



Genre analysis of official notifications of health department with reference to moves and linguistic features

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Abstract

This study presents the result of genre analysis of the official notifications of Health Department of the Govt. of Punjab. Forty authentic notifications relating to two departments of Health were collected and included in the study. The notifications were examined in respect of their move structure and strategies, text coherence, linguistic features and politeness strategies. Detailed investigation of notifications from each group was carried out first to demonstrate the method and process used to implement genre analysis. Observation, content analysis and codification methods were adopted for data collection. The results reveal that writer does not use all the moves in the notifications. Only move 2 (subject) shows 100% in one department and move 5 (ending) show 100% in other department. Data further explicates that simple present tense and present continuous tense is used in every notification. The conclusion indicates that this type of analysis provides the future researcher with essential information that can be used to develop more suitable move structure.

Keywords: genre analysis, health notifications, linguistic features, move structure

1. Introduction

Official notification is an important factor of official communication. Their importance grows as communicative networks. Official notifications become clear with the identification of specific content, ideas, arrangement of thoughts and references. Notification is a form of written or printed communication directed to a person or administration. Notifications are powerful tool and the only valuable mode of communication. They have given a great deal of importance and esteem. A notification is a source of delivering messages in a form of written or printed document by combining hardware and software. When some correspondence is written for business or non-business purposes regarding an official matter, it is regarded as official notification. In other words, official notification means balance between two or more institution on matters other than business, government, semi-government etc. are different parties of official notifications. An official notification is a more formal term, generally including appointment notification, promotion notification, notifications related to the affairs of government. They may be legal mails, notification mails, business mails or health notifications. The contextual, textual and social are different layers of official notification and relationship between these layers is important. According to the purpose of the authors, reliable notifications were analyzed with five different specific categories. These categories are invitation, acknowledgement, prescriptive, appointment and informative.

Health notifications are an important part of official communication of Health Department. Their importance grows as communicative network. Health notification can be used both as direct and indirect method. Its size is smaller than business letter. They are written in terms of specific and traditional language. The relation between sender and receiver is not important at all. The main purpose of the health notification is to serve the medical and health benefits.

Formal notifications are different from informal notifications because of tone and language. This type of notifications can be written to your bank, landlord, insurance company and government. Telephone, email or written documents are some means of sending notifications to the subsidiary health departments and hospitals. Notification sent by email should be encrypted. Simple method of the local Department of Public Health can be used for encryption. Laboratories use the Computerized Infectious Disease Reporting System (CIDR) for notifications. Local Departments of Public Health also provides the printed notification forms in booklet form.

1.2 Research questions

1. What kinds of move structures are used in official notifications of health department?
2. What types of linguistic features are found in official letters of health department?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Genre Analysis

The conception of genre has offered a precious framework for researching. For learning and teaching in educational backgrounds, its educative and instructive applications have been made. Martin (1984) ^[1] gave short but clear definition of genre. In his view, Genre is a presented, focused, purposeful activity in which we consider speakers like participants of our culture. He explains that functional model of language and social context have significant position for genres. Bhatia (1993) ^[2] commented on genre that each genre is an outstanding victory of a specific communicative purpose. According to the nature of genre, some genres are explained and defined by their setting such as western. Some genres are exclusively explained by their subject matter like as detective films and some others by their forms such as musical (Chandler). The topic of most of genre study has been based on the effort to recognize the groups of literature,

film, TV etc. It also tries to make a specific text fit to a certain genre or to expand that genre. The producer of content and the audience form an implied contract with the help of genre. Existing genre texts and audience expectations provide a guide for the production of new narratives within the genre. Genres may rise and fall with change in culture. The main objectives of genre theory are to understand for the special purposes of the author and to represent for the disorganized realities of the world.

Bhatia (1993) ^[2] specified that each genre is an outstanding outcome of a specified conversational objective by using the capability of linguistic resources. The move is considered a grammatical unit of text. It is used to determine the purpose. In writing genres, it is used to recognize textual proportion. There may be a difference in the length of the move but at least one statement is found in several paragraphs to one sentence (Connor & Mauranen, 1999, p. 51). In fact, move analysis is a helping tool in genre studies as moves are semantic and grammatical units of text. Their linguistic borderlines and communicative objectives are the sources to identify them.

According to Swales (1990, p.58) ^[16] a genre is a combination of a group of communicative occurrences and its members share common communicative objectives. The expert members of discourse community identify these objectives. In the defining process of genre, related constructs are differentiated from this conception. For example, (Biber & Conrad 2009) register is distinguished with linguistic characteristics that comes in those locations which are text-specific and they do not appear in any other part of the text, for example, introductory part comes at the beginning of the text (2009, p.16). In view of Biber and Conrad (2009), the language that is used in a specific situation is called 'register'; the selected presentation of language is 'register'. However, particular stylistic features are often what help a researcher identify a genre. In case of health notifications, high amount of medical terminologies and phrases will be considered as 'style'. The words like Medical and Health Sciences which are used in the above example, show that the particular text has relation with medical sciences. This type of wording represents the term 'register' as presented by Biber and Conrad. In short, genre analysis is a helpful device to establish the parameters that help us to identify a certain text as related to a certain genre.

The concept of move explained as a grammatical unit in a text used for objectives. It is used to recognize the textual proportions in genres of writing. Moves can differ in length but the size of several paragraphs to one sentence contains at least one statement. (Connor & Mauranen, 1999, p.51). The analysis of move is a helpful device in genre studies because moves are semantic and grammatical units of text. They can be recognized because of their linguistic borderlines and communicative objectives. Bhatia (1993, p.24) ^[2] proposes three levels of linguistic realization for applying genre analysis: 'analysis of lexico-grammatical features, analysis of text-patterning or textualization, and structural interpretation of the text-genre'.

Level 1: Analysis of lexico-grammatical features

According to Bhatia (1993) ^[2], quantitative analysis such as the frequency of tenses and dependent clauses can reveal the stylistic features of the text. However, the linguistic analysis of syntactic properties and lexico-grammatical features do not provide appropriate information about how the

communicative purpose can be achieved in a particular genre. Descriptions of stylistic variations inherent in different language use can supplement the empirical data gleaned from the quantitative analysis.

Level 2: Analysis of text-patterning or textualization

Analysis of the tactical aspect of conventional language use describes 'the way members of a particular speech community assign restricted values to various aspects of language use when operating in a particular genre' (Bhatia, 1993: 26) ^[2]. Rather than simply indicating the empirical figures of a particular linguistic feature in a specific genre, it is more interesting to state what aspect of the genre it textualizes. For example, a number of NPs, which provide more slots for adjectival insertions, are used in advertisements to give a positive description of a product (Bhatia, 1993) ^[2].

Level 3: Structural interpretation of the text-genre

Specialist writers seem to organize their overall message consistently in a particular genre, and a preferred way of communication in a particular genre can be found through the analysis of structural organization (Bhatia, 1993) ^[2].

2.2 Genre analysis with Move structure

Genre analysis tends to 'offer linguistic explanation, attempting to answer the question, why do members of specific professional communities use the language the way they do?' (Bhatia 1997) ^[3]. Learning a genre includes learning its linguistics forms, convention and 'how to participate in the actions of the community' (Miller 1984: 165 cited in Henry & Roseberry 2001: 153) ^[12, 10]. Therefore, genres are characterized in terms of the communicative purposes that they fulfill. In the words Swales (2004) ^[17], at one side, a move can be recognized by a clause and at other side it is identified by a large number of sentences (p. 20). By keeping in view the thinking of Swales (1990) ^[16] and Connor *et al.* (1995), the definition presented by Ding can be taken as 'move is a practical element of a text. In specific writing genres, it acts to recognize textual properties'. According to Swales (1981, 1990) ^[15, 16], a genre consists of a series of moves that are part of a text and achieve particular purposes within the text; thus, each move can fulfill the overall purpose of the genre by its contribution in some way. Take the example of health notifications, the move *stating the subject* exhibits the purpose of writing the notification. This contributes to the overall purpose of the genre: to clearly specify the object of the text.

Flowerdew and Dudley-evans (2002) ^[6] indicate a general agreement: the more conventional a genre and more constrained its communicative purposes are, the more predictable will be its schematic structure. Therefore, defining communicative purposes of a genre is the first step of genre analysis. Based on communicative purposes, a general pattern of a genre will appear. However, according to the degree to which the genre is conventionalized, different amounts of variation in the move structure is allowed (Swales, 1990) ^[16]. For example, moves can be either obligatory or optional in most genres, their sequence can be fixed or flexible, they can be recursive, and one move can be embedded within the other (Swales, 1990) ^[16].

2.3 What Is Medical Genre?

Since the 1950's, English has become not just an important

language in the field of medicine, but also the dominant language of health sciences. Today English is most widely used language of medical and health sciences especially in western countries. The most recent technologies in medical are available only in English. A variation in professional language modern genre is defined by Swales and Bhatia; and assessment in the field of medicine is specially done by Rebek-Nagy. The concept of genre is a key element in medical communication, as all the communicative events in medical field can be categorized into written and spoken genre. Editorials, research articles, abstracts, case reports, presentation papers can be found in many other fields of study, however, each of them has got a specific position in medical profession too.

A medical document can be translated by a specialized person who could translate each term and meaning and avoid any misunderstanding. Medical translation includes the translation of regulatory technical clinical or marketing documents, software or training curriculum for the pharmaceutical, medical device or healthcare fields. Traditionally, the term medical language refers to the language used by medical experts for their professional correspondence. In fact, it is characterized by a special vocabulary called medical jargons. Here are a few examples: acidotic- abnormally high acidity of body fluids and tissues; asystole - a condition in which the heart no longer beats and cannot be restarted; dyspnea- shortness of breath; caries- the decay and degeneration of the bone. In addition, medical language has its own specific lexical, semantic and syntactic features and is based on frequent use of passive and impersonal style focusing on measurable phenomenon; compound pairs, phrases and complex sentences.

In fact genre analysis constitutes linguistic analysis of the whole text but some authors consider genre and text types as same. In the view of Salager-Meyer, the language for specific purposes has its own certain secondary genres or text types and it may be acknowledged as a genre. For example, they declare that the language related to medical field has its own distinctive categories and sub-categories of genre. Editorials, research papers, case reports and magazines are some examples which are related to medical genre. Thus, as a central element, specific fields or areas help these authors in making difference between different texts.

2.4 Medical Discourse: A historical overview

According to Gotti (2006)^[8], it was during the 15th century that due to the increasing need of using a vernacular language for the expression of specialized texts, English language prevailed over Latin. Medical writing is considered a common term. It comprises of several distinctions in the field of several genres. For example, different fields of genres, e.g. research genres, educational genres, professional genres and commercial genres contain a great deal of sub-fields. In medical studies, the evolution of the methods and the development of new surgical procedures indicated a change in the expression of opinions and description of the phenomena. However, gradually criticism arouse of the suitability of the tool for an accurate and precise expression of the concepts in medicine such as limited number of vernacular anatomical terms or the polysemy characterizing many words which often made texts ambiguous. The solution was found to be coining new terms through the two principles of; firstly, using the resources of the native tongue, either by giving a specialized meaning to an existing word or forming

a new one, and secondly, borrowing a similar term from a foreign language, particularly from Latin and Greek as these two languages were endowed with large and respected specialized lexicon. The remarkable increase in the number of new medical terms is in line with the great expansion of the Early Modern English lexicon as a whole with intense borrowing in all fields (Finkenstaedt *et al.*, as cited in Gotti, 2006)^[8]. The medical sciences seem to reach their peak in the first half of the 17th century. Gotti (2006)^[8] continues that in adopting the loan words, the translator usually adapted the word he was borrowing to the morphological features of the receiving language [English] but generally the original suffix was replaced by the one commonly used in English (p. 676).

Since the 17th century, as medical science becomes more widespread, there will be more need for well-designed medical academic genres in order to: first, complement research findings; second, avoid the repetition of the experiments without any valuable results; and third, to control new diseases (Piqué-Angordans & Posteguillo, 2006)^[13]. To name of a few written genres in medical communication the following can be highlighted: editorials, research articles, abstracts, case reports, review articles, peer reviews, replies to these reviews, letters of acceptance/rejection of a paper, conference programs, medical popularizations, letters of application, book reviews, and letters to the editor. Apart from these genres, some journals, such as The New England Journal of Medicine, feature special articles which are usually cases from the registry of the Massachusetts General Hospital.

It should be mentioned that medical papers are basically organized following IMRAD (Introduction, methods, Results, And Discussion) macrostructure and their mode of referencing, through the so-called Vancouver system, has been considered since it was agreed on at a meeting of medical journal editors in Vancouver, Canada, held in 1978 (Piqué-Angordans & Posteguillo, 2006, p. 653)^[13]. Gotti (2006)^[8] describes the changes in medical discourse as: increase in the length of the sentences due to very lengthy noun phrases preceding and following the verb which is, in turn, only forms of verb to be, preference for coordination rather than subordination in sentence structure, application of a large number of words referring to processes and a distinct preference for the use of nouns deriving from verbs. Adoption of nominalization, as explained above, enables the scientists to include more information in the same sentence, thus more concise texts and a better flow of discourse. As nominalization recovers the information given in the previous statement as the theme of the next sentence, it promotes a better cohesion as well. This linguistic preference commonly referred to as grammatical metaphor within Systemic Functional Linguistics has become one of the salient features of scientific discourse.

2.5 Format of Notification Writing

A letter of notification is sent to the recipient of important information. There are many scenarios where this is commonly used including informing somebody about some important matter or directing medical practitioners of health department about any infectious disease etc.

A notification should be written in the following format:

- The name of the organization issuing the notice
- The Date
- Recipient's address

- Subject (purpose of writing the notice)
- The Salutation
- The body of the notice
- The Complementary Close
- The writer’s signature,
- name (in block letters) and
- designation
- The enclosures
- Copy Notation

3. Research Methodology

This study attempted to make use of both qualitative and quantitative methods. It was a document analysis in nature. The content analysis, observation and codification were adopted by the researcher to obtain accurate results. There were 40 official notifications from two departments of health,

Govt. of Punjab. The departments were Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department, Govt. of Punjab (PSHD) and Specialized Health care and Medical Education Department, Govt. of Punjab (SH&MED).

Notifications related to general instructions were 10 from PSHD and 10 from SH&MED. Notifications related to promotions and transfer were 10 from PSHD. Notifications related to generalized specification of medical equipments were 10 from SH&MED, Govt. of Punjab. Notifications were collected through simple random sampling technique. It is a fair sampling technique where every item in the population has an equal chance and likelihood of being selected. In statistics, simple random sample is a subset of members taken from a larger set in which every member is chosen randomly. Observation, content analysis and codification were adopted by the researcher to analyze the data.

Table 1: Sample Size

	Primary and Secondary healthcare	Specialized health care and Medical Education	Total
Notifications related to general instructions	10	10	20
Notifications related to generalized specification of medical equipment’s	-	10	10
Notifications related to promotions and appointments	10	-	10
Total	20	20	40

4. Data Analysis

All the notifications which are taken under preliminary observation contain the accurate formal writing style. The Heading, date, subject or title, complementary close, signature and designation of issuing officer and copy notation are present in all the notifications. Salutation is not included in any of the formal notifications. Sometimes recipients’ address is not mentioned clearly by the issuing authority. Second stage of observation is that different types of words, phrases, clauses and sentences are used. The sentences have a lot of linguistic features i.e. cohesion, coherence, modifiers, verbs, number, person, tenses and politeness strategies. There is variation in the sentences and paragraphs structure of the two groups.

designation and copy notation were 100% used in both departments. There was 100% usage of recipients’ address and subject by Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education department. ‘The closing’ is not used in any of the notification of both departments. Primary & Secondary Healthcare Department used ‘recipients’ address 20%, Subject 50%, and Signature 60%. Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education department effectively used all the parts of an official notification.

Table 2: Analysis of the parts of Notifications of Health Department

Parts of notifications	Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department		Specialized Healthcare & Medical education	
	No. of notifications	%	No. of notifications	%
The Heading	20	100	20	100
Date	20	100	20	100
Recipients’ address	4	20	20	100
Subject	10	50	20	100
Salutation	0	0	0	0
Body	20	100	20	100
Closing	0	0	0	0
Signature	12	60	20	100
Designation	20	100	20	100
Copy notation	20	100	20	100

According to the above table, the writer efficiently used all the parts of the official notifications. The heading, date, body,

4.1 Structure of Moves and Strategies

Table 3: Frequencies of Moves and Strategies

	Primary and Secondary Healthcare		Specialized Healthcare and Medical education		Total %
Total number of notifications	20	%	20	%	
Opening	19	95	18	90	92.5
Subject	10	50	20	100	75
Promoting the writer	16	80	18	90	85
Enclosing documents	10	50	11	55	52.5
Ending	20	100	18	90	95

The writers do not use all the moves in the notifications. Only Move 2 and move 5 occurs 100% in the notifications of Specialized Healthcare & Medical Education Department and Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department respectively. Although it seems that writers of official notifications shift topics very often, arranging steps from different moves is plausible if it does not break the coherence of the whole document. Move 4, ‘Enclosing documents’ is used to show the important documents enclosed with the notification.

4.2 Linguistic Features

Table 4: Examples of Modifiers used in notifications of Health Departments

	Adjectives	Adverbs	Adjective phrases	Adverb phrases
Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department	Distinguished, Competent, Sensitive, Well-educated, Private, Experts, Nominees	On Tuesday, At 9:30 am, Early, Positively, Above	Considered as selected nominees, May be informed about the actions,	With a copy to the Chief Minister’s office,
Specialized Healthcare & Medical Education Department	Foreign, Information, Immediate, Raw, Physical,	On department’s website, Admittedly, Accordingly, Merely, Similarly,	Petition being devoid of merit, Fully applicable to the petitioner’s case,	On department’s website,

According to the above examples, the notifications of both departments revealed the use of adjectives, adverbs, adjective phrases and adverb phrases. The words like ‘distinguished, competent, sensitive, well-educated’ etc. are adjectives used by Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department. The adjectives like ‘foreign, information, immediate, raw’ etc. are used by Specialized Healthcare & Medical Education Department. The adverbs of manner like early, merely,

positively, accordingly, similarly etc., the adverb of place like ‘on department’s website’, the adverb of time like ‘on Tuesday, at 9:30 am’ is used by both departments. Adjective phrases like ‘may be informed about the actions, petition being devoid of merit’ are used and adverb phrases like ‘with a copy to the Chief Minister’s office’ are used in official notifications of both departments.

Table 5: Examples of verbs used in notifications of Health Departments

Name of departments	Linking verbs	Action verbs	Modal verbs	Non-modal verbs
Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department	Are, Is, Remained, Was, Am,	Forwarded, Sent, requested, Attend, Directed, held, deputed,	Shall, Shall be, May, Should,	Be Do Have
Specialized Healthcare & Medical Education Department	Look Appear Acted Are Was Is	Requesting Complete Directed Attached Communicated Mentioned Issued	Will Shall Might Should	Is Am Are Have Be

The above examples reveal that numerous types of verbs are used in official correspondence of health department. The types of verbs are linking verbs, action verbs, modal verbs and non-modal verbs. The linking verbs ‘look, appear,

remained, was, am’ etc., action verbs ‘complete, directed, attend, mentioned, issued’ etc., modal verbs ‘may, should, shall, might’ etc. and non-modal verbs like ‘am, are, have, do, be’ are used by both departments.

Table 6: Examples of persons, numbers and tenses used in the Health notifications

Name of Departments	Examples of persons	Examples of numbers	Examples of tenses
Primary and Secondary Healthcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentioned in his offer of appointment He is further authorized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One year Section-18 5th Seniority no.318 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competent authority has been pleased May be directed to report
Specialized Healthcare & Medical Education Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Their presence in the respective ward Submit your representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Period of 4-5 years 4th meeting of policy board 1.5 Tesla MRI machine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doctors are continuously requesting They have to complete their research work

The above table shows the examples of persons, numbers and tenses used by health department. The example taken from Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department ‘mentioned in his offer of appointment’ reveal the use of third person. In another example taken from Specialized Healthcare &

Medical Education Department ‘submit your representation’ shows the use of second person. The numbers like ‘one year, section-18, 4th meeting of policy board, 1.5 Tesla MRI machine’ etc. are used in the notifications of both departments. The example like ‘Doctors are continuously

requesting' shows that the sentence is written in present continuous tense. The sentence like 'May be directed to report' is the example of passive voice sentence.

5. Discussions

5.1 The Structure of Moves and Strategies

The results reveal the structure of moves present in the language of notifications in health department. The findings show that there are nine different parts/moves of notifications presented in health department. The heading is present in 100% of the notifications of health department specially 20 from PSHD and 20 from SH&MED. The date is also 100% present in the notifications from PSHD and SH&MED. Recipients' address is 60% and subject is 75% present in the notifications that were collected from health departments. Body is 100%, signature is 80% and designation and copy notation are 100% found in data taken as sample. But no salutation and closing are seen in any notification related to PSHD and SH&MED.

5.2 Linguistic Features

The results analyzed that many linguistic features were used in the notifications of health department. In attempting to understand language, many researchers use features, the elements into which linguistic units, such as words, can be broken down. Examples of features are MODIFIERS (adjectives, adverbs, adjective phrases, adverb phrases) VERBS (action verbs, linking verbs, modal verbs, non-modal verbs) NUMBER (singular, plural, dual), PERSON (1st, 2nd, 3rd), and TENSE (present, past, future). In general linguistic features, the first person pronoun 'I' is the most frequent word and its possession form 'my' is also a frequent word. The first personal pronoun 'I' is acceptable because the genre is a notification and the subject of the letter is the writer himself. The notifications of both departments revealed the use of adjectives, adverbs, adjective phrases and adverb phrases. The words like 'distinguished, competent, sensitive, well-educated' etc. were adjectives used by Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department. The adjectives like 'foreign, information, immediate, raw' etc. were used by Specialized Healthcare & Medical Education Department. The adverbs of manner like early, merely, positively, accordingly, similarly etc., the adverb of place like 'on department's website', the adverb of time like 'on Tuesday, at 9:30 am' were used by both departments. Adjective phrases like 'may be informed about the actions, petition being devoid of merit' were used and adverb phrases like 'with a copy to the Chief Minister's office' were used in official notifications of both departments. The findings revealed that numerous types of verbs were used in official correspondence of health department. The types of verbs were linking verbs, action verbs, modal verbs and non-modal verbs. The linking verbs 'look, appear, remained, was, am' etc., action verbs 'complete, directed, attend, mentioned, issued' etc., modal verbs 'may, should, shall, might' etc. and non-modal verbs like 'am, are, have, do, be' were used by both departments. The data revealed the use of persons, numbers and tenses used by health department.

6. Conclusion

The major analysis of this study was to analyze official notifications of health department. There were three types of notifications from two departments. The departments were Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department and

Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department. The notifications were related to general instructions, generalized specifications of medical equipments and promotion and appointment notifications. The study showed that some linguistic features were different in some notifications of both departments. However, this variation did not affect the quality of communication between reader and writer. Linguistic feature (modifiers, verbs, numbers, person) were used in the notifications related to both Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department and Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department.

The main purpose of identifying moves and strategies in official notifications was a necessary tool for analysis of genres. The writer efficiently used all the parts of the official notifications. The heading, date, body, designation and copy notation were 100% used in both departments. There was 100% usage of recipients' address and subject by Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education department. 'The closing' is not used in any of the notification of both departments. Primary & Secondary Healthcare Department used 'recipients' address 20%, Subject 50%, and Signature 60%. Specialized Healthcare & Medical Education department effectively used all moves in their notifications.

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