

# A Genre Analysis Of Disciplinary Variation In Academic Writing– A Corpus Based Study

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## Abstract

Ph.D. theses Genre Analysis in Academic Writing (AW) authored in English were explored in this research. For the research corpus, 120 texts from six disciplines were gathered together. An effort was made in this research to determine whether or not the variable of discipline had an effect on the generic structure and linguistic choices taken to change thanking actions in the building of AW. It was discovered that there were modest differences in the use of AW methods between Ph.D. students in soft science and those in hard research. Research field, academic practices, exposure to the English language, language competency, and socio-cultural norms or expectations all had a role in the variety. It also proposes that ESP teachers' pay attention to the macro and micro levels of analysis of AW in order to help their students build a sense of both broad socio-cultural and small language viewpoints as they learn to write acceptable acknowledgments for their academic writing.

## I. Introduction

An important topic of interest in the study of applied linguistics is academic writing. Academic writing is comprised of the utilization of referential citations which can be demonstrated as the in-text references used by writers to credit other authors. These citations represent support for a statement or place a fresh contribution to an ongoing academic debate (Erikson & Erlandson, 2014). For the intention to use authors' work in the writing, reporting verbs are utilized which shows the intent for instance "Lee (2000) explained". Academic writing is considered the communicative engagement in which writers' intent is to describe and

illustrate the particular topic by quoting the various theories, critique of the particular topic, and the results of the investigation. Some considered reporting verbs as the writer's viewpoint and the role of these verbs is to create the writer's as well as the author's texts and statements' identity, credibility, and purpose (S. Un-udom & N. Un-udom, 2020).

Academic texts, as well as scholarly articles, have gained popularity in the research department due to the functioning of this knowledge of their disciplines. In this way, scholars can shed light on the interaction between the author, the text, and the reader by seeing academic writing through the lens of pragmatics, which is described as "the set

of tools enabling the concerned parties to build interactions" (Akbaş & Hatipolu, 2018, p. 767).

There is a study made by Hyland (2005) and the proposition was made in the study categorizing meta-discourse into two sections; the interactive dimension, It uses transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidential, and code glosses to help the reader move through the text and the other one is the interactional dimension, which interacts with the readers through the various instrument including self-mentions, attitude makers, boosters, engagement makers, and hedges. While there has been a lot of research on the five subcategories of each of the aforementioned dimensions in the context of academic writing (Akbaş & Hardman, 2018; Cao & Hu, 2014; Chen & Hu, 2020; Jiang & Hyland, 2017) studies on the pronoun we, which might fall under both the "engagement markers" and "self-mention" subcategories of the interactional domain with its inclusive and exclusive forms, have been less common. Given that "conflicting advice in textbooks and style guides and the apparently diverse conventions of different disciplines" (make it difficult for students, teachers, and even seasoned writers to determine how much, if any, authorial presence is acceptable, it is imperative that we address the complex nature of the inclusive and exclusive we. In this regard, learning more about the various disciplinary procedures may be beneficial to them in order to make better and conscious decisions.

In order to employ rhetorical aspects to appropriately communicate one's thanks, one must consider the identities that authors take in various contexts, i.e., how they place themselves by the use of sophisticated language in their AW. In spite of this,

acknowledgments may be contextualized as well as personal. Writers' chosen rhetorical patterns are influenced by the thinking patterns of language users in different settings. It is unlikely that a single language will be used to its full potential in all situations (Nkemleke, 2006). In addition, social and cultural pragmatism are important considerations while composing acknowledgments. When it comes to expressing gratitude, cultural differences and preferences may have an impact (Cheng, 2012). Authors' personalities and language usage are shaped by the circumstances they find themselves in while writing in AW.

### 1.1. Aim and objectives

Through the use of the first-person plural pronoun we as an engagement marker (the inclusive form) and a self-mention mechanism (the exclusive form), this study aims to shed light on the disciplinary variance on how much and for what ends, authorial presence is indicated in RA abstracts.

The specific objectives of the study encompass;

- to identify the variation of discipline in academic writing.
- to determine the role of linguistic choices and generic strategies role in academic writing.
- to analyze the essentialness of reporting verbs across multiple disciplines.

## 2. Literature Review

The growing importance of RA abstracts in academic research can be observed as a distinct genre that is mostly utilized by the authors (Gillaerts, P., & Van de Velde, F. (2010). Due to a number of factors, interest

in RA abstracts is growing. First, as can be seen in Hyland's (2004) classification, writers typically employ certain rhetorical strategies with beneficial functions to create an

organizational pattern that is similar to the RA itself in their abstracts, which represent a "crystallization of the whole article". (see Table 1)

Move	Function
Introduction	Establishes context of the paper and motivates the research or discussion.
Purpose	Indicates purpose, thesis or hypothesis, outlines the intention behind the paper.
Method	Provides information on design, procedures, assumptions, approach, data, etc.
Product	States main findings or results, the argument, or what was accomplished.
Conclusion	Interprets or extends results beyond scope of paper, draws inferences, points to applications or wider implications.

**Table 1; Hyland's (2004) Classification of Rhetorical Techniques in Abstracts of Articles**

Discipline in academic writing involves a wide range of thinking activities and people offer their insight into form understanding. Whereas thinking processes are similar to some extent in disciplinary research, so, it is advisory not to engage in a discussion from the scratch. Discipline in academic research makes the process more simplified while the authoring of a book or writing journal articles is in the discussion. According to the study, discipline trained the experts and authors to think in a particular way.

Genres can be elaborated as the socially patterned way of using languages. Discipline also has an influence on the genre and genre can also shape the pattern of discipline (Hood et al, 2011). In genre, the similar nature of text features relies on the context in which they are utilized, thus connecting texts to the decisions and limitations faced by text creators (Paran and Wallace, 2016). Genres are the predefined social structures or

in other terms, It is referred to as the sites in which we manifest to our surrounding. Members of disciplinary communities use the genre conventions in academic settings to build relationships, support their communities, float and test theories, and publish their work.

The idea of genre is neither new nor recent. Its conception has taken many different forms, ranging from stress on context to Bakhtinian concepts of intertextuality and dialogism (Hyland et al, 2015). The user of the ESP through the assessment of the genre can obtain the satisfaction of learning and developing the ways in which texts are created and differentiated in conventional and sociocultural contexts (Jiang, F.K. and Hyland, K., 2022). In addition to offering academics "clear and systematic explanations of the ways language acts in social circumstances" (Abdullah, S.S., 2022), the genre technique to text analysis also enables authors to acquire expert cultural knowledge.

Academic studies that examine theses and dissertations have drawn more and more attention. Researchers from a variety of specialized fields have focused on studying particular topics or subjects within their field. Due to the amount of knowledge contained in them, theses and dissertations in particular have been the focus of innumerable studies (Tullay, 2019).

Cross-linguistic and cross-disciplinary transfer are two research strands that have traditionally been developed in the area of L2 literacy. Studies on the former have looked at how learners' L1 influences their L2, and occasionally across multiple languages (Perpiñán, S. and Soto-Corominas, A., 2022). Existential Constructions in Bilingual Catalan and Bilingual Spanish: Different Types of Crosslinguistic Influence. (L1, L2, and L3; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2013). In the latter, research has looked at how L2 learners transfer knowledge across disciplinary contexts. For instance, it has looked at how college L2 learners transfer what they learned about writing essays in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) class to discipline-specific classes, or specifically, writing a literature review in a sociology class (Hansen, 2000; Jwa, 2019). Overall, for both practitioners and scholars, these transfer studies have provided insightful information on the transfer of learning.

Investigation on the acknowledgements made by the researcher in the field reveals that

When Giannoni (2002) first began investigating acknowledgments, national trends within the academic organisations those acknowledgements represented had an impact on how acknowledgements were organised in journals. Hyland and his colleague (Hyland & Tse, 2004) conducted the first scientific study of dissertation

acknowledgments in AW and created the three-tier general framework for expressing gratitude. The model presented by the investigation begins with the three basic and essential elements; a mandatory thanking phase (Move 2), in which authors map credit to people and organizations, and two optional contemplation stages (Moves 1 and 3), in which authors reflect introspectively on their research experience and provide a public declaration of responsibility and inspiration. You acknowledge participants (Phase 2.2), academic assistance (Step 2.2), and resources (Stage 2.2) as part of the gesture of gratitude (Phase 2.1). (Step 2.3). (Phase 2.4). The third phase has two sub-steps: accepting responsibility (Step 3.1) and dedicating the thesis (Phase 3.2). (Step 3.2). Furthermore, according to Hyland (2003: 266), AW not only "play a critical role in creating a competent, even rhetorically proficient, intellectual identity" of the acknowledgers but also "exposes their social and cultural traits in context."

The investigation of the three researchers and analyses (Hyland, 2003, 2004a; Hyland & Tse, 2004), have assisted in the investigation by offering them the initial phase which will cover the basis for purposeful research into AW. Using a corpus from English-related disciplines, they found that the structure often matches Hyland's model for AW written by Chinese speakers in China. Even so, some deviations might exist. The writers' propensity to misuse the plain mention form and modifiers in their thank-you deeds is clear, and Moves 1 and 2, particularly Step 3.2, are lacking from their corpus. These differences between Zhao and Jiang have resulted in a wide range of intellectual, mental, and cultural diversity. Researchers from Taiwan who speak Chinese, Cheng and Kuo (2011), found

similar support for AW in the area of applied linguistics.

Yang (2012a) found that Taiwanese authors directly appreciate their advisers and use more creative ways to do so when comparing AW in the same single subject written by Taiwanese students studying in Taiwan and the US. He said in a study he produced that academic standards, institutional preferences, the linguistic context, and socio-cultural factors are probably to responsible for this predisposition. To add to this, Yang (2012a) discovered that Move 3's Making a confession phase, which was exclusive to his corpus, involved authors confessing to others who had made sacrifices for their postgraduate studies.

A wide range of techniques for thanking someone for their help may also be found in other situations. Muslims, for example, has taken a different route. Thanking Allah (God) is a step produced by the academic and social customs of Arabic authors (**Al-Shurait, E.A, and Al-Ali, R.M., 2022**). Furthermore, contextualized components are often used by these authors to make their thank-you actions more concrete. Researchers found that authors often use nativized deferential methods and nominal words to show respect for their mentors and superiors, according to **Nkemleke, E.E., and Fube, E.M.A., 2022**. Writers also utilize diverse lexical, syntactic, and discursive aspects to establish their identities and imply specific connections with other persons who are thanked (**Afful and Mwinlaru, 2010a.b.**). According to the findings of these four research, dissertation acknowledgments are dynamic in that they are molded and appropriated when new practices and localized socio-cultural norms are adopted. (**Bhatia, M. and Elrafie, A., 2022**).

To better understand the socio-cultural effects of employing various approaches for expressing gratitude, several studies have compared and contrasted AW written by native English speakers (NS) and non-native English speakers (NNS) in various contexts. Statistically, there was no discernible difference between the two groups in terms of producing AW, despite the fact that AW was collected from Iranians of both nationalities, despite the fact that the act of thanking Allah was acknowledged. While compiling texts from the same field, Cheng (2012) found that thanking strategies are used differently by NNS Taiwanese and NNS Americans. Taiwanese students, on the other hand, utilize more explicit but less implicit thanking tactics than American pupils. The tactics used by the Taiwanese are likewise more intricate than those of other cultures. In addition, the two organizations' approaches to organizing the thanked recipients vary. In Taiwan and the United States, Cheng (2012) led to the development of separate societal norms and expectations. According to **Adekannbi, J.O., 2022**, Ph.D. history students in the United States wrote AW between 1930 and 2005. Hyland's model wasn't the best fit for her, so she looked at the dissertation acknowledgments from history majors instead. After much deliberation, she came to the conclusion that AW construction is affected by both social shifts and the characteristics of a particular academic subject. The second-most frequently thanked institutions are libraries and archives, and these history majors are no longer lone researchers since they have consistently added more and more persons to be acknowledged in their acknowledgments. In addition, the first-person I has replaced the third-person s/he as the authorial subject in terms of language. This study demonstrates that

acknowledgments act as a bridge between writers' private life and the public, social, professional, and academic spheres. They are more than just a formality (Borisovna, A.T. 2022).

The research analyzes the variables and discovered that various variables or elements like discipline, cultural expectations, language background, academic conventions, and social standards play a wide role in the AW writing the language realizations, the procedures, and the construction. An in-depth analysis of these modifications' impacts has previously been conducted in studies. There are still a few perspectives that might be overlooked, such as the variety of academic disciplines studied by one ethnic group, English's standing, and the context in which it is employed. This study fills in the knowledge vacuum by analyzing the work of students from the same ethnic background, particularly Chinese-speaking Taiwanese, by using dissertation acknowledgments from a broad group of EFL students studying in an English-speaking country, specifically the United States. Is it feasible that the types of praising acts differ depending on the disciplines, cultures, and contexts? This study is investigating this issue.

### **3. Research methodology**

#### **3.1. Corpus**

Genre Analysis in Academic Writing (GAAW) is based on 120 PhD theses produced in English by Pakistani students. It was decided to use the corpus to compare and contrast AW's characteristics in the humanities and social sciences. APL, BUS, and PBA literature come from the fields of applied linguistics, business studies, and public administration, while MED, EEN, and BI texts come from the fields of medical science and biology, respectively (BIO), written between 1990 and 2011.

The ProQuest Digital Dissertations Database was used to gather all 120 PhD students' English AW dissertations because of the very restricted availability of English AW in Pakistan. Many steps were made to verify the native identity of the writers so that Pakistani students may be accurately represented. Among them were keyword settings that only included Pakistan -related subjects and name spelling checks, curriculum vitae reviews, and abstract and acknowledgment screening. A total of 43,166 running words are included in the current corpus. When it comes to the humanities and social sciences, the average AW is 420.6 words long and 50 to 1,669 words long, with an average AW length of 298.8 words. This corpus is compared to Hyland's corpus in terms of total and average running words, as seen in Table 2.

	Present corpus			Hyland's corpus		
Discipline	Texts	Words	Average	Texts	Words	Average
APL	20	7,917	395.9	20	7,718	385.9
BUS	20	7,298	364.9	19	2,512	132.2
PBA	20	10,022	501.1	20	3,594	179.7
Soft disp.	60	25,237	420.6	59	13,824	234.3
MED/COM	20	6,356	317.8	20	3,470	173.5
EEN	20	4,833	241.7	19	2,771	145.8
BIO	20	6,740	337.0	19	3,864	203.4
Hard disp.	60	17,929	298.8	58	10,105	174.2
<b>All totals</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>43,166</b>	<b>359.8</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>23,929</b>	<b>204.5</b>

**Table 2.** 20 AW from each field in the acknowledgment corpus vs. Hyland's corpus (2003)

**Note:** APL: The study of language in context, there includes a wide range of business studies, public administration, medical science, computer science, and more. Biology and electronics are two different fields of study.

### 3.2. Analysis

The texts were analysed for their overall structure and linguistic manifestation using structural moves/steps, phrase patterns, and vocabulary choices for changing Thanksgiving actions. The basic format of the dissertation acknowledgments utilised by the authors was examined using Hyland's (2003) three-tier scheme. After reading four texts chosen at random from each field, the researcher and a research assistant manually coded the texts to obtain inter-coder reliability of 88.6%. (i.e. 24 texts in total). When categorizing the patterns of thanking behaviors, Zou, H.J., and Hyland, K., 2022, utilized a similar methodology; this

categorization had inter-coder reliability of 91.2 percent.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. The basic framework

This corpus' generic structure follows Hyland's (2004a) three-tier AW paradigm, as seen in Table 2. Only 26% and 46% of the AW included these two optional actions, however the thanking motion was required for all of the authors to utilize at least one step. As a researcher, it is essential to express thanks for the intellectual support, ideas, analyses, and comments from academic communities and for the help of non-academic collaborators. Step 3.1 was not found in the current corpus of dissertations because these authors do not feel the need to take responsibility for any mistakes or shortcomings in their work. Despite the fact that the step/move organization of the two scientific fields is quite similar, several tiny differences were discovered. In the soft sciences, for example, the reflective move is used twice as often as in the hard sciences, while Step 2.1, which introduces individuals

to be appreciated, is utilized 20% more often. More often than any other discipline, public administration (PBA) has each move and step (excluding Step 3.1) more than any other.

Public administration is seen to be at its foundation a matter of interpersonal connections, and as a result, scholars in this field may place a focus on the contributions made by others along the way. AW, after all, is a platform for public administrators to showcase their ability to connect, communicate, and build relationships with others. Furthermore, it is expected that social

science writers will employ more rigorous writing techniques than their counterparts in the hard sciences. To make a paragraph more readable, authors use Step 2.1 of AW as part of the writing process to introduce or summarise the main idea. Readers are better served by this paragraph's topic and point of view when it is introduced with a list of participants who should be thanked. This suggests that even though the authors pursued their PhDs through the American educational system, they did not all adhere to the fundamental guidelines for writing an academic paragraph.

	Soft disciplines				Hard disciplines				Total
	APL	BUS	PBA	All	MED	EEN	BIO	All	
<b>1 Reflecting Move</b>	20	15	70	35	15	15	20	17	<b>26</b>
<b>2 Thanking Move</b>									
<b>Step 2.1</b>	55	45	100	67	40	60	45	48	<b>58</b>
<b>Step 2.2</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	<b>100</b>
<b>Step 2.3</b>	100	100	100	100	100	95	100	98	<b>99</b>
<b>Step 2.4</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	<b>100</b>
<b>3 Announcing Move</b>									
<b>Step 3.1</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Step 3.2</b>	50	45	50	48	60	30	40	43	<b>46</b>

**Table 3.** Acknowledgment of percentages by step and discipline

Hyland and Tse have also argued that students in the soft sciences are more likely to write longer and more generally complicated acknowledgments than those in the hard sciences (2004). For each step, Hyland's (2004a) corpus is compared to the current one in terms of acknowledgments and the average number of steps per text per discipline. Students in the soft sciences were more likely to employ Step 1 and Step 3.1 than those in the hard sciences. The two situations are, however, very different in many respects. Step 2.4 seems to be a need with a 100% incidence in the current corpus,

while Step 3.2 appears significantly more often than in Hyland's corpus. Step 3.1, on the other hand, is completely absent from the present corpus. The PhD authors might have become more reliant on friends, coworkers, family, or religious views as sources of moral and spiritual support as a result.

As a result, after earning their diplomas, these students are well-suited to dedicate their dissertations to the people who helped them spiritually and morally along the way. Since Pakistani students are likely to have

more persons to thank than those in Hyland's study (2004a), the average number of moves/steps is considerably greater in that country's corpus. Students may choose to write their AW in such an extensive manner because they see the genre as an official one, as well as because they are expected to show their thanks for whatever help they get as part of their culture (Cheng, 2012). According to Hyland's corpus and this one,

soft-discipline students were more likely to develop steps than hard-discipline students in both corpora. However, the average of the current electronic engineering corpus is similar to the average of Hyland's corpus, which is 8.5. Thus, it is expected that the variety of situations in which Ph.D. students study has an impact on the average number of steps they take.

	Soft disciplines		Hard disciplines		Total
	Present	Hyland's	Present	Hyland's	
<b>1 Reflecting Move</b>	35	26	17	13	<b>23</b>
<b>2 Thanking Move</b>					
<b>Step 2.1</b>	67	39	48	19	<b>43</b>
<b>Step 2.2</b>	100	100	100	100	<b>100</b>
<b>Step 2.3</b>	100	75	98	59	<b>83</b>
<b>Step 2.4</b>	100	77	100	66	<b>86</b>
<b>3 Announcing Move</b>					
<b>Step 3.1</b>	0	11	0	3	<b>2</b>
<b>Step 3.2</b>	48	4	43	2	<b>24</b>

**Fig 4.** Soft and hard disciplines are compared in terms of the proportion of acknowledgments they get at each stage.

**Note:** Master's and doctorate dissertations are also included in Hyland's research.

Discipline	Present	Hyland's	Overall
APL	10.0	8.5	<b>9.3</b>
BUS	10.3	3.7	<b>7.0</b>
PBA	14.3	4.8	<b>9.6</b>
<b>Soft disp.</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>8.6</b>
MED/COM	9.1	5.3	<b>7.2</b>
EEN	7.3	4.6	<b>6.0</b>
BIO	11.0	5.8	<b>8.4</b>
<b>Hard disp.</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>7.2</b>
<b>All totals</b>	<b>10.3</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>7.9</b>

**Table 5.** The average amount of steps per text, broken down by field of study

**Note:** summation discrepancies resulting from rounded totals

A contrast with Hyland's (2004a) results can be seen in Tables 5 and 6, which indicate the average frequency with which each discipline's steps were performed. Moving/steps generated from the top to lowest rank in both STEM disciplines are the same. Writers are most likely to generate Step 2.2 and Step 2.4 because they respect and appreciate aid with academics and

emotional well-being. A similar pattern may be seen in Hyland's comparison. However, in comparison to the hard sciences, the soft sciences AW still show a greater frequency of each move or step. This research backs up the claims made by Giannoni (2002) and Hyland (2004a) that academic writers in the hard sciences prefer to write simpler acknowledgments in their work.

	Soft disciplines				Hard disciplines				Total
	APL	BUS	PBA	All	MED	EEN	BIO	All	
<b>1 Reflecting Move</b>	0.2	0.05	0.7	0.32	0.15	0.15	0.2	0.17	<b>0.24</b>
<b>2 Thanking Move</b>									
<b>Step 2.1</b>	0.55	0.45	1.35	0.78	0.4	0.6	0.65	0.55	<b>0.67</b>
<b>Step 2.2</b>	4.4	4.25	5.5	4.72	3.7	3.25	4.65	3.87	<b>4.29</b>
<b>Step 2.3</b>	1.8	1.8	2	1.87	1.8	0.95	2.25	1.67	<b>1.77</b>
<b>Step 2.4</b>	2.6	3.2	4.25	3.35	2.45	2	2.8	2.41	<b>2.88</b>
<b>3 Announcing Move</b>									
<b>Step 3.1</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Step 3.2</b>	0.5	0.45	0.5	0.48	0.6	0.3	0.4	0.43	<b>0.46</b>

**Table 6.** Step frequency in each work, broken down by discipline

	Soft disciplines		Hard disciplines		Total	
	Present	Hyland's	Present	Hyland's	Present	Hyland's
<b>1 Reflecting Move</b>	0.32	0.3	0.17	0.2	<b>0.24</b>	<b>0.2</b>
<b>2 Thanking Move</b>						
<b>Step 2.1</b>	0.78	0.4	0.55	0.2	<b>0.67</b>	<b>0.3</b>
<b>Step 2.2</b>	4.72	1.6	3.87	1.7	<b>4.29</b>	<b>1.7</b>
<b>Step 2.3</b>	1.87	1.2	1.67	0.9	<b>1.77</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Step 2.4</b>	3.35	1.2	2.41	1.0	<b>2.88</b>	<b>1.1</b>
<b>3 Announcing Move</b>						
<b>Step 3.1</b>	0	0.1	0	0	<b>0</b>	<b>0.1</b>
<b>Step 3.2</b>	0.48	0.1	0.43	0	<b>0.46</b>	<b>0.1</b>
<b>Avg. per text</b>	<b>11.52</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>10.31</b>	<b>4.6</b>

**Table 7.** Comparison between gentle and severe disciplines for the relative frequency of actions in each text.

**Note:** Master's and doctorate dissertations are included in the research by Hyland.

**4.2. Recognized by those present**

The percentages of thanks expressed to various persons are shown in Table 7. Thank you notes were sent to a wide range of people: students and participants in the research; family members; committee members; colleagues; advisors; colleagues; institutions; institutions; institutions; and religious views. There is, however, a little distinction between the two branches of science. The most common people praised in the hard sciences are professors, but in the soft sciences, it's general members of one's own family. A lot of collaborative teamwork is required while doing difficult research, thus the help from other academic lecturers was very much welcomed. Many social science studies, on the other hand, rely only on the researchers themselves, making the emotional support of loved ones and friends

all the more important. In addition, there are certain differences between fields.

Participants in the study were very important in the field of applied linguistics, particularly when it came to issues related to language education, and as a result, they were given more credit than those in other fields. A third example is the feeling of appreciation for institutions. In most cases, these students of medical science and biology were financially sponsored by other parties either at home or in the countries they were attempting to enter. Scholarships and sponsorships for hard scientific Ph.D. students are more likely to be awarded than for soft science Ph.D. students, which suggests that institutions are more appreciative of hard research Ph.D. students. In **Scrivener's (2009)** investigation, this circumstance, in which discipline influences who should be recognized in AW, was also evident.

	Addressees								
Disp.	AD	OT	CM	CO	FM	IN	FD	PA	RL
APL	11.96	16.85	11.41	16.30	12.50	7.61	11.41	11.96	0
BUS	9.10	18.19	17.05	9.10	19.31	8.00	11.36	4.00	4.00
PBA	6.52	20.43	18.26	10.00	23.48	8.26	7.39	3.91	1.73
<i>Soft</i>	<b>8.98</b>	<b>18.64</b>	<b>15.76</b>	<b>11.70</b>	<b>18.81</b>	<b>7.97</b>	<b>9.83</b>	<b>6.44</b>	<b>1.86</b>
MED	12.50	15.48	11.90	19.64	18.45	9.52	7.14	4.76	0.60
EEN	16.26	17.89	17.07	8.94	22.76	3.25	7.31	5.69	0.81
BIO	8.64	24.86	15.14	11.89	17.30	9.19	8.65	3.78	0.54
<i>Hard</i>	<b>11.98</b>	<b>19.75</b>	<b>14.50</b>	<b>13.87</b>	<b>19.12</b>	<b>7.77</b>	<b>7.77</b>	<b>4.62</b>	<b>0.63</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10.32</b>	<b>19.14</b>	<b>15.20</b>	<b>12.66</b>	<b>18.95</b>	<b>7.88</b>	<b>8.91</b>	<b>5.63</b>	<b>1.31</b>

**Table 8.** Expressions of appreciation expressed to various recipients expressed as percentages

**Note** summation errors caused by rounding; CM: Committee, CO: Colleague, FM: Family, AD: Advisor at this location: PA

stands for Participant, while FD stands for Friend. Religiosity in Real Life.

**Cheng's (2012) and Yang's (2012a)** studies reveal that PhD authors always first and foremost recognized their advisers in the acknowledgments section of their doctoral dissertations. Advisor-advisee interactions in the two settings may vary due to socio-cultural variations. Advisors are not only subject matter experts in their respective professions, but they also have the power to approve or disapprove a doctoral candidate's dissertation (**Cheng, 2012; Krase, 2007; Li, 2005**). To adhere to this rigid advisor-advisor hierarchy, the authors of Pakistan "consider advisors as indispensable addressees and always put them at the first position of acknowledgments," which is a common practice in the island nation (Cheng, 2012: 14). In spite of this, advisers in academic circles in the West are seen more as participants in the learning process than as superiors.

Advisors seem to emphasize the development of the capacity to do research independently, and so the interaction with advisees is restricted in terms of growth and improvement for both parties (**Cheng, 2012; Krase, 2007**). Academic customs, social norms, and disciplinary differences

all have an impact on who should be credited in the acknowledgments section of a dissertation.

### **4.3. Expressions of gratitude**

To convey thanks through thanking deeds, Hyland and Tse (2004) categorize five primary kinds of thanking patterns, such as Move 2. There are five ways to express gratitude: nominalization (N), performative verb (V), adjective (A), and passive (P) (e.g. I thank...). Gratitude patterns are broken down each discipline in Table 8 and compared to Hyland's (2004a) results in overall comparison. Generally speaking, there is little distinction between the soft and hard sciences when it comes to pattern ranking. These students tended to favor active verb tenses over passive ones, with the former being more prevalent. A direct authorial voice was "especially noticeable" in "the scientific and engineering writings" because the performative verb pattern usually starts with the subject I. (Hyland, 2004a: 266). It is also evident in the current corpus that the performative verb pattern is more commonly utilized in medical science and engineering than it is in other disciplines, notably the soft ones.

Discipline	Patterns				
	N	V	A	P	B
APL	16.13	55.38	18.28	4.84	5.38
BUS	13.45	50.29	11.70	2.92	21.64
PBA	10.82	35.06	17.32	1.30	35.50
<i>Soft disp.</i>	<b>13.27</b>	<b>45.92</b>	<b>15.99</b>	<b>2.90</b>	<b>21.94</b>
MED	5.00	55.90	13.04	3.11	22.99
EEN	15.20	59.20	14.40	4.80	6.40
BIO	12.50	42.93	17.93	7.61	19.02
<i>Hard disp.</i>	<b>10.64</b>	<b>51.70</b>	<b>15.32</b>	<b>5.32</b>	<b>17.02</b>
<b>All totals</b>	<b>11.96</b>	<b>48.81</b>	<b>15.66</b>	<b>4.11</b>	<b>19.48</b>
<b>Hyland's</b>	<b>33.66</b>	<b>33.70</b>	<b>15.41</b>	<b>10.96</b>	<b>6.79</b>

**Table 9.** Patterns indicating thankfulness in the current corpus, expressed as a fraction of all patterns

**Note:** summation errors caused by rounding; Nominalization (N), Verb (V), Adjective (A), Passive (P), Bare mention (B).

This study found the second-highest ranking of thanking acts in terms of explicitness (V pattern vs. implicitness in P pattern), which ranked the two extreme ends of thanking acts (i.e. explicitness and implicitness) as the consecutive first and second places (e.g. Hyland, 2004a; Zhao & Jiang, 2010). It is believed that one significant aspect is the interdependence of socio-cultural concepts and English language usage habits. When it comes to expressing their sentiments and emotions, Chinese-speaking pupils in China are more restrained, according to Zhao and Jiang's (2010) findings. The bare mention pattern, on the other hand, was used the most and the performative verb pattern the least by Pakistani students for whom English is both a second language and an official language. There was almost a two-to-one ratio of the passive pattern in hard

disciplines against soft disciplines. In the hard sciences, academic training in employing the passive voice to demonstrate impartiality undoubtedly led to this divergence.

Some modest distinctions across the disciplines were discovered when patterns and persons recognized in thanking behaviors were compared. There is a significant percentage of thanks using performative verbs in both the soft science AW and the hard scientific AW for thanking family members and other academic professors, as shown in Table 9. In both cases, however, the bare mention pattern is used rather often. According to Hyland and Tse (2004), expressing gratitude for resource support tends to over-represent the understated bare-mentioned pattern of appreciation. Contrarily, soft science students are more likely than hard science students to use adjective patterns to convey appreciation for academic assistance (such as FM and OT) (i.e. FM and OT). In

addition, although soft science students employed a passive pattern to express their gratitude to committee members and organizations, hard science students did not (i.e. AD, OT, CO, and PA mainly). Based on the variation in thank-you patterns, authors who write in the soft sciences are more likely to employ a larger variety of thank-you patterns than authors who write in the

hard sciences (Hyland & Tse, 2004). Additionally, the disparate methods employed by researchers in the various domains may help to explain this disparity. In the soft disciplines, research participants were more frequently acknowledged than institutions, whereas in the hard disciplines, institutions were more frequently acknowledged.

	Addressees									
	AD	OT	CM	CO	FM	IN	FD	PA	RL	TOTALS
<b>Nominalisation</b>										
SOFT	13.9	19.4	12.5	2.8	18.1	8.3	16.7	6.9	1.4	100
HARD	12	22	8	18	10	8	8	14	0	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Performative-verb</b>										
SOFT	10.6	19.3	17.9	8.0	19.7	6.6	9.1	6.9	1.8	100
HARD	13.4	20.9	11.7	14.2	21.8	4.6	7.5	4.6	1.3	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11.9</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Adjective</b>										
SOFT	12.4	22.4	15.7	7.9	11.2	7.9	10.1	11.2	1.1	100
HARD	16.2	14.7	25	8.8	20.6	4.4	7.4	2.9	0	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>19.1</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>15.3</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Passive</b>										
SOFT	14.3	28.6	7.1	14.3	7.1	7.1	0	14.3	7.1	100
HARD	12.5	12.5	50	0	0	16.7	4.2	4.2	0	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>34.2</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Bare mention</b>										
SOFT	3.6	17.9	15.7	13.6	25.7	10.7	7.9	2.9	2.1	100
HARD	5	25	10	12.5	21.3	17.5	6.25	2.5	0	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 10.** The percentages (percentages) of thank-you patterns used by various fields to express gratitude to their respective recipients

**Note:** Discrepancies in total sums because of rounding.

### Thanking acts can be realized and modified through lexical choices.

Soft and hard science writers appreciate each other in a variety of ways in Table 10. According to the findings, there was no discernible difference between the two groups in the frequency with which they

expressed appreciation via the use of verbs. This trend is completely in opposition to Cheng's (2012) claim that academic writers students choose to utilise more noun forms than native English speakers to express their thankfulness.

	Lexical items	Soft	%	Hard	%	Total	%
Noun	gratitude	57	10.34	57	11.75	114	11
	thanks	88	15.97	65	13.40	153	14.77
	appreciation	45	8.17	44	9.07	89	8.59
	gratefulness	2	0.36	0	0	2	0.19
	indebtedness	1	0.18	0	0	1	0.10
	debt	4	0.73	5	1.03	9	0.87
Verb	thank	193	35.02	194	40	387	37.36
	appreciate	18	3.27	12	2.47	30	2.90
	appreciated	8	1.45	4	0.82	12	1.16
	acknowledge	20	3.63	14	2.89	34	3.28
	recognize	0	0	2	0.41	2	0.19
	owe	16	2.91	8	1.65	24	2.32
Adjective	gratefulness	60	10.89	44	9.07	104	10.04
	Indebted	22	3.99	24	4.95	46	4.44
	thankful	15	2.72	11	2.27	26	2.51
	appreciative	2	0.36	0	0	2	0.19
	obliged	0	0	1	0.21	1	0.10
<b>Total</b>		<b>551</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1036</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 11.** Frequency of words used to express gratitude for both soft and severe disciplines

**Note:** Discrepancies in total sums because to rounding.

Some minor discrepancies between the two scientific domains are revealed by the word and keyword analysis. Tables 11 and 12 demonstrate, for each of the two corpora,

how many unique (different) terms were used in comparison to the BNC. The results of the study suggest that students in soft sciences may have a stronger command of

the English language, which may account for why they used more varied terms than those in harder sciences. Because their TTR (the number of unique words in a phrase divided by the total number of running tokens) is higher, hard scientific AW authors may opt to write in a more concise, lucid style. The fact that students in the soft sciences used more overused keywords than their peers in the hard sciences suggests that the lexis employed in the soft scientific AW

contained fewer frequent phrases and that the students' word selections more accurately reflected the fundamental traits of aboutness and keyness, within this genre (Archer, 2009; Baker, 2009; Scott & Tribble, 2006).

**Discipline** TTR Sentences That Stand Out  
Deviation from the mean expressed in Standard English words (DW)

APL	1,885	23.81	510	15.52	13.14
BUS	1,779	24.38	563	12.96	10.30
PBA	2,145	21.40	647	15.49	10.59
<i>Soft disp.</i>	<b>1936</b>	<b>23.20</b>	<b>573</b>	<b>14.66</b>	<b>11.34</b>
MED	1,691	26.60	460	13.82	10.49
EEN	1,216	25.16	466	10.37	9.26
BIO	1,642	24.36	719	9.37	9.05
<i>Hard disp.</i>	<b>1,516</b>	<b>25.37</b>	<b>548</b>	<b>11.19</b>	<b>9.60</b>
<b>All totals</b>	<b>1,726</b>	<b>24.29</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>12.92</b>	<b>10.47</b>

**Table 12.** The current corpus contains distinct words, the TTR, and the length of sentences.

## 5. Conclusion

Academic traditions, author's language skill (or lack thereof), cultural expectations (or lack thereof), and even one's own writing style (or lack thereof) all play a role in the acknowledgments' composition. In this research, we looked at a component that has received less attention than it deserves when it comes to determining the composition of dissertation acknowledgements: disciplinary differences. Results show that while most EFL writers used Hyland's (2004a) three-tier model to produce their acknowledgements, there are minor changes between the two scientific fields in terms of generic construction and lexical realizations in changing thanking actions. In addition to the

foregoing characteristics, it is thought that researchers' epistemology, ontology and technique might have a role in AW's construction.

The following are the ramifications for ESP educators of this research. There has been less study on acknowledgements than on other parts of academic writings (Hyland, 2004a), and much less effort has been paid to teaching students how to do so. Graduate students should be clearly aware of the different elements that might influence how they use praising moves/steps, methods, and vocabulary choices when developing acceptable AW. This information may also be used to assist authors understand the numerous types of lexical options and limitations they may face in different

contexts, such as academic, linguistic, socio-cultural, disciplinary and contextual variations. To help PhD students write impressive and correct acknowledgments, teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESP) are urged to teach this genre in both macro and micro contexts (Hyland 2004b; Paltridge, 2001; Yang, 2012).

This study may be strengthened with more investigation. It's possible to compare AW produced by fluent English speakers across cultures to see whether their differences in the discipline have the same impact on the quality of the writing. As a last option, qualitative approaches might be included in the investigations. In projects that focus on corpus analysis, additional analyses like interviews or ethnographic methodologies may be combined to better understand the account of why authors adopt certain arrangements and lexis in various fields and to discover how they see themselves as writers of AW.

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