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GENRE ANALYSIS OF SUICIDE NOTES IN PAKISTANI TV DRAMAS: UNRAVELING RHETORICAL PATTERNS AND COMMUNICATIVE INTENTIONS

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Abstract

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This research explores the rhetorical structures of moves and steps in the suicide notes of Pakistani fictional dramas. Six suicide notes have been analyzed by using Swales' model of genre analysis (Swales, 1990) and Bhatia's model of genre analysis (Bhatia, 1993). In this regard, six suicide notes have been taken from Pakistani TV dramas which are: Mohabbat tum se nafrat hai', 'Jo chaly to Jaan se guzar gaye', 'Hum Kahan k Sachy thy', 'Qaid', 'Dunk' and 'Log kya kahain gy 'from different tv channels. A mixed-method approach has been used in this study. A qualitative approach has been utilized for the identification of moves/steps in the suicide notes and to find out the communicative purposes of the suicide notes. Quantitative analysis has been carried out by using LIWC software to explore the communicative functions of suicide notes. This study found four obligatory moves in the sample of the study. These include addressing the recipient, providing an explanation, expressing directions and wishes, and describing or announcing death. These exist in the sample of the study with the frequency of 60%, 50%, 50%, and 50% respectively. Moreover, three optional moves have also been found including apologizing, describing one's state at death and after death, and bidding farewell and these moves occur with the frequency of 20%, 10%, and 40% respectively. This study will be beneficial for future researchers for sentimental analysis of suicide notes which can be implemented on the larger corpus of original suicide notes to get more valid results.

Keywords: Rhetorical, Genre, moves, steps, suicide, fiction.

Introduction

The ratio of suicide cases has been increasing day by day in the whole world, similarly in Pakistan due to various social factors. The writers have been representing this theme in their fiction along with the content of suicide notes. The rapid increase in suicide rate has been getting the interest of researchers, and suicide notes are being explored dynamically. Analyzing suicide notes is an emerging area of research in forensic linguistics. Fiction has a great influence on the lives of people. The study aims to identify and analyze the embedded rhetorical structures, and linguistic elements to reveal communicative purposes in suicide notes presented in Pakistani dramas to get interpretations for the analysis of the attitudes of writers and to know their mental health to create public awareness.

Background

Pakistan is a multicultural country where inhabitants belong to different religious and cultural backgrounds. Pakistani drama industry represents different cultures and aspects of society in Pakistan. Fiction portrays a picture of society in such a way that seems very close to reality. The fiction presents different themes including education, culture, language, lifestyle, unemployment, and different current affairs as well. The scripts of TV dramas are not based on original stories but are written to represent the lives of Pakistani people. The people of Pakistan have been facing a lot of problems and challenges in their lives. The majority of the population belongs to the lower middle class and middle class. These people are having different financial and domestic issues. Unemployment is a common problem among the majority of people and they are unable to afford their food, shelter, and even basic needs. They are unable to educate their children as well because they cannot pay the fees of educational institutes. All such difficulties of life have ended the desire to live in people. They find different ways of taking up their lives or ending their lives. People have begun to commit suicide at a high rate. In recent years, most Pakistani TV dramas have addressed these issues of Pakistan and show how such people deal with their issues. These dramas focus on recent issues to create awareness among people and try to represent the original picture of the society of Pakistan. Suicide is a significant issue all over the globe. Pakistan is an Islamic country with a majority of the population of Muslims and suicide is forbidden in Islam. Keeping in view the restrictions of Islam, the suicide rate in Pakistan has not been prominent since the beginning. So, it was not a focus of attention for the writers and researchers as well. This is the reason that suicide was not a theme of dramas in the past years. For a decade, the rate of suicide cases has been increasing in Pakistan and got the attention of the media as well. Suicide notes are important notes that are based on the issues of the ones who write them before committing suicide. Most of the research has been conducted on suicide notes to explore the emotional and psychological condition of the ones who commit suicide. Such type of research aimed to explore the motives of suicide which are hidden in the suicidal texts. According to a few recent studies, suicide notes can also be considered as a genre of writing. This study is focused on the writing of suicide notes and it has explored the suicide notes differently. As previously conducted research tried to explore the hidden motives, mental states, or the responsible victims, this study has explored the writing pattern of suicide notes by using genre theory. It has explored the genre of suicide notes by conducting a genre analysis of suicide notes. Different people write suicide notes in their way but previous research has found some similarities in suicide notes written by different people. These similarities create a possibility of proving that suicide notes can have a genre of writing. Different researchers are working on it in different countries. In Pakistan, it has not been explored yet. So, this study has researched the Pakistani suicidal texts written by males and females which are presented in Pakistani TV dramas, and has explored the rhetorical structures of Pakistani suicidal texts to find out whether suicidal texts could be a genre or not.

Research Objectives

• To find out the moves and steps present in the suicide notes of Pakistani dramas and to find out the consistency of these moves and steps in all the selected suicide notes.

• To find out the communicative purposes of the suicide notes of Pakistani dramas.

Research Questions

• What are the moves and steps present in the suicide notes of Pakistani TV dramas and how consistent the moves/steps are across selected suicidal texts?

• What are the communicative purposes present in the suicide notes of Pakistani TV dramas?

Literature Review

Shapero (2011), conducted a research study on suicide notes by making a corpus of 286 suicide notes. The focus of this research study was to explore the language of suicide notes to explore the nature of the content and to find out the ways to differentiate between genuine and simulated suicide notes. Results reflected no absolute ways of distinction between genuine and fake suicide notes. On the other hand, Samraj (2015) investigated the genre of suicide notes by implication of the Swales model (1990) of Genre theory. This study analyzed 114 suicide notes by using the Swales model (1990) and Linguistic Inquiry Word Count (LIWC) software. In the analysis of the text of suicide notes, rhetorical structures of moves and steps were categorized and this study found that suicide notes carry these moves and steps but not in the same order (Samraj & Gawron, 2015). Moreover, not all suicide notes do carry all moves and steps but these occur in different order. This study concluded that suicide notes are a non-professional and non-academic occluded genre that lacks a specific discourse community. A specific discourse community is required to declare it as an academic genre which needs more progress in this area of research. Abaalkhail (2015) explored the rhetorical moves of suicide notes. This study analyzed 86 suicide notes and a qualitative analysis was carried out. Most of the focus of the analysis was on the move/step analysis and the investigation of the communicative purpose(s) of suicide notes. This study found that suicide notes share different communicative purpose(s) and suicide notes carry a structure comprised of different moves and steps. Based on these findings, this study suggests that suicide notes can be considered as a genre. Fata. et.al. (2021) explored the characteristics of linguistic features of suicide notes and they used 11 suicide notes for the data analysis. This research study carried out a qualitative content analysis of the suicide notes and categorized the linguistic features of these suicide notes into five categories. These include clear reasoning, text structure, grammar, expressing emotions, and punctuation. This study found all these linguistic features in suicide notes and stated that the meaning of the suicide notes can be drawn from these linguistic features. Moreover, these linguistic features help in interpreting the meanings of the text of suicide notes as well which is helpful in the investigation of suicide notes. Suicide notes are suicidal texts and suicidal people use language to write suicide notes. As the language used by males and females has differences, the suicide notes written by males and females also have differences. On the other hand, Tanusy (2022) conducted a research study on the rhetorical move analysis of men's and women's suicide notes. Its focus was on the roles of gender in language and the effects of gender in the language of suicide notes. It found that the suicide notes written by males used the move of giving instructions to others in high frequency while females used the move of expressing emotions in high frequency. Analysis of suicide notes is a significant area of research for the researchers and it has been examined from diversified perspectives. Psychologists and behaviorists have researched suicide notes to explore the reasons for committing suicide which are hidden in the suicide notes. Such researches help in the identification of the mental state of the authors of suicide notes. Usually, authors of suicide notes write about their problems in

suicide notes which took them to the stage of attempting suicide. Sometimes, suicide notes give a clue about those people who are responsible for the author's death as the author addresses those people by their names in suicide notes. In this way, suicide notes help the lawyers and courts understand the whole case. This study investigated suicide notes in a new direction by implementing genre theory on suicide notes as it was not a trend for the previous researchers. So, this study addressed this gap. The main focus of this study is the text of suicide notes.

Theoretical Framework

This study has adopted two models of genre analysis for analyzing data. One model is given by Swales (1990) and the second model is given by Bhatia (1993). Samraj (2015) modified Swales' model of genre analysis and gave a model of moves and steps to analyze the suicide notes as an implication of genre theory. The modified version of Swales' model is as follows:

Table: Modified Swales' model of genre theory by Samraj (2015)

Moves	Steps
Addressing Recipient	
Providing Explanation	Providing a larger context or background
	Giving reasons or justifying
	Taking responsibility or Ascribing responsibility to others
	Expressing feelings about Act
Apologizing	Apologizing with or without explanation
	Asking Forgiveness
Describing one's state at and after death	Describing state at death
	Describing state after death
Expressing directions and wishes	Expressing short-term wishes
	Expressing long-term wishes
Describing or announcing the death	
Bidding farewell	Expressing love or positive feelings toward others
	Expressing hate or negative feelings towards others
	Expressing thanks
	Expressing (imagined) other's feelings
	Expressing goodbye and good wishes
Commentary on life	
Meta-Commentary on letter	
Problem	

The second model used for this study is the model given by Bhatia for genre analysis. Bhatia (1993) further proceeded with the model given by Swales and gave a proper framework of seven stages for genre analysis (Bhatia, 1993). These seven stages are:

1. Placing the given Genre-Text in a situational context: The first step is to place the given text in a situational context. This stage involves the engagement of text with the background events to provide the proper context to the researcher.

2. Surveying Existing Literature: This step is about the literature review of different theories used for genre analysis.

3. Refining Situational/Contextual Analysis: The third step is about the identification of the speaker in the text, audience, and discourse

community, and about the identification of the relationship of all these in a combined form of text.

4. Selecting Corpus: The fourth step is to establish the communicative purposes and the context of the text.

5. Studying the Institutional Context: The fifth step is to establish rules and conventions of language use in the context of the investigated genre which can be stated explicitly or implicitly.

6. Levels of Linguistic Analysis: This step is all about the proper analysis of the text on different levels of Linguistic analysis. These levels include the analysis of different lexico-grammatical features and structural organization of the text in a genre which is move-structure analysis. Move-structure analysis is the identification and assigning of different moves and steps in a text according to the communicative purposes that they serve in the text.

7. Specialist Information in Genre Analysis: The last step is to consult other specialists or analysts in the field to check the findings of the study. This step is all about the validity check of the study.

Bhatia gave this proper seven-staged model for the genre analysis of any text and it was suggested that these stages can be followed in any order as these provide guidelines for the analysis.

Research Methodology

A mixed method approach has been employed in this study: qualitative and quantitative. A qualitative approach has been used for the identification of moves/steps in the suicide notes of Pakistani TV dramas and to find out the communicative purposes of these suicide notes. Quantitative analysis has been carried out by using LIWC (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) software. The LIWC report of each suicide note gave the frequency of different linguistic dimensions in the suicide notes which helped in the analysis of suicide notes to get interpretations for the identification of communicative purposes. A sample of six suicide notes has been used for this study. All the six suicide notes have been taken from Pakistani TV dramas. These dramas include *'Mohabbat tum se*

nafrat hai', 'Jo chaly to Jaan se guzar gaye', 'Hum Kahan k Sachy thy', 'Qaid', 'Dunk', and *'Log kya kahain gy'*. All these dramas were broadcast on different Pakistani channels including Geo Entertainment network, Hum network, and ARY Digital network. These dramas premiered originally in Urdu language. For the analysis of data, these suicide notes have been translated into English language by following a complete procedure of translation. The translation of suicide notes has been approved by a group of experts to get the validity of the translation. Then, suicide notes have been analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative analysis has been carried out by using Swales' model of move analysis and Bhatia's model of genre analysis. These models have been used to analyze the rhetorical structures of moves and steps in suicide notes of Pakistani TV dramas and to get the communicative functions of these suicide notes. Quantitative analysis is carried out by using LIWC (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) Software. LIWC report helps in the analysis of the mental state of people who commit suicide by revealing the positive tone, negative tone, cognitive process, and many other dimensions of language.

Data Analysis

The sample of this research study consists of six suicide notes and all these suicide notes have been analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The overall qualitative analysis of the sample shows the frequency of occurrence of moves and steps in the sample as follows:

Table 4.1: Showing Frequency of Occurrence of Moves and Steps in all six Suicide Notes

Sr. No.	Moves	Steps	Frequency
Move 1.	Addressing Recipient		50%
Move 2.	Providing Explanation		60%
		Providing a larger context or background	60%

Move		Step	%
		Giving reasons or justifying	30%
		Taking responsibility or Ascribing responsibility to others	20%
		Expressing feelings about Act	10%
Move 3.	Apologizing		20%
		Apologizing with or without explanation	10%
		Asking Forgiveness	10%
Move 4.	Describing one's state at and after death		10%
		Describing state at death	10%
		Describing state after death	0
Move 5.	Expressing directions and wishes		50%
		Expressing short-term wishes	0
		Expressing long-term wishes	50%
Move 6.	Describing or announcing the death		50%
Move 7.	Bidding farewell		40%
		Expressing love or positive feelings	20%
		toward others	
		Expressing hate or negative feelings towards others	20%
		Expressing thanks	10%
		Expressing (imagined) other's feelings	20%
		Expressing goodbye and good wishes	0
Move 8.	Commentary on life		0
Move 9.	Meta-Commentary on letter		0
Move 10.	Problem		0

In the qualitative analysis, to find out the communicative purposes concerning move structure, it has been found that not even a single move or a single step is constant in all six suicide notes. All the moves and steps occur differently in different suicide notes and some even don't exist., The last three moves have zero frequency which shows the unavailability of moves. These moves are called optional moves and these include commentary on life and meta-commentary on letters and problems. Likewise, the frequency of steps is prominently below the average in all suicide notes except a few steps which include providing larger context or background, giving reasons, or justifying and expressing long-term wishes. It is evident from the overall analysis that suicidal persons do not follow a proper pattern of writing in suicide notes and do not even provide more details. Rather, they try to write only important details about the background context of the act and express their long-term wishes. Most of them do not even show love or hate feelings towards others nor do they blame anyone. They just write simple notes.

The overall quantitative analysis of all six suicide notes shows the average of all traditional LIWC dimensions of suicide notes.

Table 4.2: Showing Average of Traditional LIWC Dimensions of all 6 suicide notes

Traditional LIWC Dimensions	Average of all 6 suicide notes
I-Words (I, me, my)	9.04
Positive tone	5.17
Negative tone	2.88
Social Words	10.96
Cognitive Processes	11.34
Allure	8.76
Moralization	1.07
Summary Variables	
Analytic	87.08
Authentic	65.17

From the abovementioned average values of all LIWC dimensions, it has been found that personal pronouns occur on an average of 9.04 in all suicide notes. It shows the insecurities of suicidal people and their inferiority complex as well. Positive tone and negative tone have a prominent difference as the average values for both are 5.17 and 2.88 respectively. It reports that suicidal persons try to stay neutral and try to avoid much negative tone by balancing it with high positive tone. Moreover, social words and cognitive processes occur on an average of 10.96 and 11.34 respectively. It shows the lonely nature of suicidal people even after being social because of high cognitive processes. So, it has been found that the analytic variables have more average than authentic variables as the values for both variables are 87.08 and 65.17 respectively. All the dimensions show a clear imbalance in the lives of such people who commit suicide.

Discussion and Findings

The analysis of all six suicide notes reports that the occurrence of moves and steps in all six suicide notes is different. Moreover, all the ten moves are not present in even a single suicide note. Different moves and steps are missing in each suicide note. The last three moves which include commentary on life, meta-commentary on the letter, and problem are necessarily missing in every suicide note. It shows that suicidal persons don't like to talk much about their lives and the circumstances which they face in their life. All the moves and steps are used for a specific communicative purpose and it occurs in the suicide notes to serve these communicative purposes. That's why it occurs differently in every suicide note. Furthermore, it also shows the imbalances in their lives. The LIWC reports of suicidal texts show the emotional imbalance of suicidal persons. The imbalance in the reports clearly shows that those who commit suicide have unstable mental states. They go through different traumas in life and emotional imbalances which provoke them to commit suicide.

Conclusion

This research study has explored the rhetorical structures of six suicide notes collected from Pakistani TV dramas and found that all the suicidal texts consist of different moves and steps in their structures. The occurrence of moves and steps has been differentiated into three categories based on the frequency of occurrence in the suicidal texts. These three categories are obligatory moves, optional moves, and missing moves. Obligatory moves are those moves that exist in 50% of the selected suicide notes. Four moves have been found as obligatory in this research study and these moves include addressing the recipient, providing an explanation, expressing directions and wishes, and describing or announcing death. These four moves are obligatory because these exist in the sample of the study with the frequency of 60%, 50%, 50%, and 50% respectively. Optional moves are those moves that exist in less than 50% of the selected suicide notes. Three moves are optional moves and these moves include apologizing, describing one's state at death and after death, and bidding farewell and these moves occur with

the frequency of 20%, 10%, and 40% respectively. Three moves are missing moves because these do not exist even in a single suicide note and these moves include commentary on life, meta-commentary on letter, and problem. So, four obligatory moves consistently occurred in all six suicide notes along with their steps as well. These moves and steps function together to create a sense in the text to communicate the intended meaning of the writer. Communicative purpose is the goal that is achieved through language. Language is used to communicate with others and to deliver our message. The suicide notes are meaningful texts that are not purposeless rather these do have a purpose for writing. From the detailed qualitative and quantitative analysis of suicidal texts collected from Pakistani TV dramas, different communicative purposes have been identified. This research study found that the suicide notes in Pakistani TV dramas are very specific and to the point in nature of the content. This study found the most common communicative purpose of these notes is to justify such extreme-level acts by giving reasons and providing background details. Giving directions to loved ones and wishing them long-term wishes is another communicative purpose found in this study. One most important communicative purposes found in this study is to declare the determined intention of committing suicide by making it clear in a suicide note. Another significant communicative purpose found is to ask for forgiveness. Suicidal people also use suicide notes to reveal the identity of the responsible victims of their suicide by blaming them and showing negative feelings for them in their suicide notes. So, it is another important communicative purpose.

Recommendations

This study has analyzed suicide notes that are not genuine but are simulated and represented in Pakistani TV dramas which try to present the real picture of Pakistani society. The analysis of these suicidal texts reveals that these suicide notes consist of proper rhetorical structures and have communicative purposes as well but there is a lack of occurrence of all the moves and steps in the suicidal texts. Based on this, suicide notes have been declared as an occluded genre by previous researchers. Occluded means something hidden and suicide notes have been declared as an occluded genre based on their inconsistent rhetorical structures but this study does not conclude these suicide notes as an occluded genre as this study is not based on the genuine suicide notes. Further future implications of this research study are the following:

• It will be helpful for the researchers to conduct a sentimental analysis of suicide notes as these last notes carry a lot of emotions of the suicidal people in the language.

• It can be used for the genre analysis of original suicide notes and a larger corpus of original suicide notes can be analyzed to find out the genre of suicide notes.

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