An Investigation of Generic Structures of Pakistani Doctoral Thesis Acknowledgements

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Abstract

This paper investigates Pakistani doctoral thesis acknowledgements from genre analysis perspective. A corpus of 235 PhD thesis acknowledgements written in English was taken from Pakistani doctoral theses collected from eight different disciplines. HEC Research Repository of Pakistan was used as a data sources. The theses written by Pakistani native PhD students, and submitted to Pakistani HEC recognized universities during the last five years, from 2008 to 2012, were selected for the collection of acknowledgements data. Swales' (1990) conception of genre analysis in its modified form was followed for the investigation of genre moves. In the initial stages, Hyland's (2004b) coding scheme was utilized but due to broad socio-cultural differences between Hyland (2004b) and the present study, some other models such as Al-Ali (2010) were also sought for the coding of certain generic components. The analysis revealed seven moves along with certain sub-units or steps. These seven moves and their steps resulted from socio-cultural norms, academic traditions and institutional practices of acknowledgement writing in Pakistan.

Key Words: Genre, Moves Analysis, Acknowledgements, Expressions of Gratitude, Thanking Strategies.

1.   Introduction

This paper solely focuses on the investigation of genre components of Pakistani PhD thesis acknowledgements. Like abstract, Introduction and other sections, acknowledgements are an important part of research publications. Acknowledgements reflect gratitude for some personal, moral, financial, technical, intellectual, and conceptual support provided by some institution, agency, peers, mentors, academics or family members (Cronin, 1995). Ben-Ari (1987) states that acknowledgements are special textual constructs which are governed by conventions and that they are different from the main text. He further adds that acknowledgements are:

Formulations that take on an intermediate position between the internal contents of the ethnography and the people and relationships outside it: They are both an introduction to an intellectual product and a reconstruction of the external contributions that have gone towards its realizations. (p.65)

Most of the linguists and genre analysts see acknowledgements as neglected "part genre" (Swales, 2004, p.31), "a practice of unrecognized and disregarded value" (Hyland, 2003, pp. 242, 253), and that "its importance to research students has been overlooked in the literature" (Hyland 2004b, p. 306). In the past research on genre, acknowledgements have been a "minor and largely overlooked academic genre" (Giannoni, 2002, p. 9) and long neglected artifact (Cronin et al., 1993).

 Acknowledgements, though neglected area in the past, yet it has become an important and essential part of academic writing, especially thesis writing. Acknowledgements provide the student writers an opportunity to express their gratitude to all those who had helped them some way in their academic and research career.

Appropriate expression of personal thanks through rhetorical elements depends on the identity the writers can adopt in different contexts and in different situations. But acknowledgements are not simply personal but most of the time they are context dependent. In different contexts, language users may have different patterns of thoughts and different choice of words to express their thoughts (Kaplan, 1987; Nkemleke, 2006). Thus, writing acknowledgements also involves socio-culture pragmatism. Socio-cultural variations and preferences may affect the realization and arrangement of thanking acts (Cheng, 2012). The socio-cultural influence on language choices and construction of different genres moved us to conduct a research study on doctoral thesis acknowledgements in Pakistan where no such significant study had been conducted before from genre analysis perspective. Therefore, in order to fill this gap, this study explored PhD thesis acknowledgements as a highly significant genre of academic discourse. Generalizing the results it brought out general patterns of acknowledgements followed by average Pakistani students. This study, hence, can prove a great contribution from EAP and ESP point of view as revealing Pakistani way of acknowledging someone or something, expressing gratitude, constructing acknowledgements as a genre in their doctoral research theses, and the type of

language they use in expression of thanks, further enabling the people around the world to encode and decode the messages they send to or receive from Pakistani students, researcher, scholars and academicians.

2. Literature Review

The number of studies conducted on PhD acknowledgements from genre analysis perspective is very small. However, some of the important studies have been discussed below to develop our understanding of the generic components of acknowledgement sections. Acknowledgements are an important aspect of academic genres. A genre comprises of a series of goal oriented communicative events formed out of schematic structures and participants of these events share communicative functions (Swales, 1990). Genres are highly structured and conventionalized entity and they have certain constraints like lexis and moves. The members of a community exploit these lexis (language choices) and moves (steps) to achieve a communicative purpose (Bhatia, 1993). Secondly, genres also tend to reflect and represent an organization of a culture and some social purpose (Bhatia, 1993, 2004; Swales, 1990). Genre analysis, further, offers "explicit and systematic explanation of the ways language functions in social context" (Hyland, 2004a, p. 18). Hyland (2007) advocates genre from a broader contextual view, whereas Paltridge (2001) focuses on a narrower approach i.e. linguistic approach. Both Hyland (2004a) and Paltridge (2001) provide learners with knowledge and skills essential for communication in a specific situation and enable them to gain insight and access to socially charged and powerful form of language. Hence, for the genre analysis of any academic text, genre analysts have adopted two approaches— the analysis of generic moves (a macro level) and linguistic features (a micro level). A large number of studies have followed macro-level analysis investigating move structures or steps in academic text. Most of them adopted or adapted Swales' (1990) model in investigating the generic structures or moves of academic text. Giannoni (2002) was the first study analyzing the structure and linguistic features of research article acknowledgements. In his analysis of 100 acknowledgements taken from six disciplines (three dealing with social sciences and three with natural sciences) in English and Italian scholarly journal articles, he mainly focused on the issues like personal involvement and peer-reference, generic complexity and staging, authorial responsibility and pragmatic appropriateness. He compared structures i.e. moves (introductory move and main move) of English acknowledgements with the Italians'. He argued that the focus of English acknowledgements is on "help" which might be a clue to or indication of the "utilitarian" approach of the Anglo-Saxons whereas the Italians focused on the "value" which might be a reference to the "value favoured" (p. 25) understanding of the Italians.Hyland (2004b) found a three-tier (three moves) structure in dissertation acknowledgements which became a model for all the later similar studies on acknowledgement. He investigated 240 M.A and PhD dissertation acknowledgements, taken from six disciplines, written by Chinese Hong Kong students. His objective was to explore the expression of gratitude structured in acknowledgements.

Table: 1   *Hyland's (2004b) Three Tier Structure of Acknowledgements*

Moves & Steps	Description
1- Reflecting Move	Introspective comment on the writer's research experience
2- Thanking Move	Mapping credit to individuals and institutions
2.1-Presenting participants	Introducing those to be thanked
2.2-Thanking for academic assistance	Thanks for intellectual support, ideas, analyses, and feedback, etc.
2.3-Thanking for resources	Thanks for data access, clerical, technical, and financial support
2.4-Thanking for moral support	Thanks for encouragement, friendship, sympathy , patience, etc.
3- Announcing Move	Public statement of responsibility and inspiration
3.1-Acceptingresponsibility	An assertion of authorial responsibility for flaws and errors
3.2- Dedicating the thesis	A formal dedication of the thesis to one or more individuals

Hyland and Tse (2004) investigated lexico-grammatical patterns involving thanking strategies. They found that Chinese students constructed their thanking acts in five different ways i.e. in the form of Nominalizations, Performative verbs, Adjectives, Passives, and Bare-mentions.

Zhao and Jiang (2010) is also the similar type of study following Hyland's (2004b) model. They investigated 20 M.A and 20 PhD dissertations written by China Chinese-speaking students, collected form language related fields like Applied Linguistics, English Language and Literature. In this study, they compared and contrasted Hong Kong Chinese and China Chinese acknowledgements in terms of their generic structures, thanking expression and the modifier used in the thanking expressions. In spite of the fact that both the groups were Chinese speaking yet there were variations and differences in the organization of acknowledgements. There was "the absence of reflecting and announcing moves, especially step 3.2 of the latter [and] the excessive use of bare mention form and modifiers in thanking acts" (Zhao and Jiang, 2010, p. 108). Modifiers such as *hearty* or *heart-felt, sincere, special* in China Chinese acknowledgements resulted from the cultural and academic differences in both the contexts.

Al-Ali (2004, 2010) investigated 100 PhD dissertation acknowledgements written by Arab students in English and Arabic respectively. He identified eight moves structure in Arab acknowledgements. The eight moves identified by him are : 1- Opening, 2- Praising and Thanking Allah, 3- Thanking Supervisors, 4- Acknowledging Access to Resources, 5- Invoking and Blessing, 6- Closing, and 8- Signing Off. He found that Arab students frequently used performative verbs such as *Thank, Appreciate, and Acknowledge* etc. for the expression of their thanks. He also claimed that Arab students used special textual and contextual components because of their religious beliefs, local academics, socio-cultural norms and conventions. Al-Ali (2010) shows that acknowledgements are not merely a record of assistance and support received from the acknowledgees but it also reveals how the writers see themselves in interaction with their peers in accordance with the preferred cultural specific conventions.

Lasaky (2011) compared PhD acknowledgements written by native English and non-native English-speaking Iranian students of Applied Linguistics. He found that both of the groups followed Hyland's framework and there was no significant statistical difference in the structure of acknowledgements. However, Lasaky found the step of *Thanking Allah* in the Iranian English acknowledgements. But in contrast to Hyland (2004b), a separate dedication page was found in both the groups. Moreover, *Reflecting Move* or *Accepting Responsibility Step* was missing in the Iranian acknowledgements. Lasaky (2011), in this regard, explains that this missing step in Iranian acknowledgements was due to the socio-cultural reasons as Iranians take writing a dissertation as their duty and there is no place for accountability in their culture.

Cheng and Kuo (2011) investigated 20 master dissertation acknowledgements written by Taiwanese writers. They found that Taiwanese student writers express their gratitude quite explicitly, using overt thanking expressions. Here, advisors are addressed and appreciated first with more complex strategies than the others. Cheng (2012) compared native English speakers with Taiwanese and found that difference in acknowledgements' organization is due to socio-pragmatic perceptions in writing this genre.

To sum up our discussion on the research in acknowledgement genre, we can say that most of the previous studies follow Hyland's (2004b) three moves' structure to investigate generic structure and thanking patterns of dissertation acknowledgements. However, the point for further research in this genre is that inadequate knowledge of acknowledgement structures and patterns may lead to improper expression of gratitude reflecting incompetent academic and social identity of the Master and Doctoral students (Hyland, 2004b).

In Pakistan, where no such study has been previously conducted, this study will be a great contribution. This paper focuses mainly on the identification of genre moves of PhD acknowledgements. This study will enhance the importance and awareness of this genre enabling the students to well organize their acknowledgements. This study will also be helpful for the teachers teaching thesis writing in general and acknowledgement writing in particular.

3. Methodology

In present study 235 PhD thesis acknowledgements were explored for the investigation of genre moves. Acknowledgements were collected from eight different disciplines. These disciplines were Biology (BIO), Chemistry (CHEM), Botany (BOT), Engineering (ENG), Applied Linguistics (APL), Education (EDU), Economics (ECO), and Business Studies (BSS). HEC Research Repository of Pakistan was used as a data source. PhD theses were downloaded from the official site of the Research Repository. In each discipline 30 theses having acknowledgement sections were selected but in the discipline of APL, due to the scarcity of PhDs,

only 25 theses were available. Hence, in eight disciplines, total 235 theses having acknowledgement sections were collected. Acknowledgement pages were separated from the theses and renamed by the last name of the author, the year of publication, and the name of university. In order to turn them into editable form, acknowledgement pages were processed through OCR (Optical Character Reader) and saved in txt format. Finally, the text files were processed through Sentence Extractor which disintegrated the paragraph forms and separated each sentence of acknowledgement text, and saved in Excel sheet.

The researcher inductively coded each sentence categorizing genre moves and steps. In the initial stages Hyland's (2004b) coding scheme was used but some of the sentences did not fit into three tier model proposed by Hyland (2004b) because of the broad socio-cultural differences in Chinese and Pakistani acknowledgements. Therefore, some other studies like Al-Ali (2010) conducted in Islamic settings were sought. Still there were few components which had never been traced out by previous studies. To fix the problem, writer coded them with the help of his own induction, personal experience of Pakistani culture, and understanding of acknowledgement genre developed after the review of relevant literature. After coding the text and defining each move and step, the researcher consulted the move structure with another linguist who was also expert in genre analysis research. Both of them had an agreement rate of almost 96%. Frequencies of all the moves and their steps were processed and calculated using SPSS 16.0 and saved in the form of tables and figures. As far as linguistic analysis of the text is concerned, Antconc Concordance tool and Sketch Engine were used for the investigation of thanking patterns and linguistic features.

4. Corpus Results

The corpus data of Pakistani PhD acknowledgements was first investigated to the point of view of size and number of words in each acknowledgement by discipline. A corpus of 235 doctoral thesis acknowledgements comprised 87459 words with the average of 372.3 words each acknowledgement text excluding disciplinary variations in the size and the number of words.

Table: 2   Corpus results of acknowledgements in each disciplines

Discipline	Texts	Words	Average
BIO	30	13432	447.7
CHEM	30	13727	457.5
BOT	30	11256	375.2
ENG	30	10128	337.6
APL	25	9570	382.8
EDU	30	10550	351.6
EDU	30	11016	367.2
BSS	30	7780	259.3
Total	**235**	**87459**	**372.3**

The results in the table 2, quite contrary to Hyland (2004b), show that writers of hard sciences produced longer acknowledgements than the writers of soft sciences. The longest of all acknowledgements was found in CHEM that consisted of 1039 words spread to three A4 size pages with 32 steps and 28 thanking acts. On the other hand the shortest of all acknowledgements was found in ENG that consisted of only 21 words and only a single step i.e. thanking supervisor.

(1) *I would like to thank Dr. Imtiaz (my supervisor) and Dr. Noman Jafri (my co-supervisor) for their kind support and guidance.*   (ENG)

The longer size of Pakistani PhD acknowledgements shows the importance of acknowledgements for Pakistani students. It appears that Pakistani students are more sensitive to the academics and individuals around them who had provided them even the slightest of assistance during their academic career and research work and that writing of acknowledgement is not mere an academic formality but a real concern and regard for those intuitions and individuals who made them write to the length of three pages to gratify and acknowledge every single individual and his assistance.

4.1. Moves Analysis

In our analysis of genre moves in the corpus we found that Pakistani students did not strictly follow Hyland's (2004b) three tier structure, or the eight moves structure of Arabic acknowledgements as identified by

Al-Ali (2010). Mixing both these models and with the addition of some new moves and steps, Pakistani acknowledgements had seven moves structure. Each of these moves was divided into sub-units or steps. Table 3 presents the moves and steps identified in Pakistani PhD acknowledgements.

Table: 3   Move Structure Identified in Pakistani Doctoral Thesis Acknowledgements

Serial	Moves and Steps	Status	Description
1	**Opening**	Other Model	Thanking and Praising Allah and the Prophet (PBUH) (Al-Ali, 2010)
2	**Reflecting**	Basic Model	
2.1	Stating Research Experience	Basic Model	Introspective Comments on Writers research experience (Hyland, 2004b)
2.1	Stating Research Place	**New Step**	Stating research place and supervision
3	**Thanking**	Basic Model	
3.1	Presenting Participants	Basic Model	Introducing those to be thanked (Hyland, 2004b)
3.2	Thanking Academics	Basic Model	Thanking for intellectual support, ideas, feedback etc. (Hyland, 2004b)
3.3	Thanking for Resources	Basic Model	thanking for access to data, clerical, technical, administrative and financial support (Hyland, 2004b)
3.4	Thanking for Moral Support	Basic Model	Thanking for encouragement, friendship, sympathy and patience etc. (Hyland, 2004b)
4	**Crediting**	**New Move**	
4.1	Praising Academics	New Step	Praising academics for their knowledge, skills and expertise in teaching and research.
4.2	Crediting Individuals	New Step	Crediting academics, friends, family members and others for the completion of research work.
5	**Announcing**	Basic Model	
5.1	Accepting Responsibility	Basic Model	Assertion of authorial responsibility for flaws or errors (Hyland, 2004b).
5.2	Dedicating the Thesis	Basic Model	Formal dedication of thesis to individual(s) (Hyland, 2004b)
6	**Closing**	Other Model	
6.1	Apologizing	Other Model	Apologizing for not being able to list (Al-Ali, 2010)
6.2	Invoking & Blessing	Other Model	Asking Allah's blessings upon the contributors and the researcher himself
6.3	Over-all thanks	**New Step**	Final note of thanks to all who helped and contributed in research work
7	**Signing off**	Other Model	Claiming the ownership with the description of researchers' name (Al-Ali, 2010).

The analysis of quantitative data revealed that 72% of all the steps in the corpus were related to Move-3, Thanking Move, with all its steps, integral and obligatory to all acknowledgements. All other moves and their steps appeared to be optional as they partly appeared in acknowledgements and some of the steps were sometimes repeated and there was great recursion in the occurrence of certain steps. In contrast to Move-3, all the other moves become optional because acknowledgement can be completed even without all other moves as can be seen in the case of the shortest of all acknowledgements found in ENG consisting of 21 words and only one thanking act—Thanking supervisor. Crediting Move with its two steps comprised 10% of all the steps. Opening Move covered almost 9%, Signing off 5%, Closing Move 2.6%, Reflecting 1% whereas the most omitting and least frequent was Announcing Move which covered only 0.4% of all the steps in the whole corpus of 235 acknowledgements consisting 2967 steps. Hyland (2004b) also identified Announcing Move as the most omitting of all moves. Sequence of moves and steps was another issue in the structure of acknowledgements. Table 4 below represents the most frequent structure with the sequence of all moves and their steps as identified in Pakistani acknowledgements in the present study.

Table: 4		Sequence of Moves and Steps
1	**Opening Move**	I am thankful to ALMIGHTY ALLAH, the most beneficent, merciful, gracious and compassionate who gave me strength courage and ability to come up with this write up and whatever success I have achieved in my life. The gratitude also goes to the educator of mankind Holy Prophet (Peace be Upon Him), who has no educator to him but Allah.
2	**Reflecting Move**	
2.1	Stating Research Experience	Execution of this honorous research work has been a matter of immense inspiration and a strong prevailing elation for me.
2.2	Stating Research Place	The studies embodied in this thesis were undertaken at the Department of Microbiology, University of Karachi in collaboration with Department of Biological and Biomedical Sciences, Aga Khan University, Karachi, and some part at the Mullins laboratory, Department of Microbiology University of Washington, Seattle, United States of America.
3	**Thanking Move**	
3.1	Presenting Participants	A great number of people have helped in the completion of this study. I want to thank them all in my humble acknowledgement
3.2	Thanking Academics	I feel highly privileged to express my heartiest gratitude to the worthy and kind supervisor, Prof. Dr Munir Ahmad Sheikh, for his dynamic supervision throughout the course of my studies.
3.3	Thanking for Resources	I am highly thankful to Dr Saeed Ahmed, gastroenterologist (LNH) for providing biopsy samples and data of the patients from their gastroenterology ward and also from other gastroenterology units.

3.4	Thanking for Moral Support	I am also highly indebted to all my family members and friends for their moral support and encouragement throughout the course of my studies, particularly in research work
4	**Crediting Move**	
4.1	Praising Academics	His unremitting concentration, determination, hardworking, enthusiastic and highly courteous behavior, scholastic guidance, dedicated attitude, continuous help, congruent encouragement, valuable suggestions, inexhaustible inspiration and kindness in planning and execution of the present research projects are really appreciable
4.2	Crediting Individuals	I could never have completed this research work without his assistance and kind guidance.
5	**Announcing Move**	
5.1	Accepting Responsibility	A lot people though contributed in this research but the errors therein are only mine.
5.2	Dedicating the Thesis	I dedicate this PhD thesis to my parents, the two most special persons in my life.
6	**Closing Move**	
6.1	Apologizing	I request for forgiveness that I could not mention all important persons one by one.
6.2	Invoking & Blessing	May God bless all those who so vehemently contributed to my study and thesis work.
6.3	Over-all thanks	Finally I am thankful to all those once again who helped me in any part of my research work.
7	**Signing off**	Muhammad Nasir, Oct 2009.

Though all the above mentioned moves and steps hardly appeared in any acknowledgement in its entirety as one or the other step(s) and sometimes even a full move was absent in each acknowledgement, yet the sequence of the occurrence of moves was same as presented in the Table 4**.** However, there was a bit exception in the case of Move-4. It appeared though after Move-3 in each acknowledgement, yet its steps were, in fact, complementary with the steps of Move-3. In other words, step-4.1 Praising Academics appeared right after step-3.2 Thanking Academics in all acknowledgements. Similarly, Step-4.2 was also complementary with step-3.2, 3.3, and step 3.4 of Thanking Move. It was after conveying their gratitude to the academics, friends and family members that the writers credited them for the completion of the research.

4.2. Description of Moves
Genre analysis aims to identify the rhetoric moves and their sub-components. Table 5 presents the frequency of each move and its steps by percent in the corpus.

Table: 5   Percentage of Acknowledgements with each step by discipline

Move	BIO	CHEM	BOT	ENG	APL	EDU	ECO	BSS	Total
1- Opening	90	76	70	80	68	93	80	53	**76**
2- Reflecting									
2.1	0	6	6	10	4	6	10	13	**7**
2.2	20	3	0	6	0	3	0	3	**4**
3- Thanking									
3.1	10	10	13	23	36	13	36	43	**23**
3.2	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	**100**
3.3	86	83	90	80	88	76	86	80	**83**
3.4	96	96	100	90	96	100	86	93	**94**
4- Crediting									
4.1	43	50	43	33	48	46	46	36	**43**
4.2	46	60	36	46	64	50	46	46	**49**
5- Announcing									
5.1	10	3	3	0	8	0	0	6	**4**
5.2	3	3	0	0	4	0	0	3	**2**
6- Closing									
6.1	3	3	3	0	8	0	0	3	**2**
6.2	16	10	16	13	8	16	10	10	**12**
6.3	20	16	13	6	16	26	16	16	**16**
7- Signing Off	90	86	76	53	20	76	73	60	**66**

1   Opening Move

The opening actually characterizes how Pakistani doctoral students start their academic acknowledgements. Opening move was first identified by Al-Ali (2010) in his study of 100 Arab acknowledgements. In Al-Ali (2010), this move was found in 25 % of all acknowledgements in four different aspects i.e. Quranic verses, Prophetic sayings, prayers on the prophet, and invocation followed by the formulaic expression wa-baʕd (and then). In Pakistani acknowledgements, there were neither Quranic verses, nor prophet sayings, nor any other component pointed out by Al-Ali (2010). This opening was like the Praising and Thanking Allah move of Al-Ali (2010) incorporated with praising and thanking Allah phrases. The opening of Pakistani acknowledgements accompanied the same praising and thanking phrases, not prepositioned to thanking move but in the very initial point before the Presenting and Reflecting, that is why, it was characterized as Opening Move. Another difference is that there were not only praising and thanking to Allah but also to the Prophet. Pakistani

acknowledgements open with thanking and praising phrases addressed to Allah and the Prophet, Muhammad (PBUH). Such an opening was found in 76% of all acknowledgements where 43% had only thanking and praising Allah steps whereas 33% of them had both Thanking Allah and the Prophet. There was not even a single opening in the whole corpus without thanking or praising Allah phrases and there was none with only thanking and praising the Prophet.

Table: 6   Types of Steps in Opening

Category	Frequency %
Thanking Allah	36
Praising Allah	32
Blessing upon the Prophet	19
Praising Allah and the Prophet	4
Thanking the Prophet	7
thanking Allah and the Prophet	2

(2) *All praise to Allah, the Most Beneficent and the Most Merciful who bestowed upon me His blessings to accomplish this work.*   (APL)

First and foremost, I thank almighty ALLAH for enlightening me and bestowing his blessings abundantly upon me throughout my life.   (ENG)

All praise to Allah Almighty! The Compassionate, Ever Merciful who provided me with the vision to explore the universe and stay amongst those who sought knowledge; and blessings upon His Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) whose spiritual support has always been with me. (CHEM)

2   Reflecting Move

In present study, Reflecting was divided into two steps. Step 2.1 was Reflecting basic that presented writers' introspective comments on their research experience which the researcher entitled as *Stating Research Experience*, and step 2.2 accounts for writers description of the place where research was conducted and administered and sometimes it also included the account of supervision provided. The researcher entitled it as *Stating Research Place*. Both the steps are optional and substitutionally and alternatively used by the writers. Both the steps appeared before Thanking move and right after the Opening. There is not even a single acknowledgement in which both the steps collectively appear together.

According to Hyland (2004b) step 2.1 is peripheral to the purpose of genre, a feature of book acknowledgements and overwhelmingly of PhD acknowledgements. This step gives the writer the freedom of thought and expression. This step, after long struggle and strenuous effort to complete their research work, and accomplishment of the task, allows them to publically announce their research experience and what they felt during the whole course of completing their PhD which was nothing less than a challenging adventure.

(3) *A research study entails strenuous and hectic work.*   (APL)

Execution of this honerous research work has been a matter of immense inspiration and a strong prevailing elation for me. (BOT)

In present study it was found only in 7% of all acknowledgements with the reflection of manifold experience of the writers such as the experience of feeling honoured, experience of learning and training, mutual cooperation, being gratified at the solution of research problems, and it can also be an experience of feeling humble before the gigantic task of conducting PhD research and getting it done by the miraculous help and support of the contributors which gave enlightenment and insight to the researcher to delve deep into the world of knowledge and learning.

Step 2.2 (Stating Research Place) was found in almost 4% of all the acknowledgements. This step aims to bring about certain important revelations to the readers regarding when the seed of the research was sown, how the research came to existence, what type of research it is, where it came to pass, and who supervised and

administered it. The writers intend to reveal such truths to validate that their research was conducted at a recongnized institution and administered by skillful and expert members of research community.

(4)   *This research course has its roots planted in 2007, when I first joined Research lab, Aga Khan University and Hospital, under the supervision of Professor Dr Anwar Ali Siddiqui, Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies at Aga Khan University/Hospital.*
         (BIO)

3   Thanking Move

Thanking Move is central and obligatory to the acknowledgement genre. It was found in three steps i.e. 3.1-Presenting Participants, 3.2- Thanking for academic assistance, 3.3- Thanking for resources, and 3.4-Thanking for moral support.

3.1   Presenting Participants

This step serves as a prologue to the thanking move and a bridge between the other steps in thanking move (Hyland, 2004b). It had a textual purpose to introduce the people who were mentioned and thanked in the following steps. In present study, it was found in 23% of all acknowledgements in two distinct ways. First, there was a type of confession in the statement that the writer was not the sole proprietor of his work and that there were many individuals who contributed to the completion of the research work. Secondly, it reflected the writers' intention to thank and acknowledge all those who have contributed to his research work some way.

4   *I realize that the fulfillment of Ph.D task is a collective effort, which involves the guidance, cooperation and help of my well wishers.*   (CHEM)

Though only my name appears on the cover of this dissertation, a great many people have contributed to its production. I owe my gratitude to all those people who have made this dissertation possible and because of whom my doctoral experience has been one that I will cherish forever.   (BOT)

The first type comprised 28% whereas the second type was found 78% of all the Presenting steps. In the second type, the writers also intended to express the reasons why they wanted to thank the concerned individuals. Some of the writers wanted to express gratitude as their religious duty, some as moral obligation, some as means to pay off debts, and for some it was for pleasure and satisfaction.

3.2   Thanking for Academic Assistance

Thanking for academic assistance is the core step in move-3 and obligatory to the acknowledgement genre. It was the only step found in 100 acknowledgements. The aim of this step is to pay off intellectual debt to all those who had provided any sort of academic assistance in the form of feedbacks, ideas, discussions, comments, approval for the study, inviting for conference papers, help in analysis etc. (Hyland, 2004b, Al-Ali, 2010). The individuals addressed in this step are often senior academics like the dean or the chairman of the department, supervisors, members of supervisory committee, members of teaching faculty, internal or external reviewers and examiners, teachers of previous classes like graduation and masters, someone from neighboring institution or some acquaintance who had shared some valuable ideas, concepts, or discussion. Of all of these individuals, supervisors were the most mentioned, and even, always mentioned, and always mentioned before any other academic.

5   *I owe a great deal of my understanding of things within colonial and post-colonial perspective, to the teaching of my supervisor Dr Sardis Asadullah Khan, who not only introduced me with a new world but also guided me to unearth it.*(APL)

Gratitude to supervisor is not mere an expression of thanks rather the students oblige their lives and career to their supervisors. Thanking only the supervisors comprised 33% of thanking acts in step 3.2. Members of supervisory committee, the members of teaching staff, internal and external reviewers and examiners, and foreign academics were some of the other individuals after supervisors who were thanked for the academic assistance or support. All these people comprise 39% of the thanking acts in step 3.2. There were some other influential persons like chairmen, deans, rectors and directors of the departments (parent or neighboring), vise-chancellors, and some other influential figures outside the world of academia, may be the acquaintance or close to the writers who were also thanked for their direct or indirect support and assistance in the form of ideas, concepts, discussions, and views or something that may help the writers in their research work. 28% of the thanking acts in step 3.2 consisted acknowledging to such influential individuals. In a country like Pakistan, winning such a favour of some influential administrative or political figure is vital to secure one's place or position to secure one's future after completion of doctoral studies.

Another important and interesting aspect in all the thanking acts in step 3.2 is the naming practice of the writers. It is notable that 98% of the thanking acts comprised full length details of the individuals to be thanked. All the names also contain the honorific titles like *Dr*, *Prof*, *Mr*, and *Ms* etc. All such details aim to reveal the rank or status of the concerned individuals and the social and academic circle of the writers that were meant to show that writer was addressing a particular individual having certain position, professional membership and accomplishments, whom the writer had close relationship with, and the writer was enjoying his favour and he deserved writers gratitude, loyalty and indebtedness, which in itself is a strategic art of continuation of relationships.

3.3 Thanking For Resources

Thanking for Resources involves thanking to all those who made it possible for the writers to work out their research by providing them certain resources like some materials, data and information, tools and instruments, and some technical, clerical and financial help. This step was found in 83% of all acknowledgements. Hyland (2004b) categorized this step into four different sub-units namely Access to data, Clerical support, Financial support, and Technical support. In present study, Access to data was found in 57%, Clerical assistance was found 10%, Financial support 22%, and Technical Assistance was found in 11% of all acknowledgements.

6   *Financial help provided by Pakistan Science Foundation under the project entitled "Preparation of an In-vitro passage live attenuated Hydro-Pericardium syndrome virus (local isolates) Vaccine" is highly appreciated.*   (BIO)

The details of prize winnings, scholarships, sponsorships, research and travel grants in the acknowledgements show that the writer was not a commoner or the beginner in his academic and research career but the one whose talent, capabilities, intelligence and efficiencies are already well recognized and who was seeking for further progress in his academic and research career (Hyland, 2004b). Similarly, a great number of individuals and institutions mentioned in the acknowledgements were not mere random checklists but they represent the procedures and practices encountered by the writer throughout the completion of the research work which further build writer's identity as a competent and qualified skillful professional having vast network to manage the resources for his study (Hyland, 2004b). Hence, expressions of sincere gratitude to the academics, research participants, and purveyors of data materials serve the function of sugar coated pills covering the rhetorical strategies and deeply concealed intentions submerged in the depth of the mind, the designs to walk up the stages leading to the heights of success. Expression of gratitude, for doctoral writers in a way, becomes a process of self-revelation and getting one's self and one's capacities know to the academic and research community of the world.

3.4 Thanking for Moral Support

This is another most important step which was found in 94% of all acknowledgements. Here writers offer their gratitude to friends, colleagues, class mates, research fellows, academics, and family members for moral support, encouragement, friendship, sympathy, and patience. Normally, among family members, parents were thanked for their prayers, love and care; husband/wife and children for love, care, patience and sacrifice; brothers and sisters, and other family members for motivation, encouragement and moral support; friends, colleagues, class mates, and research fellows were thanked for spiritual and moral support, encouragement, help, and hospitality. Supervisors or some other academics were also thanked for inspiration, motivation and encouragement. Table 7 presents the distribution of all the thanking acts in step 3.4.

Table: 7   Frequency (%) thanking individuals for moral support

Individuals	Frequency
Friends, colleagues, research fellows	29
Other individuals (acquaintance)	9
Academics	5
Parents	13
Brothers and sisters	11
Wife and children	14
Other family members	4
All family	15
Total	100

Greater numbers of acts expressing gratitude to family members suggest that acknowledgements are not merely political strategizing but also an opportunity for the writers to extend their thanks from public to private sphere (Hyland, 2004b), from outer academic world of professional life to inner circle of family life, from professional materialism to the compassion and concern of the loved ones. Here they try to express their emotions they cherished for their family and friends when they were spiritually elevated, morally uplifted, and mentally stimulated and rejuvenated.

7   *My special regards to my aunt Raheela, cousins Sabina and Tehmina, Brother Mohammad Naseer, dearest sisters Nasreen Fatima, Farzeen and Samia Naz and my lovely niece Unzilla Naseer for their moral support and encouragement throughout the studies.* (BIO)

A notable thing in expressing gratitude to family and friends is the naming practice. Mentioning friends and family members with their full names lends ceremonial implications to the acknowledgements and suggests that writers are formally aware of this genre. It reflects the public nature of this genre and the underlying intention of the writers to identify the recipients to the readers (Hyland, 2004b).

4   Crediting Move

Crediting move is one of the most important moves identified in Pakistani acknowledgements in present study. It has been divided into two steps: 1-Praising Academics and 2- Crediting Individuals. The frequency of this move in all the acknowledgements also validates the importance of this move in PhD acknowledgments. It is worth noticing that Crediting with its step 4.1 was found in 43% of all acknowledgements and step 4.2 was found in 49 % of all the acknowledgements. As it was mentioned above, this move is complementary to Thanking move, therefore, both of its steps always appeared right after the steps in Thanking move.

4.1   Praising Academics

Step 4.1 Praising Academics was found right after supervisors or other academics were thanked. After expressing their formal gratitude, the writers praise their supervisors or other academics for their knowledge, skills, and expertise in teaching and research work.

8   *He gave me a lot of positive perspective in life. He who taught me things far more of my understanding. His skillful guidance, unfailing patience, masterly advice and inspiring attitude made it very easy to undertake this work and to write this manuscript. I thank him for challenging me to do this project. To you sir, I give you lots of respect and regards. Thank you.*   (BIO)

4.2 Crediting Individuals

Step 4.2 is closely related to step 4.1 in nature and function. But it is not as longer in size and garnished with language beauties as step 4.1. It comprises a short statement quite distinct and distinguished from expression of gratitude and praising remarks and is addressed to a large number of people like academics, friends and family members, class fellows and colleagues and even the research subjects. It insists the point that the completion of writers' doctoral research was entirely dependent on the contributors. If the writers had not received the support of the concerned individuals, their future might have been otherwise and their PhD would have been mere a dream. So, the entire credit goes to those individuals who had contributed to their research in the form of ideas, discussions, academic guidance, encouragement, giving access to data and resources or actively participating themselves, moral support, and prayers etc. It is in this view that researcher entitled this step as Crediting.

9   *If it were not all the prayers, moral support and encouragement given by my father, Hasan Muhammad Awan, the completion of the dissertation would have been impossible.* (APL)

My wife made me comfortable at my workplace and encouraged me to deliberate and concentrate on research, so as to accomplish the study in a befitting manner. Without her assistance, it would have been difficult for me to complete the assignments in a presentable form. (BSS)

5   Announcing Move

Announcing is an optional move with its two steps—accepting responsibility and dedicating thesis. This move was found in only 5% of all acknowledgements. After expressing gratitude and crediting individuals writers generally tend to make a public announcement to indirectly claim their authorship to the content of their research

work and then they dedicate their life lasting achievement to some highly esteemed individual who might be one of the members of family or someone other.

5.1 Accepting Responsibility

Throughout the acknowledgements, we see that writers owe their work to others. They are found as taking it a result of the collective effort of many individuals. But here they appear to be more realistic in claiming their authority and ownership to their work. Claiming the ownership is indirect as it accompanies stating responsibilities, accepting errors and shortcomings to their work and absolving other contributor of the blame of shortcomings and deficiencies in their work.

(11)   *In addition to giving these nice people credit for whatever may be praise-worthy in this work, they could however, not be held responsible for any errors and mistakes which should be considered mine alone*.   (BIO)

5.2 Dedicating Thesis

Step-5.2 has been borrowed from book acknowledgements (Hyland, 2004b), and it aims to pay a special tribute to the people who had made a special contribution not only to the research work but also to their entire life. Beyond the rhetorical acts of strategizing, the writers in their expression of pure love, care and indebtedness dedicate their lives' achievement to those who had sacrificed their lives to support the writers to achieve their goals. Most of the time, these dedications are offered to family members, especially parents, grandparents, wife and children, and sometime these dedications are made to God and the Prophet.

(12)   *Finally, I dedicate this PhD thesis to my parents, the two most special persons in my life.* (BIO)

Dedicating thesis was found only in 2% of all acknowledgements. The reason for such a low frequency of this step is that 100% of the students offered their dedications on a separate page, apart from the acknowledgement text.

6   Closing Move

Like Arab students as mentioned by Al-Ali (2010), Pakistani students do not end their acknowledgments abruptly but by proper closing lines and remarks that give a sense of completeness to the acknowledgements. Closing of Pakistani acknowledgements comprises three distinct steps. These steps are: 1- Apologizing, 2- Invoking & Blessing, and 3- Over-all thanks. With all its three steps, this move was found in 30% of all acknowledgements.

6.1   Apologizing

Closing their acknowledgements writers expressed their apologies for two reasons. First, apologies were made to those who could not be unconsciously listed in the acknowledgements for certain reasons. Secondly, writers expressed their apologies to family members and children. The writers were so much absorbed and busy in their research work that they could not give the required time to their family. So, in the absence of the writers, the family had to suffer a lot. In this case, the writers have their apologies for their family after acknowledging their support and contribution.

(13)   As always it is impossible to list by name all the individuals whose support benefited this study. Therefore, I apologize if your name has not been mentioned here: your contribution was highly valued. (BIO)

In addition to him, there is yet a whole chain of my relatives to whom I owe thanks and apologies. I apologize to my family as I could not give them much time.   (APL)

6.2   Invoking & Blessing

Step 6.2 was found in 12% of all acknowledgements and there were only 30 acts of invocation in the corpus of 235 acknowledgements quite in contrast with Al-Ali's (2010) finding where it was found in 68% of acknowledgements with 145 acts of invocation in 100 acknowledgements and 80 % of the occurrences were found in between the thanking acts. But in Pakistani acknowledgements 74% of the acknowledgements were found in the last closing lines where writers called upon Allah's blessing upon all those who contributed to the research work and only 26% were found in between the thanking acts. Sometimes writers asked Allah's blessing upon themselves to utilize the acquired knowledge in right direction.

(14)   *May God bless all those who so vehemently contributed to my study and thesis work.* (BOT)
Finally, I pray to Allah to bless all my teachers, family, friends and relatives who always pray for my success and feel my success as their own. (ECO)

At last, I pray that Almighty Allah give me patience and vigor to utilize the expertise and knowledge I acquired, for the betterment of humanity.(BIO)

Invocations found within the acknowledgements were more frequently meant for those who died but researchers remembered their contribution. Therefore, after expressing their gratitude to them, writers prayed for the rest and peace of their souls. Some of these invocations were made for the academics or supervisors.

May God rest his soul in peace (Ameen). (BOT)

May God shower his constant blessings on him forever and ever as he always illuminated the dusk of my ignorance with the dawn of his unfathomable knowledge. (EDU)

6.3   Over-all Thanks

Another closing strategy in Pakistani acknowledgements was the expression of final note of gratitude to all. Before signing off and penning off the acknowledgements, writers express their thanks to all the contributors once again. This step was found in 16% of all acknowledgements. 90% of all the final notes of thanks are expressed to all the contributors whereas 10% of them are especially addressed to those who could not be listed or mentioned in the acknowledgements.

(15)   *Finally, I again thank all those whom I have mentioned and whom I could not, for helping me in completing this work,*   (BIO)

7   Signing Off

Finally, after closing remarks in the form of apologizing, invoking and blessing, and over-all thanks, writers properly sign off their acknowledgements with a signature. Signing off signature comprises name of the author, date of completing or submitting the thesis, and name of place (city) where the research was conducted and completed. Such a signing off is basically epistolary practice (Al-Ali, 2010) but presence of full name, date, and city name in PhD acknowledgements can be taken as writers' direct claim to their work. It is important to note that signing off was found in 66% of all acknowledgements. Table 8 defines the type of signatures and their frequency.

Table:8   Type and frequency of signing off expressions

Type	Example	Frequency (%)
Full Name	Muhammad Khalid Mansoor.	79.3
Name and date	Muhammad Sohail, Oct 2009.	9.0
Name and contact	SIDDRA IJAZsiddraijazkhan@yahoo.com	1.2
Name, date and place	GEFULAM ABBAS, 2010, Karachi.	6.2
Initials only	AMK.	4.3
Total		100

5.   Conclusion

There is no doubt that genres are highly dynamic, highly structured and conventionalized entity and acknowledgements are no exception. Investigating Pakistani PhD acknowledgements, we found that Pakistani acknowledgements are also highly structured and complex entity and a product of Pakistani academic and social conventions. For Bhatia (2004), genres are a social practice. We found that many of the moves and steps had Islamic colour. As the objective of this paper was only to highlight the generic components of Pakistani PhD acknowledgements, therefore, the socio-cultural factors, disciplinary variations, and contrastive comparisons across cultures were not discussed in detail here. Seven moves structure of PhD thesis acknowledgements was found in this study. Besides the three tier structure found by Hyland (2004b), there were four additional moves found in this study. All the moves resulted from writers' fellowship and interaction with international research community, local academic cultural trends, and the influence of their own academic context and socio-cultural factors on their writings.

The generic components of Pakistani PhD acknowledgements revealed that writers were fully aware of the international practices of acknowledgement writing. It was crystal clear that students borrowed the basic structure of acknowledgements from international community either through imitation or the instruction of teachers but adopted and adapted it according to their own cultural norms, academic traditions and institutional practices. It can be argued on the basis of the findings of this study that certain genres are transformable in their

structure in accordance with institutional practice and socio-cultural norms but at the same time, they maintain their identity across culture and context due to some unified structural components observed by international genre community in the organization of those genres. Being longer in size and having greater number of moves and steps, Pakistani acknowledgements were highly complex, elaborated, and distinct variety in its generic structure, and a product of writers devotion to Allah and the Prophet, admiration and indebtedness to supervisors and other academics, higher obligation and gratefulness to friends, and profound moral duty, care and love for family members.

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