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The Generic Structure of Book Acknowledgments

Rasoul Mohammad Hosseinpur* iD
Assistant Professor in TEFL, University of Qom, Qom, Iran

Mohammadreza Pirooz iD
Assistant Professor in Linguistics, University of Qom, Qom, Iran

Reza Jafari Harandi iD
Associate Professor in Educational Sciences, University of Qom, Qom, Iran

Gohar Mohammadpour iD
MA in TEFL, University of Qom, Qom, Iran

Abstract

Studies on the generic structure of thesis and dissertation acknowledgments have resulted in some influential models such as Hyland's (2004) and Al-Ali's (2010) models. Few studies, if any, have investigated the generic structure of acknowledgments in books. Therefore, the present study was an attempt to find out whether the acknowledgments of books follow an organizational pattern. To this end, 200 books (100 written by native and 100 by non-native speakers of English) which included acknowledgments section, from a mass of 1000 books, were considered. The data were analyzed with reference to Hyland's (2004) scheme. The results obtained from the analysis of the acknowledgments written by both native and non-native writers of English revealed that the overall structure of the acknowledgments section of the books follows an organizational pattern which is a combination of two models: Hyland's (2004) scheme (all moves and steps), Al-Ali's (2010) model (Praising and Thanking God Step and Signing off Move) and two new moves: Copyright Move and Commenting Move. The findings suggest that a full appreciation of this organizational pattern can help writers to enjoy this unique space for thanking all those who have contributed to the completion of their work and academic identity formation.

Keywords: Book acknowledgments, Dissertation acknowledgments, Hyland's model, TEFL, Thesis acknowledgments

*Corresponding author's email: rmhosseinpur@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Thanksgiving and acknowledging have always been a favorite way to appreciate those who have contributed to the completion of work. Acknowledging others is not only a common practice in oral communication, but it is also seen in other written materials such as theses, dissertations, and books. According to Hyland and Tse (2004) "acknowledging the assistance and contributions of others is now a well-established feature of the scholarly communication process" (p. 259).

An acknowledgment should not be regarded as a simple way of offering gratitude. According to Hyland (2008), "they (acknowledgments) are central to the academic practice of reciprocal gift-giving and for this reason, are particularly important to students" (p. 243). Acknowledgments usually serve as a means of indicating the researcher's gratitude and appreciation to all those who have contributed to her work or have accompanied her in the process of doing her research.

Hyland (2004) stated that "there are good reasons to see Acknowledgments as a significant genre in their own right, although their importance to research students have been overlooked in the literature" (p. 306). The widespread occurrence of acknowledgments in scholarly texts shows that this genre has established itself as an inseparable component of academic writing (Hyland, 2004). Hence, Acknowledgments sections are important to the writers and they should not be overlooked.

The under-explored nature of Acknowledgments can cause some disadvantages for non-native speakers (Hyland, 2004; Swales & Feak, 1994). Being native (NS) or non-native (NNS) is a significant point that matters in the writing of the writers. Kaplan (1966) believes that it is a wrong belief that because a student can write an acceptable essay in his native language, he is undoubtedly able to write an acceptable essay in a second language. He also states that foreign students who have been proficient in syntactic structures usually exhibit inefficiency to compose acceptable themes, term papers, theses, and doctoral dissertations.

Previous studies of Acknowledgments have mainly focused on the investigation of Acknowledgments in dissertations and theses and the generic structures of them; that is, how elements of Acknowledgments are put together to meet its purpose (Cheng, 2012; Hyland, 2004; Yang, 2012; Zand-Moghadam & Meihami, 2016). Few studies have investigated the structure of Acknowledgments in the books. Therefore, the present study considers the under-explored structure of Acknowledgments in books written by NSs and NNSs of English.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Genre

Genre analysis has offered a lot to our understanding of academic discourse. Swales (1981) described the concept of genre as communicative events with a specific goal or a set of goals that do not exist in isolation rather formulate a complicated intertextual system. Hyland (2005) defined genre as "a term for grouping texts together, representing how writers typically use language to respond to recurring situations" (p. 87). According to him, this concept was based on the fact that community members usually did not have too much difficulty in identifying similarities in the passages they often used and could make use of their repetitive experiences with such passages and texts to read, figure out and perhaps compose them relatively easily. This was, partly, because of this fact that the process of writing was a practice founded on expectations: chances of the reader for interpreting the purpose of the writer increased if the author made an effort to predict what the reader might be predicting. According to him, "genre theorists, therefore, locate the relationships of participants at the center of language use and assume that every successful text displays the writer's awareness of its context and the readers who form part of that context" (p. 88).

Hyland (2008) argues that genre approaches focus on the importance of declaring what is to be learned and judged, so they give teachers a more essential role in enabling the learners or students to write in their disciplines.

According to him, the need to consider community together with genre in teaching emphasizes this fact that writing isn't mere words on a paper or what is done by isolated individuals. It has been a social practice in all the times and situations which is affected by cultural as well as institutional contexts. Genre gives a tool for analyzing texts so that empowers the individuals to differentiate the special features of structure and form. Genre also gives a picture of how language is typically employed within different disciplines (Ebrahimi & Weisi, 2019).

The Genre of Academic Acknowledgments

Acknowledgments are sections that provide a space in which students have an opportunity to show their gratitude and appreciation for any aid and assistance received from others in the process of composing their written work. Acknowledgments as an important genre in writing were the main focus of a limited number of studies. Mainly these studies focused on Acknowledgments sections of theses and dissertations.

Bazerman (1988) asserted that acknowledgments sections have not been seen explicitly until the 1940s. They also were not a typical component until the 1960s. Acknowledgments of the 1890s carried personal testimonials to the writers' friends and their mentors. Acknowledgments vanished very soon, but they reappeared (in a different form) around 1920. Those acknowledgments that reemerged in the 1920s had been more limited, and they had limited forms of credit. The Acknowledgments in that period identified institutional dependencies. Personal effusiveness even disappeared from acknowledgments of intellectual fellowship.

Swales and Feak (1994), in their book, stated that Acknowledgments sections of a research paper appear after the discussion section at the bottom of the first page or sometimes at the end of a research paper. Acknowledgments sections allow the writers to demonstrate that they are a member of a community and have gained benefit from that membership. They identified financial support, thanks, disclaimers, other versions, and

sources as some of the common parts in Acknowledgments. They suggested that Acknowledgments should be written in the first person 'I' when there is only one author and 'we' when there is more than one author. They also offered that financial support tends to come first and thanks follow it. They stated that disclaimers seem optional and other versions and sources seem to occur at the beginning or it may occur at the end.

Paltridge and Starfield (2007) held that in the Acknowledgments sections, students indicate their scholarly membership and sense of allegiance as well as a thanksgiving to the individuals for their supports. The Acknowledgments sections follow suitable academic values of modesty, thanks, and self-effacement. Acknowledgments have important social as well as interpersonal roles in the theses and dissertations writing process.

Studies on Academic Acknowledgments

Hyland's (2004) influential study examined the generic structure of Ph.D.'s Acknowledgments. Corpus of his study was made of 240 Acknowledgments sections written by N and NN speakers of English. He concluded that Acknowledgments have a three-tier structure including Reflecting (optional), Thanking move (obligatory), and Announcing move (optional). According to him, Thanking moves and Announcing moves have four and two sub moves, respectively. He identified the following pattern for Ph.D.'s dissertation:

1. Reflecting Move: It is an introspective comment on the research experience of the writer. This move provides the students with an opportunity to publicly consider the understandings they have obtained as a result of the research experience and usually reminds the endeavors involved or the sense of fulfillment achieved.

2. Thanking Move: It includes mapping credit and expressing gratitude to individuals and institutions. This is a move of four steps which permits the writer to announce and acknowledge individuals and institutions for their supports:

a. Presenting participants: In this step, those to be thanked are introduced.

b. Thanking for academic assistance: Thanks are given to individuals or institutions for intellectual support, ideas, analyzes, and feedbacks, etc.

c. Thanking for resources: Thanking others for making the data accessible, technical or financial support, and clerical assistance.

d. Thanking for moral support: Thanking others for their encouragement, patience, friendship, sympathy, etc.

3. Announcing Move: It includes statements describing responsibility and inspiration. This move enables the writer to publicly make a declaration of their authorial responsibility for the dissertation's contents. This step also permits the writers to dedicate their works to an esteemed individual. The following steps comprised this move:

a. Accepting responsibility: It is an affirmation of authorial responsibility for any flaws or error.

b. Dedicating the thesis: It is formal dedicating of the thesis to others. (Hyland, 2004, p. 264)

Hyland and Tse (2004) examined the importance of the Acknowledgments genre. They explored the generic structure and linguistic features used in expressing Acknowledgments of 240 MA and Ph.D. dissertations. Their findings certified the importance of this genre. The findings of their study also revealed that Ph.D. students employed more complicated structures to compose the Acknowledgments. They suggested that teachers in English for Academic Purpose (EAP) courses should familiarize their students with the underlying structure of Acknowledgments.

In another study, Al-Ali (2010) studied the structure of Acknowledgments composed by Ph.D. students. Drawing upon 100 Acknowledgments written in Arabic by NS Arabic Ph.D. students, he came up with an eight-staged structure as the generic structure of Arabic

Acknowledgments. The first move was *the Opening*. The other moves were *Praising and Thanking Allah, Thanking Supervisors and other Academics, Acknowledging Access to Resources, Thanking for Moral Support, Invoking and Blessing, Closing, and Signing off.* However, all of the components were not seen in a single Acknowledgments. The corpus indicated some culture-specific differences among writers in the utilization of generic structure and lexical resources. It was seen that the Acknowledgments written by Arab writers comprised of the *Opening move, Thanking Allah move, Invoking and Blessing move, Closing move, and Signing off* move that did not become apparent in English texts. The results of the study indicated that the religious beliefs of Arab writers overshadowed their manner of writing Acknowledgments.

Yang (2012) carried out a study on disciplinary variations in Ph.D. dissertation Acknowledgments. He examined the structure of Acknowledgments sections in different disciplines to determine the influence of disciplinary variations on the construction of the generic structure of a Ph.D. dissertation and the linguistic choices of writers made to modify thanking acts. It was understood that there were subtle variations between hard science and soft science students in using strategies of writing dissertation Acknowledgments. He believed that different factors such as the writers' language proficiency and the amount of exposure to English played a role in this diversity. The results of his study indicated that though generally, most English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writers followed Hyland's (2004) model to construct the generic structure of their Acknowledgments, there were subtle differences between the two science areas.

Rofess and Mahmood (2015) examined 235 Ph.D. dissertation Acknowledgments. These Acknowledgments were written in English by Pakistani Ph.D. students. Hyland's (2004) scheme and Al-Ali's (2010) model were utilized in their study. The results of the study indicated that Ph.D. students of hard sciences had written longer Acknowledgments sections than Ph.D. students of soft sciences. They found that Pakistani

Ph.D. students did not strictly utilize Hyland's (2004) scheme or all moves of the structure of Arabic Acknowledgments that identified by Al-Ali (2010). A seven-move structure was identified for Pakistani Acknowledgments. These moves were comprised of sub-units or steps.

Acknowledgments and examining their generic features has been approached by Iranian researchers as well. Lasaky (2011), for example, conducted a study on Acknowledgments written by English NS and NNS (Iranian) Ph.D. students. He compared the generic structure of these Acknowledgments in dissertations based on Hyland's (2004) scheme. He concluded that the differences between these two groups in composing Acknowledgments were not significant. Moreover, a new step, *"Thanking God"* step was identified. The use of this step among NS and NNS Ph.D. students was statistically significant.

Drawing upon Hyland's (2004) generic structure pattern, Yang's (2012) category of the Acknowledgments and subject types, and Hyland and Tse's (2004) linguistic choice framework, Estaji and Nosrati (2018) investigated the thesis Acknowledgments produced by Iranian MA students in the field of Persian Language Teaching to Non-Persian Speakers and TEFL students. They targeted the generic structure of Acknowledgments, preferred authorial subject, and linguistic choice and concluded that both groups adhered to Hyland's (2004) three-tier structure. Moreover, they suggested praising God and His Prophet (PBUH), thanking God, blessing, and closing/signing off as further common moves/steps in the Acknowledgments sections of theses.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

An overall review of the Previous studies on Acknowledgments indicates that they have focused on the investigation of Acknowledgments in dissertations and theses and the generic structures of them. Few studies have investigated the structure of Acknowledgments in the books. The present study targeted books and compared and contrasted the Acknowledgments

written by NSs and NNSs of English according to Hyland's (2004) scheme. The main purpose of this study was to determine whether an organizational pattern is followed in Acknowledgments sections written by NSs and NNSs of English or not. It also intended to investigate to what extent NSs and NNSs of English follow the same pattern in their Acknowledgments sections. The following research questions were formulated to meet the purposes of this study:

1. What organizational pattern do Acknowledgments sections of books written by NSs and NNSs of English follow?
2. Do acknowledgments sections written by the NSs and NNSs of English differ in terms of their Reflecting move, Thanking move, and Announcing move?

METHOD

Corpus

One thousand English books written by NS and NNS writers in the field of applied linguistics were considered for this study. Among these books, those including Acknowledgments sections were selected. Two hundred books, published mainly after 1980, were qualified to serve as the main corpus of the study. These books were in electronic PDF format and were mainly from the following publishing companies: John Wiley & Sons, John Benjamins Publishing, Psychology Press, Routledge, Palgrave Macmillan UK, Taylor & Francis Springer, Walter de Gruyter, Rahnama Press, Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Multilingual Matters, Longman, Willy Blackwell, Elsevier, MIT Press, National Academies Press, McGraw-Hill, Longman, and Siam Publishing Companies.

In order to determine whether the writers were native speakers or not, all information about the books including titles of the book, dates of publication, publication companies, names of the writers, their affiliations, and other related information were checked by two professors of TEFL. The

professors determined them as NSs or NNSs of English. In determining the nativity of the writers, a point considered by the professors was that authors' names should have been names native to the country concerned and also should have been affiliated with an institution in their respective countries.

Instrumentation

Hyland (2004) carried out a seminal study on the Acknowledgments section of Ph.D. dissertations. He identified a three-move model with different steps for the Acknowledgments section of dissertations. Hyland's (2004) scheme, as the most influential and comprehensive scheme on the Acknowledgments section, was used in this study in the analysis of the Acknowledgments section of books written by NSs and NNSs of English. Reflecting, Thanking, and Announcing moves are the main components of this pattern. Table 1 shows the details of this scheme.

Table 1: Move structure of dissertation Acknowledgments (Hyland, 2004, p. 264)

Serial	Moves and 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 feedback, etc.
2.3	Thanking for Resources	Thanks for data access and clerical, technical, or financial support
2.4	Thanking for Moral Support	thanks for the encouragement, friendship, sympathy, patience, etc.
3	**Announcing Move**	Statements delineating responsibility and inspiration
3.1	Accepting Responsibility	An assertion of authorial responsibility for flaws or errors
3.2	Dedicating the Thesis	A formal dedication of the thesis to an individual(s)

Reflecting Move focuses on the experience of the writer related to writing the book and the difficulty of writing. For example, the following part of the text was considered the *Reflecting Move* of the Acknowledgments.

> *I could not have imagined when I sat down at my computer in a small apartment in Almaty, Kazakstan, during my first sabbatical, what a challenging journey I was about to undertake to write this book. Now, looking back, I can clearly see that I would not have completed this journey without the assistance of many along the way (Perry, 2011, P. xvi).*

The *Thanking Move* includes *Presenting the Participants, Thanking for Academic Assistance,* and *Thanking for Moral Support. Thanking for Academic Assistance* includes thanksgiving to those who had technical support to the writers or gave ideas, analyzed feedback, etc. (Hyland, 2004). For example, in the following sentences, the writer is thanking the reviewers for their academic assistance.

> *On a more human level, I owe much to the candid comments of those who have reviewed this manuscript at various stages: Mary McGroarty, Northern Arizona University; G. Richard Tucker, Carnegie Mellon University; Jessica Williams, University of Illinois, Chicago; and a reviewer who wanted to remain anonymous (Perry, 2011, P. xvi).*

In the *Thanking for Resources* step, people are thanked for making available the data to the writer or for their technical, clerical, or financial support (Hyland, 2004). An example of this kind of thanking is given below.

> *I also want to thank my graduate assistants whom I have had overtime to aid me in this book: Hanna Bokhtar, Hayam William Mikhail, Germin Sanad, Heba Saber El Sayed, and Dahlia Hassan Sennara. They have worked hard at providing me extra hands and legs for obtaining and entering data into a large database of information (Perry, 2011, P. xvi).*

In the *Thanking for Moral Support* step, people are thanked for their "encouragements, perseverance, sympathy, friendship, etc." (Hyland, 2004, P. 308).

> *Of course, none of it would have happened without the continuing support of my family and I thank Ross, Douglas, and Catherine for their confidence in me over all the years (Burns, 2009, P. x).*

The Announcing Move is related to the public expressing responsibility and inspiration. *Announcing Move* is comprised of two steps i.e. *Accepting the Responsibility* and *Dedicating the Thesis*. In the *Accepting the Responsibility* step, the writer asserts authorial responsibility for any error or flaws.

> *Of course, everyone had slightly different views on the best research methodologies and other content of the book, and so the final distillation of the various points of view is my interpretation for which I alone am responsible (Schmitt, 2010, P. xvi).*

Dedicating the book is the second step of an *Announcing a move* in which the book is dedicated to an individual or individuals. The following is an example of the dedication of the book.

> *I wish to dedicate this book to the three men of my life: my husband Ivan Smit – his inexhaustible computer knowledge keeps my work going; his patience and understanding do the same for me – and our sons Eric and Leon, who make it so clear to me that there is another side to life, too (Smit, 2010, P. vi).*

Data Collection Procedure

In order to collect the data, about one thousand books from different publishing companies were examined. Among these books, those including Acknowledgments sections were selected. First, Hyland's (2004) scheme

was employed as the main source of comparing the data. Being native or non-native was determined by two professors of TEFL. The occurrence of different moves and steps of Hyland's (2004) model was checked. The data were checked for the inclusion of all moves and steps of this pattern. When the existence of an organizational pattern similar to that of Hyland (2004) was confirmed, the next step was to calculate the frequencies of different moves and steps in each of the Acknowledgments sections. This was done manually. Each move or step was underlined. Then, all the information related to the occurrence of different moves and steps was put in a table to be used for further interpretation.

Data Analysis

Two hundred books from the applied linguistics field were selected. First, they were examined to specify the organizational pattern they followed. By doing so, the first research question was answered. In order to answer the other research question, the texts were analyzed for the existence of different moves and steps with reference to Hyland (2004). Then, they were compared based on the frequency of different moves and steps. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed in order to run a Chi-Square test for all the moves and steps of the two groups of samples to compare their frequencies.

RESULTS

The First Research Question

In order to answer the first research question, (i.e. What organizational pattern does Acknowledgments sections written by NSs and NNSs of English follow?), a checklist of different moves and steps of the aforementioned model was prepared to check the occurrence of different moves and steps: i.e. *Reflecting Move(RM), Thanking Move(TM), Presenting the Participants (PP), Thanking for Academic Assistance (TAA),*

Thanking for Resources (TR), Thanking for Moral Support (TMS), Announcing Move (AM), Accepting the Responsibility (AR), and Dedicating the Thesis step, here *Dedicating Step (DS)*. Table 2 shows the occurrence of different moves and steps in the data.

Table 2: Occurrence of different moves and steps in the data

	RM			TM		AM		CR	CM	SO	PTG
		PP	TAA	TR	TMS	AR	DS				
Native	20	23	87	85	43	16	3	9	2	13	1
Non-native	5	31	90	84	47	6	5	6	3	32	0

In addition to the moves and steps introduced by Hyland (2004), four additional moves were spotted in the data. The first one was Copyright (CR) move (This title was suggested by the researchers) in which the writer apologizes for neglecting or dismissing the copyright unintentionally. Then, copyright owners are asked to inform the writer(s) about any negligence. Another new move was that the writer asked the readers to send their comments about the book. This move was named Commenting Move (CM) by the researchers of this study. Two other moves, which had already been suggested in Al-Ali's (2010) model, were Signing off (SO) and Praising and Thanking God (PTG) move. In the former, the name of the writer(s), sometimes along with the date of composing the book, was mentioned. In the latter, as the title suggests, thanks were expressed to God. These four additional moves were included in the identified pattern due to the occurrence of them in the data; however, the frequencies of Commenting Move (CM) and Praising and Thanking God (PTG) were too small. All of these four moves were optional.

Therefore, the analysis of the data indicates that the Acknowledgments genre in books follows an organizational pattern. According to the results of this study, Reflecting Move, Thanking Move (including Praising and Thanking God, Presenting the Participants, Thanking for Academic Assistance, Thanking for Resources and Thanking

for moral Supports Steps), Announcing Move (including Accepting the Responsibility and Dedicating Steps), Copyright Move, Commenting Move and Signing Off Move are the main components of Acknowledgments sections of books.

Table 3: Move structures identified in books' Acknowledgments

Serial	Moves and steps	Status	Description
1	**Reflective move**	Hyland's Model	Introspective comment on the writer's research experience
2	**Thanking move**	Hyland's Model	Mapping credit to individuals and institutions
2.1	Praising and Thanking God	Al-Ali's Model	Thanking God for his supports and helps
2.2	Presenting participants	Hyland's Model	Introducing those to be thanked
2.3	Thanking for academic Assistance	Hyland's Model	Thanks for intellectual support, ideas, analyses, feedback, etc.
2.4	Thanking for resources	Hyland's Model	Thanks for data access and clerical, technical, or financial support
2.5	Thanking for moral Support	Hyland's Model	Thanks for the encouragement, friendship, sympathy, patience, etc.
3	**Announcing move**	Hyland's Model	Statements delineating responsibility and inspiration
3.1	Accepting responsibility	Hyland's Model	An assertion of authorial responsibility for flaws or errors
3.2	Dedicating step	Hyland's Model	A formal dedication of the work to an individual
4	**Commenting**	New Move	Asking the readers to send their comments regarding the book
5	**Copyright**	New Move	Apologizing for any unintentional negligence in reserving copyright and asking copyright owners to inform the writer in this regard
6	**Signing off**	Al-Ali's Model	Writing the name of the author and the date

The Second Research Question

The second research question was an attempt to discover whether acknowledgments sections written by NSs and NNSs of English differ in terms of their Reflecting move, Thanking move, and Announcing move. Table 4 shows 20 and 5 instances of RM in the acknowledgments of the NS and NNS authors, respectively.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for Reflecting move in native and non-native samples

	Reflective Move (RM)		Total
	Yes	No	
Native	20	80	100
Non-Native	5	95	100
Total	25	175	200

A Chi-square test was run to compare the employment of the *Reflecting Move* in books' Acknowledgments sections written by NSs and NNSs of English. Table 5 shows that probability value, marked as Sig. (2-tailed), is smaller than.05 indicating that there was a significant difference in the Reflecting move of native samples and non-native samples. This means that the difference between NS and NNS samples in *Reflecting Move* reaches statistical significance, so it is meaningful. Hence, it could be concluded that the acknowledgments sections written by the NSs and NNSs of English differ in terms of their Reflecting move.

Table 5: Chi-Square for Reflective move in native and non-native samples

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.28[a]	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	200		

The second part of this research question is concerned with the Thanking move in the acknowledgments sections written by the NSs and NNSs of English. Since Thanking move is an obligatory move in Acknowledgments, it was seen in all samples, and the total frequency of it equaled 200 in all samples. Therefore, no difference in Thanking Move as a general move was

seen in the samples of the two groups. However, some differences, as illustrated in Table 6, were observed between the NS and NNS samples in the use of the steps of Thanking Move i.e. Presenting the Participants (PP), Thanking for Academic Assistance (TAA), Thanking for Resources (TR), and Thanking for Moral Support (TMS).

Table 6: Descriptive statistics for the steps of Thanking move in native and non-native samples

	PP		Total	TAA		Total	TR		Total	TMS		Tot al
	Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No	
Native	23	77	100	87	13	100	85	15	100	43	57	100
Non-native	31	69	100	90	10	100	84	16	100	47	53	100
Total	54	146	200	177	23	200	169	31	200	90	110	200

Chi-Square tests were run to compare the frequencies of Presenting the Participants, Thanking for Academic Assistance, Thanking for Resources, and Thanking for Moral Support steps in samples of Acknowledgments sections of the books written by the NSs and NNSs of English. As Table 7 demonstrates, there were not any significant differences between the NS and NNS samples in the use of the steps of Thanking Move; that is, Presenting the Participants (PP), Thanking for Academic Assistance (TAA), Thanking for Resources (TR), and Thanking for Moral Support (TMS). As shown in Table 7, probability value, marked as Sig. (2-tailed), is larger than.05 (p >05) for all these steps. This means that the difference between NS and NNS samples in the use of these steps does not reach statistical significance, so they are not meaningful.

Table 7: Chi-Square for the frequencies of different steps of Thanking move in native and non-native samples

Pearson Chi-Square	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square (pp)	1.62[a]	1	.20
Pearson Chi-Square (TAA)	.44[a]	1	.50
Pearson Chi-Square (TR)	.03[a]	1	.84
Pearson Chi-Square (TMS)	.32[a]	1	.57
N of Valid Cases	200		

The last part of the second research question dealt with Announcing Move (AM) and its steps; that is, Accepting the Responsibility (AR) step and Dedicating step (DS) in the samples produced by the NSs and NNSs. Table 8 shows the descriptive statistics for this move and its steps.

Table 8: Descriptive statistics for Announcing the move, Accepting the Responsibility step and Dedicating step

	AM		Total	AR		Total	DS		Total
	Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No	
Native	19	81	100	16	84	100	3	97	100
Non-Native	11	89	100	6	94	100	5	95	100
Total	30	170	200	22	178	200	8	192	200

A Chi-Square test was conducted to see whether there was a significant difference between NSs and NNSs in terms of Announcing Move. The results of the test (Table 9) indicated that the probability value was marked as Sig. (2-tailed), was larger than.05 (p >05). This meant that the difference between NS and NNS samples in Announcing Move did not reach statistical significance, so it was not meaningful.

Two other Chi-Square tests were employed to investigate the two sub-units or steps of the Announcing move (i.e. Accepting the Responsibility (AR) Step and Dedicating Step (DS). The results of the test for Accepting the Responsibility Step indicated that the probability value was smaller than.05, so it was confirmed that the difference was significant. Hence, the difference between the frequencies of the use of this step was significant in NSs' samples and NNSs' samples.

Likewise, the results of performing another Chi-Square test to compare the use of Dedicating Step in books' Acknowledgments sections of NSs and NNSs of English revealed that the probability value, marked as Sig. (2-tailed), was larger than.05 (p >05), and there was not a significant difference in the frequency of Dedicating Step in samples of NSs and NNSs.

On the whole, it could be concluded that the results of running Chi-Square test for Reflecting Move, Thanking Move and its steps and Announcing move and its steps made clear that the differences in the frequencies of the use of different moves and steps of Hyland's (2004) scheme in NS and NNS samples were not meaningful except in the use of Reflecting Move and Accepting Responsibility step.

Table 9: Chi-Square Test for the frequencies of different steps of Announcing the move in native and non-native samples

Pearson Chi-Square	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square (AM)	2.51[a]	1	.11
Pearson Chi-Square (AR)	5.10[a]	1	.02
Pearson Chi-Square (DS)	.52[a]	1	.47
N of Valid Cases	200		

DISCUSSION

The present study was an attempt to investigate the under-explored structure of Acknowledgments of the books written by NSs and NNSs of English. More specifically, the study intended to determine whether an organizational pattern, according to Hyland's (2004) influential scheme, was followed in the Acknowledgments sections of the books. Moreover, it also sought to see whether acknowledgments sections written by NSs and NNSs of English differ in terms of their Reflecting move, thanking move, and announcing the move.

The overall results of the study revealed that NSs and NNSs of English employed somewhat the same organizational pattern in writing the Acknowledgments section of the books. It came to light that the overall structure of the Acknowledgments section of the books follows an organizational pattern which is a combination of two models i.e. Hyland's (2004) scheme (all moves and steps), which had been developed for the generic structure of theses and dissertations, and Al-Ali's (2010) model obtained in a study conducted in Muslim countries (Praising and Thanking God Step and Signing off Move) and two new moves that were identified by

the researchers of this study: Copyright Move and Commenting Move (These titles were suggested by the researchers). Praising and Thanking God step includes expressing gratitude to God for his supports and helps. In the signing off move, the writer writes his or her name at the end of the Acknowledgments sections (sometimes with the date of writing). In Copyright Move, the writer apologizes for any unintentional negligence in reserving copyright and asks copyright owners to inform the writer(s) for any fault in reporting copyright. By Commenting Move, the writer asks the readers to send their comments regarding the book to the writer.

In line with some other studies (e.g., Estaji & Nosrati, 2018; Lasaky, 2011; Yang, 2012), the results of this study also showed that, apart from some minor differences, both NS and NNS writers of English followed Hyland's (2004) scheme in the development of acknowledgments. However, it should be noted that, contrary to the present study that had focused on the acknowledgments of the books, all the previous studies had targeted the acknowledgments section of theses and dissertations. Therefore, it seems that the present research is the first study that confirms an organizational pattern for the acknowledgments section of books.

The second research question of the study concerned with Reflective move as the first move in Hyland's (2004) scheme. A reflective move is an introspective piece of writing in which a writer shares his/her thoughts, feelings, and research experiences with the readers. As the findings of the study indicated, there was a meaningful difference in the utilization of reflective move between NS and NNS writers of English.

Reflecting Move was seen more frequently in NS books. This result is in line with the results of Al-Zubaidi's (2012) study which examined the structure of Acknowledgments written by NS and NNS writers of English. Al-Zubaidi (2012) considered the lack of Reflecting Move in the corpus as an indicator of cultural axioms of self-effacement in contrast to self-enhancement methods of communication. The scant use of the Reflecting Move in NNS samples can be attributed to this fact that native speakers are more fluent and proficient in English; therefore, they have more capability

to talk about their experiences. This fact also can be attributed to cultural issues as Nkemleke (2006) claimed that Acknowledgments sections are significantly culturally contextualized. Hence, scant use of Reflecting Move might be attributed to cultural factors that affect the writing of writers and since Reflecting Move indicates the personal identity and self-confidence of the writers, is used rarely by non-native speakers due to their cultural factors.

The third research question of the study dealt with the Thanking move as an obligatory move which functioned as the main communicative purpose of the acknowledgments section. This move serves the function of introducing and thanking all those who have somewhat contributed to the completion of the work. Due to the obligatory nature of this move, it was observed in all the samples produced by NS and NNS writers. However, the frequencies of its steps were different in the samples. This finding is parallel to other studies (e.g., Estaji & Nosrati, 2018; Lasaky, 2011) confirming the fact that this move is employed by almost all writers in the process of acknowledgments writing. Apart from the "four steps which enable the writer to introduce and thank individuals and institutions for various kinds of support" (Hyland, 2004, p. 313), one more step, Praising and thanking God, was identified in the samples that usually precedes these four steps mainly by Muslim writers.

The last research question of the study concerned with Announcing Move. The results of the study indicated that the difference between samples in Accepting the Responsibility (as the first step of Announcing move) was meaningful. This step was mostly employed by native speakers. Cheng (2012) believes that socio-cultural norms and values can influence the thanking manner of people and affect the rhetorical framework of genres like Acknowledgments. Intellectual property and copyright law can be regarded as the by-products of western cultural values (Myers, 1998). Especially in the United States and the United Kingdom, there is a long-lasting awareness and recognition of these values. Therefore, it can be asserted that accepting the Responsibility of work is rooted in the psyche of

these people. It could also be argued that as Rofess and Mahmood (2015) put it, due to less proficiency of non-native speakers in English writing skill, especially in writing Acknowledgments genre, they prefer to take only the obligatory move and they are usually satisfied with the basic component of an acknowledgment section. The results of Rofess and Mahmood's (2015) study indicated that 72% of all the steps concerned with thanking move, and the use of other steps were rare. The results of the present study indicated that the acknowledgments section of native speakers' books were made of 30162 words, however, the NNS samples were made of 27117 words. Hence, the native samples were lengthier. Such a result can be due to cultural factors related to the society of native speakers and the level of proficiency of the writers.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The present study intended to investigate the under-explored structure of the acknowledgments section in books. The Findings of the study indicate that the Acknowledgments section in books follows an organizational pattern. This pattern is mostly in accordance with Hyland's (2004) scheme which was considered as the basic model in the present study. Al-Ali's (2010) model was another model considered in investigating the generic structure of Acknowledgments sections. It should be noted that Hyland's (2004) and Al-Ali's (2010) schemes are two well-established models that have been developed for the generic structure of theses and dissertations. The overall structure of the Acknowledgments section of the books follows an organizational pattern which is a combination of Hyland's (2004) and Al-Ali's (2010) model and two new moves that were identified by the researchers of this study: Copyright Move and Commenting Move (These titles were suggested by the researchers).

The identified move structures in this study are made of six moves and seven steps. Reflecting Move, Thanking Move (with all its steps except Praising and Thanking God), and Announcing Move (with its two steps)

match to Hyland's (2004) scheme. Praising and Thanking God step and Signing off move is similar to the step and move identified in Al-Ali's (2010) model. Commenting and Copyright moves are two new moves identified by the researchers in this study.

It should be noted that the number of books utilized in this study was limited to 200 books which makes the results less generalizable. Large scale use of the Acknowledgments genre in books indicates their importance to writers; however, many of students in ESL or EFL contexts do not receive sufficient instruction concerning this piece of writing. Much study remains to be done, and this study focused only on the surface and formal properties of Acknowledgments sections. Nothing has been done about the effect of gender on the way writers compose their Acknowledgments sections. Moreover, comparing Acknowledgments sections written in two different languages can be a good suggestion for further research.

ORCID

Rasoul Mohammad Hosseinpur   https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3718-5948
Mohammadreza Pirooz   https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2329-1544
Reza Jafari Harandi   https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6533-6275
Gohar Mohammadpour   https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1184-1887

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