis manipulates and interprets the linguistic features on aesthetic level and register analysis takes into account the functional significance of linguistic features and interprets them accordingly.

Register analysis may take into account register features and register markers. Register features are core lexical and grammatical characteristics found to some extent in almost all texts and registers with more or less frequency, whereas register markers are specific and constrained to a target register (Biber, 1995, p. 29). The analysis of register features instead of register markers can reliably distinguish among two or more registers. Biber and Conrad (2009) stated the inevitability of the analysis of register features in these words, ‘Linguistic component of a register analysis requires identification of the pervasive linguistic features in the variety: linguistic characteristics that might occur in any variety but are much more common in the target register’ (p. 6). An empirical approach which employs quantitative techniques is crucially important to identify register features.

2.1. Idea of Co-occurrence of Linguistic Features

A register analysis having comparative, empirical and quantitative approach may take into account the individual linguistic features or sets of co-occurring linguistic features. The analysis based upon individual features has been found inadequate to capture the complex phenomena of comparative approach (Crossley & Louwerse, 2007, Biber & Conrad, 2009), whereas the analysis based upon the sets of co-occurring linguistic features is found essential to produce results which are reliable and authentic. The Multidimensional approach developed by Biber (1988) is appropriate to distinguish among registers because ‘in this approach co-occurrence patterns are identified quantitatively, based on the actual distribution of linguistic features in a large corpus of text’ (Biber *et al.*, 1998, p.145).

2.2. MD Approach and its suitability for present study

The current study on linguistic variation of book blurbs subsumes to multidimensional approach (Biber, 1988) as its basic methodological framework and sets out to analyze Pakistani book blurb data on New linguistic dimensions. The logic underlying this decision is that no other approach, so far, is available which possesses such an ample capacity to explore quantitatively the linguistic similarities and differences across various registers. The central importance is given to the notion of linguistic co-occurrence patterns and the empirical methods of their identification.

The New MD analysis is based upon new linguistic dimensions generated as a result of dealing with any distinct discourse domain. It involves a new statistical analysis which is incorporated to encompass the linguistic variation found in a specific corpus yet unexplored. A distinct register would tend to generate new sets of co-occurring linguistic features defining unique dimensions indicative of specific shared communicative functions.

A few new dimensions were identified through a new factor analysis employed by Biber (2006) on spoken and written University registers, i.e Dimension 3: Procedural versus Content Focused Discourse; and Dimension 4: Academic Stance. Biber (2008) analyzed dimensions of variation in conversation and discovered a new dimension labeled as, ‘Stance Focused versus Content Focused Discourse’. The study conducted by Shakir (2013) explored three new dimensions in Pakistani corpus of advertising text. These were labelled as Dimension 1: Oral versus Literate; Dimension 2: Expression of Organizational Policy versus Other Concerns; and Dimension 3: Impersonal versus Audience Centered Style. Hardy and Romer (2013) applied factor analysis on the Michigan Corpus of upper level students and explored four new dimensions. These were identified as, Dimension 1: Involved Academic Narrative versus Descriptive Academic discourse; Dimension 2: Expression of Opinions and Mental Processes; Dimension 3: Situation-Dependent, Non-Procedural Evaluation versus Procedural Discourse; and Dimension 4: Production of Possibility Statement and Argumentation. Gray (2011) explored linguistic variation of research articles across six disciplines and identified four new dimensions: Dimension 1: Academic Involvement and Elaboration versus Informational Density; Dimension 2: Contextualized Narration versus Procedural Discourse; Dimension 3: Human versus Non-Human Focus; and Dimension 4: Academese. Egbert (2015) discovered five new dimensions

based on the multidimensional analysis of academic writing. The five dimensions were labelled as Dimension 1: Affective Synthesis versus Specialized Information density; Dimension 2: Definition and Evaluation of New Concepts; Dimension 3: Author-Centered Stance; Dimension 4: Colloquial Narrative; and Dimension 5: Abstract Observation and Description. Getkham (2010) examined the distributional patterns of linguistic features across different sections of research articles of Applied Linguistics by using New MD analytical approach and identified six dimensions which are labelled as follows: Dimension1: Established Knowledge/ Expression of Ownership; Dimension 2: Expression of Purposes; Dimension 3: Evaluative Stance; Dimension 4: Expression of Generality; Dimension 5: Framing Claims; and Dimension 6: Conceptual complexity. All these dimensions identified through applying new factor analysis, revealed distinct characteristics of the analyzed text in different discourse domains.

A review of previous studies conducted in the fashion of New multidimensional analytical approach has clearly elucidated the fact that not a single study has been carried out so far to explore the co-occurring distributional patterns of linguistic features of book blurb register which possesses a remarkable importance in today's ever expanding world of book marketing. The current study sets out to conduct a quantitative analysis, following New MD approach in order to reveal the linguistic variation of the specific register of Pakistani book blurb text.

3. Research Methodology

Present study constructed a sizable corpus of book blurbs to explore linguistic variation across different categories. The computerized corpus was used for accurate identification of linguistic features in text following Biber (1988), who recommended the use of computerized corpus as it enables the verification of results and the direct comparison of results from one study to the next.

Book blurbs were divided into different categories for the purpose of clarity and precision. Categorization of data was established on the basis of the categorization acclaimed by eminent linguists and experts of discourse community (Gea-Valor, 2005; Cacchiani, 2007; Basturkmen, 1999; Onder, 2013). The division of book blurbs in different categories was made with reference to three variables i.e. publisher location, publication medium and literary source. Figure 1 presents the schematic division of book blurb data.

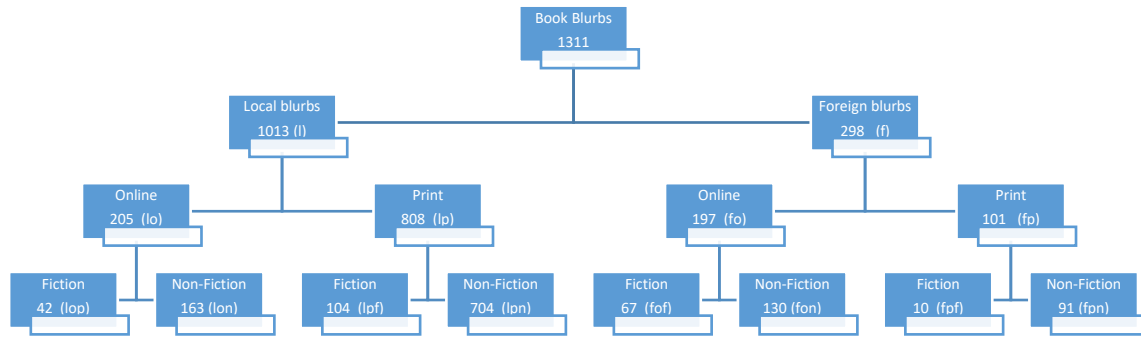


Figure 1. Schematic Representation of Book Blurb Data

The above figure shows the systematic categorization of book blurbs along with their codes and number of sample blurb texts used in this study. The figure is explained below.

3.1 Division of book blurbs with reference to Publisher Location.

As shown in Figure 1, at the highest level, book blurbs (total 1311, a corpus of 0.4 million words) were divided in two main categories, with reference to publisher location. The detail of main categories is given below:

1. Foreign Blurbs (code- f) included blurbs for books written by Pakistani authors and published by foreign publishing houses. Total number: 298
2. Local Blurbs (code- l) included blurbs for books written by Pakistani authors and published by local publishing houses. Total number: 1013

3.2 Division of Book Blurbs with Reference to Publication Medium

Two main categories of book blurbs were further split into four sub-categories with reference to publication medium (online & print).

1. Foreign online blurbs (code- fo) comprised blurbs for Pakistani books, provided online by foreign publishers. Total number is 197
2. Foreign print blurbs (code- fp) comprised blurbs for Pakistani books, printed by foreign publishers. Total number is 101

3. Local online blurbs (code- lo) comprised blurbs for Pakistani books, provided online by local publishers. Total number is 205
4. Local print blurbs (code- lp) comprised blurbs for Pakistani blurbs, printed by local publishers. Total number is 808

3.3 Division of Book Blurbs with Reference to Literary Source

To explore linguistic variation at micro level, four sub-categories of book blurbs were further divided into eight sub-sub-categories with reference to literary source (fiction & non-fiction). Four categories of fiction blurbs and four categories of non-fiction blurbs were included. Detail of eight categories based on literary source is given below with specific category codes.

1. Foreign online fiction blurbs (code- fof): Blurbs provided by foreign publishers, accessed online, written for fiction books. Total number: 67
2. Foreign online non-fiction blurbs (code- fon): Blurbs provided by foreign publishers, accessed online, written for non-fiction books. Total number: 130
3. Foreign print fiction blurbs (code- fpf): Blurbs printed by foreign publishers, found in print form, written for fiction books. Total number: 10
4. Foreign print non-fiction blurbs (code- fpn): Blurbs printed by foreign publishers, found in print form, written for non-fiction books. Total number: 91
5. Local online fiction blurbs (code- lof): Blurbs provided by local publishers, accessed online, written for fiction books. Total number: 42
6. Local online non-fiction blurbs (code- lon): Blurbs provided by local publishers, accessed online, written for non-fiction books. Total number: 163
7. Local print fiction blurbs (code- lpf): Blurbs printed by local publishers, found in print form, written for fiction books. Total number: 104
8. Local print non-fiction blurbs (code- lpn): Blurbs printed by local publishers, found in print form, written for non-fiction books. Total number: 704

(For explanation of data, see Appendix A).

3.4 Inter-Categorical Comparisons

Three main inter-categorical comparisons were carried out. First major comparison was conducted between blurbs categorized with reference to publisher location – foreign book blurbs

and local book blurbs. This comparison was based on the assumption that Pakistani book blurbs published by local publishing houses may use a different choice of co-occurring linguistic features from those published by foreign publishing houses because of different socio-cultural situations in which they are produced. Kathpalia (1997) in this regard argued that socio-cultural factors, especially the pragmatic value in a specific professional business context, would affect how genre is constructed and its success in various situations and environments. However, present study has not focused the socio-cultural factors in relation to linguistic variation found in Pakistani blurbs published by foreign publishing houses or local publishing houses.

Second important comparative analysis was carried out between blurbs categorized with reference to publication medium (online blurbs and print blurbs), based on the conjecture that there may be a great deal of difference in the distribution of linguistic features between online blurbs and the blurbs found in traditional print form. The idea is also substantiated by Gea-Valor's (2006) study of the features of book blurbs displayed on internet sources, with a finding that digital features are gradually affecting the rhetoric and structure of traditional printed book blurbs. They involve many innovative and advanced characteristics. However, present study does not take into account the impact of innovative features of online blurbs on print blurbs. It simply gathers the idea of linguistic variation between online and print blurbs and seeks to explore it on textual dimensions to exclude the element of subjective assumptions and to reach findings which are empirically sustained and logically justified.

Third important comparison was carried out between fiction blurbs and non-fiction blurbs. Fiction book blurbs have been analyzed by past studies such as conducted by Bhatia, 2004 and Pontes, 2005, but the internal composition of fiction blurbs was not revealed. Present study took an initiative in this regard and represented the fiction book blurbs through a variety of sub-categories, such as, Novel blurbs, Poetry blurbs, Short Story blurbs, Humor book blurbs and Children book blurbs. Non-fiction blurbs such as, the blurbs for autobiographies, biographies, Memoirs and travel books, included in present data, have not been studied so far. The data with respect to academic book blurbs has been systematically organized and taken from a variety of disciplines which cover approximately the whole range of academic domain introduced across the educational institutions at national and international level. Previous literature examined different categories of academic book blurbs in chunks. The research study conducted by Yang

(2013) studied blurbs for the books of business management, education, legal studies and linguistics from soft sciences and agriculture, life sciences, computer science, electronics from hard sciences. Montesino (2012) studied the blurbs for books of construction engineering and architecture. Chahkandi and Zeinali (2015) examined book blurbs for ELT books. Blurbs for books of business and economics were analyzed by Gesuato (2007). Yang (2013) investigated the rhetorical structure and linguistic choices of blurbs for Literature and linguistics books. Blurbs for art, geography, psychology were studied by Eaglestein and Berman (1990). Present study has built a comprehensive corpus which deals with all these academic book blurbs studied before and the others missing in previous literature.

3.5 Corpus Collection

For online data, the webpages of well reputed and frequently visited publishing houses were searched. A small java program was also written to retrieve blurbs from online book catalogues provided by Oxford University Press, Pakistan, Good Reads and Kitab Ghar, Pakistan.

For the assortment of print data, the renowned institutional libraries in Pakistan were visited. Print data was collected in the form of camera images. For the conversion of images to text files, Text Fairy (a flavor of Google Tesseract tools for Android) was used. To assign codes to the categories, a Java script was written. Methods implemented within Java String Class were used for text manipulation of blurb data. The Java script parsed the blurb data and extracted the initial category code, the author name, the book title, the publisher detail and year of publication. A final category code was created from this information. Lastly, the program renamed the blurb files to respective category codes. The final category code (represented by different alphabets) contained necessary information about the sample blurb. After proper compilation and categorization of whole blurb data, it was sent to Dr Jesse Egbert, Department of English, Northern Arizona University, for tagging and analysis.

3.6 Data Analysis

New Multidimensional analysis, based on the Old Multidimensional analytical approach (Biber, 1988), was used for the analysis of book blurb data in present study. Biber's 1988 Multidimensional approach is deemed to an appropriate, empirical and quantitative approach to

explore linguistic variation between two or more varieties of texts (Biber, 1986, 1995, 2004; Biber & Finegan, 1989; Conrad & Biber, 2001; Biber & Conrad, 2009; Biber *et al.*, 2002).

New MD analysis was based on the new factor solution matrix of the Pakistani book blurb corpus of the current study. Tukey's HSD (Tukey's Honest Significant Difference) were also conducted in present study to process multiple comparisons of all possible pair of means.

3.6.1. Analysis of Book Blurbs Based on New Factor Solution Matrix

New MD analysis was based on new factor solution matrix applied on the whole book blurb data that resulted in the identification of new textual dimensions. Analysis of data was started with the grammatical and semantic tagging of all linguistic features found relevant on different textual dimensions of new MD analysis. Raw frequency score of each grammatically tagged linguistic feature was acquired. To avoid skewing effect of varying length of text included in analysis, the raw frequency scores were normalised to a text length of 1000 words. To ensure that all linguistic features on dimension had equal weightage in the calculation of dimension scores, the normalised frequencies were standardized to the mean of 0.0 and a standard deviation of 1.0. A statistical procedure 'Factor analysis' was employed to identify the co-occurrence patterns across linguistic features. Each set of co-occurring linguistic feature defined a 'dimension' of variation. In order to determine the optimal number of factors to be extracted through new factor solution matrix, a scree plot of Eigen values was examined. Only first four factors which extracted relatively larger groupings of co-occurring linguistic features were included in interpretation. The rest of the factors were not included because they accounted for little amount of shared variance and did not commensurate with the already determined cutoff point, i.e. 30 %. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of the distributional patterns of the sets of co-occurring linguistic features grouped on new factors led to the identification of the following four new linguistic dimensions.

Dimension 1- Abstract Informational Description versus Concrete Human Focus.

Dimension 2- Interactive Stance versus Formal Reportage of Facts.

Dimension 3- Informational Density versus Elaborated Expression.

Dimension 4- Expression of Personal Stance and Judgment

The next step was the computation of Dimension scores for each text. Dimension score were computed by subtracting sum of standardized scores of negative features from the sum of standardized score of positive features. The standardized scores of positive features were taken as dimension scores where negative scores did not occur at all. Mean and standard deviation of each frequency of co-occurring linguistic feature of different categories of book blurbs and the data as a whole were also attained to perform Tukey's HSD (Tukey's honest Significant difference).

A detailed description of analytical steps can be seen in the research study conducted by Qasim *et al.* (2017).

3.6.2. Explanation of Factors

Dimension 1- Abstract Informational Description versus Concrete Human Focus.

Co-occurring distributional patterns of linguistic features on positive polarity of Dimension 1 comprised Attributive Adjectives (score: 0.68), All Adjectives (0.66), Word length (0.53), Topical Adjectives (0.44), Abstract Nouns (0.42), Process Nouns (0.38), coord_conj_phrs (0.32). The negative co-occurring patterns of linguistic features included Human Nouns (-0.33), Proper Nouns (-0.49), 3rd Person pronoun (-0.71) and All personal Pronouns (-0.78).

The following extract from Foreign online non-fiction blurb exhibits the co-occurring patterns of informational features (bold letters) accumulated on positive polarity.

FONASSSoc.Khan.1999

The **book** is addressed broadly to those concerned with **development** and specifically to those concerned with **collective action issues (institutional economists)** and the role of NGOs in fostering **development and collective action**. The **book** breaks **new ground** in several **ways** – first, in developing a **conceptual framework** within which to view the role of **governments, markets** and NGOs in **a comparative economic context**; and second, by systematically providing **empirical evidence** to highlight various **points** identified in the **conceptual framework**.

The example extract presented above is taken from the discipline of social studies and subject 'sociology'. Human references are found rare. The ultimate objectives of the book i.e. fostering of the notions of conceptual framework and collective action issues in the institutions associated with developmental tasks, are emphasized.

The following excerpt from local print fiction (Novel) comprise features (underlined) associated with concrete human focus. The text highlights briefly the activities of the protagonists to grasp reader's attention in a short span, by making a frequent use of human nouns, proper nouns, third person pronoun and all pronouns. These features are associated with the negative polarity on dimension 1 of new factor analysis.

LPFNov.Hussain.1999.673

Naim, the son of a peasant farmer, loses an arm fighting for the British during the First World War and is decorated for his bravery. But his faith in the Raj has been shattered and on his return to his village in northern India he joins the **newly formed Congress Party** and later the Muslim League, eventually being incarcerated for his political activities. He marries Azra, daughter of a wealthy landowner, but the marriage of this couple from very **different social backgrounds** proves impossible to sustain, thus mirroring the union between the British Empire and its Indian subjects. Finally, Naim's hopes for a united India are swept away after independence in 1947 when his Muslim family is forced to migrate to newly created Pakistan.

In view of shared communicative function performed by the complementary grouping on this factor, the dimension is labeled as “Abstract Informational Description versus Concrete Human Focus.

Dimension 2- Interactive Stance versus Formal Reportage of Facts.

Co-occurring distributional pattern of linguistic features on Factor 2 comprised 11 positive linguistic features showing interactive stance: All modals (0.81), Present Tense Verb (0.78), Possessive Modals (0.52), Prediction modals (0.51), attitudinal adjectives in other contexts (0.4), Mental verbs (0.38), Necessity models (0.34). Moreover, 2 negative features included Past tense verbs (-0.46) and Prepositions (-0.48).

The following example text from foreign online non-fiction blurb shows a comparatively high frequency of interactive features (present tense verb, first person pronoun, attitudinal adjective in other contexts, and second person pronoun, etc). The text is taken from an autobiography blurb, written in an interpersonal tone to add a familiar note to readers. Positive features are bolded and negative features are underlined.

FONAu.Yousafzai.2013.256

I Am Malala is the **remarkable tale** of a family uprooted by **global terrorism**, of the fight for **girls' education**, of a father who, himself a school owner, championed and encouraged his

daughter to write and attend school, and of **brave parents who have a fierce love** for their daughter in a society **that prizes sons**. **I Am Malala will make you believe in the power of one person's voice to inspire change in the world**. Malala Yousafzai **is a 16 years student from Swat, Pakistan**. She is studying in 8th class. She wrote a diary for BBC in early 2009 with a **different name** "Gul Makai", she wrote about the **critical situation** in Swat at that time.

The positive features on this dimension seem to reflect an interactive stance. Many of the features assembled on positive polarity of dimension 2 of new factor analysis, also show a salient loading on dimension 1 of 88 MD analysis (Involved versus informational production).

The following example text is taken from local online non-fiction blurb. It illustrates frequent occurrences of past tense verb and prepositions (underlined), accumulated on negative polarity and are exploited to report facts about book and author.

LONA.Majeed.2006.215

Faiz Ahmed was born in Sialkot in the Punjab, then a part of India under British rule. He studied English and Arabic literatures at Government College, Lahore, receiving in 1932 his MA in English, and in Arabic from Oriental College, Lahore. After graduating, he worked as a teacher in Amritsar and Lahore. In the 1930s, Faiz came under the influence of the leftist Progressive Movement. Under the leadership of Sajjad Zaheer (1905-1973) authors were expected to follow the dictates of the Socialist Realism, but by the 1950s, the movement had ceased to be an effective literary force.

The features on the negative polarity of this dimension are similar to a few features, present on the positive polarity of dimension 2 (narrative versus non-narrative concerns) of Biber's (1988) study. In view of shared communicative function performed by the complementary grouping on this factor, the dimension is labeled as **"Interactive Stance versus Formal Reportage of Facts"**.

Factor 3:

Informational Density versus Elaborated Expression.

Positive features on factor 3 show a high preponderance of nouns. All nouns (.94), pre-modifying nouns (.65), normalizations (.44) and common nouns (.38) co-occur frequently on this dimension reflecting informational density.

This example extract is taken from local print non-fiction blurb. It shows density of information represented by frequent occurrences of all nouns, premodifying nouns, common nouns and nominalizations. Positively loaded features are bolded in the following example text.

LPNASSEco.khan.1997.731

This book expands the **critique of structural adjustment in Pakistan** by presenting **an alternative approach to social and economic development**. **The book** also tackles **the issues of human development and the necessary institutional reforms** required for this **process**.it analyses **the prevalent orthodox adjustment programs** and criticizes the **lack of justice**.

The above local blurb for an academic text has been extracted from discipline ‘social studies’ and the related subject ‘Economics’. The blurb elucidates that the book in question covers all important issues related to human and economic development and institutional reforms. Few features on this dimension are similar to features on the negative polarity of dimension 1 (Affective synthesis versus Specialized information density) of Egbert (2015). These features are also parallel to the features on the negative polarity of dimension 1 (Academic involvement and elaboration versus Information density) of Gray’s (2011) study.

The following blurb excerpt from f (foreign print, non-fiction, academic blurb from the discipline of social studies and subject ‘gender studies) illustrates features performing the communicative function of elaborated expression. The blurb marks the gap in the existing literature regarding the role of women in shaping and framing the scenario which led to the independence of Pakistan. The negatively loaded features are underlined.

FPNASSGs.Ali.2000.27

Various studies have contributed to the changing position and relevance of the Muslim women to society. Some tend to focus on the traditional reformers of Muslim womanhood, or, concentrate on the post-independence position of Indian Muslim women. There still remains a gap, therefore, as far as understanding the chain of developments which gradually opened up a place for Muslim women in terms of their private and public lives. Without knowing these chains of development, it remains difficult to examine how, Muslim society in general and Muslim women in particular responded to these changes and challenges during the decades leading to independence and the creation of Pakistan.

The features of elaboration on negative side of dimension 3 of new factor analysis show correspondence with the features grouped on positive polarity of dimension 3 Explicit/elaborated versus situation-dependent reference) of 88 MD analysis. A few features of elaboration are also

found similar to the positively loaded features of (Academic involvement and elaboration versus Information density) Gray's (2011) study.

Given the co-occurrence pattern of positive and negative features, the interpretive label 'Informational Density versus Elaborated expression' is suggested for dimension 3.

Factor 4:

Expression of Personal Stance and Judgment

Positive features on factor 4 included; to_vb_stance_all (0.87), to_stance_all (0.87), th_vb_stance_all (0.58), th_stance_all (0.56), Infinitive (0.55), vb_all (0.32).

The interpretation of Factor 4 is relatively direct and straightforward, because it comprises only positive features. Negative features do not appear on this dimension. Linguistic feature with heaviest loading is indicated as 'To complement clause controlled by stance verbs (0.87). Heavy representative co-occurrence of stance features in book blurb text characterizes it as a discourse full of personal feelings and expressions.

The following representative text extracted from foreign print non-fiction academic book blurb demonstrates highly frequent occurrences of stance features (to complement clause controlled by stance verbs, sum stance 'to' complement clause controlled by verbs, all verbs, infinitives, etc). Positively loaded features are bolded.

FPNASSPs.Nadeem.2002.

In the past few decades, Pakistan's economy **has been beset by lawlessness**, widespread corruption, financial mismanagement and chaos. **In this book the author undertakes to assess, for the first time, the effect of these abuses on the economic performance of the country.** He does so by presenting a quantitative measurement of the impact of lawlessness on Pakistan economic development with special reference to the years 1969-96---- though other critical periods have also been touched upon. **As an economist and criminologist, turned police officer, Mr. Nadeem has first-hand knowledge of problems related to lawlessness and also well acquainted with the strategies of economic development adopted in Pakistan from time to time. He has, therefore, been able to produce a book with an interdisciplinary appeal, useful for policy makers, economic planners, administrators, police officers, researchers, students and the general readers.** It is the rarest, finest quantitative analysis of the impact of lawlessness on economic development.

The features grouped on this dimension are similar to the features displayed on dimension 2 (Expression of opinions and mental processes) of Hardy and Romer's study (2013) and dimension 3 (Evaluative stance) of Getkham's research study (2013). A few linguistic features of dimension 4 of present study also go parallel to the features of Biber's (2006) dimension labelled as 'Stance focused discourse,' and dimension 3 (Author-centered stance) of Egbert's study (2015).

Given the co-occurrence pattern of positive and negative features, the interpretive label '**Expression of Personal Stance and Judgment**' is suggested for dimension 3.

New MD Analysis of Book Blurb Corpus Based on Tukey's HSD (post-hoc) Tests

Following sections present the detail of new multidimensional analysis of book blurb corpus categorized with respect to three situational variables. To identify in depth variation, Tukey HSD (post-hoc) tests were performed on blurb corpus categorized with reference to publication medium and literary source. Tukey HSD (post-hoc) tests could not be performed on two blurb categories with respect to publisher location.

New MD Analysis of Book Blurbs Categorized with Respect to Publisher Location

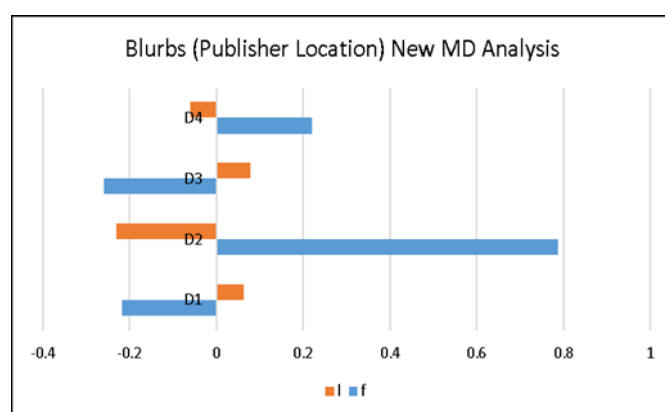


Figure 2. Linguistic Variation across Blurbs Categorized with Respect to Publisher Location.

New factor analysis showed that **f (foreign)** book blurbs tended to reflect concrete human focus to a relatively higher degree and **l (local)** blurbs in comparison seemed more inclined to describe abstract information. On dimension 2 (of new factor analysis), foreign blurbs, appeared

to be dominantly concerned with informal interactive stance, whereas local blurbs simply reported facts in a formal style. On dimension 3 foreign blurbs subsumed an elaborated expression, where as local blurbs used linguistic features which were marked for density of high information. Linguistic features of personal stance and judgment were used more frequently in foreign blurbs than in local blurbs.

New MD Analysis of Book Blurbs Categorized with Respect to Publication Medium

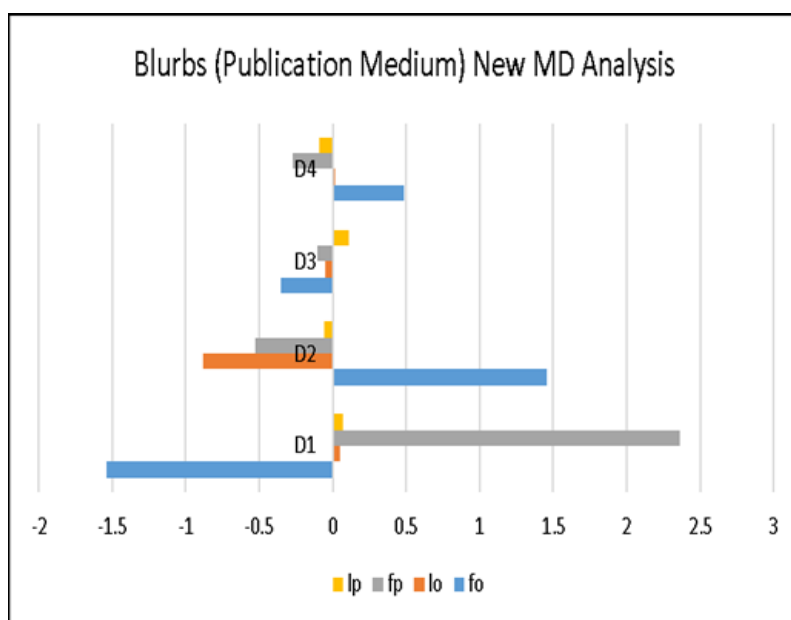


Figure 3. Linguistic Variation across Blurbs Categorized with Respect to Publication Medium

Maximum variation was exhibited between **fo (foreign online blurbs)** and **lp (local print blurbs)** on dimensions 1 and 2 of new factor analysis. Fo (foreign online blurbs) on dimensions 1 and 2, were found more focused on presenting concrete human descriptions, with a relatively high degree of interactive stance. Whereas, lp (local print blurbs) indicated a dominant tendency to present abstract information with a lesser degree of interactive stance. Linguistic variation is also seen across **fo and fp**. On dimension 1, **fp (foreign print blurbs)** appeared to have statistically significant differences with three categories i.e. **fo, lo, and lp**. Fp was found to have a marked feature of describing abstract information, whereas in comparison, fo, lo and lp showed their prevailing tendency for reflecting concrete human focus.

New MD Analysis of Book Blurbs Categorized with Respect to Literary Source

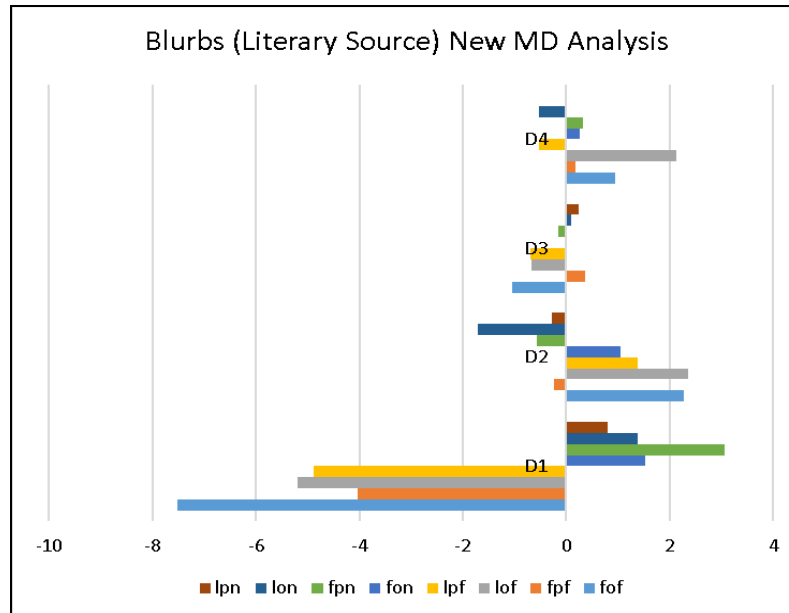


Figure 4. Linguistic Variation across Blurbs Categorized with Respect to Literary Source

On D1, four categories of **Fiction blurbs** (**lpf**, **lof**, **fpf**, **fof**) obtained negative scores, indicating the predominant focus on concrete human descriptions. Other four categories of **Non-fiction blurbs** (**lpn**, **lon**, **fpn**, **fpn**) achieved positive scores, reflecting their emphasis on abstract informational description. On D2, all fiction blurb categories, except **fpf**, appeared with positive scores, indicating the inclusion of the sets of linguistic features associated with interactive stance. Non-fiction blurb categories, except **fpn**, obtained negative scores, showing emphasis on formal reportage of facts. On D3, all fiction and non-fiction blurb categories appeared with statistically non-significant differences. The mean dimension scores of all categories of blurbs were found closer to 0.00, indicating a mixed tendency of blurbs showing informational density and elaborated expression. D4 showed statistically significant differences between fiction and non-fiction blurb categories. Fiction blurbs (**lpf**, **lof**, **fpf**, **fof**) showed positive scores, reflecting an increased trend of expressing personal stance and judgment whereas, non-fiction blurbs (**lpn**, **lon**, **fpn**, **fpn**) obtained negative scores, reflecting a relatively lesser trend of expressing personal stance and judgment.

4. Discussion

From the foregoing detail of the analysis and comparison of book blurb categories on four dimensions of New MD analysis, supplemented by Tukey HSD post hoc tests, it is exhibited that there lie statistically significant differences across several categories along different dimensions. Two main blurb categories with reference to publisher location (f, l) exhibited significant difference on dimension 2. Blurbs provided by foreign publishers are more concerned with interactive stance to show familiarity with the prospect buyers, whereas blurbs provided by local publishers tend to depend upon formal reportage of facts about author and the book in question. The use of interactive features in foreign blurbs reflect the increasing consciousness of foreign publishers to the essential promotional perspective associated with blurbs. The results are in line with several studies (Gea-Valor, 2005; Onder, 2013; Cacchiani, 2007) which emphasize the promotional functions of blurbs related to marketing and business enterprise.

Four blurb categories with reference to publication medium (fo, fp, lo, lp) show maximum variation on dimension 1 and dimension 2 of new MD analysis. Online blurbs are more focused on concrete human descriptions with a relatively clear interactive stance, whereas print blurbs tend to describe abstract and factual information in a formal style. A few features (attributive adjectives and nouns) on positive polarity of dimension 1 of new MD analysis show similarity with the informational features on the negative polarity of dimension 1 of 88 MD analysis (Involved versus informational production, Biber, 1988). They are also parallel to the features on the negative polarity of dimension 1 of Hardy and Romer's (2013) study (Involved, Academic narrative versus Descriptive, informational discourse). Print blurbs, like a stereotypical written discourse show high frequency of informational features, such as attributive adjectives, topical adjectives, abstract nouns, process nouns, cognitive nouns and word length. The informational purpose of blurbs has been extensively discussed by several studies (Gea-Valor, 2005; Basturkmen, 1999, 2009; Chahkandi & Zeinali, 2015). Gea-Valor (2005) argued that the primary purpose of blurb was persuasive and the secondary purpose was informational. Other studies (Basturkmen, 1999, 2009) discussed the role of blurbs as reflecting information about teaching and learning theories in text book blurbs. Present study conforms to this viewpoint, because as proved by the text evidences of print blurbs from academic disciplines,

plenty of information is shared about teaching and learning perspectives followed by the books in question.

Eight blurb categories with reference to literary source also show significant differences on dimensions 1, 2 and 3 of new MD analysis. Fiction blurbs (fof, fpf, lof, lpf) are found focused on concrete human descriptions with prevailing features such as human nouns, proper nouns, 3rd person pronouns and all personal pronouns . They show an interactive stance with dominant linguistic features such as all modals, prediction modals, possessive modals, necessity modals, mental verbs, contractions, present tense verb and use of pronouns. Further the fiction blurbs indicate a relatively clear expression of personal stance and judgement with frequently used linguistic features such as , to_vb_stance_all, to_stance_all, th_vb_stance _all and infinitives. Non-fiction blurb categories (fon, fpn, lon, lpn) show a marked characteristic of intimating abstract information with prevailing features of attributive adjectives, all adjectives and nouns. Dominant use of past tense verbs and prepositions in non-fiction blurbs indicate the tendency of reporting facts in a formal way. Low frequency of stance features on dimension 4 is indicative of a lesser tendency of stance expression in non fiction blurbs.

5. Conclusion

Local blurbs (Pakistani blurbs published by local publishers) showed a much wider range of variation on all dimensions of new MD analysis, reflecting an extended stretch of discourse purposes exhibited by the sample texts. Whereas foreign blurbs (Pakistani blurbs published by foreign publishers) showed comparatively lesser values of range and standard deviation suggesting internal coherence and the close grouping of text scores around the mean score. One probable reason for high internal variation of local blurbs may be the large corpus it possessed, accounting for a fairly broader range of sub-categories ever studied in past. As a larger corpus allows larger opportunities to show variation, so local blurbs reflected a highly variegated linguistic structure.

The study concludes that blurbs invariably reveal the subject matter, discipline and the content of the books for which they are written. They also reflect the size of market and the trends of readership in that specific socio-cultural environment, where they are produced. The differences across eight categories of book blurbs with reference to literary source appear to have

a meaningful pattern validating the fact that blurbs reverberate the books, they stand for. Fiction book blurbs (fof, lof, fpf, lpf), on new dimensions are found to be focused on concrete human descriptions, reveal interactive stance, with a dominant expression of personal stance and judgement. Whereas non-fiction categories (fon, lon, fpn, lpn) are more concerned with describing abstract information and formal reporting of facts with a comparatively lesser tendency of expressing personal stance.

Variation across blurbs categorized with reference to publication medium on New MD analysis exhibited interesting results. On dimensions 1 and 2 of new MD analysis, the online blurbs (fo, lo) show a focus on concrete human descriptions with an interactive stance, in comparison, the print blurbs (fp, lp) are more inclined to describing abstract information and formal reportage of facts. On dimension 4, online blurbs (fo, lo) showed an increased tendency to add positive evaluation through the expression of personal stance and judgment. On the other hand print blurbs (fp and lp) did not solely rely upon stance features. All categories reflected mutual similarity on dimension 3 of new MD analysis. They indicated resemblance in reflecting density of information.

New MD analysis of the book blurb corpus in present study reflected that all blurb categories appeared with mean dimension scores closer to the 0.00, reflecting mixed and intermediate type of discourse purposes either on positive or negative polarity. Anyhow, one noticeable point is that with the exception of a few instances, the blurbs categorized with respect to three situational variables (publisher location, publication medium, literary source) appeared on opposite polarities reflecting marked differences in the discourse purposes they exhibited. The finding correspond firmly with the basic contention of multidimensional analytical approach that there lie no absolute differences among different varieties. Rather different varieties may be similar on some dimensions or dissimilar on other dimensions with more or less degree of similarity or dissimilarity.

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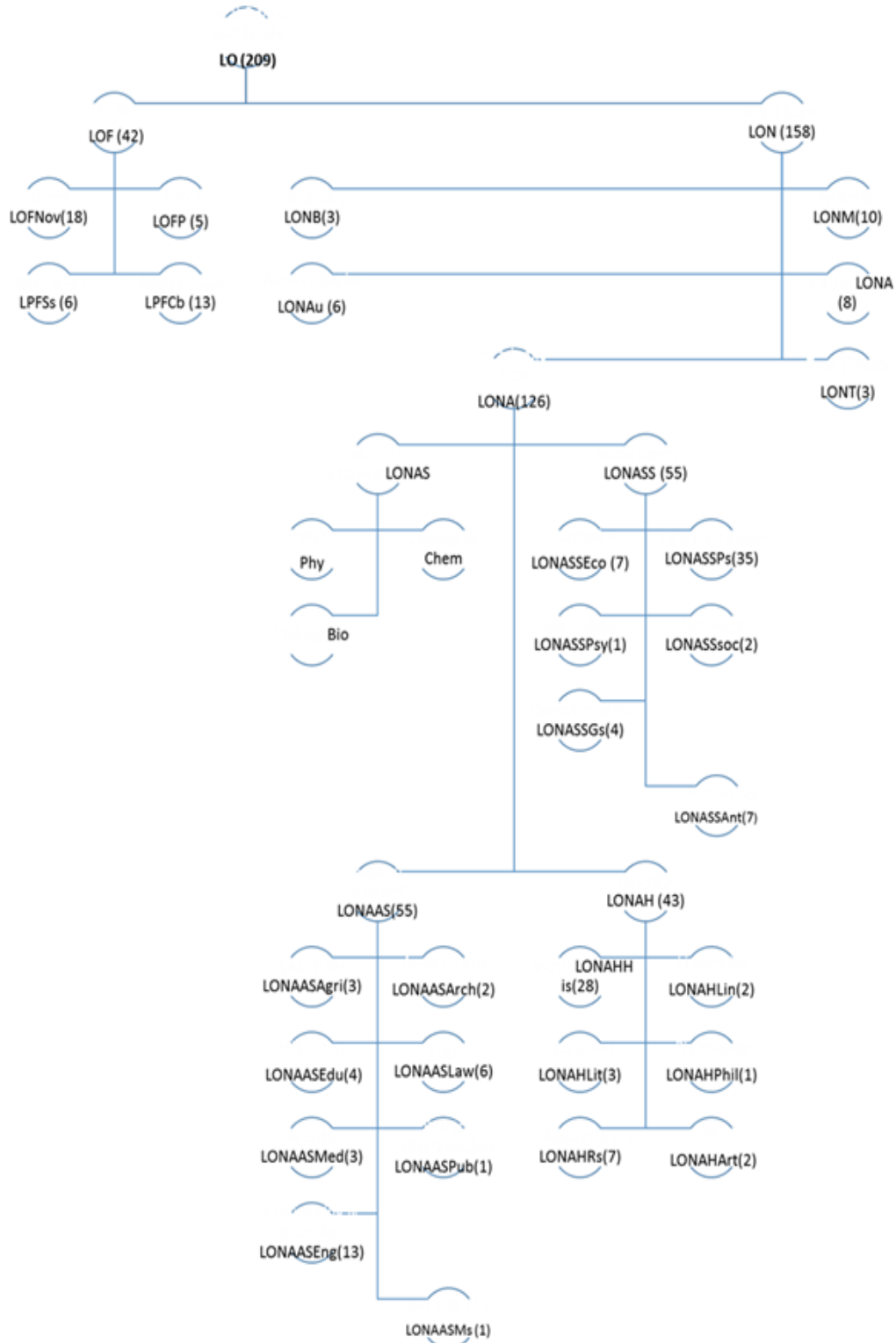
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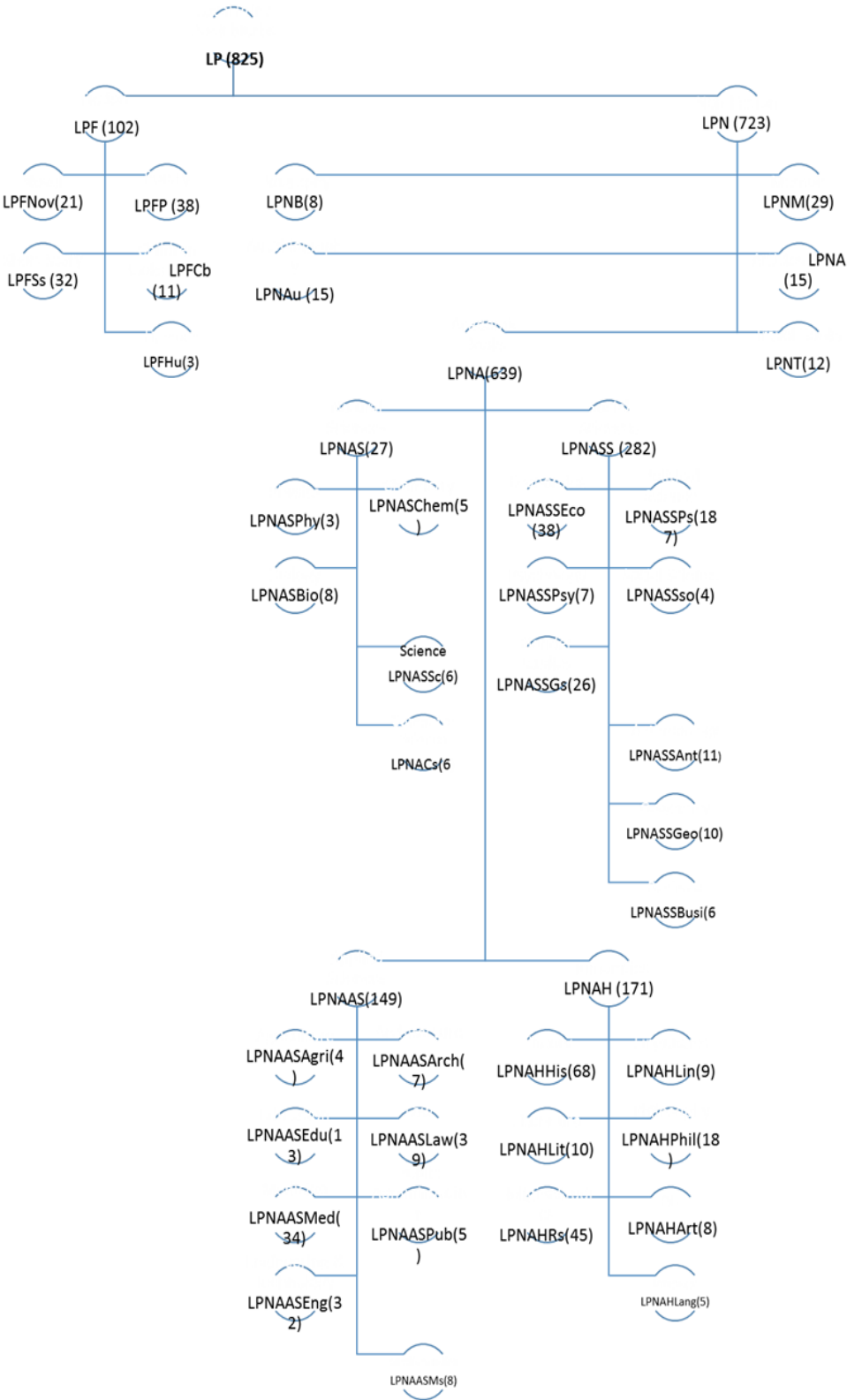
Appendix A

Data Tables

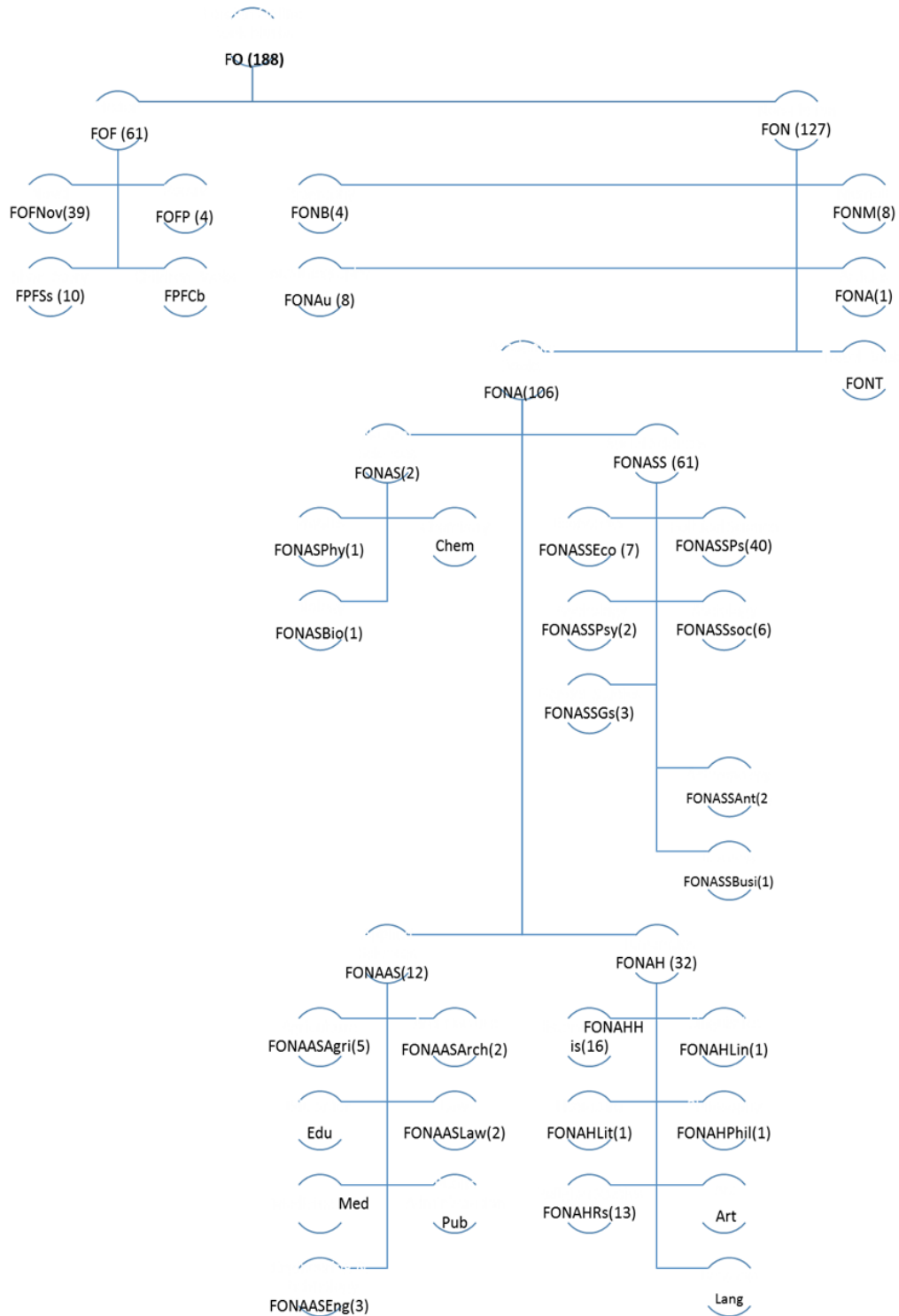
Local Online Blurbs



Data Table of Local Print Blurbs



Data Table of Foreign Online Blurbs



Data Table of Foreign Print Blurbs

