DECODING ACADEMIC PERSUASION: A STUDY OF VERY FIRST SENTENCES IN PAKISTANI RESEARCH ARTICLES

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ABSTRACT
The present research paper offers an analysis of rhetorical features, linguistics, and textual choices found in the Very First Sentence (VFS) of research papers produced by Pakistani researchers in the English language and literature. The researchers examine a corpus of fifty research articles from ten Pakistani Journals. This study adopts a genre-based approach and the Swales CARS model to analyze each article's rhetorical and textual VFS. The present study reveals that Pakistani researchers in the English language and literature follow Move One as their preferred pattern for VFS. They start their research with an emphasis on the significance of the topic. Their choice of words reveals their rhetorical objectives. The textual analysis highlights the recurrent use of the present tense, which shows their connection to the current knowledge and their desire to be relevant. The researchers prominently use terms such as 'the study and 'employ,' showing their focus on advanced study models from Western sources. The present research contributes to the understanding of effective academic writing practice in the Pakistani context. No study has been conducted on the importance of VFS in Pakistani research articles. It fills this gap by exploring the textual and rhetorical features of the first sentences in Pakistani research papers. It also highlights the persuasive strategies employed in the VFS of the articles. The findings contribute to academic writing conventions and offer valuable insights for scholars interested in understanding the writing practices of Pakistani researchers in English language and literature.

Keywords: Textual Analysis, Rhetorical patterns, Linguistic choices, Very First Sentences (VFS), Pakistani Researchers, Swales CARS Model, Lexical Choices

1. Introduction

The research paper's first sentence (VFS), part of the first section, Introduction, plays a role in capturing the readers' attention, setting the tone, and showing the topic's relevance. It is like a gateway to the whole research project. The textual and rhetorical analysis of these initial sentences is critical because it highlights the persuasive strategies employed by the researchers. Scholars such as Shehzad (2006) emphasize the need to organize the structure of the introduction section of research papers. The first sentence belongs to the foundations of the documents upon which the rest of the research work is built. Swales (1990) mentions common challenges academic writers face when starting their research. He indicates the importance of a strong beginning. However, many studies have focused on introducing the research papers. Rhetorical and textual properties have been studied in various languages, including English, Arabic, Finnish, and Malay. Researchers have utilized the Swales CARS model to study the structure of the introduction section of the papers. The first sentence in the research article introductions: A rhetoric comparative approach has been conducted recently by Mohammad Alanazi and Muteb Alqarni, comparing the Middle Eastern writers' and Western writers' use of VFS in their research projects. However, the researchers find a gap and opportunity because no one has examined the first sentences of Pakistani research articles. Researchers have widely used the CARS model in

writing and analyzing the introduction section of their research papers. The present study focuses on the VFS of the research articles published in Pakistani journals in English language and literature. This study adopts a genre-based approach and collects the corpus of fifty research papers from ten Pakistani journals. Swales' CARS model is taken as a framework for analyzing VFS. The main objective of this study is to identify the rhetorical pattern employed in the VFS. This study explores how Pakistani researchers establish the relevance and importance of their chosen topics. Moreover, this study examines the textual choices made by the authors in the VFS and its significance. This study aims to discover a deeper understanding of the dynamics and multifaceted importance of this specific segment of the research paper. This study contributes to the existing stock of knowledge on academic writing conventions. It explores researchers' persuasive strategies in writing their paper's introduction section. It also highlights the power and influence of the opening sentences of the papers in capturing the readers' attention.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The Objectives of This Research Study are as follows:
1. Identify and analyze the common rhetorical structures used in the opening sentences of research article introductions in Pakistani publications.
2. Investigate the textual choices made by Pakistani authors in the opening sentences of research article introductions.
3. Assess the extent to which Pakistani authors adhere to Swales' rhetorical pattern of Move One in establishing the research territory.
4. Uncover the rhetorical purposes underlying the textual features employed in the opening sentences of Pakistani research article introductions.

1.2. Research Questions

1. What common rhetorical structures are employed in the opening sentences of research article introductions in Pakistani publications?
2. What textual choices are made by Pakistani authors in the opening sentences of research article introductions?
3. How much of Swales' model, especially the patterns of Move One, are followed by Pakistani authors in their research papers?
4. What are the rhetorical purposes behind the textual choices in the VFS in the Pakistani research article introductions?

1.2. Significance of the Study

The present research holds significant value in the field of academic writing. The study aims to analyze the first sentence in the research articles written by Pakistani authors in the English language & literature field. It explores the rhetorical strategies employed by the authors. This research enhances the understanding of effective academic writing practices in the Pakistani context. It is an addition to the existing scholarship on academic writing. It is helpful to work for scholars interested in Pakistani researchers' writing practices. This study highlights the power

and influence of the opening statements in capturing readers' attention. It illustrates how initial sentences play a role in setting the tone of the research article. This research contributes to the broader understanding of writing practices in academia. It sheds light on the textual choices and rhetorical patterns employed by the authors in VFSs. It can help new researchers refine their writing skills and effectively engage readers from the very first sentence (VFS).

2. Literature Review

The VFS of research papers serves as the early point of contact for the readers. It helps to set the tone of the research paper. It conveys the relevance and significance of the topic. The authors of research papers employ rhetorical and textual strategies to capture the attention of the readers/audiences. It foregrounds the purpose of the study. Scholars such as Shehzad (2006) emphasize the organization and structure of the introduction of the research articles. The VFS of the introduction is the first building block of the foundation of the entire research project. Swales (2009) acknowledges the challenges researchers and academic authors face in initiating their research projects and highlights the importance of a strong beginning. Previous studies focus on the construction of the entire introduction sections. The researchers mainly employed Swales' CARS model to conduct their study. Some studies pay attention to the first paragraph of the introduction section for their analysis. Different research efforts have been conducted in English, Arabic, Finis, and Malay. The gap in conducting a research study on the first sentence has been filled by Mohammad Alanazi and Muteb Alqarni, who compare Middle Eastern and Western writers' use of VFS in their research projects. But still, no one has paid attention to taking the VFS of Pakistani authors for their research projects. The present study fills this gap by taking VFS of research papers by Pakistani authors in English language and literature. It is a unique effort as it looks for textual and rhetorical strategies employed in the VFS, and it sheds light on the influence and importance of the VFS in the introduction of the research papers.

Khan et al (2017) have pointed out print media as a tool for capitalist. Ramzan and Khan (2019) and Ramzan et al.(2021) suggested that stereotyped ideological construction is a language manipulation agenda of powerful people. Ramzan et al.(2020) dominance of English is visible in technology and internet. Bhutto and Ramzan (2021) have claimed that there is a collusive stance and pacifier agenda of media wrapped in the strategy of power. Nawaz et al.(2021) have said that power is striving for negative them and positive us.   Chen and Ramzan (2024) have further stated that Facebook posts about learning English as a second language (L2) provide primary motivation for learners and promote their performance. Swales' CARS model has been widely used as a framework by researchers globally to conduct their projects. This model outlines three moves: establishing a territory, establishing a niche, and occupying the niche. The present study project also uses this model to analyze the VFS of the selected articles. It is qualitative research that adopts the genre-based study approach. The researcher conducts a study on the corpus of fifty research articles taken from ten Pakistani journals. It systematically analyses the corpus of fifty VFS research articles. The researchers study the rhetorical and textual choices employed by Pakistani authors.

The main objective of this project is to identify the pattern and linguistic choices of the VFS by Pakistani authors. And to see the relationship between move one and the pattern of the sentences. It sheds light on the writing conventions in the English language and literature field in

Pakistan. It highlights the power and use of opening sentences to capture the reader's attention and establish the territory. It foregrounds the importance of VFS in academic writing.

3. Research Methodology

The researchers prepared the corpus of fifty research papers taken from the Pakistani Journals of English language and literature, published between 2017 and 2022. The representative samples are selected from Pakistani research articles published in reputable English and literature journals, with a geographic range spanning from Kashmir to Karachi. The chosen papers encompass a diverse range of topics. The very first sentence (VFS) of the introduction section of each article has been selected for the detailed analysis. To determine the article's first sentence (VFS), the researchers followed a definition of a sentence provided by the Oxford Dictionary. www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com, considering a sentence as a set of words expressing a statement, question, or order with a subject and a verb. The identified sentence must begin with a capital letter and end with appropriate punctuation, such as a period, question mark, or exclamation mark. Identifying the first sentence involves examining its placement in the research paper's introduction. The sentence must appear directly under the heading 'Introduction' or as the first sentence under any subheadings within the introduction. A sentence containing multiple clauses separated by semicolons is treated as a single sentence, regardless of length. References and abbreviations using a complete stop sign within a sentence are considered separate sentences. The data inclusion criteria for the analysis require that only research articles published within the specified time frame and in the selected journals are included. The articles must have clearly labeled introductions under the heading 'Introduction.' Any language or stylistic variations within the identified VFS are considered as long as they adhere to the defined sentence structure. Ethical considerations are paramount throughout the research process. The study follows ethical guidelines, ensuring proper citation and acknowledgment of the research papers and authors included in the corpus. Confidentiality and anonymity of the authors and journals are maintained, respecting the integrity of their work and contributions. The research methodology collects a representative corpus of fifty papers published between 2017 and 2022 in Pakistan's English language and literature. The analysis focuses on the first sentence of each paper's introduction section, applying the defined criteria for a sentence. The sample selection encompasses diverse journals across the country to ensure representation. Ethical guidelines are followed throughout the study, and only papers meeting the specified inclusion criteria are included in the analysis.

3.1. Theoretical Framework

This article's theoretical framework is grounded in the works of esteemed scholars in applied linguistics, genre analysis, and rhetorical studies. It provides a conceptual lens through which the first sentence (VFS) analysis in research article introductions within the Pakistani context is conducted. Jojn M. Swales' CARS model (Create a Research Space) is widely accepted and employed by researchers of diverse fields as a framework for writing the introduction section of their research papers. This model outlines three moves: establishing a territory, establishing a niche, and occupying the niche. This model is based on the norms and patterns of researchers from diverse fields of study. Now, it serves as a guide for the new researchers to understand the traditional patterns and norms of the research article's introductions. This framework allows a systematic examination of the structures of the

introduction of the articles. In this study, we take only the first sentence of the paper and employ the model to explore the moves in the VFS.

Genre analysis focuses on the text's structuring and pattern according to the genre's principles. It explores the style, schema, and form of the articles. The present study also analyzes the linguistic choices, their importance and influence, and their relation to rhetorical strategies. The research authors employ These persuasive strategies to foreground their topics and centralize their argument. It enhances understanding of the effectiveness of academic writing practices within the Pakistani context. CARS model enables the researchers to examine the rhetorical structure employed in the VFS of the article's introductions. Pakistani authors' linguistic choices express their research topics are relevant and significant. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, the framework provides a comprehensive lens for analyzing the VFS in research article introductions published in the English language and literature in Pakistani journals. It facilitates the understanding of Pakistani research article writing conventions, sheds light on the persuasive strategies employed by authors in this specific context, and contributes to the scholarship of rhetorical analysis and effective academic writing practices. The CARS model is applied to operationalize the framework. The model consists of three moves: establishing a territory, establishing a niche, and occupying the niche. Move 1 involves claiming centrality, generalizing the topic, and reviewing previous literature. Move 2 focuses on counterclaiming, identifying gaps in earlier research, raising questions about previous efforts, and continuing the tradition. Move three outlines the research paper's purpose, objectives, principal findings, and structure. Considering the VFS in the Pakistani context, it is hypothesized that the first sentence predominantly aligns with Move 1, establishing a territory. Move two and Move three are expected to be less prevalent in the VFS, as starting the introduction with these moves indicates inexperience or less training, according to Swales. The upcoming section will apply the move analysis model to a corpus of fifty VFSs from research articles in English and literature journals to explore how Pakistani authors adhere to or deviate from Swales' moves. By employing the theoretical framework and conducting the move analysis, this research aims to gain insights into the patterns and strategies used in Pakistani research article introductions, contributing to the understanding of academic writing practices and further enriching the field of rhetorical analysis.

4. Data Analysis

The data analysis in this article involves the systematic examination and interpretation of the collected corpus, consisting of fifty research article introductions published between 2017 and 2022 in Pakistani journals in English and literature. The analysis aims to explore trends and patterns related to the very first sentence (VFS) in these introductions.

First, the selected corpus is minutely viewed to ensure its relevance to the inclusion criteria set in the research methodology. Any papers not meeting the specified frame are excluded from the analysis. Next, the carefully selected VFS of all nominated research article introductions is analyzed qualitatively, where we analyze linguistics features, textual choices, and rhetorical structures. It is closely related to exploring how authors establish a territory, identify a niche, and occupy the niche in the overall structure of the introduction. Besides, we identify any unique pattern observed or any deviation noticed in the first sentence of the selected research articles published in the English language and literature in Pakistani research journals.

Next, we apply qualitative analysis, where statistical techniques are used. We count frequency, percentages, and other measures to quantify and summarize the features of the very first sentence. This method enables us to identify the dominant rhetorical strategies, frequent patterns, and linguistic characteristics foregrounded across the corpus. The theoretical framework discussed in earlier sections served as a guide to the research process. Swales' CARS model is used to identify the moves and rhetorical strategies employed by the authors in the very first sentences. The genre analysis perspective is also considered during the analysis process to understand the data better. The study's findings are displayed in an organized sequence and a transparent manner, using tables, graphs, and textual details to illustrate the trends and patterns. Data analysis is always supported by the corpus's relevant expressions, words, and examples to contextualize the study and provide strength with evidence. We follow ethical standards throughout the data analysis by giving proper citations and acknowledging the authors and other research works. The highest standards of academic integrity are observed in the entire research process. The findings are reported objectively and without any bias. The main objective of the data analysis in this article is to explore the textual features and rhetorical strategies employed in the VFS of the selected data. We foregrounded Pakistani authors' writing trends and conventions, persuasive techniques, and academic practices in English and literature. The present study is valuable to effective academic writing and style literature. It also informs the readers to improve the research article's introductions. Now, we present the list of journals selected for the present study in the form of table one.

Table 01
List of the journals

Sr.no	NAME OF THE JOURNAL	No ofVFS
1	Erevna: Journal of Linguistics & Literature Volume 2 Issue 2, Air University, Islamabad	05
2	Corporum: Journal of Corpus Linguistics, June 2022 Vol 5, Issue 1, Air University, Islamabad.	05
3	Pakistan Journal of Language Studies Vol. 5, Issue 1, 2021, GCU Faisalabad.	05
4	Explorations, VOL. 29 2018, GCU Lahore.	05
5	Hayatian Journal of Linguistics and Literature Volume IV (2020), Gujrat University.	05
6	Journal of Contemporary Poetics, IIUI.	05
7	NUML Journal of Critical Inquiry, Vol. 20 (I) June 2022	05
8	Kashmir Journal of Language Research, Vol. 24 No. 2 (2021), AJK University	05

9	Journal of Research in Humanities Volume 57(2), University of the Punjab.	05
10	ARIEL, An International Research Journal of Language and Literature, Volume 29 Issue 2020 University of Sindh	05

This table shows us the list of ten selected journals across Pakistan and the number of VFS collected from each journal. A total of 50 very first sentences were collected. It means each journal contributes 05 VFSs. All journals belong to the field of English language and literature. It is a representative sample of Pakistan's English language and literature field. This collection captures a diverse range of English and literature research. They are from different universities in Pakistan, such as Air University in Islamabad, GCU Faisalabad, GCU Lahore, Gujrat University, IIUI, NUML, AJK University, and the University of Punjab. An equal contribution is taken to ensure a balanced representation. This collection of first sentences (VFSs) from different research journals from other universities across Pakistan allows for a comprehensive analysis of the recurrent linguistic patterns and rhetorical features in Pakistan's English language and literature.

4.1.Rhetorical Properties of VFSs

According to Swales (2004), the initial sentence of the introduction part of the research article usually falls under move 01, which often involves the inclusion of a citation. The VFS of the introduction represents the specific rhetorical move. Citation in the opening sentence is obligatory in move one and optional in move two. We analyze to discover the ornamental features of the corpus of the VFSs. It reveals interesting information regarding patterns. It is shown that 20% of the introductions of the articles contain citations in the VFSs. It is relative to the Swales' indications. It is important to note that citations play a vital role in establishing the validity of the research. It provides factual support to the argument. These evidence-loaded sentences create a credible writer ethos, as Hyland (2002) indicated. It illustrates that Right from the outset, the authors are keen to support their claims with external factual evidence.

We also considered the temporal aspects of the research publications. All the selected corpus of the journals included in this study were published between 2015 and 2021. We adopted the classification of old and new to organize the data. The journals published before 1999 were considered old, and those published in 2000 and onward are categorized as unique. During the analysis, a fascinating insight emerged that 10% of the citations in the very first sentence were from new sources, and 90% of citations were from old sources. It suggests that Pakistani research authors in English language and literature tend to rely extensively on ancient sources. It also indicates their tendency to recycle existing data instead of exploring new ideas. It also illustrates that they strongly adhere to the established existing scholarship. It is important to note that the citation in the very first sentence (VFS) does not necessarily imply that it belongs to Move 01. John M. Swales also argues that citations may appear in move 02 or move 03. It is also interesting to note that a single sentence can represent the entire move.

Frequency analysis is conducted to capture a comprehensive understanding of the existence of the move type or different steps of each move in the VFSs. Table 02 shows the occurrence of each move type or step.

Table 02

	Type of move and Reference occurrence	Frequency
1	Reference in the VFS	12 out of 50
2	Centrality claim, move 1, step 1	09 out of 50
3	Generalization of the topic, move 1, step 2	32 out of 50
4	Move 3	06 out of 50

It shows the variations in the rhetorical moves employed by the authors in Pakistan from the English language and literature field. Most authors follow the genre conventions by starting their introduction section with move one. They claim the centrality of their topics, but many authors deviate from the convention and start with move two, which entails generalization. This departure from the standard of the research writing practice indicates a lower familiarity with the norms of the research genre by some authors. According to Swales (2004), Move 01 establishes a centrality claim, wherein the author positions their research within a lively, significant, or well-established research area. This claim should be supported by evidence, often in the form of citations. On the other hand, Move 02 involves making a more neutral general statement about the topic, connecting the research problem to the broader context of the study area. While Move 01 typically requires citations, Move 02 may or may not include them. In the analyzed corpus, it was observed that most Pakistani authors initiate their introduction sections with topic generalizations, representing Move 02 of the rhetorical model. Additionally, only 10% of the authors included citations in their VFSs, indicating a lower tendency to make central claims in their initial sentences. Although citations are not required in topic generalizations according to the research article genre conventions, some authors still attempted to incorporate them, displaying a need for more awareness regarding genre norms and conventions. Interestingly, some Pakistani researchers employed Move 02 or Move 03 in their VFSs, contradicting Swales' model. Move 02 typically introduces a niche, such as a research gap or a modification of previous research, and Move 03 focuses on research questions, objectives, article structure, significance, and hypotheses. However, the data reveals that Move 02 appears in only 10% of the VFSs, while only 1% represents Move 03. This suggests that most Pakistani authors do not utilize these strategies and instead follow the conventions of research writing, displaying awareness of the genre principles and conventions. The findings indicate that most authors adhere to the CARS (Create a Research Space) model in writing the introduction of their research articles. They typically start with Move 01 but emphasize topic generalization, which serves as the second step of Move 01 in the CARS model. This inclination towards contextualizing the study through background information suggests a preference for a general-to-specific writing structure. Therefore, a high proportion of topic generalization usage is observed at the beginning of the introduction section. Overall, the analysis demonstrates the diverse approaches taken by Pakistani authors in their VFSs within research article introductions. While some authors adhere closely to the genre conventions, others exhibit deviations and variations in

their rhetorical moves, potentially indicating a lesser familiarity with the research genre's conventions. Let's analyze and explain the two examples within the context of the previous argument. Example 1: "War affects human life in every possible way" (Generalizing topic, move 1, step 02, no reference). This example represents a generalization of the topic without any reference. It serves as a broad statement about the impact of war on human life in various aspects. Regarding rhetorical moves, it corresponds to Move 01, precisely Step 02, where the author provides a general statement related to the topic. Since this statement does not include a reference, the author makes a broad claim without explicitly citing any specific source or evidence. Example 2: "Most of the public sector schools of Pakistan use the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) to teach English (Khurshid, 2010)" (Generalization of the topic, move 1, step 2, with reference) In this example, the author begins with a generalization of the topic by stating that the majority of public sector schools in Pakistan utilize the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) for teaching English. This generalization falls under Move 01, precisely Step 02, where the author provides a neutral general statement related to the topic. However, unlike the previous example, this statement includes a reference to support the claim. The author cites Khurshid (2010) as the source of this information, which adds credibility to the assertion and aligns with the genre conventions of incorporating references in Move 01. These examples highlight the different approaches taken by authors in their Very First Sentences (VFSs) within research article introductions. A generalization without a reference is illustrated in example one. It showcases the broader idea about the topic. On the other hand, example two shows a generalization but supports the argument with a reference indicating that the author substantiates the claim.

4.2. Lexical Analysis of the VFS of Pakistani Authors

A lexical analysis of the VFSs exposes interesting tendencies and patterns. The authors usually take move one, which shows their adherence to the general conventions of academic writing. Regarding the temporal aspect, they generally use the present tense in the opening sentences of the introductions. It also indicates their desire to be relevant and connected to the current stock of scholarships. Pakistani authors' use of Move 01 suggests that they are conscious of the established structure of the research writings. Move one typically establishes a connection between the research being reported and the larger context of the research field. It emphasizes the relevance and significance of the study. Pakistani research authors' adaptation of Move 01 in their opening sentences shows their awareness of established norms and research conventions. It illustrates that they understand the research writing genre. Pakistani authors preferred the present tense to suggest a sense of immediacy and connectedness to the research field. The present tense establishes their link to the practicality of the research, and it connects to the current context. In this way, these authors position themselves and their research as impactful and timely. Moreover, it aligns them with the expectations of the research writing. It links their research with the current state of knowledge and with the ongoing debates. It also connects them with the recommended upcoming research projects. By employing the present tense, Pakistani authors effectively engage readers and communicate the significance of their research within the current scholarly discourse.

This lexical analysis sheds light on the strategic choices made by Pakistani authors in constructing their VFSs. By following Move 01 and employing the present tense, they demonstrate their understanding of the research genre's conventions and their intent to establish the relevance and timeliness of their work. These findings contribute to a better understanding of Pakistani authors' linguistic choices and rhetorical strategies in the introductory sections of their research articles.

4.3. Tense and Time in Research Articles: Establishing Connections and Context

In the realm of research articles, Pakistani authors display a noteworthy preference for initiating their introductions from step two of the Move, even though they adhere to the overall structure. By doing so, they prioritize establishing a generalized background for their research. Pakistani authors' consistent use of the present tense in the VFSs establishes the bond between their research work and the latest developments in that field. Using the present tense in research papers' writings has multiple purposes. It easily generalizes the study and connects the authors with various contexts. It enables the researcher to link their research to the ongoing discourse in their field. It also emphasizes the relevance of contemporary issues. The authors' linguistic choices help readers locate the study in a particular time and place. They can quickly put that research into the current scholarly landscape. The present tense and linguistic choices bridge that study to the existing knowledge base. It shows the continuity and evolution of the field. Some researchers preferred using the past tense, which shows that they want to establish connections with the previous studies and create a historical link to the past. It also illustrates the continuity and progress of the research process. It also suggests that the present study is part of the existing body of knowledge. Table 03 provides a detailed breakdown of the frequency of time and tense in the corpus of VFSs. It gives us a comprehensive view of the predominant tense choices made by Pakistani researchers. Some Pakistani authors prefer starting their research projects following step two of step one. However, overall, they follow the conventional structure of the introduction writing. Their present tense connects their research to the current discourse of the study. It also showcases generalization; meanwhile, the occasional use of the past tense establishes a historical link and illustrates the continuity of the study. The survey of their preferences and choices of tense and their frequencies in the pattern of use provide valuable insights into the strategies employed by the authors.

Table 03

Sr.no	Tense	frequency
1	Present Simple Tense	38 out of 50
2	Present Perfect Tense	09 out of 50
3	Past Simple	03 out of 50

4.4. Tense Usage in VFSs of Pakistani Research Articles

Table 03 shows the tense preferences of Pakistani research article writers in their very first sentences (VFSs). Their choice of tense in the VFSs offers a glimpse into their linguistic

strategies. The table illustrates that the present tense, both in simple form and perfect form, is widely used in the VFSs. Fifty articles have been taken for the study, and 38 of these 50 sets utilized the present simple tense, 76% of the total. At the same time, nine authors incorporated the present perfect tense, which is 18% of the total. The authors are inclined to align their research work with the current discourse and want it relevant to contemporary scholarship. The authors' wide use of the present tense in the VFSs shows that they strive to establish connections with the latest advancements in their field of study. They want to put their study into the existing research scholarship. In this way, readers can also quickly grasp and understand their work and find immediate implications of the research. A smaller portion of the authors, only 03 out of 50, around 6%, opted for the past tense in their research article's VFSs. Relatively infrequent happenings demonstrate the authors' inclination to form a link with the past and show the continuity of a discourse. They wanted to emphasize the historical context and built their work upon previous studies. This dominant use of the present tense in the VFSs reflects the Pakistani authors' preference for showcasing the generalization and currency of the research efforts. It also shows that they want to promote their work as not being bound to any specific period but presented as generalized knowledge that is useful beyond the immediate time frame. In short, most Pakistani research authors begin with the present tense. The present simple tense is the most employed tense. This choice illustrates their desire to be relevant and connected to the existing stock of knowledge. The occasional use of the past tense shows their desire to connect to the past and establish the historical context for their research work. They also want to demonstrate continuity. We get valuable insight into linguistic and rhetorical strategies employed by Pakistani research authors.

4.5. Lexical Choices in Research Articles: Insights from Pakistani Authors

In the previous section, we examined the tense usage. It is essential to analyze the lexical choices made by the authors in their VFSs. Linguistic choices tell us remarkable information regarding authors' perspectives. It also exhibits the writer's research approach and the research work's overall tone. It is discovered through analysis that two recurrent lexical words used in the very first sentence are 'the study' and 'employ.' It suggests that Pakistani writers are interested in foregrounding the significance of the studies. The phrase 'the study' implies the distinctiveness of their research work from other research scholars. On the other hand, the word 'employ' illustrates their desire to use specific methodologies, frameworks, and techniques to conduct their study. Their choice of words conveys their background knowledge of advanced research models and methods to produce reliable and relevant research work. So, the use of present tense and these lexical recurrent choices indicate Pakistani research authors struggle to establish bonds with the current research discourse. They portray that their research is advanced and highly relevant. In this way, they put their work within the broader context of ongoing scholarly discussions. It also signifies the timeliness of their research works. Moreover, they want to show that their research efforts apply to solving the present issues and problems. The researchers need to examine the underlying implications of these lexical choices made by the Pakistani research authors. They mostly rely on advanced methods and analysis models, often the product of Western academia. It shows their inclination towards deductive methodologies. It indicates Euroscepticism. Most of the knowledge in Pakistani academia is produced from a Eurocentric

perspective. The data is usually collected from the local population, but Western frameworks and models are used to analyze that data. There is a risk of overlooking the unique cultural, social, and contextual aspects. Pakistani research authors' use of present tense and linguistic choices in the VFSs reflects their desire and inclination to utilize advanced research methodologies. It also suggests their desire to be connected with the Eurocentric research discourse. It is essential to be mindful of the Eurocentric bias, which may mar their research objectivity. Their overreliance on Western models may produce an unreliable result in the context of indigenous culture. By considering the local culture and context, they can contribute to a more diverse and inclusive body of knowledge.

4.6. Use of Voice in the Very First Sentences (VFS) of Research Articles by Pakistani Authors

To understand deeply the rhetorical significance of the linguistic choices in the VFSs, it is essential and contributory to analyze the use of the voice in their very first sentences. It helps to determine a sentence's tone, focus, and agency. By identifying the active and passive voices in the very first sentences, we can uncover the authors' approach to presenting their work. Pakistani authors dominantly utilize the active voice in the very first sentences. It is used in 70% of the cases. The active voice allows authors to emphasize the subject as the agent of the action, resulting in a more direct and assertive tone. This choice aligns with the conventional norms of research writing, where clarity and authorial responsibility are valued.

Let us explore a few examples to illustrate the use of voice in the VFSs

"*This study has analyzed the changing roles of students within the integrated ELT mode in Pakistan.*"

This example represents the aim or purpose of the study (move 3, step 1) and employs the active voice. The active voice emphasizes the study as the agent performing the analysis, highlighting its active role in the research process.

"*Using language appropriately does not mean mere correct phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, but involves pragmatic knowledge or, to be more specific, cultural knowledge to avoid misunderstandings or communication breakdowns.*"

In this instance, the author presents a centrality claim (move 1, step 1) using the active voice. The active voice emphasizes using language appropriately as a dynamic and essential element, underlining its significance in communication.

"*Time and tide have proved that the issue of womanhood is challenging.*"

Using the active voice, this example demonstrates a generalizing statement (move 1, step 2). By using the active voice, the author highlights the role of time and tide as agents in proving the challenging nature of the issue of womanhood.

"*War affects human life in every possible way.*"

Using the active voice, the author presents a generalizing topic (move 1, step 2). The active voice reinforces the impact of war on human life, accentuating its far-reaching consequences. The preferred use of active voice in the VFSs shows their inclination for direct and assertive communication. Active voice helps them to assert their agency in research findings. This choice aligns with the tradition of research writing, where transparency and authorial responsibility are highly appreciated. Although some authors in their VFSs use passive voice. They are comprising around 30% of the total data. Passive voice allows the authors to shift the focus from the agent to the receiver of the action. It helps to foreground the research problem. It also adds variation to the Pakistani research authors' linguistic choices. So, their use of voice in the article is strategic and has a rhetorical function that contributes to the overall impact of the research product.

5. Conclusion & Findings
5.1. Findings

The present study analyzed the Very First Sentences (VFSs) of the introduction sections of the research article written by Pakistani authors to determine the rhetorical features and linguistic choices. After a detailed analysis of the collected data, many key findings were foregrounded. It sheds light on the Pakistani authors' adherence to the conventions and traditions of research writing.

5.1.1. Rhetorical Move Analysis

The data analysis reveals that Pakistani authors dominantly follow Move One. It indicates their awareness of the norms and traditions of the research writing genre. However, it is significant that Pakistani authors initiate their research about topic generalization with Step Two. It is a unique pattern among Pakistani authors. They want to establish a broader background for their research topic/issue. They prefer to create a context before the centrality claim.

5.1.2. Tense and Time Usage

It is observed that Pakistani authors, in their very first sentences, frequently employed the present tense, both in simple form and perfect form. This choice in their opening sentences allowed them to establish a connection with the current state of knowledge. It shows their desire to be relevant and up-to-date. Although a few Pakistani authors utilized past tense as well. It was comparatively less common.

5.1.3. Lexical Analysis

Lexical analysis reveals their linguistic choices. The prominent terms used in their VFSs by Pakistani research authors are; 'the study' and 'employ.' It suggests the use of advanced research frameworks and analysis models. These advanced research models and frameworks are often derived from Western sources. On the one hand, it demonstrates a commitment to modern knowledge and current scientific discourse. On the other hand, it also indicates Eurocentric knowledge production in the field of English language and literature in Pakistan.

5.1.4. *Voice Usage*

Pakistani authors primarily used the active voice in their VFSs. This use of active voice allowed them to assert their tone and align their research with the norms of research writing. It shows Pakistani researchers' authority, clarity, and responsibility in the English language and literature. Although the use of passive voice by Pakistani authors is less prevalent, it adds to the flavor. Its selective use adds variation and foregrounds the affected party or research problem. The study's findings shed light on Pakistani research writers' rhetorical and linguistic choices. It also shows the pattern and preference of Pakistani authors in their VFSs. It highlighted Pakistani authors' preference to be aligned with the norms and traditions of the research community. They prefer to follow the tradition of international researchers. These findings offer a foundation for further research work in this particular field.

5.2.Conclusion

In this article, we decided to study the rhetorical and linguistic choices of the Pakistani authors in their VFSs of the introduction sections of their research articles. We collected a corpus of fifty research papers in English language and literature from ten research journals. The present study has given us valuable insights into their rhetorical and linguistic choices. The survey findings foregrounded Pakistani authors' inclination to follow research writing norms and traditions. It is found that most Pakistani authors followed the norms and conventions of research writing by initiating their works with Move One. There, they claim the centrality of their research topic. However, it is noteworthy that authors usually begin their work introductions with step two of Move One. It involves topic generalization. It is a unique pattern among Pakistani authors in the English language and literature. In this way, they prefer to establish the background and the context of the research project. This slight deviation from the norm gives them uniqueness. It is proved that his specific choice has a particular rhetorical function. Pakistani authors in The English language and literature prefer the present tense. They want to connect their studies to the latest developments in their fields. It suggests that their research is relevant and up to date. While some authors also employed the past tense. They want to establish a connection with the past, although it is rare. Most of the author's choice of the present tense signifies their desire to be connected to the ongoing discourse. After the lexical analysis of the data, it is revealed that two frequently used terms are 'the study' and 'employ' in their VFSs. These choices illustrate their focus on applying advanced research frameworks and theories. These are often derived from Western sources. It also shows that Western theories are influential. Pakistani researchers are using Western models and frameworks to produce new knowledge. Pakistani researchers, in their VFSs, predominantly utilized the active voice. It reflects a direct and assertive tone in their writings. It also aligns them with the norms of research writing. It emphasizes authorial responsibility and clarity. Some authors' use of passive voice added variation. It foregrounded the topic or issue being studied. In conclusion, this study gives us valuable insight into the rhetorical function of the linguistic choices made by Pakistani authors in the opening sentences of their VFSs in the English language and literature. The findings highlight that Pakistani authors prefer to follow the tradition of research writing. Their tense, voice, and lexical choices indicate their awareness of the research writing conventions and norms. The analysis of the corpus of the VFSs and its subsequent findings contribute to the understanding of the research writing

conventions in Pakistan. This study prompts further research and exploration into the research writings in the English language and literature field in Pakistan.

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