

Target Situation Analysis (TSA) To Examine The Expert Viewpoint About The Academic Writing Demands To Author A Research Thesis In Social Sciences: A Review Study In English For Academic Purposes

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Abstract

Target Situation Analysis (TSA) is used in this review study to investigate the expert opinion about the requirements for academic writing when producing a social science research thesis, specifically about English for Academic Purposes (EAP). According to Basturkmen (2010) and Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998), task-specific assessment (TSA) entails determining the particular tasks, abilities, and language requirements of students in the intended academic setting. This article focuses on the expectations of examiners in EAP, important academic norms for thesis writing, and linguistic and rhetorical elements that can help ESL students overcome obstacles. In order to fulfill the demands of ESL students doing social science research, this TSA intends to inform effective instructional approaches and support systems by reviewing the body of existing literature. These writing requirements were assessed using a systematic literature review methodology and a qualitative design. Themes including thesis writing, the function of the social sciences, academic expectations, and the flow and structure of the thesis were identified through thematic analysis of scholarly guides and studies. Important findings show that writing with precision, consistency, and clarity is still quite difficult, especially for non-native speakers. In order to produce high-quality theses, social science researchers need certain abilities including critical thinking and good communication in addition to language¹ competency. The results underscore the necessity of customized assistance, including focused writing training, mentorship, and peer evaluation, in order to improve research thesis quality in Pakistan and foster scholarly distinction. Future studies should concentrate on efficient teaching strategies, the influence of language ability on the caliber of theses, and the creation of assessment instruments to help students even more. By addressing these unmet requirements for academic writing in Pakistan, researchers will be better equipped to do excellent work that makes a significant contribution to their areas.

Keywords: Target Situation Analysis (TSA), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), Social Science Thesis Writing, ESL Students, Academic Writing Challenges.

1. Introduction:

Writing a research thesis is a crucial milestone in academic pursuits, requiring students to demonstrate their expertise and contribute meaningfully to their field. However, for English as

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a Second Language (ESL) students, this task is particularly highly challenging. This challenge gets even bigger for Social Sciences Researchers when they need to present their thesis argument as a united whole (Khan & Ghani, 2021; Khan et al., 2024). Despite their subject matter knowledge, these students often struggle to express their ideas coherently and cohesively in academic English, hindering their ability to produce a well-written thesis.

Even though the task of authoring a thesis is challenging for Pakistani Social Sciences student writers, enhancing their awareness about academic writing conventions and enabling them to position themselves as authors has still been a question (Khan & Ghani, 2021). There are no guiding principles set and circulated among such writers prior entering the write-up phase. Furthermore, these writers produce their theses with less understanding of what examiners like to see as M Phil or PhD thesis. In this connection, the examiners' expectations (as the ultimate audience) with one's thesis as an important academic document need to be examined too.

As a matter of fact, with low awareness of academic writing conventions and examiners' expectations, these writers spend their time extensively to review and modify thesis leading to delayed deadlines for final submission. So, it is direly needed for these writers to be thoroughly aware of thesis writing academic conventions and expectations with a thesis as an important formal document. This will enable them to cope up the challenges during thesis write-up well. This is how, these writers can better position themselves as authors.

Research and experience show that teaching and learning EFL/ESL writing has been a sad failure (Baroudy, 2008). Similarly, Haider (2012) argues that for EFL/ESL student writers writing is one of the most difficult and complex human activities. Likewise, teaching EFL/ESL students to write academically is equally difficult and complex as being a teacher handling large classes and giving individual attention to guide and assess each one during writing activity is impossible. Many students are left out due to shortage of time and length of syllabus to be covered during semesters. This phenomenon has been widely researched evidence that proves teaching of academic writing a difficult job in almost all EFL/ESL contexts. Such studies are found conducted in Pakistan (Ahmed et al., 2016; Ahmad et al., 2019; Al Hussein, 2014; Dar & Khan, 2015; Fareed et al., 2016; Haider, 2012; Ismail, 2011; Jabeen, 2013; Khan & Ghani, 2015; Khan & Khan, 2015; Muhammad Mushtaq et al., 2019; and Sajid & Siddiqui, 2015); India (Nusrat, 2016 & Shokrpour & Fallahzadeh, 2007); Iran (Ismail, 2008; Loghmani et al., 2019); Malaysia (Abdulkareem, 2013; and Ghabool et al., 2012), Arabia (Al-Fadda, 2012; May Al-Gharabally, 2015); Iraq (Muhammad, 2018; Sura Muttlak, 2019); Sudan (Alfaki, 2015) and Uzbekistan (Mustafayeva, 2018).

2. Theoretical Framework

In a concept of Needs Analysis process by Basturkmen (2010) and Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998), target situation analysis refers to the analysis of language needs of adult learners related to the situation in which they may carry out communicative purpose through. Target situation analysis (TSA) refers to the identification of tasks, activities and skills learners will be using English for; and to know what the learners should ideally be aware of and be able to do (Basturkmen, 2010). Here in this paper, the TSA consists of an examination of the existing literature to present the expert viewpoint about

- i. the key academic norms to write like an author and produce a well-knit thesis argument.
- ii. linguistic and rhetorical features that can support ESL students in overcoming thesis writing challenges.
- iii. examiners' expectations with thesis write-up in English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

Thus, this TSA will serve the purpose to inform the development of effective instructional practices and support mechanisms for EAP Intervention course to fulfill thesis writing demands of ESL students conducting research in Social Sciences.

3. Literature Review

Writing a research thesis is a complex task that requires students to demonstrate their academic proficiency, critical thinking, and research skills. However, for English as a Second Language (ESL) students, this task is further complicated by the need to navigate the linguistic and rhetorical conventions of academic English.

Numerous studies have investigated the challenges ESL students face in writing a research thesis. Researchers have consistently identified linguistic and rhetorical difficulties as major obstacles (Abdulrahim & Hussain, 2014; Afful & Nartey, 2014; Alraddadi, 2024; Azadnia et al., 2016). ESL students often struggle with grammar, vocabulary, and syntax, leading to issues with coherence, cohesion, and clarity (Kashiha, 2022; Khan & Ghani, 2021).

In addition to linguistic challenges, ESL students must also navigate the rhetorical conventions of academic writing. Research has shown that ESL students often have difficulty with issues such as audience awareness, purpose, and tone (Maisoun & Alzankawi, 2017; Medve & Takac, 2013). Furthermore, the use of cohesive devices, such as transitional phrases and conjunctions, can be particularly problematic (Gunes, 2017; Lanjwani Jat et al., 2020).

Several studies have also explored the impact of instructional approaches on ESL students' thesis writing skills. Research has shown that explicit instruction in linguistic and rhetorical features, combined with feedback and guidance, can significantly improve ESL students' writing abilities (Ersanli & Tangin, 2015; Yang & Sun, 2012).

Expert viewpoints also emphasize the importance of developing ESL students' awareness of discourse conventions and genre-specific norms (Yoon-Hee Na, 2011; Yin, 2015). Furthermore, researchers stress the need for ESL instructors to prioritize teaching academic writing skills, including thesis writing, to support students' academic success (Zhang, 2018).

Overall, the existing literature highlights the complex challenges ESL students face in writing a research thesis and emphasizes the need for targeted instructional approaches and support mechanisms to help students overcome these challenges.

4. Methods

This study undertook a qualitative design to present review of existing literature through systematic approach to evaluate the target situation demands of writing a Social Sciences research thesis in English for Academic Purposes (EAP). In this wake, the academic databases like Google Scholar, Scopus, ERIC etc. were searched for related papers and books by using keywords related to EAP, thesis writing, target situation demands, Social Sciences Research thesis etc. Moreover, the scholarly books related to these keywords available in the local libraries were accessed too.

Studies and the scholarly guides to write thesis in EAP and Social Sciences were included for the investigation. A thematic analysis approach was employed to identify and synthesize the findings of the included studies. The themes that emerged from the analysis were:

- i. Thesis writing
- ii. Social Sciences and Thesis writing

- iii. Thesis as an Assessed Writing Activity
- iv. Academic Writing Consideration to Author Thesis
- v. Examiners' Expectations with Thesis
- vi. Thesis Flow: Textuality
- vii. Thesis Writing: A Writer-responsible Academic Document

The studies and scholarly guides presenting any or all of the above themes were included for the review. It was ensured that the studies and guides included for the review shall not be published earlier to 2005.

5. Target Situation Analysis Results

By employing a systematic literature review approach, this study aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing research on the target situation demands of writing a research thesis in EAP, highlighting the expert viewpoints and informing future research and instructional practices.

“In specific purpose task-based courses it is necessary to first carry out a needs analysis to identify the ‘target tasks’ that learners will need to perform in real-life situations and then ‘translate’ these into pedagogic tasks.”

(Long, 2005)

5.1. Thesis Writing

Thesis is the term which stands for the written draft compiled for the accomplishment of different degree programs i.e. Masters and PhD. It is believed that it is the length of the argument in research thesis that makes the writing complex (Becker, 2007) because argument in ‘a thesis is too big to keep the whole thing in mind at once.’ (Runte, 2017).

“The thesis always takes significantly longer, because as the number of pages increase arithmetically, the complexity of the task and the difficulties encountered expand exponentially.” (Runte, 2017: p.02)

Thesis writing demands careful writing and rewriting processes. It demands almost six rewrites with the first draft is what the researcher thinks of and the sixth one to be thought acceptable for publication by the editor. These rewritten drafts are presented in a figure below (source: Runte, 2017:p.04):

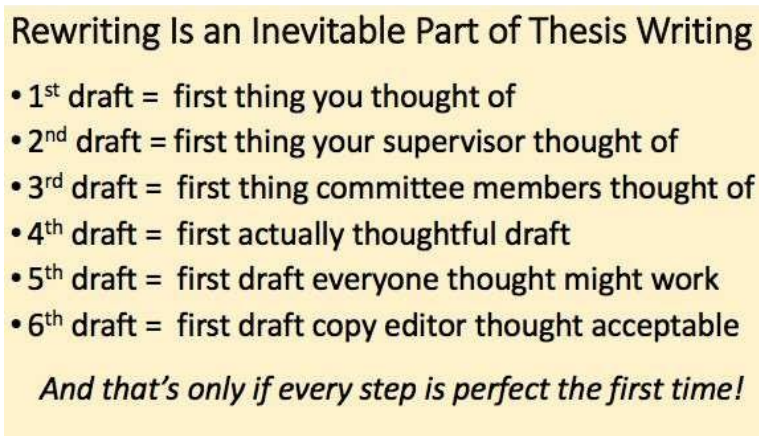


Figure 5.1

It is noteworthy that there is a condition put at the bottom of the above figure. ‘Only if every step is perfect the first time’ then the number of rewrites is six otherwise this number may exceed as per the level of imperfection.

Besides the writing and rewriting of one’s argument for clarity and perfection for persuasion, it is believed that theses demand nice structural editing. This kind of revision is necessary to

make things more clear and persuasive. Penning down things on paper is not enough, rather it is the structural organisation of ideas which make the flow of the thesis go in the right direction with no or less conceptual gaps. This is why Runte has put this way:

“Structural editing allows one to try different ways to organize the material to make the argument clearer, to examine which ideas supersede or subsume others. One cannot see ideas in the air: one needs to write them down to judge which needs to be expanded and which expunged; how pieces fit together or don't fit at all. Once down on paper, one can interrogate ideas to see how they fit with each other, with the data, and with what others have said in the literature.” (Runte, 2017:p.08)

5.2. Social Sciences and Thesis Writing

Recently, there are nine disciplines noted by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) with wider scope are included in Social Sciences. These disciplines include:

- i. Demography and social statistics, methods and computing
- ii. Development studies, human geography and environmental planning
- iii. Economics, management and business studies
- iv. Education, social anthropology and linguistics
- v. Law, economic and social history
- vi. Politics and international relations
- vii. Psychology and sociology
- viii. Science and technology studies
- ix. Social policy and social work

This list is an extensive coverage of what relates to social phenomenon. This shows the broadened face of Social Sciences. More interesting is Greenfeld's and Nisbet's (2020) concept of social science as 'any discipline or branch of science that deals with human behaviour in its social and cultural aspects' due to which 'public health' also enters the scope of Social Sciences. Whatever the reason for expansion might be, the diversity of human behaviour, their existence, intricacies, and every aspect of social setup are considered more important by the researchers nowadays. Therefore, it seems that the expansion in Social Sciences never stopped. There are certain characteristics of writing theses in the social sciences discipline. These characteristics make this discipline different from the rest. Several researchers have outlined these characteristics and emphasized on the adoption of writing processes likewise. These characteristics are:

- i. Theses in Social Sciences tend to contain highly nominalised language (Billig, 2013; and Starfield, 2004);
- ii. Theses in Social Sciences tend to be lengthier (Becker, 2007; Burnett, 2009; Golding et al., 2017; Gruba & Zobel, 2017; Paltridge & Starfield, 2020; and Smith et al., 2009);
- iii. Theses in Social Sciences need to maintain the red thread of the argument to stay influential and convincing (Golding, 2017); and
- iv. Social Scientists are responsible Public Intellectuals who help us to imagine alternative futures, contribute to our health and well-being, and help to change the world for the better (Campaign for Social Sciences, 2015).

However, Billig (2013: 212-214) has presented usual characteristics of Social Sciences theses:

- i. Use of simple language and avoidance of technical terms as much as possible because overuse of technical terms may hinder a layperson's understanding of a social phenomenon dealt in the thesis.

- ii. Try to reduce the number of passive sentences in your writing. Try to make the active sentence your default sentence as active sentences generally contain more information than passive ones.
- iii. Try to write clausally rather than nominally: express yourselves in clauses with active verbs. Nominalisation occurs when we turn our verbs into abstract nouns and then favour those nouns over the verbs. Try to avoid using the nominally dense style that today comes almost as second nature to many social scientists.

According to Billig, Social Scientists deal with people and their social issues. By avoiding the use of active verbs and active voice in sentences, these scientists seem to avoid taking their subjects as people and usually present them as things in their theses. Therefore, it is the advice given here that treat people and their actions as they are without being treated as things in world. Thus, SSRs are the social scientists who are considered responsible for all good they bring through their insightful work of research. This is why they carry double burden on their shoulders to stay as clear in their thought as possible. They need to stay more cohesive and coherent in reporting and presenting their research work to keep their style simple and convincing; and carry influential tone.

As responsible academic writers, social scientists need to not only demonstrate as good researchers but also prove themselves good at having sustained writing process. It is because of the complexity of the task they undertake and the nature of writing process they need to carry out. Thus, English being a writer-responsible language puts much responsibility on the shoulders of social scientists: the responsibility to present the extensive argument in a sustained manner to help and guide the readers and examiners through parts of the thesis smoothly. Besides, the responsibility to keep up the sustained writing style also comes with a role that the academic writers play as a persuader. Since the social scientists as writers propose some new idea or perspective on something existing to provide credible and logical argument, they need to persuade readers accept their work for consideration and not to agree for what they believe to be true (Singh & Lukkarila, 2017: p. 78).

5.3. Thesis as an Assessed Writing

Thesis is the document that is to be examined. (Gruba & Zobel, 2017:10)

It is very important for student writers to keep reminding themselves of this fact that their thesis is something which is written for the examination purpose. PhD thesis is examined by internal examiner as well as national and international external examiners; whereas, Masters Thesis is examined by internal examiners and national external examiners with similar examination criteria. Gruba and Zobel (2017) have presented this examination criteria in the form of given points:

- i. organization of the thesis
- ii. clarity of expression
- iii. demonstrated grasp of the problem and of the area
- iv. understanding of and insight into the research literature
- v. appropriateness and correctness of the research methodology
- vi. quality of the presentation and interpretation of the results
- vii. understanding of the outcomes as demonstrated by critical analysis of the research
- viii. understanding of the implications of the results
- ix. novelty of the question and resulting contribution. (p.10)

A range of shortcomings typically found in weaker projects has been presented by Gruba and Zobel (2017:11) which is listed below:

- i. The work has a strong start but a poor finish; (speculation: The student started with enthusiasm, but did not sustain sufficient interest and discipline. Moreover, it can

- be suspected as the scope of the project may have not been sufficiently constrained, or it was simply too ambitious for a minor thesis.)
- ii. The methodology is unclear and thus the project could not be easily replicated, which makes the work seem preliminary or exploratory.
 - iii. The lack of structure, signposting, or awareness of the needs of the reader. (Academics are busy, and do not like to have to search for information or details that a student has not organized in a convenient way. Textuality issues fall in this category of shortcomings in a thesis or dissertation.)
 - iv. Thesis has interesting results but overall is sketchy. (Perhaps because the student didn't allow time to do the writing.)
 - v. Treating the project as an undergraduate exercise in reporting, description, tool building, or data gathering. (The work does not demonstrate that the student has done much actual research, and the thesis appears to be more like a diary of the project rather than a critical investigation.)

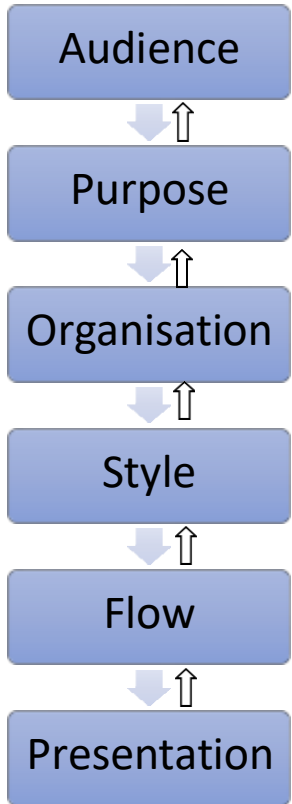
They concluded by stating their point of view that these shortcomings 'stem from a lack of organization from the start of the project, a failure to appreciate the time that is required at each stage, or a failure to understand what it means to be a research student' (p.11).

5.4. Academic Writing Considerations while Writing Thesis

Thesis consists of logical, structured, and defensible reasoning based on credible and verifiable evidence (Gruba & Zobel, 2017).

Therefore, thesis in general and Social Sciences thesis in particular needs to consider certain academic writing conventions. Swales and Feak (2012) have outlined the considerations in academic writing. These are six interrelated considerations which are termed as 'conventions' by Bailey (2015) and Paltridge (2018). For Paltridge, adherence to these conventions is required to write thesis successfully. Bailey considers these conventions to be important in all types of academic writing. Bailey (2015:XIV) has stated that 'both academic writers and readers need to learn special conventions without which assessment of the written task gets difficult'. These considerations are presented in the table below:

Table 5.1. Considerations in Academic Writing (cited from Swales and Feak, 2012)

Considerations	Description
 <p>Audience</p>	<p>Defining the audience assists writers to set the purpose, organise and style up their writings with a fine flow of ideas and presentation.</p>
<p>Purpose</p>	<p>With audience less knowledgeable than the writer, the purpose is to instruct them; however, the writing purpose gets ‘to display’ familiarity, expertise and intellect with highly knowledgeable audience.</p>
<p>Organisation</p>	<p>To fulfill purpose of the writing, pieces of information needs to be organised in paragraphs, sections and chapters as per the length of the document. . Organisation is integral in lengthy writings like thesis to keep the flow of ideas and assist audience to skim and scan the information chunks easily.</p>
<p>Style</p>	<p>The style depends on rhetorical and organizational choices academic writers make. There are style guides for academic writers to style their writings like APA or MLA or as per the discipline of study.</p>
<p>Flow</p>	<p>Smooth transition of ideas from one to another refers to flow. Good flow of ideas is the basic requirement for the academic writers as poor flow doubles the comprehension time for the audience leading to poor grade.</p>
<p>Presentation</p>	<p>As academic writing is categorized between formal to a highly formal piece of writing, its presentation needs to be likewise. Presentational accuracies refer to the use of correct homophones like quite/quiet or to/too/two etc., basic grammar like subject-verb agreement, proper spellings as per English dialect like British or American or Canadian etc., articles and prepositions properly.</p>

It is noteworthy that these conventions are applicable on thesis writing in any discipline of study; however, in the current study these conventions are presented in the context of thesis write-up in Social Sciences.

As a result of his study, Bruce (2018) has offered the textual resource types to novice writers to write discussion parts of their theses. He identified the range of textual resources used by five PhD researchers to express critical thinking in their discussion parts/chapters. The examination of the chapters revealed the integrative use of three generic elements to construct an overall argument. First, there was the recursive use of move pattern of Point, Support and Evaluation as organizing content schema. Second, there was the use of key coherence relations to make critical statements in the Evaluation part of the content schema. The third was the use of meta-discourse devices such as hedging and attitude markers (Hyland, 2005a, 2007, & 2008) embedded within the critical statements.

5.4.1. Examiners’ Expectations as an Ultimate Audience

“What’s important to the thesis committee is that the student has demonstrated that s/he can do the research and sustain the writing process.” (Runte, 2017:p.13)

In an academic writing context, the audience is the Instructor, Supervisor or the examiner who is quite knowledgeable about what students bring in writing (Swales and Feak, 2012). This

audience evaluates the written tasks with great expectations in view. Understanding of audience and its expectations affect the content selection, purpose of writing and its style. Thus, knowing the expectations of audience helps in setting the purpose of the written task which guides the way through organisation and structure of academic task with proper style, flow and presentation. Consequently, the thread of academic writing task gets connected from one consideration to another. It is noteworthy that audience, purpose and strategy are closely interrelated considerations. If audience knows less than the writer, the purpose of writing becomes instructional. However, with more knowledgeable audience, the academic writers write with a purpose to display familiarity, expertise and intelligence. Instructional or display writing purpose guides toward the selection of strategy to organize and present information accordingly.

Johnston's (1997 & 2006) examination of 51 evaluation reports of examiners of doctoral theses has given rise to the important findings which are summarized by Paltridge and Starfield (2020:57) in the given words:

- i. Examiners approach reading a thesis with an air of expectation and enthusiasm which disappear if the thesis is not 'reader friendly'.
- ii. Examiners give importance to the general impression and overall presentation of the thesis.
- iii. The use of summaries, logical sequencing, signposts and the removal of excessive repetition are the tools to assist examiners as readers to make sense of thesis argument.
- iv. Poorly presented work distracts and irritates the examiners as readers.
- v. Examiners appreciate well-written, interesting and logically presented arguments.

Mullins and Kiley's (2002) findings are somewhat similar to that of Johnston's. According to them, senior examiners carefully look for the links between introductions and conclusions as introductions state students' intentions and conclusions are the realization of those intentions. Moreover, they have considered use of hedges as an important device for the second language writers to 'adjust the strength of their claims in relation to their audience'. Likewise, Gruba and Zobel (2017) have emphasized on the use of signposting in thesis. They argued that student writers need to make it sure that everything has a top and a tail. They added that 'having a top-and-tailing overdone is a critical tool to ensure narrative flow of the thesis' (p.21).

Thus, to ease the writing process of dissertation and thesis for their writers, Golding et al. (2014, 2017) and Johnston (1997 & 2006) have outlined number of expectations examiners keep to view and comment on dissertation/thesis. They did textual analysis of examiners' reports on doctoral theses and came up with the list of expectations. Golding et al.'s (2017:50-58) list of examiners' expectations is presented below:

Table 5.2 Examiners' Expectations (Golding et al., 2017)

Sr. No.	Expectations	Bottom-line
1	Examiners expect a thesis to pass	You do not have to perfect every word, sentence and paragraph to have a good thesis.
2	Examiners tend to be broadly consistent in their practices and Recommendations	All your examiners are likely to be looking for similar qualities in your thesis, and they are all likely to give a consistent recommendation to pass

3	Examiners judge a thesis by the end of the first or second chapter	It is very important to refine the first chapter or two of your thesis
4	Examiners read a thesis as an academic reader and as a normal reader	To make your thesis a good read, you need to take a reader-centred approach to your Writing
5	Examiners are irritated and distracted by presentation errors	Read as a writer; Write as a reader
6	Examiners favour a coherent thesis	have a 'red thread' that runs through the thesis, linking it all together into one coherent whole
7	Examiners favour a thesis that engages with the literature	you should use the literature to inform, support and justify your conclusions, and avoid merely listing who said what.
8	Examiners favour a thesis with a convincing approach	present an argument that will convince your examiners that you have a researchable topic, and that your method and approach is a good way to tackle this topic.
9	Examiners favour a thesis that engages with the findings	Discuss what your findings imply for your research field by relating your findings to what others have already found, and showing how your findings contribute to the literature
10	Examiners require a thesis to be publishable	An original publishable contribution does not mean you have to solve every problem, revolutionise your field or change the world; you only have to add something useful to your field
11	Examiners give summative and formative feedback	Be prepared for some negative comments, but recognise that most examiner comments will be constructive feedback

It is noteworthy that the sixth expectation is to write a thesis in a coherent whole as examiners expect to favour coherent theses over incoherent ones. This expectation is longest in description as it covers one complete page related to the tools to maintain coherence in the thesis.

5.4.2. Thesis Flow

“If the flow of ideas is good, small errors may not be noticed – grammar errors get more pronounced with poor flow of ideas” (Swales and Feak, 2012: 49)

Thesis flow refers to organising information in a structured format that needs to follow predictable patterns to be reader-friendly. As the writing style is chosen between formal to highly formal with non-conversational patterns and colloquial terms, it demands creating flow to move from one statement to the next in a text and establishing clear connections of ideas to help reader follow the text. According to Swales and Feak, flow can be created by connecting old and new information. This is termed by Cook (1998) as given-new information structure. To ensure textual connectivity, use of linking words and phrases – commonly known as cohesive links (Haliday and Hassan, 1976) – play vital role to offer a great deal to establish look of a unified whole of a text. Another element felt necessary for creating flow in the text is punctuation as put by Swales and Feak.

In other words, thesis needs to adhere to textual component in order to appear cohesive and coherent. High-quality theses are those which are textually well presented. High-quality presentation of thesis has been defined by Evans et al. (2014:153-155) that the thesis is high-quality presentation when:

- i. It is well planned and executed with each section building on the last.
- ii. There is clear signposting and linking between paragraphs, sections, and chapters. The thesis consistently (but not repetitively) reminds the reader of the purpose, argument, or overall thrust of the thesis.

In contrast, the bad thesis is the one that does not adhere to these characteristic features of good quality thesis. A badly written thesis is mentioned as to 'have no clear connection between the focus of the study and the logic and foundations of the research on which it is based' (Evans et al., 2014: 153; cited from Paltridge & Starfield, 2020: 19). It is significant to note that the importance has been laid on the links between/across sentences and ideas throughout thesis writing. This is the clear evidence that supports the notion of thesis to be cohesively and coherently well presented for the sake of accomplishing the respective degree. Similar idea of a well-presented thesis has been found in the words of Paltridge and Starfield:

"An important feature of a well-written text is the unity and connectedness with which individual sentences relate to each other. This is, in part, the result of how ideas are presented in the text, but it also depends on how the writer has created cohesive links within and between paragraphs in the text" (2020: 19).

Thesis flow is maintained by ensuring connectivity between ideas within and across paragraphs and sections. The flow maintained within and between paragraphs refers to the local coherence and the ideas flow ensured across paragraphs and sections of thesis is termed as global coherence. It is well emphasized by Golding (2017:56) that the thesis writers need to make the 'red thread' of the thesis influential and convincing by maintaining the local and global coherence well in it. Some tools are prescribed as a quick guide to maintain coherence in the thesis (Golding, 2017:54) which are presented below:

Table 5.3. Tools to create a coherent thesis by Golding (2017)

Sr. No.	Tools to create a Coherent Thesis	Instances
1	Metatext: It is the combination of words to connect chapters or sections of the chapters in a thesis.	'This chapter will build on the previous chapter by ...' / 'I will start with discussing X, then show how this links to Y...' etc.
2	Signposting: It is the way of signaling semantic relation with the help of linguistic means to develop connections between sentences and paragraphs.	'because, conversely, for example, however, but, yet, and, moreover, for this purpose...' etc.
3	Summaries and Previews: In the beginning and ending of chapters and sections of thesis, brief statement is added to assist expected audience.	'This chapter/part of the chapter is the description of ...' / 'The present chapter or part of the chapter has covered ...'
4	Referring Back and Forward: Developing connections between sentences and paragraphs by referring back or forward.	'I will expand on this description in second chapter ...' / 'Building on the example I introduced in chapter 3 ...' / (for details see chapter 5) etc.
5	Repetition: It is the mentioning of same word, close synonyms,	'The research hypothesis was set based on the given assumption . The research

	antonyms, collocation and paraphrases for the purpose of creating connectivity.	<u>hypothesis</u> gave rise to the formulation of <u>research questions</u> ’ etc.
6	Do what you say: Write what you do and do what you say you will do.	If you mention in thesis ‘There are three reasons...’ it is important to state three reasons then.
7	Be consistent: It is the use of consistent terms with the likely meanings for the same thing in a thesis to avoid confusion. Many terms for the same thing create confusion for the reader.	If you use the term ‘second language acquisition’ in thesis, ‘second language learning’ will not be the right term to show consistency.

As far as local coherence is concerned, paragraph flow brings consistency in the text (Goodson, 2017). The organizational pattern of information in a paragraph needs to be developed properly for the smooth flow of idea. Moreover, there is a need to connect paragraphs through transition words/phrases/sentences. Thus the structure of a paragraph begins with a transition followed with the mention of the key idea through a topic sentence. The rest of the structure maintains the flow of idea presented in the topic sentence by holding supporting details and pieces of evidence. It is the formula for the well-developed paragraph structure as suggested by Goodson (2017).

5.4.3. Thesis Writing: A Writer-Responsible Academic Document

It is noteworthy that Paltridge and Starfield have reported another criterion to differentiate high-quality thesis and dissertation from the low one. According to them, the high-quality thesis is reader-friendly, because the English language is a ‘writer responsible’ language and it is writer's responsibility to make sense of the text clear for the reader which is not the case in other languages like Japanese which has been termed as 'reader responsible' (Paltridge & Starfield, 2020: 19).

Similar notion has been found in the words of McCool (2009) who believes that English language is strongly associated with writer responsibility due to ‘its association with short sentences and paragraphs, common use of language, omission of meaningless words and phrases, avoidance of long introductory phrases and clauses and a desire to control sprawl’ (p.102). Therefore, when writing in English, ESL learners need to take care of connections and relations between/across sentences and paragraphs; without which, the text appears vague and loses the strength of its argument for the examiners. Thus, writing theses with a good level of English proficiency is an important matter of concern for researchers globally.

According to Gruba and Zobel,

“Writing that is full of mistakes says that the author is lazy or incompetent; such people don’t do solid research. Writing that is impenetrably complex or knotted up says that the author is incapable of clear thinking. It is these kinds of messages that you are trying to avoid. Remind yourself that good researchers are busy; if you want other people to read and appreciate your work, you have to make it easy for them to do so.” (p. 21-22)

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the comprehensive review covered in this paper highlights the significant challenges social science researchers face when writing a research thesis, particularly when it comes to academic writing in English. Experts agree that clarity, coherence, and precision are

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