Genre Analysis of Move Structures in Job Interviews by the Judicial Service Commission of Kenya in 2011

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Abstract
Many scholars have carried out research on genre analysis (Swales, 1990, Bhatia,1993, Bruce, 1993), Flowerdew, 2002, Fairclough,, 2006, and others) and their findings have opened many avenues for research and analysis of many genres. However, much of their studies have scarcely attempted to analyze move structures of job interviews conducted by a judicial commission in any country. A literature gap therefore exists, thus motivating the authors to analyze the move structures of JSC's interviews using Genre analysis theory. A genre analysis involves a survey of certain aspects, including : the identification of communication purposes and overall schematic structure of the target text, the analysis of lexico-grammatical features which involves quantitative corpus studies, the analysis of text patterning, which includes the analysis of conventionalized patterns of language use at lexical, syntactic and discourse levels and lastly, the analysis of content-based organization, conventionally described as substance specific moves (Swales, 1990). A move is a unit that incorporates both purposes and content that the writer intentionally communicates to the reader (Bhatia, 1993). The present study aimed at investigating how the move structures of job interviews conducted by the Judicial Service Commission of Kenya in 2011 correspond to the interview process models as designed by Huffcut & Roth (1998), Adelsward (1998) and other scholars. Through a genre analysis of interviews texts extracted from the interviews conducted by the Judicial Service Commission of Kenya, the present study is aimed at exploring the moves employed in the interviews for certain communicative purposes. The results of the study indicate that the JSC interviews make use of certain moves that are usually textually realized through certain linguistic forms. The study has identified some linguistic realizations that are used to develop the moves of job interviews and it has attempted to offer solution to some language challenges that emerge in the process of using language as a tool to address some problems in our society.
Keywords: Genre analysis, communication purposes, interviews, overall schematic structure, lexico-grammatical features.

1.   Introduction

Genre analysis as a sub-discipline in applied linguistics emerged in 1980s and blossomed in the 1990s. A genre is a highly structured and conventionalized discourse which occurs among the members of a community thereby helping them achieve communicative purposes (Bhatia,1993). According to Swales (1990), genre constitutes a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rational for the genre. For Bhatia (1993) genre analysis refers to the study of naturally occurring written discourse focusing, in particular, on analysis beyond the sentence level.

Any study of language or, more specifically, text at a level above that of sentence is a discourse study. This may involve the study of cohesive links between sentences, of paragraphs, or the structure of the whole text. The results of this type of analysis make statements about how texts work. This is what is referred to as applied discourse analysis. The focus of text analysis is on the regularities of structures that distinguish one type of text from another, and this is what is referred to as genre analysis and the results obtained focus on the differences between text types, or genres. What is of great importance in genre analysis is the identification of the communicative purpose or purposes of the texts or genres under investigation and the use of language in institutionalized settings controlled by communicative conventions existing in and created by a group of participants in a defined discourse community. Central to the analysis of a certain genre is the identification of the moves in a text based on the conventions set by the discourse community. In other words, in genre studies, the researcher proceeds with identifying the moves that have been employed by the writers for organizing the information throughout the text. To account for the main structural organization of introduction section in academic journals, Swales (1990) developed a model termed as Create a Research Space (CARS) and empirically applied it in studying of the introduction sections of the academic papers in various academic disciplines in English as well as other languages. The model comprises of three obligatory moves namely: establishing a territory (move 1), establishing a niche (move 2) and occupying the niche (move 3). The interviews conducted by the Judicial service commission of Kenya in 2011 was necessitated by the fact that most

of the institutions were marred with corruption, incompetence, inefficiency and many other negative aspects that made the public lose confidence in those institutions (Makwera, et al 2011). One such institutions is the Kenyan judiciary. To address these challenges, a new constitution was promulgated in 2010, and one of the components that received a lot of attention was the vetting of public office holders during recruitments or when they are in service. Vetting in this case involves finding out about a person's past life, career qualification, knowledge of the new constitution among other aspects in order to decide if he or she qualifies to do the job in question. The vetting process therefore involves use of public interviews and this is how language can be used to improve an institution like the judiciary. The present study is aimed at exploring the moves employed in the interviews for certain communicative purposes.

2.   Methodology

This paper has analyzed 3 interview texts which have been purposively sampled out of 10 JSC interviews for the chief justice position. It has used qualitative approach which is usually used to identify the move features in the interview texts. The method of data collection involved internet search and library research which were used to extract the interview transcripts from the JSC website and the newspapers in the Kenya national libraries that had recorded the interview texts. Content analysis was been used to transform the data with the intention of discovering useful information, suggesting solutions and supporting decision making.

3.   Significance of the study

This article is significant as it highlights how move features in a text can be used to express the communicative conventions existing in and created by a group of participants in a defined discourse community. It shows how certain moves or units of certain genres like interviews correspond to the structures of similar genres as designed by a particular community which uses it. At the same time it shows how some of the moves may deviate from the conventionally recognized structures of the same genre. It acts as an eye opener to the fact that language is a tool for improving certain institutions like the judiciary. The study will broaden the scope of the field of genre analysis and many scholars will benefit from the findings of the study. The recommendations made are meant to help improve the use of certain genres in different contexts.

4.   Genre analysis of move structures in JSC interviews.

The following sub-topics explain the different move structures of job interviews.

4.1 The First schematic structure: introduction (pre-interview stage).

According to the Interview Process model by Huffcut & Roth (1998), an interview is divided into three related phases namely: the pre-interview phase which occurs before the interviewers and candidate meet, the interview phase where the interview is conducted, and the post-interview phase where the interviewers make judgments of candidate qualifications and state their final decisions. The phases are normally related because the impressions interviewers form early on may affect how they view the person in a later phase. Huffcut & Roth *(1998)* explains that, in the pre-interview phase the interviewers look at the information available to them beforehand (for instance, resumes or CV, application letter, academic and professional certificates, the testimonials of the interviewee, social networking site information) and the perceptions interviewers form about applicants from this information prior to the actual face-to-face interaction between the two parties. In this phase, interviewers are likely to already have ideas about the characteristics that would make a person ideal or qualified for the position. Interviewers also have information about the applicant usually in the form of test scores, or prior contacts with the applicant. Interviewers then often integrate information that they have on an applicant with their ideas about the ideal employee to form a pre-interview evaluation of the candidate. In this way, interviewers typically have an impression of the interviewee even before the actual face-to-face interview interaction. Nowadays with recent technological advancements, we must be aware that interviewers have an even larger amount of information available on some candidates. For example, interviewers can obtain information from search engines (e.g. Google, Bing, Yahoo, blogs), and even social networks (e.g. LinkedIn, Face book, Twitter etc). While some of this information may be job-related, some of it may not be. Despite the relevance of the information, any information interviewers obtain about the applicant before the interview is likely to influence their pre-interview impression of the candidate. And, why is all this important? It is important because what interviewers think about you before they meet you, can have an effect on how they might treat you in the interview and what they remember about you. Furthermore, researchers have found out that what interviewers think about the applicant before the interview (pre-interview phase) is related to how they evaluate the candidate after the interview, despite how the candidate may have performed during the interview.

The interviews should also carried out in accordance with the standard procedures that is to be followed during a formal interview. In the Judicial service commission of keya, 2011 interviews the structures of the examples correspond to the findings of other authors, and the phases are found in an almost identical form in

Adelsward, 1988 (cf. Akinnaso and Seabrook Ajirotutu,1982; Komter, 1991). The move structures of the JSC also conform to interview convention of the Modern Language Association (2012). The most affected phases are phase 1 which involves the introduction and the general information usually done by the chairman of the interview session. and phase three where the judgments are made or decisions are reached. For instance in the interview texts that were extracted for this study, two phases are not complete hence the interviewees are sometimes taken by surprise when the interviewers refer to some information they are not aware of or they have forgotten about

Consider the following examples showing part of the first move taken from the JSC interviews

1. *Could you say that you were not too harsh on the plaintiff particularly on issue of gender?*

2. *Burials have to be dealt with under the customary law, that is the constitutional position. There was no other law to deal with issues of burials.*

3. *And if this case came back to you today, and if you were to set a way forward for every other judge as head of the judiciary, how would you handle it?*

4. *Customary practices which run contrary to human rights are not to supersede the position of human rights.*

In the examples above, the case of a lawyer who died in the 1980's is used to pin down a judge who made a ruling against his widow who wanted to bury his body in their family land by then (i.e. 25 years earlier) against the husband's clan whose culture does not allow men to be buried far away from their ancestral land. The phase contains the narration, conversation and the discussion on the main subject of discussion, which is touching on a ruling that was made earlier by the interviewee. If this phase is left out then the first question would not make sense to any reader as it talks about a plaintiff and the issue of gender, terms that cannot be interpreted out of the context. The background information is missing but the interviewers are aware of what transpired several years before the interviews and this must have been taken from other sources, most probably from the literature or internet during the pre-interview stage. Table 1 below clearly shows how certain parts can be included or left out in an interview session.

4.1.1 Table 1: schematic relationship of moves in terms of sentences

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Schematic structure	Move	Sentences/examples
Introduction	Pre-interview *Phase 1*	1. *Could you say that you were not too harsh on the plaintiff particularly on issue of gender?* 2. *Burials have to be dealt with under the customary law, that is the constitutional position. There was no other law to deal with issues of burials.* 3. *And if this case came back to you today, and if you were to set a way forward for every other judge as head of the judiciary, how would you handle it?* 4. *Customary practices which run contrary to human rights are not to supersede the position of human rights.*

As the table suggests, the first move of the interview was realized through the use of linguistic structures serving a single function of the move. The first example is an interrogative sentence and it shows that the interviewers are aware of what took place earlier meaning that they must have retrieved some information about the candidate during the pre-interview stage. Example 2 is a declarative sentence and it is used by the candidate in response to the question asked. The two sentences are used alternately with one interviewer asking the candidate a question and the candidate responding with a statement. The third example carries a conditional sentence and this is realized through the use of subordinating conjunction *if*. The fourth example is in form of a declarative sentence and it comes as a response to the question asked by the interviewer. All the four sentence are revolving around one subject, that is a widow who was presumably denied her rights by the candidate who wants to be recruited as a chief justice. All the sentences are part of move one and this is in line with what other scholars (Huffcut & Roth,1998; Adelsward, 1998 etc) say about move one .

4.2 The second schematic structure: body

After analyzing the pre-interview phase of the JSC interviews, the next stage to be looked at is the interview phase or what is known as phase 2 of the interview. It is the most detailed part as almost all the main questions are presented, be they on academic qualification, experience, past failures and successes, strategic plans and other key areas of concern. According to Bhatia (1993), a genre analyst should focus on the generic-distinctive features such as communicative purposes, schematic structure and the syntactic patterns. A job interview as a genre is conducted for a particular purpose, that is to get suitable candidates for a particular job. It has also to follow the conventions that are known by the discourse community that uses it and each stage or move has to be

realized through using different linguistic structures including interrogative, declarative and direct sentences. Also the use of modal auxiliary verbs, personal pronouns, conjunctions and others are considered. Consider the following examples:

4.2.1 <u>Table 2.</u>

Schematic structure	Move	Sentences /examples
Body	*phase 2*	*4. And now, l see you have a Bachelor's degree with 2ⁿᵈlower, and at second lower, you have not conceptualized you know, and an average Kenyan is like somebody with a 3rd division or a C-*
		5. I may not be having the paper qualification but l have the experience and fundamentally, the exposure. By that time, when l was being engaged in the Government in1976, the grades were among the best and l was among the cream at that
		***6.** And is there a possibility that you may have become a very narrow minded person as a result of just working in through one institution all your life?*
		***7.** People have got to update themselves. You are attacking me on personal liking or a persona disliking.*
		8. To be sincere we would wish to clarify that when we interrogate you on the judicial position we are aware that we are not the supreme court.

In the above table, the first column shows the schematic structure of the interview by the Judicial Service Commission. The second column shows the move structure and finally the third column shows the sentences or examples that are used to realize the second move. Sentence 4, starts with a conjunction to link it to the previous sentence and therefore creates cohesion. The use of first person and second person pronouns indicating personal feeling and involvement, is a common feature in job interviews. The interviewer uses a declarative sentence but it is a form of question that needs clarification. The sentence is a compound sentence as the simple sentences are joined together using conjunction *and.* The sentence in example 5 is initiated by a personal pronoun 'I' and it is a declarative sentence given the fact that the interviewee is responding to a question asked by an interviewer. The next sentence (example 6) is an interrogative sentence as the interviewer asks the interviewee a question to understand further how qualified he is for the job. The next sentence, sentence 6 is a response to the question asked by the interviewer and finally the last sentence in example 8 is said by one of the interviewers who uses the first person plural 'we' which is an inclusive pronoun indicating that the interviewers are in agreement and what is said is a general feeling of all the interviewers. The second move is therefore realized through different linguistic features and it is aimed at achieving a communicative purpose of getting a suitable person who would help improve the judiciary.

4.3 The third schematic structure

The third schematic structure is the concluding part of an interview which is referred to as phase 3. In the examples presented above, the third phase is assumed as we don't see the concluding remarks from the interviewers concerning the interviewee and this is what brings out the difference between the moves in an enclosed door and that which is done publicly. Mostly the public and the interviewee are not involved in last part of the third phase which includes the judgments, This is another challenge that the public and those interviewee may face. Language is said to play a role of achieving communication purposes, but in most cases, the interviewee is kept out of what goes on beyond the closed doors.

5.   Conclusion.

The present research was set to analyze the move structures in the Judicial Service Commission of Kenya interviews. From our analysis it is clear that the JSC interviews followed the normal format used in many public job interviews, meaning that the move structures are used by the participants as expected. The different steps

used in the interviews indicate that interviews are organized according to the different moves, as expressed by Bhatia (1993). However, for the interviews that are done in the full glare of the public during the vetting process in a Kenyan contexts, the interviewers may not cover all the moves as some parts of the interviews have to be kept away from the public. The results have indicated that, moves are realized through different linguistic feature, including use of declarative and interrogative sentences which are used alternately, use of personal pronouns, conjunctions and many others. The study recommends that all the moves should be considered for purposes of making the interview processes complete. The linguistic features used should geared towards achieving communication purposes.

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