

Generic Patterns in Discussion Sections: A Corpus-Based Analysis of Academic Moves Structures in Dissertations in Pakistan

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Abstract

Writing discussion in dissertation, though has textual generics, yet is influenced by the context, research domain, and writers' linguistic competence. In Pakistan, graduates, despite being non-native English writers, know about the generics of writing discussion; yet, their mother tongue and cultural context influence their writing. In order to compare and contrast the generics of writing discussion, and identify the commonalities and variation; this research aims to explore the academic move-structures in the discussion sections. By adopting Corpus-based research tools corpora of M.Phil. and Ph.D. dissertations from the field of English Linguistics and Education were compiled. Based on Yang and Allison (2003) model the data was analyzed through *Antmover* (text structure analyzer software). Different types of moves in discussion section, such as obligatory, conventional, and optional moves, were analyzed in accordance with the strategies of Kanoksilapatham (2005). The commonalities and contrast in the moves of writing discussion has enabled the researcher in identifying 5-moves generic pattern that can serve as a guideline for novice researchers in writing discussion of the dissertations in the fields of English Linguistics and Education in Pakistan. Furthermore, paying attention to the ways in which these disciplines use specific structural moves would facilitate researchers to become more aware of the need for employing these structural moves in properly discussing the data and results in research.

Keywords: Discussion Sections, Dissertations, Generic Patterns, and Structural Moves.

Introduction

In the entire academic career of a student, dissertation writing is considered as the most important writing project because it is a specific genre that is a communication activity with set goals (Martin, 1999). It is written by research scholars at different academic levels for the fulfillment of degree requirement in Pakistan. Within genres, academic genre has become a popular field for the research as it has a direct impact on the different aspects of the life of those who live in a specific society (Hyland, 2009). Academic writing includes sub-genres which are consistently under the research lens by the researchers from different angles as academic discourse has a significant role in communicating a message effectively. As it is said that communication is an important feature of academic discourse which helps in enhancing learning abilities (Becher & Trowler, 2001). In the academic genres, language investigation at different levels has been an interesting area for the researchers. Academic move-based language analysis has caught major response from the researchers. Swales (2004) said that ‘move’ is meant to be a specific part of a discourse that performs specific communicative functions.

Discussion section in a dissertation can be the most rewarding sections if written with care and proper format. In this section, the researcher communicates to the readers about the actual study conducted. The author comments on what was unknown and what has been explored in the study. The stance of the author needs to be communicated to the readers in a particular way but mostly after conducting very good research the researchers often communicate the results and ‘discussion’ ineffectively (Bitchener & Basturkman, 2006). Non-native writers, do not have the optimum understanding of the generic patterns and technicalities in writing different sections in dissertations (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007). Therefore, this study keeps it lens on academic genre for the purpose of exploring generic patterns of discussion sections in dissertations. In this research, the researcher has investigated the differences and similarities in writing discussion sections of dissertations across the fields of English Linguistics and Education with the purpose of comparing and contrasting these two fields and investigating the models followed by the researchers in their respective fields. The research has analyzed the structural moves with their functions and frequencies in discussion sections of MPhil and Ph.D. dissertations, identified the commonalities and variations in these moves, and developed a comprehensive generic model for guiding novice researcher for writing discussion sections in dissertations.

Literature Review

Each discourse genre has its distinctive features (Swales, 2004); and has several communicative purposes (Swales & Feak, 2009); these features distinguish it from other genres (Holmes, 1997), and the defining feature of communicative purpose is vivid in genre studies (Evans, 1994). Genre analysis has been popularized mainly because of its wide range of implications in the field of applied linguistics (Brett, 1994). It has also given a considerable touch to the practicality of writing genres in the field of EAP classroom. For Bhatia (1993) genre analysis provide the knowledge for establishing the linguistic behavior in an institutionalized setting i.e. academic or professional. Within EAP, Gillet (2016) says that English creates problems for the students as well as researchers in academic setting, therefore; researchers from all over the world have explored the area of English for Academic Purpose (EAP) from various angles. Corpus-based genre analysis helps researchers to explore grammatical items, structures and linguistic patterns in texts through different research parameters and models. From a genre perspective, corpus-based analysis provides an opportunity to the researchers to expose the current patterns of language in use across different academic texts such as research articles and dissertations. Corpus-based analysis sustains a developmental progress to investigate different genres from various research perspectives which results in further learning for the novice researchers. Genre analysis and corpus-based investigations in combination have caught the attention of the researchers. Works on genre analysis through corpus-based investigations have been the recent development in the field that have provided many new opportunities to the field of linguistic (Paltridge, 2001; Wennerstrom, 2003; Swales, 2004).

Corpus-based analysis got attention of the researchers; therefore, it has been integrated in different fields because of the empirical nature of the research (Neumann, 2013). Hinton (2020) discussed the efficacy of corpus-based analysis in research articles, and asserted that it develops critical thinking as it goes into in-depth analysis of the data. Researchers by employing corpus methodology have explored different linguistic entities and structures in different genres. McEnery and Gabrielatos (2005) said that corpus-based analysis is mostly conducted for academic language comparison to a specific norm, and has the tendency to produce quality research results. Recently the trend of conducting research using different techniques of corpus linguistics has spread to a wide range of fields, for instance pedagogy (Flowerdew & Forest, 2009), literature (Biber, 2011), and the anxieties of translators (Vieira,

2020). Flowerdew (2015) has established the link between corpus and pedagogical application for academic purposes by identifying the lexical items and rhetorical structures in academic texts. Deroey and Taverniers (2011) have conducted a research on the spoken language used during lectures, and identified the main features of language use in spoken form for effective communication in classroom. Tas (2008), conducted corpus-based analysis of the introductory chapters of theses and research articles in the field of English Language Teaching with reference to CARS model. The study investigated the lexico-grammatical features and rhetorical structures, and found that research articles are refined in terms of move-structures as compared to theses. Khattak and Shehzad (2019a) conducted corpus-based analysis of the Specificity of Academic Verbs in introduction sections of PhD Dissertations in English Studies in Pakistan. Whereas, in the same year, a corpus based analysis of the forms and functions of nominalization in PhD Dissertations in English Studies in Pakistan, was also carried by Khattak and Shehzad (2019b).

In terms of research-oriented writing moves, Swales (1981, 1990) has given the idea of a move which is commonly utilized for some specific communicative function and it carries a purpose. These moves are analyzed to explore textual structure in writings. Bhatia (1993) explains that a move's characteristics are bound to genres, and understanding of the moves gives an insight of a specific genre and elaborates the functions of a text in a particular environment. Swales' move framework has been employed in move analysis of selected sections of research articles and dissertations in different disciplines (Brett, 1994; Peacock, 2002; & Samraj, 2002). Bunton (2002) identified the communicative moves in the introductory chapter of Ph.D. dissertations. Geçikli (2013) conducted a study on the introduction sections of PhD dissertations of Turkish and English students. Shehzad and Abbas (2015) conducted a corpus-based genre analysis of the schematic sequence and moves in the Introductory Chapters of M.Phil theses. Thompson (2009) explored the textual moves in writing Literature Review chapter. Yang and Allison (2003) analyzed the structural moves in encoding results in dissertations, that has now been used as a model for knowing the generics of writing result section. Peacock (2002) investigated the move patterns in Conclusion Sections. Shah and Abbas (2016), also, conducted a study on move patterns and authorial stance in the Conclusion Chapters of M.Phil thesis. Abdullah (2018) by following the concepts of Schematic Structure on Literature Reviews (Jian, 2010), and Rhetorical Moves of discussion sections (Nodoushan & Khakbaz, 2011) analyzed the structural moves in the Literature Review and discussion sections of International Postgraduate Theses and Dissertation on ELT and Applied Linguistics

from genre-analytic perspective. Nodoushan (2012) also studied the textual structures of the discussion section in graduate studies in Iran. Even, Irfan *et al* (2021) studied digital classroom pedagogy, learning, and assessment methods in higher education in Pakistan amidst the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.

Researchers around the globe have widely analyzed different sections of research articles such as abstract, introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion and conclusion; however, there is a dire need for investigating different sections and sub-sections in dissertations across different field (Akbarian et al., 2017; Amalia et al., 2018; Amnuai & Wannaruk, 2013; Maswana et al., 2015; Shi & Wannaruk, 2014; Zamani & Ebadi, 2016; Zamin & Hasan, 2018). Keeping in view the existing research and future prospects of academic writing, this research has investigated the discussion sections of both M.Phil and PhD dissertations in the field of English Linguistics and Education with the objectives of exploring the commonalities and differences, identifying a comprehensive generic model for the future pedagogical implementation and bringing further improvement in writing discussion sections in dissertations.

Research Methodology

In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives of the study, quantitative research method was selected by the researcher. It is a corpus-based study and corpus software Antmover (text structure analyzer software) was used as an instrument for the analysis of the data. Data for the study was selected through purposive sampling technique (Guarte and Barrios, 2006), and was converted into Sample Corpora. In total four sample corpora were developed, each contained Discussion sections of fifteen dissertations i.e. fifteen MPhil in English linguistics, fifteen MPhil Education, fifteen Ph.D. in English linguistics, and fifteen Ph.D. Education respectively. Two methods of analysis such as analysis through Antmover as well as manual analysis of the data was conducted in order to bring more validity to the results. The AntMover was used to input each discussion from the corpus in order to determine its move structure. Yang and Allison's (2003) model was used as a theoretical framework for exploring the rhetorical move sequences and occurrences in the texts of the discussion sections. Descriptive statistics was also made a part of the study for the frequencies of the employed rhetorical moves in the corpus. Frequencies and moves identified by the software Antmover were compared to manually identified frequencies and moves. Manual analysis of the data was conducted because Yang and Allison's (2003) model is designed for human coders of the data

which brings more authenticity to the results when it is compared with results achieved through software (Nodoushan, 2012). Quantitative approach was used to identify moves and note down their frequencies to produce a profound description of the communicative moves present in the discussion sections. The model consists of the following seven moves:

Table 1

Yang and Allison (2003) Move-Structure Framework

Move 1 Background Information	
Move 2 Reporting Results	
Move 3 Summarizing Results	
Move 4 Commenting on Results	Step 1 Interpreting Results
	Step 2 Comparing results with Literature
	Step 3 Accounting for Results
	Step 4 Evaluating Results
Move 5 Summarizing the Study	
Move 6 Evaluating the Study	Step 1 Indicating Limitation
	Step 2 Indicating significance or Advantage
	Step 3 Evaluating Methodology
Move 7 Deduction from the research	Step 1 Making Suggestions
	Step 2 Recommending Further research
	Step 3 Drawing Pedagogical Implication

The moves were compared to each other in the light of the above model. Furthermore, for the frequencies and categorization of communicative moves, the criteria for justifying and classifying the frequency of each move were defined according to Kanoksilapatham (2005) that is if a particular move occurs 100%, it is an ‘obligatory’, move; if a particular move occurs within the range of 60 %-99%, it is ‘conventional’ move; and if the occurrence of move is below 60%, the move is regarded as ‘optional’. The study also took guideline from the analytical framework used by Nodoushan (2012), and Amnuai and Wannaruk (2013).

Analysis and Discussion

a. Analysis of Structural Moves in M.Phil English Theses ‘Discussion’ Sections

Table 2

Moves Status in ‘Discussion’ Sections of M.Phil English Theses

Moves	M.Phil English Corpus (N = 5)	Status
M1: Background Information	5(100%)	Obligatory
M2: Reporting Results	5(100%)	Obligatory
M3: Summarizing Results	2(20%)	Optional
M4: Commenting on Results	3(60%)	Conventional
• S1: Interpreting Results	3	
• S2: Comparing Results with Literature	2	
• S3: Accounting for Results	2	
• S4: Evaluating Results	2	
M5: Summarizing the Study	2(40%)	Optional
M 6: Evaluating the Study	2(40%)	Optional
• S1: Indicating Limitations	2	
• S2: Indicating Significance/Advantage	2	
• S3: Evaluating Methodology	1	
M 7: Deductions from the Research	3(60%)	Conventional
• S1: Making Suggestions	3	
• S2: Recommending Further Research	3	
• S3: Drawing Pedagogic Implications	2	

Table 3

Availability of Structural Moves in M.Phil English Theses ‘Discussions’

Moves	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	Total
M1: Background Information	+	+	+	+	+	5
M2: Reporting Results	+	+	+	+	+	5
M3: Summarizing Results	–	–	–	+	+	02
M4: Commenting on Results	+	+	–	–	+	03
M5: Summarizing the Study	–	+	–	+	–	02
M 6: Evaluating the Study	+	–	+	–	–	02
M 7: Deductions from the Research	+	–	+	+	–	03

Table 2 and 3 shares all the details after analyzing the data of 5 M.Phil English Theses. Moves are identified as '*Obligatory*', '*Conventional*' and '*Optional*'. Kanoksilapatham (2005) has set the criteria for the moves. It has been justified that the frequency of each move shall be recorded. It is said that move occurred with 100% ratio is regarded as 'obligatory' move. If a particular move occurred in 'discussion' section with the range of 60% to 99%, this move is regarded as a 'conventional' move. In addition to it, if a move occurrence is recorded below 60 %, it is regarded as an 'optional' move. In the light of research objectives and questions, move identification process has been carried out.

As shown in Table 2, *M1* and *M2* were found as the most frequently occurring moves in M.Phil English Theses. *M1* and *M2* both stand obligatory moves because these two moves occur in every research 'discussion' section. *M4* and *M7* are recorded as conventional moves as the range of the occurrences stand between 60% and 90%. *M3*, *M5* and *M6* are noted as optional moves because the range is less than the required range. All these moves are regarded as communicative moves which are present for a particular purpose in these theses. These moves are used for the purpose of communicating results to the readers. At M.Phil level, researchers in the field of English have mostly pay attention to *Move 1* and *Move 2*. Frequencies of moves varied throughout the process. All the three categories such as obligatory, conventional and optional were found in the analysis. In 'discussion' sections of M.Phil theses, researchers pay attention to all the three categories. *Move 4* is recorded as conventional move because it was found in 60% theses but it is very well written by the researchers. Classifying the frequency of each move is set by Kanoksilapatham (2005). According to this model, all the moves are classified into their specific categories. The categories are divided as per the proper format given above.

At M.Phil level, these moves occurred according to the researcher understanding of the results. All the authors have introduced their results in a proper way. They have given all the details of the results. Followed by the introduction of the results, the authors systematically report their results. Whatever the results are, they are reported after a proper introduction. Here a slight change has been noted that mostly authors have skipped *Move 3*. Researchers have not paid attention to summarizing the results and that is the reason that *Move 3* becomes an optional move. This move has been found in only 20% theses. Although the findings in the table partially deviates from the above model which says that *Move 2* and *Move 3* are obligatory but here *Move 3* does not fall in the category of obligatory moves. The findings over here are in

line with Chen and Kuo (2012) which says that Move 1 and Move 2 are obligatory in Masters' theses. Move 2 stands obligatory while Move 3 falls in optional category. The occurrences of moves are deviating from each other and their sequence also contradicts with the model given by Yang and Allison (2003).

b. Analysis of Structural Moves in M.Phil Education Theses

Table 4

Moves Status in 'Discussion' Sections of M.Phil Education Theses

Moves	M.Phil Education Corpus (N = 5)	Status
M1: Background Information	5(10%)	Obligatory
M2: Reporting Results	5(100%)	Obligatory
M3: Summarizing Results	2(20%)	Optional
M4: Commenting on Results	4(80%)	Conventional
• S1: Interpreting Results	6	
• S2: Comparing Results with Literature	7	
• S3: Accounting for Results	2	
• S4: Evaluating Results	1	
M5: Summarizing the Study	1(20%)	Optional
M 6: Evaluating the Study	-	-
• S1: Indicating Limitations	-	-
• S2: Indicating Significance/Advantage	-	
• S3: Evaluating Methodology	-	
M 7: Deductions from the Research	2(40%)	Optional
• S1: Making Suggestions	2	
• S2: Recommending Further Research	2	
• S3: Drawing Pedagogic Implications	1	

Table 5

Availability of Structural Moves in M.Phil Education Theses 'Discussion' Sections

Moves	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	Total
M1: Background Information	+	+	+	+	+	5
M2: Reporting Results	+	+	+	+	+	5
M3: Summarizing Results	-	+	-	+	-	2
M4: Commenting on Results	+	+	+	+	+	4
M5: Summarizing the Study	+	-	-	-	-	01
M 6: Evaluating the Study	-	-	-	-	-	0
M 7: Deductions from the Research	+	-	-	+	-	02

During the analysis of M.Phil Education theses, the researcher has found that authors do not follow the sequence of Yang & Allison (2003) model. They follow the moves accordingly but they deviate from the sequence. It is for the purpose that writing the 'discussion' sections in a thesis requires sublime efforts to communicate the results.

Researchers utilize different writing skills to make it easier for the readers. Different techniques are adopted by the writers to convey their results. Here in this study, the researcher found that in both M.Phil English and M.Phil Education theses, proper sequences are not followed. A noticeable change that has been noted in M.Phil Education theses is that researchers have combined *M2* and *M4*. Move 2 is reporting results and Move 4 is commenting on the results. Here, researchers adopted a new move which is the combo move of Move 2 and Move 4. When an author reports results, starts commenting on it as well and skips Move 3 for a while. This type of scenario is not found in M.Phil English these. It is only explored in M.Phil Education theses. Therefore, it is clear to say that a visible difference has been found in writing ‘discussion’ sections in two different disciplines.

Figure 1

Comparative Analysis of Moves Structures in M.Phil. Theses

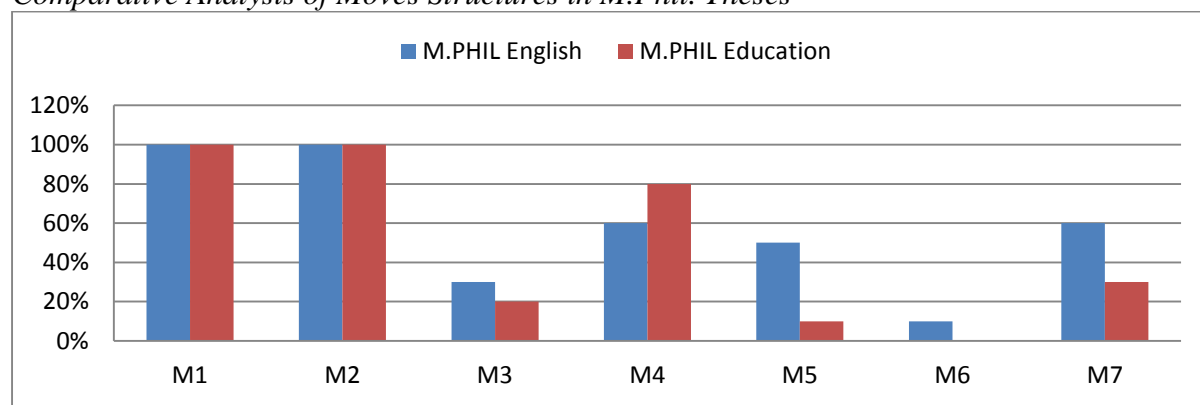


Table 6

Compare and Contrast Table of Structural Moves in Theses ‘Discussion’ Sections across Disciplines

M.Phil English Theses		M.Phil Education Theses	
Frequent Moves	Less Frequent Moves	Frequent Moves	Less Frequent Moves
M1	M3	M1	M3
M2	M5	M2 + M4	M5
M4	M6		M6
M7	—	—	M7

c. Analysis of Structural Moves in ‘Discussion’ Sections of Ph.D. Dissertations

Writing dissertations at Ph.D. level is an important project falling in the category of academic writing. It requires a lot of hard work and determination. It is considered as a challenge for the scholars who are up to receive doctorate degree. Writing dissertation for the first time can be an intimidating job because it has several chapters and sections and each

require a specific format and structure. In Pakistan, it can be much more challenging because here the researcher mostly uses English as second language. Paltridge and Starfield (2007) share their view that thesis or dissertation writers might be the second language users of English and can face problems while writing different chapters of a thesis or dissertation. It is also clear that all the chapters are equally important and need sincere attention during writing. Academic writing at an advanced level is therefore more than ‘just getting ideas down on paper’ and being sure that they are in ‘good English’ (Atkinson & Curtis, 1998, p. 17). Therefore, to achieve the purpose of this study, in this section, the researcher has analyzed ‘discussion’ sections in Ph.D. dissertations for structure moves. In the previous section, ‘discussion’ sections of M.Phil English and M.Phil Education theses have been analyzed and results are reported. Here, ‘discussion’ sections of two diverse field i.e. English and Education at Ph.D. level are analyzed. Five Ph.D. dissertations of English and five Ph.D. dissertations of Education have been selected and analyzed to look for obligatory, conventional and optional moves in two different disciplines. Frequencies of these moves are recorded and are presented in the tables below. The frequencies of moves are compared to each other at Ph.D. level and the commonalities and differences are noted down. In the light of these commonalities and differences and new writing model is proposed to guide novice researchers in the field. In the light of the analysis held in this section, it will work as a guideline for the upcoming research projects in the field as Biggs et al. (1999) and Torrance and Thomas (1994) found that native and non-native thesis writers benefited from explicit instruction on how to structure a thesis sections.

Table 7

Moves Status in ‘Discussion’ Sections of Ph.D. English Theses

Moves	Ph.D. English Corpus (N = 10)	Status
M1: Background Information	5(100%)	Obligatory
M2: Reporting Results	5(100%)	Obligatory
M3: Summarizing Results	2(40%)	Optional
M4: Commenting on Results	3(60%)	Conventional
• S1: Interpreting Results	3	
• S2: Comparing Results with Literature	2	
• S3: Accounting for Results	1	
• S4: Evaluating Results	2	
M5: Summarizing the Study	2(40%)	Optional
M 6: Evaluating the Study	1(20%)	Optional
• S1: Indicating Limitations	1	
• S2: Indicating Significance/Advantage	1	
• S3: Evaluating Methodology	1	
M 7: Deductions from the Research	3(60%)	Conventional
• S1: Making Suggestions	3	
• S2: Recommending Further Research	3	
• S3: Drawing Pedagogic Implications	3	

The above table no. 7 reports the frequencies and status of seven different moves in Ph.D. English dissertations. All the dissertations have been analyzed for move structures. Writers have utilized all the moves in ‘discussion’ sections with varied frequencies. According to Kanoksilapatham (2005) and Amnuai and Wannaruk (2013), moves are categorized in three categories such as: *Obligatory*, *Conventional* and *Optional*. After the analysis, it is found that the most occurring move in ‘discussion’ sections of Ph.D. dissertations is *M1* and *M2*. They are regarded as *Obligatory* Moves with 100% occurrence in all dissertations. The only conventional move is *M4*. It is regarded as conventional because it occurs in 3 out of 5 dissertations with 60%. The rest of the moves i-e *M3*, *M5* and *M6* falls in the category of optional moves. While *M7* is all set in conventional move categories. *M3* occurrence is recorded as 2 out of 5 with 40%. *M5* occurs in 2 out of 5 dissertations. *M6* is recorded in only one dissertation out of 5. Moreover, *M7* occurs 3 times in 5 dissertations. In all, these moves occurred with their specific frequencies in Ph.D. English dissertations’ ‘discussion’ sections. Researchers have mainly paid attention to utilize Move 1 and Move 2. Move 6 got less attention than Move 1 and Move 2. The rest of the moves received less attention than all. It is clear from the results that differences are there at two different degree levels in the field of English. Researchers utilize structural moves to communicate their results to readers. The results produced in the current study reveal certain commonalities and differences. In the light of these differences and commonalities, a new structural model is produced in the current study to guide novice researcher in the field.

According to Paltridge and Starfield (2007), many second-language researchers are unaware of writing theses and dissertations according to the new trends in the world. The present particular challenge achieved in this study also gives deep understanding of structuring ‘discussion’ sections in a thesis or dissertation. When the data at Ph.D. level is analyzed and compared to M.Phil data, it is found that little deviation is there at two different degree levels. According to the current study, Move 7 was a conventional move at M.Phil and similarly, the case of *M7* is handled and it is regarded as conventional move. In the rest of the moves, slight deviation has also been recorded with a little change in percentage of different moves. Deviation in the statistics of moves is encircled with the writers’ approach towards the subject. It may be dependent on the requirement of the field. Researchers communicate their results according to their own understanding of the subject but when it is not according to a specified format, readers do not grab the main concept of the study. If the results of the study are transmitted to audience according to a particular structure, readers are in a better position to

understand it. Considering the results of the current study, they are in line with Chen and Kuo (2012) which says that Move 1 and Move 2 are obligatory in Masters' theses. Move 2 stands obligatory while Move 3 falls in optional category. Similar to M.Phil theses, frequencies of moves are not in line with Yang and Allison (2003) structural moves model.

Table 8

Availability of Structural Moves in Ph.D. English Dissertations' 'Discussion' sections

Moves	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	Total
M1: Background Information	+	+	+	+	+	5
M2: Reporting Results	+	+	+	+	+	5
M3: Summarizing Results	+	–	–	+	–	02
M4: Commenting on Results	+	+	–	+	–	3
M5: Summarizing the Study	–	–	+	+	–	2
M 6: Evaluating the Study	–	–	–	–	–	01
M 7: Deductions from the Research	–	+	+	–	+	3

d. Analysis of Structural Moves in 'Discussion' Sections of Ph.D. Education Theses

Table 9

Moves Status in 'Discussion' Sections of Ph.D. Education Theses

Moves	Ph.D. Education Corpus (N = 5)	Status
M1: Background Information	5(100%)	Obligatory
M2: Reporting Results	5(100%)	Obligatory
M3: Summarizing Results	2(10%)	Optional
M4: Commenting on Results	4(80%)	Conventional
• S1: Interpreting Results	4	
• S2: Comparing Results with Literature	3	
• S3: Accounting for Results	2	
• S4: Evaluating Results	2	
M5: Summarizing the Study	2(40%)	Optional
M 6: Evaluating the Study	2(40%)	Optional
• S1: Indicating Limitations	1	
• S2: Indicating Significance/Advantage	1	
• S3: Evaluating Methodology	1	
M 7: Deductions from the Research	3(60%)	Optional
• S1: Making Suggestions	3	
• S2: Recommending Further Research	3	
• S3: Drawing Pedagogic Implications	3	

In this part of the analysis, table 9 shows the current status of structural moves in Ph.D. Education theses. Differences have been noticed from that of Ph.D. English dissertations. The

differences are noted in terms of the categorization of obligatory, conventional and optional moves and also the difference is visible with respect to the format and sequence of the moves. During the analysis of Ph.D. Education dissertations, it is found that *M1* and *M2* are in line with Ph.D. English dissertations. Despite the different fields, both of the moves are obligatory. Authors have paid attention to them and structured their ‘discussion’ sections in such a manner that Move 1 and Move 2 are the starting moves with 100% occurrences. Next in line occurs *M3*, which is found in the category of optional moves. Similar to the authors of Ph.D. English dissertations, the authors of Ph.D. Education dissertations also did not include this move while writing ‘discussion’ sections. When it comes to Move 4, in the results, it came to know that it is a conventional move recorded 80%. Similar to English dissertations, it is also a conventional move but the percentage varies in both disciplines. It was recorded with 60% occurrences in English dissertations. One major difference found regarding this move in two disciplines is regarding the position and sequence of the move. It is noticed during the analysis of Ph.D. Education dissertations that Move 4 often comes in combo with Move 2. Authors have made a direct interaction between Move 2 and Move 4. The case is opposite in Ph.D. English dissertations. However, the similar situation is also noticed during the analysis of M.Phil Education theses. Here in the current study, it is the main difference found between the two disciplines. Afterwards, *M5* and *M6* are found optional moves. While *M7* are found with the percentage of 60, therefore, it is regarded as conventional move.

In the current analysis, all the moves and their sequences are noted and reported properly in Table 9. The results of the current portion are when compared with the analysis of the previous sections a visible difference and similarity can be seen in the frequencies as well as the sequence of the moves. The sequence of moves in M.Phil and Ph.D. English theses are different from that of the sequence in M.Phil and PhD Education theses. All seven moves are present in both disciplines at two different degree levels but their frequencies vary from one another. The researcher further noted that authors of both disciplines inculcate these moves to provide a deep understanding of the subject to readers and especially for the purpose to guide novice researchers in the field. The purpose of the current study is achieved when it is found that at both M.Phil and Ph.D. levels, similarities and differences exist in terms of move structures and move occurrences. It can be further deduced from the analysis that the communicative purpose of ‘discussion’ section is achieved through these moves. Besides, in the ongoing portion of this study, it is once again noticed that as similar to the M.Phil Education

theses, authors also do not follow the sequence of moves given by Yang and Allison (2003) in Ph.D. Education theses.

Moves remain the same but their sequences are interchanged. Authors have given their best to write ‘discussion’ sections at both degree levels. They have communicated their findings of the study in such a way that readers easily grab the main idea of a study. The cycle of the moves varies from one discipline to another. All of the moves are used for different communicative purposes.

Table 10

Availability of Moves in Ph.D. Education Theses ‘Discussion’ Sections

Moves	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	Total
M1: Background Information	+	+	+	+	+	5
M2: Reporting Results	+	+	+	+	+	5
M3: Summarizing Results	+	–	–	–	+	2
M4: Commenting on Results	+	+	+	–	+	4
M5: Summarizing the Study	+	–	–	+	–	2
M 6: Evaluating the Study	+	–	–	+	–	02
M 7: Deductions from the Research	+	–	–	+	+	03

The above table 10 is drawn for the purpose to enlighten readers’ mind with the presence and absence of moves in ‘discussion’ sections of Ph.D. Education dissertations. The moves are analyzed according to the model presented by Yang and Allison (2003).

Table 11

Compare and Contrast Table of Moves in ‘Discussion’ Sections across Disciplines

Ph.D. English Theses		Ph.D. Education Theses	
Frequent Moves	Less Frequent Moves	Frequent Moves	Less Frequent Moves
M1	M3	M1	M3
M2	M5	M2 + M4	M5
M4	M6	–	M6
M7	–	–	M7

e. Comprehensive Communicative Move Model for Writing ‘Discussion’ Section

Paltridge and Starfield (2007) say that “The ‘discussion’ chapter is often in a kind of reverse form from the introduction section” (p. 78). Yang and Allison (2003) presented a model for communicating. Chen and Kuo (2012) presented a new version of communicative moves

model but no study has been conducted on Pakistani dissertations to explore the communicative moves structure in ‘discussion’ chapters. The current research has explored M.Phil and Ph.D. dissertations across two disciplines in the light of Yang and Allison (2003) model in association with Chen and Kuo (2012) and Kanoksilapatham (2005) and found some variations of moves in terms of its sequences and frequencies in ‘discussion’ sections of selected dissertations. The studies by Basturkman and Bitchener (2005) and Bitchener and Basturkman (2006) have shed lights on the difficulties encountered by second-language students while writing this part of their thesis. It is argued that students are mostly unaware of the technicalities of this section in their dissertations. Therefore, after the results achieved in this study, a 5-moves comprehensive communicative model is presented for the guidance of novice writers.

Table 12

Communicative Moves Model for Writing ‘Discussion’ Sections in Dissertations

Move#	Title	Function
Move 1	Background Overview	To provide basic information about the current research to the readers
Move 2	Reporting Results	To present the original results achieved after the analysis of the data
Move 4	Discussing Results	Interpreting results with respect to topic, relating and evaluating results
Move 4	Deductions from the Research	To draw inferences from the research. i-e Future research gaps, recommendations and pedagogical implications
Move 5	Summarizing the Study	To summarize the overall research

Conclusion

Going forward, the study revealed that all the seven moves presented in Yang and Allison (2003) model are present with variations in their frequencies and sequence. ‘Obligatory’, ‘conventional’ and ‘optional’ moves across the fields of English linguistics and Education are identified. M1 and M2 in both fields fall in the category of ‘obligatory’ moves both at M.Phil and Ph.D. levels. M4 and M7 at M.Phil and Ph.D. English levels are found in the category of conventional moves while at M.Phil and Ph.D. Education levels, only M4 joins the category of conventional moves while M7 races for optional moves. Similarly, the other moves are also regarded as optional moves. Moreover, the differences and commonalities were found in both of the fields in terms of ‘moves’ frequencies. Disciplinary variations can be the reason for the ‘obligatory’, ‘conventional’ and ‘optional’ moves. In addition to it, a new

comprehensive model is developed in the light of the study conducted. The model consists of Five-moves. It carries all the essential details of the moves. The model can be used for writing the discussion sections in dissertations. Along with, there is dire need of exploring the academic genre more and more.

The discussion sections in dissertations convey the researchers' stance. Gastel and Day (2016) state that many editors reject researches due to weak discussion sections that clearly shows the importance of writing this section. At higher levels, this chapter becomes the center of attention. In dissertations, the writers communicate about their results in this chapter therefore needed to be effectively communicated. Effective communication can only be possible if a proper structure in writing discussion is followed. Discussion section needs extra care and skills to communicate the results effectively. As it is under the umbrella of academic genre and in Pakistan, academic English is still in progressing stage and students strive for bringing improvement in their writings. Exploring the structure of academic English at different levels in Pakistan is the need of the hour. Research-based investigation is needed across the different fields for the identification of structural moves in academic English in Pakistan and to compare it with rest of the world.

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