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Lexogramatical Analysis of Science and Literature Book Blurbs

A B S T R A C T

This study deals with book blurbs. It aims to identify the ways in which science book blurbs differ from and/or similar to literature book blurbs and to explore what kinds of lexogramatical features are used in science and literature book blurbs. To meet these aims this study focuses on sixteen science blurbs in different disciplines involving (Physics, Chemistry, Geology, Medicine, Biology, Computer Science, Linguistics, Agriculture) and sixteen literature book blurbs in four different disciplines involving (Novel, Drama, Poetry, Literature). The data are analyzed based on Halliday's transitivity system (2004). The results revealed that the most common processes that is involved in science and literature book blurbs are material and relational process. The texts of science are longer than literature book blurbs. Simple sentences (45.56% in literature, 53.7% in science) and active voice (83.6 % in science, 86% in literature) are the dominant structures in both disciplines. Finally Science and literature book blurbs have the same tendencies in applying transitivity systems.

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التحليل النحوي للأغلفة الخارجية الخلفية للكتب العلمية والأدبية

مريم كريم سعيد عزيز جامعة تكريت- كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية- قسم اللغة الانكليزية
 ا.م. محمود عباس داود جامعة تكريت- كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية- قسم اللغة الانكليزية
الخلاصة:

تتناول هذه الدراسة مكونات الغلاف الخارجي الخلفي للكتب العلمية والأدبية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى

تحديد اوجه التشابه والاختلاف بين الاغلفة الخارجية للكتب العلمية والأدبية فضلا عن تحديد أنواع التراكيب النحوية المستخدمة في ترويج الكتب. ولتحقيق ذلك تم اعتماد (١٦) عنوانا للكتب العلمية والتي شملت (الفيزياء ، والكيمياء ، والحيولوجيا ، والطب ، وعلم الأحياء ، وعلوم الكمبيوتر ، واللغويات ، والزراعة) ومثلها للكتب الادبية والتي شملت (الرواية ، والدrama ، والشعر ، والكتب الادبية) يمكن تلخيص النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها في هذه الدراسة كما يلي: ان التباين بين الاغلفة الخلفية للكتب العلمية والأدبية ليس واضحا بدرجة كبيرة ، وهذا يفرض الديناميكية والمرونة لنوع أغلفة الكتب أو فنتها والتي بدورها تكون خاضعة لبعض القيود. نصوص الاغلفة الخلفية للكتب العلمية أطول من الأدبية. اغلفة الكتب العلمية والادبية لها نفس الاتجاهات في تطبيق التراكيب النحوية. واخيرا الجمل البسيطة (45.56% في الكتب العلمية) (53.7% في الكتب الادبية) والجمل المبنية للمعلوم (٨٣.٦% في الكتب العلمية) و(٨٦% في الكتب الادبية) هما المهيمنين في اغلفة الكتب الخلفية.

الانتقالية، المعجم، النوع، الغلاف الخلفي للكتاب ، الادب ، العلوم

1.2 Introduction

Book blurb is a brief, precise description of the content and the author of book. Grossi and Bruit (2015:15) describe blurbs as a combination of an excerpt of books content, the reviewer, author and the publisher; in addition it can embrace a plot summery of the work, biography of the author and a claim about the importance of the book. An old English wisdom argues that “don’t judge books by their cover”. Means do not judge anything by its outward appearance. This was frequently used in early 1800 but in the late of 1890 the book itself competes with a hundred of book with similar title then readers find themselves with a question how not to judge book if not by its cover (Grivina and Zirker, 2019:3).

Valor (2015:42) and Maskoliūnaitė (2013:10) regard blurb as a canvas for promotional discourse. The first thing we check when we intend to buy a book is the front cover. If we want to know more about the content of the book after we get interested by the front cover, we look at the back cover. Similarly Grossi and Bruit (2015:8) state that when people enter a bookshop they get confused immediately because of the large number of books placed on the shelves. Publishers are aware of the fact that market is a competitive place so they spend a lot of money, time to present their project in the best way. Various nonverbal strategies like colors, headlines and pictures are used to capture the reader’s attention, but when the

publisher wants to persuade the reader to buy or read this book rather than other books; blurbs come to play. “Book covers play a prime role in the choices of readers” Jones (2007: 45).

Hyon (1996:695) classifies three approaches to genre that contribute to the field of applied linguistics primarily for pedagogical purposes one of these approaches is Australia genre theories; this tradition is centered within Halliday’s linguistic theory “*Systematic Functional Linguistics*”. SFL approach submits that human language are evolved to make three kinds of meaning, interpersonal meaning that deals with clauses as exchange , textual meaning that deals with clause as message, and experiential or ideational meaning that deals with clause as representation.(Egins, 2004:58-59).

Ideational meaning deals with concepts or ideas of phenomena which are expressed in an expression. The grammar of experience deals with transitivity system, which embraces process types in English, the accompanying participants and circumstances. Raeisi, et al, (2019:1389) describes Halidays Transitivity system as it has three main components. First the processes those are unfolding through time, they are the central elements (verbal group). The process of outer experience is called material while the process that deals with inner experience (consciousness) is called mental process. Furthermore Relational process expresses relation between two fragments. These are major processes while minor processes include verbal process that involves types of saying, behavioral process involves manifestation of inner experience and existential process which denotes something is existed. Second the Participants that involve in the process directly, they are close to the central (nominal group). Finally The Circumstances that associates within the process.

A number of studies have examined cross cultural linguistics variations and disciplines but there is no study that covers the comparison between science and literature book blurbs which is a gap that has not been analyzed yet. In addition, for the best of our knowledge; this study is the first study which systematically identifies the elements of transitivity system in book blurbs.

The aim of this paper is to explore what kinds of lexicogramatical features are used and which process is the most common one in science and literature blurbs. In addition to identify the ways in which science book blurbs differ from and/or similar to literature book blurbs.

This paper is extracted from M.S.C thesis

1.3 Methodology

This study follows a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis. After the entire corpuses are collected randomly from Kirkuk and Tikrit University libraries based on their availability and accessibility, which include Physics, Chemistry, Geology, Medicine, Biology, Computer Science, Linguistics, and Agriculture. The lexogramatical features of book blurbs are specified based on Halliday's transitivity system (2004). "*An introduction to functional grammar*". The transitivity system is applied to explore the subjective, evasive and psychological view points of the writer and to investigate why certain choices of words are made. So an attempt is made to locate the six processes (material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral and existential), participants (the nature of participants differs depending on the type of the process involved) and circumstances in the corpus as they are employed by writers to convey a positive evaluation of books. Finally types of sentences (simple, complex, compound and compound complex sentences) based on their structure are observed.

1.4 Results and discussion

1.4.1 lexogramatical features

Transitivity systems, tenses, voices and types of sentences can be analyzed in terms of lexogramatical feature.

1.4.1.1 Transitivity system

Material Process this process describes tangible and concrete actions. Based on the obtained results, this process is the most frequent type in science and literature book blurbs (50.7% in science, 47.9% in literature blurbs). Participants involve in this process can be animate, inanimate and abstract entities. Some examples from science and literature blurbs are listed in table (1):

Table (1) Some Examples of Material Process in Science and Literature Blurbs

Participant/ the actor	Process: material	Participant/ the goal	Circumstances
This online teaching	Integrates	the entire digital	with wily plus/ accompaniment
Professor Raghuvanshi	has published	many research papers	in reputed nation/ spatial

People	Learn	best	when information is engaging/ temporal,
Every English teacher	will find	this book	indispensable/ manner
You	will return	to this treasure	for years to come/ temporal

It should be noted that sometimes material process can be intransitive that has only one participant; for example, *answers found here, how the idea of the English nation has shaped by its writer*. In the first example *answers* is the goal and the actor is understood as someone who finds answers, while in the second example the actor is introduced as a prepositional phrase, since it is passive construction. It has been revealed that material process is mostly used in descriptive move with verbs such as *give, provide, get, examine, write, divide, deal, explore, design* usually accompanied with manner circumstances like, *widely, clearly*. While evaluative move usually utilizes verbs like *offer, develop, use, shape, open, help* with cause and purpose circumstances like, *for students of English, to find a position* these are used to justify the importance of the book. Finally it is least used in about the author move with verbs such as *publish, select, follow, and write*.

Mental Process This process presents feeling, perceptions and thoughts. It has been discovered that there are 11% process in science blurbs and 14% in literature blurbs. This process is identified by noticing some entities like the participants (the sensor, the one who thinks that is endowed with consciousness and the phenomenon that can be realized as fact, thought) some examples are listed in table (2):

Table (2) Some Examples of Mental Process in Science and Literature Blurbs

Participant/sensor	Process: mental	Participant/phenomenon	Circumstances
Bialosky, a poet	sees	life	broken up not by tears/ manner
Marlowe	prefers	Faustus	deftly/ manner
Alex cross	knows	this is no ordinary criminal	
What they	need	to know	to master anatomy/cause
You	will learn	how to create	

This process mostly used in evaluative move to persuade potential readers with the benefits that they gain if they read the book.

Relational process this process is used to establish a relation between two separate entities .It is the second highly process after material process (31%in science blurbs and 30% in literature. This process has been identified by noticing the participant (carrier & attribute) in attributing process that cannot be reversed and (token & value) in identifying process that can be reversed. In this process there are no human participants and actions that are performed. It is used either to identify or attribute something or someone. Some examples are listed in table (3):

Table (3) Some Examples of Relational Process in Science and Literature Blurbs

Participants Carrie /Token	Process: relational	Participants Attribute/ value	Circumstances
Materials	are (attributing)	frequent	to maintain continuity/cause
Fuels	is (identifying)	one of the challenges	of the present oil refiners/ spatial
The protagonist	would be (attributing)	Faust	
This	is (attributing)	ambitious book	refreshingly/ manner
Every lover of Shakespeare	should have (Attributing)	this edition	in his private library/ spatial for it is inexhaustible/ cause

Relational process is used to express the way of being or having something that benefits reader. This process is mostly found in about the author move, when providing information about the authors by using verbs like *have*, *become*, *be* .Furthermore, it is also used in descriptive and evaluative moves when describing the book's content and quality.

Verbal Process this process states verbal actions. It has been found that this process is (5.4%) in science blurbs and (5.7%) in literature blurbs. It is identified by noticing verbs like *say*, *question*, *present*, *address*, *describe* with participants (sayer and verbiage) .Sometimes the receiver (to whom the message is directed) is also illustrated. Some examples are listed in table (4):

Table (4) Some Examples of Verbal Process in Science and Literature Blurbs

Participant/sayer	Process: verbal	Participant/verbiage	Circumstances
We	Answer	the simple question	
It	will explain	the forces	
This book	will discuss	how knowing	where animals go/ spatial
Mr. Rawlinson	considers and discusses	the problems	of the beginner/ spatial
Magus	had called	himself Faustus	

It should be noticed that Martinez (2001:230) claims that verbal process is typically not necessarily conscious, so this justifies the existence of inanimate sayer such as *this book, it*.

Behavioral Process this process occurs between material and mental process. It

	Process: Existential	Participant/Existent	Circumstances
There	Are	copious notes	from all the editions/spatial of 1603/ temporal
There	Are	reprints	of three important early work
Physical process	that are occurring	on earth	
That	took place	in the latter half of this century	

expresses actions that should be experienced through consciousness. It is the least frequent process that is found in book blurbs only (0.7%) in science blurbs , as it seems it is not prominent

in the science language while in literature blurbs is (1%) for example, *sleep tight, Mary's own past has blinded her* .

Existential Process this process is rare to happen in the language of blurbs. It concerned with something that exists or happens. It has discovered (0.7%) in science blurbs and (0.3%) in

Table (5) Some Examples of Existential Process in Science and Literature Blurbs

Process	Physi cs	Chemis try	Geolo gy	Medici ne	Biolog y	Agricult ure	Compute r Science	Linguist ics	Tot al	%
Material	25	17	17	19	12	27	55	33	205	50.7 %
Mental	5	3	3	7	2	4	13	8	45	11%

Relation al	8	22	22	12	12	24	14	12	126	31%
Verbal	5	2	3	1	4	2	2	3	22	5.4%
Behavior al	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	0.7%
Existenti al	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	3	0.7%
Total	44	46	47	39	30	57	84	57	404	

Table (7) Frequency and Percentage of Process Types in Literature Book Blurbs

Process	Novel	Drama	Poetry	Literature	Total	%
Material	41	61	22	26	150	47.92%
Mental	20	11	9	5	45	14.37%
Relational	13	41	20	21	95	30.35%
Verbal	6	7	1	4	18	5.75%
Behavioral	4	-	-	-	4	1.27%
Existential	-	1	-	-	1	0.31%
Total	84	121	52	56	313	

From the tables above, the results show the domination of material process in texts of science and literature book blurbs, (50.7%) in science, (47.92%) in literature blurbs. Whereas, Relational process ranks at the second most frequent process with (31%) in science blurbs, (30.35%) in literature blurbs. Mental process with (11%) in science, (14.37%) in literature. Verbal process is (5.4%) in science, (5.75%) in literature, it is rank after mental process. While Existential and Behavioral process rank last. They are very rare in both disciplines. As it is illustrated from the percentages, there are no big differences in the utilization of process types between science and literature blurbs. All these processes construe different actions, activates and experiences that are encoded in the language of book blurbs, as a result they are employed to serve the same functions in both science and literature blurbs.

Table (8) Frequency and Percentage of Circumstances in Science Book Blurbs

Circumstances	physics	chemistry	Geology	Medicine	biology	Agriculture	Computer science	linguistics	Total	%
Manner	4	4	4	7	2	8	11	7	47	21%
spatial	8	4	12	4	7	17	4	9	65	29%
Temporal	4	6	-	1	1	7	1	6	26	11.6%
Cause	5	7	3	5	2	4	4	9	39	17%
matter	2	4	-	2	1	-	-	2	11	4.9%
Accompaniment	4	4	3	3	6	2	3	3	28	12.5%
Role	-	-	1	-	1	1	2	2	7	3%
Total	27	29	23	22	20	39	25	38	223	

Table (9) Frequency of Circumstances in Literature Book Blurbs

Circumstances	Novel	Drama	Poetry	Literature	Total	%
Manner	3	6	3	8	20	17.8%
Spatial	1	10	6	8	25	22.32%
Temporal	2	11	8	4	25	22.32%
Cause	2	7	6	4	19	16.9%
Matter	-	1	-	3	4	3.5%
Accompaniment	2	4	3	3	12	10.7%
Role	3	2	2	-	7	6.25%
Total	13	41	28	30	112	

As it is shown from tables above, the dominant circumstances in both science and literature blurbs are spatial circumstances (29%) in science, (22.32%) in literature blurbs. These adverbs are mostly used in about the author move, when providing information about where authors work, especially in which university they teach. While manner circumstances rank the second most circumstances (21%), (17%), it is commonly used to evaluate the quality of the book. Temporal process is more used in literature blurbs (22.32%) as compared with science blurbs (11.6%). Whereas cause circumstances are (17%) in science and (16.9%) in literature blurbs. They are used to give reason, purpose and to whom this book is directed, so it is mostly used in Evaluative move. Accompaniment circumstances are signaled with the prepositions (with, without) which are used to give further information. They are (12.5%) in science and (10.7%) in literature. While matter (4.9% in science, 3.5% in literature) and role circumstances rank last (3% in science, 6.25% in literature), they are very rare in both disciplines. Role circumstances are used to indicate something as what, for examples, *as a source of comfort, as plant reproduction*. Science and literature blurbs have the same trends in the employment of circumstances.

Table (10) Distribution of the Number of Words in Science Book Blurbs

	Physics	Chemistry	Geology	Medicine	Biology	Computer science	Linguistics	Agriculture	
Blurb1	257	382	287	292	229	292	279	606	
Blurb2	240	232	287	177	176	309	511	121	
Total	497	614	574	469	405	601	790	727	4.677

Table (11) Distribution of the Number of Words in Literature Book Blurbs

	Novel	Drama	Poetry	Literature	
Blurb1	129	494	227	143	
Blurb2	187	125	271	284	
Blurb3	162	391	150	162	
Blurb4	129	270	102	251	
Total	607	1.280	750	840	3.477

For a more comprehensive comparison, the overall number of words is calculated. Science book blurbs have (4.677) words whereas, literature blurbs have

(3.477). Furthermore, the prototypical length of literature book blurbs is around (150) because it should not reveal many details; it only represents a brief summary about the story's plot. While the prototypical length of science book blurbs is around (250) because it should provide detailed information about a specialized topics and the book's author. Moreover it will appeal to very specific readers (students and researchers) unlike literature book blurb that is appeal to all people. These findings corresponds to that of Bacić (2021) as he found that the length of fiction blurbs are (150) words while, linguistic blurbs are (270) words.

1.4.1.2Tense and voice

Generally, there are three main tenses (present, past and future) that take three aspects (simple, perfect and progressive). It has been found that, the most common tense that is mostly used in book blurbs is present simple. It is used to express facts, truth that is always true as it does not need to locate it in a specific time. Explanations and descriptions of books content are always written in present simple. According to Biber et al (1999) and Caplan (2012) the most three tenses that are used in academic writing are present simple, past simple and present perfect.

Table (11) Frequency and Percentage of Tenses and Voices in Science Blurbs

Science Blurbs	Physics	Chemistry	Geology	Medicine	Biology	Computer science	Agriculture	Linguistics	sum	%
Present Simple	23	22	13	21	8	43	24	20	174	73.41%
Present Perfect	3	2	1	-	3	3	5	5	22	9.28%
Present Progressive	-	-	1	-		2	1	-	4	1.68%
Past Simple	-	5	1	1		4	13	1	25	10.54%
Future Simple	-	-	8		1	1	1	1	12	5%

Total Tenses	26	29	24	22	12	53	44	27	237	
Active Voice	24	27	18	15	12	49	38	21	204	83.6 %
Passive Voice	2	4	6	9	3	2	5	9	40	16.3 9%
Total Of Voices	26	31	24	24	15	51	43	30	244	

Table (12) Frequency of tenses and voices in literature blurbs

Literature Blurbs	Novel	Drama	Poetry	Literature	Total	%
Present Simple	27	30	23	27	107	66.45 %
Present Perfect	6	5	2	4	17	10.55 %
Present Progressive	1	-	-	-	1	0.62%
Past Simple	4	20	2	1	27	16.77 %
Future Simple	5	-	3	1	9	5.59%
Total Of Tenses	43	37	30	15	161	
Active Voice	37	47	29	30	143	86%
Passive Voice	6	11	3	3	23	13.8%
Total Of Voices	43	58	32	33	166	

As it is shown in table (24) and (25) present simple is high in both disciplines (73.41% in science, 66.45% in literature). Present simple is used to describe the book's content and provide accurate information. In addition it is employed to evaluate and praise the book and the author for example; *it examines the independent development of linguistic science, this novella explores for the first time*. The information in these sentences is fact, so it shouldn't be affected by time.

Past tense has only (10.54% in science, 16.77% in literature). It is used only to give information that is happened in the past. Mostly when giving information about the authors, *prof. Rao published more than 80 researches*. In literature blurbs it often used to describe the plot, *magus who thence plunged to earth, crashed and died*.

Whereas present perfect is not very high (9.28%) in science, (10.55%) in literature. It is used to indicate how the current edition is revised or developed to fulfill target readers requirement, for example: *The final section has been rewritten and divided to new chapters*. Or sometimes it is used to indicate the author's achievements, *dr. Shrivastava has recently shifted to reputed...* Whereas, Future tense (5% in science, 5.59% in literature). It mostly incorporates the modal verb *will* to indicate the positive outcomes of reading the book.

Concerning the voice, most of the sentences are active. To avoid ambiguity and make it more clear and easy to comprehend, as there is no time to guess where the subject is. Active voice is (83.6%) in science while (86%) in literature book blurbs. Passive voice is (16.39%) in science while (13.8%) in literature book blurbs. Passive sentences are used to put the focus on the important material and to make the text impersonal.

It is worthwhile to see from table (22), (23) there are no differences between science and literature book blurbs in employing tenses and voices. This indicates that there are standard rules in writing book blurbs that every writer should apply when writing any blurb. In general it should be written mostly in simple present despite its discipline.

It should be noted that, from the current analysis it has been reached to this result, similarities between science and literature book blurbs are more than differences. This result suits the typicality of the genre that blurbs belong to. One of the basic characteristics of each genre is to have typical, conventional word choices, structures and purposes.

1.5 Conclusions

From present analysis the following conclusions are obtained: Science and literature book blurbs have the same tendencies in applying transitivity systems. Material and relational process are dominant in both disciplines. Thus, because of book blurbs constraints in terms of the allowable contribution of lexogramatical structure that is recognized by the members of professional and academic

community. This constitutes the genre of book blurbs with its own communicative purposes and linguistic conventions in the textual type. The present analysis has illustrated that Simple sentences and active voice are the dominant structures in both disciplines. They are used highly to give concise information simply, briefly and directly. In addition the variability between science and literature book blurbs is not highly market, this assumes the controlled dynamism and flexibility in the integrity of book blurbs genre. The texts of science book blurbs are longer than literature book blurbs. As in literature blurbs the writer shouldn't reveal much details, to keep the curiosity and suspense that encourage potential readers to read the book to know what will happen next. Whereas in science blurbs readers need to have sufficient information about books topic to select what is relevant to his need and desire.

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