Nominalization in Pakistani Academic Writing: A Corpus-Based Study of the Theses of Different Academic Genres

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Abstract

This research aims at studying the prevalence of nominalization in Pakistani academic writing and the stirring factors behind its usage. Since there has been no research to analyze Pakistani academic writing specifically, so with the aim of finding out that nominalization is an eminent aspect of Pakistani scholarly writing, a corpus of 225 theses of different academic genres were compared with each other with reference to nominalization. A quantitative analysis was carried out by reckoning the existence of nominalization in each genre and then various portions of the theses were compared with each other to find the dominance of nominalization in a specific portion of a thesis. For interpreting the function of nominalization in Pakistani academic writing specifically in the genre of science, the data were analysed qualitatively as well. The claim that nominalization is a marker of Pakistani scientific discourse is confirmed by the result of the analysis, because of the difference in its usage in science than in humanities and social sciences—20.3 vs. 3.8 & 5.4 out of 1000 words. It is found that Pakistani scientific writing needs nominalization because it creates the quality of objectivity in the text, which is prerequisite of this genre. Moreover, the discourse in Pakistani science text is based on closely investigated knowledge and to present the credible knowledge, the author should have objective stance. The findings of this study clarify the significance of nominalization in Pakistani academic writing particularly in the genre of science.

Key Words
Nominalization, Pakistani academic writing, Scientific discourse, Humanities, Social sciences, Sciences

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Introduction

The research intends to look at the use of nominalization in different genres of Pakistani academic writing. It also examines the dominance of nominalization in a particular genre and the factors behind its supremacy in that genre. Halliday (2004) defines nominalization as “a type of grammatical metaphor, by which nouns can refer to ‘processes’ or ‘qualities’ (which are typical functions of verbs and adjectives) rather than to ‘entities,’ thus taking on a metaphorical function within a sentence”. So, nominalization refers to the derivation of an abstract noun from a verb. The derived noun is usually labeled as “deverbal noun,” or a “nominalized verb,” e.g., development (to develop), evaluation (to evaluate), thought (to think). The grammatical terms as gerund, verbal noun, and deverbal noun are related to nominals which are formed from verbs. “These all are kinds of nominalization with unlike degrees of nominal and verbal properties, differing in their meaning and structure”. The internal structure of these grammatical terms is presented in the following examples:

1. Playing soccer is fun. gerund
2. Shooting balloons is a pleasing activity for kids. verbal noun
3. Police arrested the people who carried out shootings. deverbal noun

There is a great divergence regarding the terminology of these forms used in linguistic references and studies (Taher, 2015).

A text may become vague, clunky, and challenging to understand because of the excessive use of nominalization which in turn can affect the quality of good writing in English. No doubt, many publications on English writing support “a plain English campaign” for less use of nominalization and more use of verbs. David Bowman, the Chief Editor of Precise Edit, while expressing his viewpoint against the use of nominalization recommends avoiding it to make the text more direct, clearer, more elegant and influential. Giving this sentence as an example: “His expulsion by school officials caused serious personal reflection,” he claims that the two nominalizations (expulsion and reflection) “make this simple sentence dry, ungainly, and a little tedious to read.” He suggests that such a sentence be edited into one with verbs instead of nominalizations as (1) or (2) below:

(1) He reflected on his life seriously when the school officials expelled him. OR
(2) Being expelled from school caused him to reflect seriously about his life.

He supported his argument with some more examples to explain how the nominalized sentences can be edited into ones with verbs, as in (3) and (4).

(3) a. Their ability allowed them to make many rationalizations.
b. They could rationalize many things.
(4) a. His absolute dedication to his visions resulted in overcoming all his
b. He overcame all obstacles because he was absolutely dedicated to his vision.

Various scholars suggest that nominalization is necessary in academic writing in English despite of its above-mentioned disadvantage. Holes (1995, p.260) states that
nominalization empowers the writers to add the required essence of objectivity to their statements and claims. As objectivity is the requirement of academic writing, so the nominalization is often used to comply with this.

Objectives

As there has been no study that specifically analyzes Pakistani academic writing regarding nominalization, this work aims to study the writing of different academic genres in Pakistani research with a focus on nominalization. The findings of this study provide a better understanding of the significance of nominalization in Pakistani academic writing in particular the genre of science, resultantly, better understanding of academic discourse.

Research Questions

This research paper endeavours to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the difference in the frequency of using nominalization in different genres of Pakistani academic writing?
2. Does the occurrence of nominalization differ in various portions of Pakistani theses in the genre of science?
3. What are the promoting factors behind using nominalization in Pakistani academic writing?

Literature Review

The majority of the previous research on nominalization is theoretical by nature. Nominalization has not attracted extensive consideration of corpus linguists until now. In the previous corpus based studies, the focus has been on the variation of its uses different registers (Liu & Fang, 2014). Therefore, this research is an attempt to present quantitative evidence for the theoretical work done previously on the prevalence of nominalization in academic writing. Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 2004b; Halliday and Martin 1993), and corpus linguistics (CL; Biber et al. 1998; McEnery & Wilson, 1996) quoted by Holtz (2009) are the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of this research.

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) deals language as a semantic conformation of meaning which relates to a specific context. So, it is not possible to segregate language either from its speakers or its setting of use (Halliday, 1985). SFL recognizes the variety of language according to use as a register. To illustrate, register is, “what is said, depending on what is being done and on the nature of the activity in which language is being used” (Halliday & Hasan 1989, p.41). For engaging with a specific discourse community, one needs to be competent in using its language especially its register according to the situation. Therefore, scientific discourse is a language’s functional variation with its own grammar and technical terminology (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Martin & Veel, 1998). Recently, scientific discourse has spread slowly through other discourses rather than science, thus influencing the general interpretation of human experience.
Every text, from the discourses of technocracy and bureaucracy to the television magazine and the blurb on the back of the cereal packet, is in some way affected by the modes of meaning that evolved as the scaffolding for scientific knowledge. In other words, the language of science has become the language of literacy (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 11).

Academic discourse encompasses a range of discourse where the actions of ‘doing science’ are performed (Halliday, 2004, p.49), includes the blend of “theoretical technicality with reasoned argument” (Halliday, 2004, p.127). This is attained with the help of its clear technical terminology, taxonomies, and its appropriate technical grammar, e.g., by nominalization. The reliance on nominalized structures is one of the most distinguishing linguistics features of today’s academic writing. It contains of nouns which are derived morphologically from verbs (e.g., shooting, introduction) and the verbs changed into nouns (e.g., increase, use). Almost any sentence taken from an academic research thesis will demonstrate the use of such structures (Biber & Gray, 2013).

Nominalization is an element of the grammatical metaphor, "in which a semantic category such as a process is performed by an unusual grammatical class as a noun, rather than a verb" (Martin and Rose 2007, p.106). The usage of nominalization in the texts permits the packaging of information. The first process, which becomes part of a nominal group, can be linked with modifiers and qualifiers after their nominalization. Through nominalization it is possible to create chains or sequence of logical argument (Halliday, 2008). Hence, nominalization “is the single most powerful resource for creating grammatical metaphor” (Halliday, 2004, p. 656). Therefore, nominalization was selected as a suitable linguistic feature for gaining deep insight into the features of refining information in abstracts and research articles, their commonalities and variations.

Prasithrathsint (2014) says that nominalization is to derive an abstract noun from a verb. The derived noun is normally labeled a “deverbal noun,” or a “nominalized verb,” e.g., evaluation (to evaluate), development (to develop), thought (to think). The use of nominalization in any text may make it unclear and difficult to understand. Huddleston & Pullum (2002) consider “nominalization a process of word formation, which prototypically involves the formation of a noun from bases of other classes, by affixation, conversion, or phonological modification” (p. 16). A good definition can also be found in The Oxford Companion to the English Language (1992) where “nominalization” is explained as: “The process or result of forming a noun from a word belonging to another word class: writing/writings and shaving/shavings derived from write and shave by adding -ing; sanity derived from sane by the addition of the noun-forming suffix -ity; nominalization derived from nominalize by adding –ation” (p. 702). According to Grefenstette and Teufel (1995), nominalization is the transformation of verb phrase into noun form and this process is done to bring variation in writing and to avoid repetition of a word. According to Crystal (1997, p.260) nominalization is:

1. “the process of forming a noun from some other word - class as: redness and refusal.
2. the derivation of a noun phrase from an underlying clause” for example:

a. Her answering of the letter was expected.  From  b. She answered the letter.
Example (a) is of the deverbal noun whereas the second is of the verbal noun. This definition does not include gerund.

Quirk et al (1985) state nominalization as a “noun phrase which has a systematic correspondence with a clause structure. The head of such a noun phrase is usually morphologically related to a verb or an adjective”. They state three types of nominalization: gerund, verbal noun, and deverbal noun. The verb with addition of (-ing) forms gerund and verbal noun with unlike internal structure as in the following examples, respectively:

1 a. Writing the book takes time. b. He wrote the book.
2 a. The writing of the book made her well known. b. She wrote the book.

Deverbal nouns are made of verbs either by suffix or conversion as in the following examples:

3 a. His refusal to help was expected. b. He refuses to help.
4 a. His answer is correct. b. He answered the question.

According to Janigova “nominalization refers to the process of conveying a verb – related meaning by a noun phrase whose underlying structure is clausal” (2008, p.9). It refers also to the constructions that result from the process.

Kazemian and Hashemi (2014) quote Halliday’s work about nominalization while describing its background. The grammatical metaphor (GM) is a substitution of a grammatical class, or a grammatical structure, for another (Halliday & Martin, 1993, p. 97). Halliday (1985, 1994) gives two categories of GM, “the ideational and interpersonal metaphor, in which the ideational grammatical metaphor (IGM) comprises of process and nominalization”. IGM primarily uses the nouns to convey the action or quality which should be conveyed by the verbs or adjectives. Thus, nominalization refers to the utilization of a verb or an adjective into a noun, with or without morphological conversion, so that the word can now function as the head of a noun phrase. In English, some verbs and adjectives can be applied directly as nouns, for instance, protest and nice, while others inquire some form of morphological alternation demanding a suffix, for example, discriminate from discriminate, difference from different etc. When a verb is nominalized, it becomes concept rather than an action (Webster, 2002, 2003). The studies on the use of grammatical metaphors in scientific discourse have come to interesting conclusions in the relevant literature. Gotti (2002) investigated a sentence taken from “Newton’s Treatise on Opticks: Now those colors argue a diverging and separation of the heterogeneous rays from one another by means of their unequal refractions.” and concluded that the better flow of discourse and inclusion of more information in this sentence is due to the process of nominalization. In this regard, Randaccio (2004) in her analysis of scientific discourse comes to the conclusion that the concept of grammatical metaphor is not a simple rewording of another form or structure. She says that when there is a shift in the mode of metaphor, grammar, in fact, creates new meanings. She continues that a grammatical metaphor gets into a text instantaneously for the immediate requirements of a discourse.
This grammatical metaphor can be a systematic construction, something for the long-term requirement of discourse. Banks (2005) has also explored the origin of nominalization in scientific writings. He argues that although nominalization is a common feature of the current scientific style, it has not always been that way. He also argues that different scientific branches, e.g. the biological and physical sciences present distinctiveness in their use of nominalization. He attributes this difference in the increasing use of nominalizations among various branches of science to their contexts. However, he finds that the tendency is toward a greater use of nominalizations in scientific discourse.

Holes (1995) states that nominalization aids the writers to add the needed touch of objectivity in their statements and claims. Nominalization is often used in academic writing due to the requirement of the objectivity in this genre. The recurrent use of nominalization in academic writing is indicated by many scholars as Biber (1988), Swales (1990), Halliday & Martin (1993), Francis (1994), Guillen Galve (1998), Charles (2003), Hartnett (2004), Hyland (2006), Gao (2008), Baratta (2010). They agree on the significant role of nominalization in academic writing because nominalized forms comprise of more condensed information, create better cohesion in discourse, and communicate an unbiased tone which are the distinguishing characteristics of academic writing (Prasithrathsint, 2014).

Furthermore, Biber et al (1999) found that the frequency of nominal elements is different in news reports, academic texts, novels, and conversations (news reports: 80%, academic texts:75%, novels: 70%, and conversations:55%). He concluded that instructors who teach English as foreign language have also realized nominalization as a feature of academic writing. Hinkel (1997) examined the English academic discourse of native and non-native speakers to analyze indirect devices and markers including nominalization. His analysis revealed that native English speakers and speakers of other language as Malay, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Indonesian who speak English as a foreign language do not differ considerably in using nominalization.

Kress (1983) shows that nominalizations can therefore be used for ideological purposes. For manipulating the reader, the central actions are often expressed in nominal form thus omitting the actor and leaving the reader in doubt. “By expressing an event in nominal form, it is at once taken out of time, and therefore be readily assimilated to ‘timeless’ sets of categories. The event is taken out of the world of the specific, concrete, and placed in the world of the general, abstract” (Susikiene, 2010).

Nominalization is a feature of written text, particularly a feature of academic English discourse. It is used as a process in academic discourse to create technical taxonomies; it helps the writer create chains of reasoning by relating one process to another (Halliday, 1988, 195). It can be said that nominalization contributes to language economy i.e. it restates the meaning relationships of noun, verb and adjective. According to Susinskiene (2012), Halliday (2004, p.162) emphasizes the importance of studying the language of science due to the fact that science and language of science are two indissoluble entities. The difficulty of scientific language is not at lexical level only but it also applies to a wide range of grammatical structures that construct a discourse. Nominalization is one of these
lexico-grammatical structures causing a high degree of complexity and high information density in scientific texts.

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) inherits the corpus based linguistic analysis of language so real texts are “fundamental for the enterprise of theoretical language” for systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 2004, p.34). But corpus linguistics and systemic functional linguistic put an effort to describe language in a distinct way. Although SFL is somewhat difficult theory to describe language while corpus linguistics is a methodology that can be applied in any theoretical framework, yet they have some common features (Thompson & Hunston, 2006, p.2). They both deal with natural language, language as text and the contexts in which language is used. These reasons provided ground for choosing corpus linguistics as the methodology of this research.

Methodology

The corpus used in this work consists of 225 theses of different academic genres i.e, humanities, social sciences and sciences, collected from the universities of Punjab in Pakistan. They were altogether 95, 63,761 words long. First, the theses of humanities, social sciences and science were compared with each other to find out the frequency of using nominalization in each genre. Then different sections of science theses as introduction, literature review, methodology, results and conclusion were separated and measured against each other for an in-depth study of nominalized expressions.

The whole text of the corpus was originally in PDF-format. As, this format does not allow further tagging through corpus tools and probing into linguistic information of texts. So, whole text of the corpus was converted to plain text format. The texts were then manually cleaned to assure high quality of data (e.g., no erroneous splitting of tokens, no flawed contraction of tokens). Multidimensional Analysis Tagger (MAT) was used to find out nominalized expressions used in the corpus. Occurrences of nominalization were counted by using AntConc 3.5. The source of the corpus, number of theses taken of each genre and the word limit is described in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Source</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>No. of Theses</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research theses</td>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3332914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social Science</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2391863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3838984</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results and Data Analysis

After compiling and processing the corpus, occurrences of nominalization were counted by using AntConc 3.5. The frequency of nominalization in different academic genres was
obtained through the division of nominalization by the total words in the whole text and multiplying it by 1000 to get normalised frequency, to observe the occurrence of nominalization in equal number of words in different genres. Each research question is answered one by one below.

1. **Is there any difference in the frequency of using nominalization in different genres of Pakistani academic writing?**

After analyzing the corpus, it is apparent that there is striking difference in the use of nominalization in different academic genres. The results show that it occurs manifold more in science discourse than in other academic genres as humanities and social science (20.3 vs. 3.9 & 5.38 per 1000 words), as shown in Table 2 and Figure 1. So, it is inferred that nominalization is a marker of Pakistani scientific thesis writing which in turn strengthens the universal claim that nominalization is a significant feature to distinguish Pakistani scientific academic writing from other academic genres.

**Table 2: Frequency of nominalization in different academic genres**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic genres</th>
<th>No. of words in the text</th>
<th>Occurrences of nominalization</th>
<th>Frequency of nominalized words (per 1000 words)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>3332914</td>
<td>12931</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>2391863</td>
<td>12880</td>
<td>5.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3838984</td>
<td>78061</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.** Occurrence of nominalization in different academic genres
It entails that there should be some aspects of Pakistani academic writing represented by nominalization. While answering research question number three an attempt is made to justify this implication.

2. **Does the occurrence of nominalization differ in various portions of Pakistani theses in the genre of science?**

Because of the marked usage of nominalization in the Pakistani science discourse as compared to humanities and social sciences, various sections of theses of science were analyzed and compared with each other to get a clear picture of the dominance of nominalization in this genre.

**Table 3:** Nominalized expressions in various sections of science theses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sections of science theses</th>
<th>Word length</th>
<th>Nominalized expressions</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>470976</td>
<td>9590</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>776358</td>
<td>17059</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>544378</td>
<td>11388</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>1837084</td>
<td>34598</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>241788</td>
<td>5573</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2.** Nominalized expressions in various sections of science’s theses

The results of the analysis of comparison among various parts of science theses clearly
depict a great difference in using nominalization in methodology section as compared to other portions. While in other portions this difference is minor. The reason of using such a reduced number of nominalization in methodology of thesis could be the element of subjectivity. As in methodology section the researcher describes the process of sampling, data collection, tools used for data collection etc. So, the chances of subjective representation are higher in it to show researcher’s presence or involvement in the whole process.

3. **What are the promoting factors behind using nominalization in science thesis writing in Pakistan?**

“By nominalizing processes and attributes, people can hold a large amount of information in a relatively small place by grouping a large number of lexical items into a single clause.” Nominalization has two qualities that are useful in academic writing. First, by "nouning" a process, the author may reflect the fact that he or she has negotiated and established the meaning of the process-centered clause. Secondly, it may function as a theme. In other words, it can summarize a complete clause in the previous sentences to a nominalization that serves as the basis for the next stage of the argument, a starting point as a theme. This is another definite proof that nominalization can serve as a thematic link (Wenyan, 2012). The other two factors are discussed in detail below.

**Detachment in Thesis Writing of Scientific Genre**

The findings of this research reveal that nominalization gives rise to the feature of detachment in Pakistani thesis writing of scientific genre. Impartiality/detachment refers to the absence of personal participation or separation of self from the environment. In academic writing, nominalization supports the researcher to achieve detachment because nominalization helps the author to argue for a particular idea without direct involvement. It permits the writer to eradicate the need of specifying participants as the actor and the receiver of the action. Resultantly, the proposition has a shift in the focus from the agent to the action. So, the academic writing achieves the liberty from self-assertion, direct involvement of the researcher/writer, presenting personal desire or preferences and imposing ideas on others as can be seen in example 1a, which shows nominalization and its counterpart--1b in which there is no nominalization.

1a. I asked him what his own choice would have been in order to make a contribution.
1b. I asked him what his own choice would have been if he wanted to contribute.

It is clear that 1a, which contains nominalized verb contribution, is free from self-assertion, getting involved and presenting personal choices. Therefore, it can be said that 1a is more detached than 1b, which contains true verb to contribute as it clearly mentions the subject. Some more examples are given below:

2. Hence, this paper is based on the investigation of the behavior of the KSE.
3. Gansser (1964, 1979), Valdiya (1980), Sinha (1981&1989) and Le Fort (1986) have advocated for the recognition of the Panjal Thrust as the correlative of the MCT.
4. For them the situation was simply incomprehensible.

In the above examples if verbs ‘to investigate, to recognize, and to situate’ are used instead of nominalized verbs, one can have better idea of the subject of these verbs. Because of the use of nominalized verbs, it is not clear who actually the subject is. The nominalized forms in above examples help to create impartiality by not imposing the ideas on the reader and controlling the reader’s thought. The argument seems informative without imposing and controlling the thoughts.

In short, nominalization is very helpful in creating detachment and turning the reader’s attention from the agent/actor to the information which is the basic purpose of thesis writing (Prasithrathsint, 2014). The shift in the focus from ‘who does it?’ to ‘what is done?’ makes academic writing informative rather than narrative. Regarding the role of nominalization to create impartiality in academic writing, the argument in this research strengthens Stubb’s viewpoint about the role of nominalization as given below:

Nominalization turns “X assessed Y” into “There has been assessment of Y.” For example, ‘The authorities put the price of milk up’ is replaced by ‘There was a rise in the price of milk’. Therefore, nominalization separates the normal relations among participants, making it doubtful who did what and to whom. Nominalizations have the discourse function of permitting information to be packaged which transforms the verbal process with its subsequent participants into one nominal structure (Stubbs, 1998).

Halliday and Matthiessen (1999, p.429) regard nominalization as a “grammatical metaphor,” which not only acts as an alternate realization of the same meaning but presents a different interpretation of an experience as well e.g., power failure, heart failure, crop failure. They claim that nominalization can turn all phenomena into distinctive forms that are detached from normal experience and supports an element to undertake a new semantic aspect.

After analysis of data the existence of deverbal nominalization in Pakistani researchers’ writing is clear with frequent use ‘tion, ment, ity’, derivational suffixes. While gerund and verbal nouns (made by adding –ing) are absent in Pakistani authors’ writing.

To sum up, nominalization creates detachment by using deverbal nouns frequently as compared to verbal nouns and gerund, which is a noteworthy aspect of Pakistani academic writing. It shifts the focus of text from the actions of participants to the packaged information while generating innovative categories of phenomena.

Objectivity in science thesis writing

Communicating facts without misrepresentation by personal feelings and biases refer to the objectivity. This section discusses that nominalization helps in gaining objectivity in academic writing especially thesis writing in scientific genre. It encompasses the following features:

a) No partiality
b) No personal choice  
c) No judgement

**Example:**

6) a. Based on the above *description*, we suggest that the extension of the MCT from Batal towards Nauseri in lower Neelum Valley is probably not justified.

b. Based on what we described above, we suggest that the extension of the MCT from Batal towards Nauseri in lower Neelum Valley is probably not justified.

The example (6a) shows, nominalization turned the statement into generalized fact, not individual or particular proposition. The nominalized form creates objectivity i.e., the statement shows no prejudice, no personal partiality and seems like an interpretation of a research experiment. Many scholars have documented that nominalization helps in creating objectivity in the academic writing. Quirk et al. (1985) state that nominalization unties the writer from commitment to the truth of his/her statements by letting him/her to make “unattributable claims”. Hatim (1997, p.14) declares that the agent can be blurred by nominalization that can cover the actual intentions. Hatim & Mason (1997) also confirm that nominalization deals with the concept of “depersonalization”. Holes (1995) states that a writer is allowed to add the required flavor of objectivity in his/her arguments with the help of nominalization and according to Stalhammar (2006 cited in Hamide, 2011), the writer is capable of removing human agency and attain objectivity and obscurity through nominalization.

**Conclusion**

This research reveals that nominalization is a marker of academic writing of Pakistani scholars. The comparison of the theses of humanities, social sciences, and sciences, collected from universities of Punjab in Pakistan show that the use of nominalization is dominant in science theses. After examining different portions of Pakistani science these against each other, it is clear that there is minor difference in the use of nominalization in introduction, literature review, results and conclusion. While it is used very less in methodology portion which may be due to presentation of researcher’s involvement in the whole process. Further research could be done to find out the reasons of such reduced use of nominalization in methodology section of theses. After analyzing the factors behind using more nominalized expressions in science theses, it is clear that such expressions create detachment and objectivity. Detachment means nonexistence of identity expressions and presentation of facts without the impact of personal feelings, biases or explanations refer to the concept of objectivity. The research also shows dominance of deverbal nominalization in Pakistani academic writing in contrast to gerund and verbal nominalization.

In a nutshell, Pakistani academic writing is marked by nominalization because of three reasons. First, the author should be neutral in academic writing though they are arguing for a specific idea they believe in. They should not be involved in the argument personally or emotionally and nominalization supports them to do so. To sum up, academic writers need to be detached in presenting their argument. For example, to write that ‘The result of the
analysis shows that...’ is more impartial than ‘I analyzed and found that.’ Second, in real the writers are required to take sides and select to support for one and against another in their academic writing. They need to prove their statements with scientific evidence to influence the reader to follow them and nominalization helps to bring objectivity in such statements. Third, the purpose of academics is to reach at a theory and to deal with theory, concepts are required which are represented by abstract nouns in the academics. Halliday and Martin label them as “grammatical metaphor” (Halliday & Martin, 1993). This abstraction of notions is used to arrive at such theories or models which are general and impartial. Conclusively, nominalization generates detachment and objectivity in Pakistani academic writing and makes it possible to pack a lot of information in few expressions.
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