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## Academic Publishing and the Referees' Reports: A Genre-Based Study

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### ABSTRACT

Peer review (RP) process as an academic genre is a pivotal step to certify the research quality to be published by enhancing peer perspectives and imparting credibility. The aim of this paper is to scrutinise the formal, cognitive structuring, the significant evaluative features and pragmatic value. To address this aim, a framework based on Bhatia's (1993) cognitive structuring model and Fortanet's (2008) model of moves is adopted to analyse two referees' reports from two various disciplines namely Social Sciences and Veterinary Medicine solicited from Iraqi academicians. The findings unravel that there is a special format that followed by referees in their reports concerning the balanced use of positive/ negative comments along with the structural organization adopted. The generic structuring of the two analysed reports includes four paramount moves that are similar despite they are from two different disciplines. In addition, the most notably comments assigned by referees' reports are content related defects which are amalgamated with the use of language written.

**Key words:** Academia, Genre analysis, International journals, Peer review reports, Moves and strategies.

## النشر الأكاديمي وتقارير الحكام: دراسة قائمة على النوع

### الخلاصة

إن عملية مراجعة الأقران التي تسمى أيضاً الإحالة كنوع أكاديمي هي خطوة محورية لإقرار جودة البحث الذي سيتم نشره من خلال تعزيز وجهات نظر النظراء وإضفاء المصداقية. الهدف من هذه الورقة هو التدقيق في البنية الرسمية والمعرفية والسمات التقييمية الهامة والقيمة البراغمية. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف ، تم اعتماد إطار عمل يستند إلى نموذج الهيكلية المعرفية لباتيا (١٩٩٣) ، و نموذج moves لفورتانت (٢٠٠٨) لتحليل تقريرين للحكام من تخصصات مختلفة هما العلوم الاجتماعية والطب البيطري والتي تم الحصول عليها من الأكاديميين العراقيين. تكشف النتائج أن هناك صيغة خاصة يتبعها الحكام في تقاريرهم بشأن الاستخدام المتوازن للتعليقات الإيجابية / السلبية جنباً إلى جنب مع التنظيم الهيكلي المعتمد. تتضمن البنية العامة للتقريرين المحللين أربع حركات أساسية متشابهة على الرغم من أن النصوص من مجالين مختلفين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، فإن أبرز التعليقات التي تم تخصيصها من قبل تقارير الحكام هي العيوب المتعلقة بالمحتوى والتي تم دمجها مع استخدام اللغة المكتوبة.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الأوساط الأكاديمية ، التحليل النوعي ، المجلات الدولية ، تقارير مراجعة المنقحين ، التحركات والاستراتيجيات.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Recently, the publication of academicians' researches in reputable peer review international journals with high impact quality is regarded as an indicator of their scholarly competence and effectiveness (Belcher, 2007; Gosden, 2001, 2003). Nowadays, this is the focus of the higher arena in the educational institutions within the country. Each manuscript submitted to an indexed academic journal goes through the process of peer review in which the manuscript is scrutinized by experts who are specialists in the same fields (Rajagopalan & Jie, 2014). Peer review process is important to evaluate and enhance the quality of a manuscript through the mutual peer perspectives and imparted credibility (Dhammi & Kumar, 2013). According to Fortanet (2008, p. 1), the peer review report can function on two directions; on the one hand it assists the editor to make his/her decision regarding the publication of the



manuscript depending on the referee's recommendation and evaluation. On the other hand, it assists the author to reconsider and correct the manuscript to "fit" the standards of the journal.

Kelly, Sadeghieh and Adeli (2014, p.227) state that "the major advantage of a peer review process is that peer-reviewed articles provide a trusted form of scientific communication. Since scientific knowledge is cumulative and builds on itself, this trust is particularly important." However, most of the peer review reports deem to be ambiguous and this is due to the different mental models especially for those non-native speakers. Another reason that makes the peer review report problematic is its "occluded" genre, i.e. it is an exclusive and confidential document (Swales, 1996, p. 46). Thus, the peer review reports pose a challenge to most authors because of their unfamiliarity with the conventions of this genre, its discourse community, and its audience expectations. In this vein, Kwan (2013, p. 213) explains that the novice writers are "confused, discouraged or even shocked by the negative reviews" and he adds that some of those writers do not make any revision to their manuscripts although their manuscripts have a possibility of publication. Therefore, analysing the referee's reports is vital for authors in order to improve the quality of their manuscripts so as to be published. Previous researches have added new dimensions in understanding the problems and difficulties of peer review genre; however, most of the studies have been conducted by different scholars such as Flowerdew and Dudley-Evans (2002), Fortanet (2008), Mungra & Webber (2010), and Paltridge (2017). However, studies have not yet been conducted on peer review of research articles written in English and submitted to peer-reviewed international journals by Iraqi researchers across disciplines. Regarding this hiatus in the literature, the present study sets out to investigate the genre of the referees' reports on two research articles submitted by Iraqi researchers in fields of Social Sciences and Veterinary Medicine. Therefore, this research will be an attempt to facilitate the researchers' task who are in need for the interpretation of the referees' comments. Also, the researchers hope that the analysis of such an occluded genre will be of benefit to doctoral students and early career academics not yet familiar with the peer review process in different fields. Accordingly, the following objectives are addressed:



1. Identifying the cognitive generic structure (moves and steps) that characterise the selected peer review reports.
2. Investigating the lexico-grammatical patterns of the selected peer review reports.
3. Investigating the contents and messages of the selected peer review reports.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Peer Review Reports as a Genre

The term "*genre*" originally comes from the French which in turn comes from Latin word "*kind*" or "*class*". It covers categorisation of texts in terms of a variety of structural and stylistic features. The word "*genre*" is used in different domains whether in literary, media, rhetoric or in linguistic domains to refer to a distinct type of text (Bruce, 2008, p. 6; Hauser, 2012, p. 219-220). Genre studies have a great role in understanding and creating a particular discourse, therefore, genre analysis is not only expressive but also interpretive (Bhatia, 2002; Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010). Conventionally known, genre is recognised as "a class of speech events" such as the genre of academic articles (Davies, 2005, p. 55). However, the linguistic description of genre involves their social purposes, i.e. different genres are different conducts of using language in order to convey different culturally recognised tasks and texts of different genres are texts intended to realise different culturally objectives (Hyland, 1992, p. 4; Eggins & Martin, 1997, p. 236).

According to Swales (1990, p. 45), genre is "a communicative event" that involves a variety of different relations among people that are performing in special communal setting and acting particular function typifying that event in which the significant and indispensable part is played by language". Thus, several communicative events formulate a genre if they engage in a variety of communicative goals. These goals may be recognised by experienced members of a discourse community to create the ground for genre. The ground creates structural schemata (background knowledge about textual features of PR report) and content schemata (earlier academic knowledge in general and disciplinary culture in particular). The same patterns, styles,



content, and certain audience have been applied to examples of genre. Miller (1984, p. 151) contends that genre is understood in terms of the function rather than in terms of content or structure.

Applying this to PR reports, there will be several logical reasons to consider PR reports as a genre. First, PR reports consist of a variety of different communicative activities. PR report embraces a variety of relationships among the interlocutors that are taking place in particular social contexts and performing particular roles related to that event and to particular aims presenting and evaluating new publications in the discipline. Second, the professional people of the discourse community can diagnose the communicative intentions. Knowledgeable readers and referees can detect the instances of genre by using their schemata. Generally, referees used to discuss certain content, employing distinctive language selections that are regulated in a standard form.

## 2.2 Previous studies on PR

Biagioli (2002, p. 20-25) traces the beginning of the PR process back to Henry Oldenburg who is the first editor of the *Philosophical Transactions* by the Royal Society in Edinburgh and London. PR process is defined by many scholars such as Weller (2001, p. 15) who adopts a very general definition as in "a review of a manuscript by someone other than the editor" or "evaluation by one's peers". Likewise, Wager, Godlee and Jefferson (2002, p. 3) add that PR is a "formal system by whereby a piece of academic work is scrutinized by people – the peer reviewers who are not involved in the creation but are considered knowledgeable about the subject". Noticeable researchers such as Flowerdew and Dudley-Evans (2002), Fortanet (2008), and Paltridge (2017) have studied the genre of PR with significant contribution from different perspectives.

Flowerdew and Dudley-Evans (2002) have conducted a study of the "editorial letters" in general, in which they use a corpus of 53 letters written by Dudley-Evans employing Swales' (1990) and Bhatia's (1993) models of genre analysis. The aim of their study is to give input to English for academic purposes (EAP) course project. They build their study on the assumption that there may be difficulties in decoding some letters due to the unclear generic



structuring and due to the use of the face-saving acts strategies by the editors and referees. Flowerdew and Dudley-Evans find out that the analysed editorial letters consist of four generic moves: "preparing the reader for the decision, conveying the decision, making recommendations for revision and improvement, and signing off". They have concluded that the third move "making recommendations for revision and improvement" is an optional move, i.e. does not exist in all the selected corpus of editorial letters. Accordingly, their study cannot be generalised as they use data written by one of the analysts related to only one journal i.e., *English for Specific Purposes*.

Another study is conducted in (2008) by Fortanet in which she has studied the evaluative language of the PR reports. Fortanet uses a corpus of 50 blind PR report collected from *Universitat Jaume I*. The reports are related to two disciplines; *Applied Linguistics* and *Business Organisation*. Fortanet has focused on three functional patterns in the selected PR reports: criticisms, recommendations, and requests. Therefore, she has dealt only with the lexico-grammatical features and the pragmatic strategies of the PR reports. This means that she neglects the contextual configuration of the PR reports, their content analysis and the categorisation of each single report, whether the manuscript is accepted with minor or major corrections or rejected.

Furthermore, Paltridge (2017) investigates the PR genre from different analytical perspectives. Paltridge differentiates between the discoursal constructions and components of four categories of review judgements; accept, minor revision, major revision, and reject reports. He also explains the key role of PR reports in judging the quality of the manuscript according to the beliefs of the discourse community (p. 37). Paltridge adopts Fortanet's (2008) framework of PR reports which consists of four generic moves as discussed above. Paltridge investigates the pragmatic values of the PR reports such as speech act and politeness. Moreover, Paltridge investigates the referee's stance in PR reports through using "attitude markers", "boosters", "self-mentions", and "hedges" that are emphasized by Hyland (2005, p. 178). Paltridge (2017) concludes that the discoursal features of PR reports can be generalised to PR reports in other journals across different disciplines. In addition, the framework of rhetorical moves can be adopted for all submitted



manuscripts of different disciplines. Finally, the interactive nature of this sort of genre in particular between the referee and the author in the PR process is needed.

### 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researchers employ Bhatia's (1993) model of cognitive structuring and Fortanet's (2008) model of structural description of PR reports. Bhatia's model embraces the social, cognitive, and linguistic configurations. For Bhatia (1993), the conventional communicative purpose which is shared by the members of a particular discourse community is the key factor to categorise a collection of texts in a particular genre. Thus, the novel contribution of Bhatia's account of genre is the cognitive level of genre construction. In other words, members of a particular discourse community have a conventional, accumulated, shared knowledge which reflects their discursual conventions.

According to Bhatia's (1993) and Fortanet's (2008), the structural description of genre includes moves and strategies that the writers can use to achieve the communicative objectives of a particular genre. The generic moves reflect specific communicative functions and their incorporation assists to achieve the overall communicative purpose of a particular discourse. This indicates that each genre user utilises certain strategies to accomplish his/her communicative goal in a particular context.

Bhatia's (1993) model consists of seven steps to give a description of PR genre throughout the combination of social, cognitive, linguistic and discursual features. Some of these steps are followed by the researchers according to the nature, scope and data of the study. Fortanet's (2008) model offers a particular generic structure of PR reports which includes four moves to reveal the communicative purpose of PR genre. Therefore, the selected PR reports are analysed according to various levels including the contextual analysis, the cognitive structuring analysis (including generic analysis) and the content analysis. To avoid redundancy, lexico-grammatical features, text-patterning elements, and pragmatic values are analysed within the generic analysis. Therefore, the combination of these two models would yield a better understanding of the notion of genre, both in theory and in practice. Along with Bhatia (1993) and Fortanet (2008), the researchers conceptualise the



generic structure of the selected PR reports under analysis as comprising four essential moves (obligatory and optional) that represent specific communicative functions as explained below.

1. **Summarising judgements regarding the suitability for publication**, in which the referee expresses his/her own personal attitude or opinion and provides a first impression towards the submitted manuscript.
2. **Outlining the article**, in which the referee explains the main content material of the topic of the submitted manuscript.
3. **Points of criticism**, in which the referee identifies the weak points and the errors or mistakes of the submitted manuscript.
4. **Conclusion and recommendation**, in which the referee obviously recommends to accept, accept with minor/major corrections, or reject the submitted academic work and mostly s/he shed lights on some essential aspect that are in need of correction before publishing the work.

#### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper employs a qualitative design to provide a fuller understanding of the data analysed. The selected reviewers' reports are compiled from Iraqi researchers who have submitted manuscripts to international journals for publication on different manuscripts related to two various disciplines, namely, social sciences and veterinary medicine. The manuscripts are "research articles" according to Swales (1990, p. 134) that are submitted to reputable journals. These manuscripts are selected with the accepted (minor or major) or rejected decisions. The reports are the results of the first round of revision. The reason for such selection is Belcher's (2007) insight that the first round reviews hold more criticism of both content and style. The research does not pursue whether the manuscripts eventually achieved publication or not. The following steps will illustrate the procedure followed in the analysis. The reports are analysed on the macro level adopting the generic structure through moves and steps such as (outlining the article, summarizing judgements regarding the suitability for publication, points of criticism and conclusion and recommendations). At the micro level, the reports are analysed lexically, grammatically and pragmatically.



## 5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Peer Reviewed Report One

#### 5.1.1 Contextual Analysis

The studied report does not have any reference to the name or the personal data of the referee. This indicates that this report includes a blind rather than an open PR process. This is so in order to eschew any type of direct contact with the author of the manuscript. The analysed report evaluates a manuscript submitted to the journal of *Terrorism and Political Violence*. According to the subject matter of the peer-reviewed manuscript that deals with the ideology of the terrorist groups, the examined report falls in the applied linguistics discipline, which is one of the humanities disciplines that deal with real data that are not related to the world of academia.

Accordingly, the referee provides a feedback and proposes enhancement to the submitted manuscript. Therefore, the referee aids and enables the authors to enhance the quality of their manuscript. Since the referee is an expert in the field of the submitted manuscript, the author is expected to take all referee's comments and inquiries in his/her consideration through correcting and amending their manuscript. At the same time, the journal editor makes use of the referee's feedback and recommendations as a guide to take the publication decision of the submitted manuscript.

#### 5.1.2 Generic Analysis

The cognitive structuring of the analysed report consists of the following generic moves:

##### 1. Outlining the article

The referee begins the report with outlining the key entries that the manuscript is concerned with as below.

*1. This paper sets out by offering a series of hugely ambitious objectives including: "addressing" suicide terrorism as a "provocative problem", discussing problems of defining terrorism, developing specific case studies of LTTE and AQ in this context –complete with background and context– and,*



*finally, understanding the emergence of violent discourse as a "frame of reference" for terrorist group formation.*

The present simple verb phrase "sets out" followed by the preposition phrase "by offering" is used to generalise the subject matter of the manuscript and give it a perpetual sense. Thus, this extract shows the overall objectives of the submitted manuscript. The objectives are positively described as it is pre-modified by the adjective "ambitious", which expresses a promising subject matter. The adjective "ambitious" is preceded by the adverb "hugely" so as to increase the intensity and the degree of the pre-modified noun phrase "objectives". Additionally, the referee points out that the submitted manuscript deals with more than one ambitious goal as in "offering a series of hugely ambitious objectives". To express the main goals and purposes of the submitted manuscript, the ing-clauses in "addressing", "discussing", "developing", and "understanding" are employed since the non-finite clauses have more impact on the reader. The manuscript tackles with the general theme that is of "suicide terrorism", which is described as a 'provocative problem' by the referee. This shows that this sort of terrorism is an annoying and problematic concern for different countries. The manuscript generally concerns with violence discourse and the different perspectives of terrorism. In particular, it focuses on two case studies and namely: *Liberation Tiger Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and Al-Qaeda (AQ)*. The co-occurrence of the coordinator "and" followed by the sequence adverb "finally" shows the end of the series of the intended goals of the submitted manuscript.

## **2. Summarising judgements regarding the suitability for publication**

In this text, there is a strong connection between the moves (2) (summarising judgements regarding the suitability for publication) and (3) (points of criticism). In move (2), there are some summarising judgements which are explained to show the appropriateness of the academic work. These judgements are as follows:

*2. Unsurprisingly, given its vast scope, this paper quickly losses focus and none of the issues identified above are dealt with in a novel, sophisticated or rigorous way. Overall, the paper is not particularly well written and there*

*are issues with syntax and grammar throughout. Referencing is poor and several claims and assertions, as well as direct quotes, are not attributed to a source. Where references are used, specific page numbers for direct quotes are not always provided.*

The occurrence of the adverb "*unsurprisingly*" at the beginning of the extract (2) functions as an attitude marker. One of the judgements that the referee summarises is the loss of the focus of the submitted manuscript due to the wide scope of it. This makes the manuscript not to accomplish its already planned goals adequately. The adverb "*quickly*" modifies the lexical verb "loss" functioning as attitude marker. The indefinite pronoun "*none*" shows a negative attitude towards the authors' procedures to tackle the proposed objectives of the manuscript. The combination of the pronoun "*none*", which indicates negation, with the passive construction "*are dealt with*" express the referee's emphasis on the goals of the manuscript which are not sufficiently discussed as in "*none of the issues ... are dealt with in a novel, sophisticated or rigorous way*".

The linking adverb "*overall*" draws attention to the summative or inclusive view about the submitted manuscript. A special reference to the style and language used in the manuscript is made through the use of the negative form in the passive construction "*is not ...well written*". The referee utilises the restrictive adverb "*particularly*" pre-modifying the adverb of state "*well*" to describe the submitted manuscript. The use of the passive construction gives prominence to the manuscript. Furthermore, the coordinator "*and*" is occurred as additive device followed by the existential pattern "*there are*" introducing the problematic use of language through the manuscript, significantly in syntax. To evaluate the way the authors have dealt with the sources, the referee employs the nonfinite clause "referencing is ..." as it is more effective than the finite clause pattern. The attributive adjective "*poor*" is uses to express the weakness of the referencing process. The coordinator "*and*" and the conjunction "*as well as*" are used to add more flaws associated with citation procedures in the manuscript either not acknowledging some claims, assertions and quoted materials to their authors, or not providing some page numbers for some quoted material. Repeatedly, the referee utilises the passive construction as in "*are not attributed*" and "*are not always*



*provided*" to show the importance of accrediting others' used material. The negation form "*not*" indicates the lack of paramount elements from the submitted manuscript. The combination of the negation form "*not*" and the frequency adverb "*always*", which pre-modifies the verb "*provided*" shows that it is always essential to provide the referencing data so as to guide the reader to the source of the quoted material and this is part of the study validity. It is worthy to mention that the referee's evaluation of the various elements of the submitted manuscript in this extract involves to great extent a sense of criticism which will be discussed in move (3) "points of criticism" below.

### 3. Points of criticism

Some points of criticism have been already referred to in move (2) "summarising judgements regarding the suitability for publication". Additionally, move (3) includes an overview about the various sections of the submitted manuscript that the referee criticises as explained below.

*3. Each of the sections, moreover, provides a rough overview pertaining to a particular issue without offering anything particularly novel or incisive. For example, the section on "Defining terrorism" offers a few quotes from Schmid's voluminous output concerning the topic, where the author comes to the dismissive conclusion that Schmid's definition concerns only "secular terrorism where the victims are usually the ultimate goal", despite Schmid's emphasis on the propagandistic and psychological effects of violence as the intended outcome of violence and in spite of Schmid's substantial work on faith-based terrorism in the Routledge Handbook and beyond.*

This extract opens with the determiner "*each of*" followed by a plural noun phrase "*the sections*" to indicate that the various sections of the manuscript are separately considered. The adverb "*moreover*" is employed to add vital information about the parts of the submitted manuscript. The occurrence of the prepositional phrase "*without offering*" followed by the non-assertive item "*anything*" expresses the lack of novelty in the submitted academic work as in "*without offering anything particularly novel or incisive*". The adverb "*particularly*" pre-modifies and emphasises the adjectives "*novel*" and

"*incisive*", which are coordinated by the alternative "*or*". In other words, the sections of the manuscript offer a poor quality contents as each of them concerns with a specific subject which is not tackled in a new and sophisticated way. The referee uses the present simple tense verb "*provides*" generalising the shortcomings throughout the sections of the manuscripts. To emphasise his/her point of view, the referee discusses an example from the manuscript entitled as "*defining terrorism*". The author has quoted some material from a reference related to Schmid who deals with the topic of terrorism thoroughly. However, the author of the submitted manuscript does not consider such reference in sophisticated way. The manuscript retells that Schmid's focus is only on "*secular terrorism*", whereas Schmid's concept of terrorism is concerned with "*propagandistic and psychological effect of violence*", in addition to his emphasises on the "*faith-based terrorism*". The adjective "*dismissive*" which pre-modifies the noun "*conclusion*" includes a negative view for neglecting essential material for the manuscript. The adjective "*only*" pre-modifies and emphasises what has been stated in the conclusion of the manuscript. The conjunction form "*and in spite of*" is employed to express an additive meaning to what the referee states about Schmid's concept of terrorism, which is described as being "*voluminous*" and "*substantial*". This means that the author of the manuscript misuses a very important reference associated with the topic of the submitted work.

4. *The section on suicide terrorism is equally superficial and the section on the "average number of victims" makes no sense at all. For example, it is stated that "...the highest number of victims would represent the most efficient way in the arsenal of the terrorist groups. In this regard, the average number of victims in a shooting attack is 3.32%..." etc. But a percentage of what? Presumably 100% of casualties in a shooting attack are victims. Do these percentages pertain to number of deaths out of wounded, number of casualties out of those targeted?*

This extract is an evaluation to two sections of the manuscript, significantly "*suicide terrorism*" and "*average number of victims*". The suicide section is described through the use of the adjective "*superficial*", which is pre-modified by the adverb "*equally*" indicating that this section like other sections of the manuscript does not include an in-depth discussion to the

concept of suicide terrorism. The *no-negation* followed by the noun "sense" is employed to describe the section of average number of victims. This expresses a negative view about this section. The adverb phrase "at all" occurs as emphatic device for the negative evaluation of the section. Underpinning his/her criticism, the referee retells an example of the manuscript findings, which includes a reference to the number of victims out of terrorist activities. The passive voice is utilised in order to foster objectivity regarding the evaluated material. The author of the manuscript proclaims that the casualties of gunfire outbreaks are about "3.32%". However, s/he does not refer to the parameters upon which these percentages are decided. Therefore, the coordinator "but" is used to show contrast with what the author claims. The referee uses a wh-interrogative sentence to ask about the percentage occurred in the manuscript. The wh-word "what" postponed to the end of the question as it is a complement of the preposition "of" whereas the word "percentage" occurs at the beginning of the wh-question to indicate its importance to the manuscript as in "a percentage of what?". The adverb "presumably" is employed to underscore that all the casualties of gunfire attacks are victims regardless of any percentage. This means that the referee disagrees with what the author has stated about the shooting attack victims. The referee uses the verb "do" to formulate a yes/no question trying to understand whether the given percentages are related to the number of deaths out of injury, or number of victims out of only those people who are under attack. The abbreviated coordinating adverb "etc." is used to convey that there are similar items in the manuscript. These interrogative sentences express the illocutionary force of directives for the author to provide more explanation about the given percentages so as to be understood for the readers of the manuscript.

5. *The section on jihad in Islam, again, is superficial and misleading: not all Wahhabists for example "adopted the ideology of the global Salafi jihad" as it is interpreted by AQ and notions concerning the individual (or collective) obligation of jihad are dependent on a number of factors and there are different opinions as to when these apply.*

Another point of criticism is emphasised in the section of Jihad in Islam as shown in the extract above. The additive adverb "again" occurs as emphatic

device for the evaluation of the section, which is described through the use of two coordinated adjectives "*superficial and misleading*". These adjectives indicate negative values attributed to this section as it is unfocused and lack an in-depth discussion. The noun "*Wahhabists*" is pre-modified by a negated determiner "*not all*" occurs as an example showing how the manuscript is unfocused and shallow in its discussion. According to AQ, Wahhabists members are not entirely following the Salafi norms of jihad as there are number of factors and different perspectives as when and how to adopt such norms. The adjectives "*individual*" and "*collective*" are coordinated by "*or*" and pre-modify the noun phrase "*obligation of jihad*" indicates that there are two types of obligatory jihad. Thus, the ideology of Salafi members may lead them to adopt either individual or collective jihad depending on various reasons and perspectives such as the time as indicated by the wh-word "*when*". Pragmatically, the above extract shows a face-threatening act for the author of the manuscript as the referee disagrees with the author and therefore, indicating that the section needs more detailed explanation and logical discussion.

6. *The section on AQ and suicide terrorism is too basic but yet contains errors (such as attributing the 1996 Khobar attacks to AQ and suggesting AQ existed as a force during the Soviet-Afghan war as opposed to emerging in its wake). Later on, the author confuses motivation and (post)justification in the context of usage of martyrdom ops and presents AQ as a tactical pioneer in this respect (ignoring the precedent of Shia militants in this context).*

The section on "*AQ and suicide terrorism*" is negatively evaluated. The intensifying adverb "*too*" pre-modifies the adjective "*basic*" to show that this section is fundamental for the study. However, the coordinator "*but*" reinforced by the adverb "*yet*" occurs to show a contrast with what has been already stated. In other words, though the section is significant to the manuscript, it has some wrong information as in "*contains errors*". Among these inaccurate information, AQ was deemed to be the responsible for the Khobar violence events in 1996; and it was existent force during the Soviet-Afghan conflict but refused to involve in that conflict. Then, the adverb phrase "*later on*" is used to show the subsequent inaccuracy of the same section of the manuscript. According to the referee, the concept of the



martyrdom operations is not completely discussed. The author has only dealt with AQ and deems it as a strategic force, yet s/he has abandoned Shia militants in the respect of the incentives of martyrdom operations. A direct reference to the author of the manuscript is made through the use of the singular noun phrase "*the author*" followed by the present simple tense verb "*confuses*" to generalise the author's confusion of the inducements and justifications that lead the AQ members to be involved in suicide operations. These examples are given to emphasise the negative evaluation of the section concerned with AQ and suicide terrorism. Pragmatically, the referee chooses to perform a face-threatening act as s/he directly addresses the author of the submitted manuscript and negatively comments on AQ and suicide terrorism section.

*7. The LTTE sections present general overview and background material but little in the way of analysis. Bizarrely, moreover, the group is presented as a current and potent threat and there is no mention of its decline during the 2009 war.*

The above extract is concerned with evaluation of the LTTE sections. The presentation of the sections includes a critical overview in addition to the background configuration. However, the coordinator "*but*" is used to indicate an incompatible meaning. The quantifying adjective "*little*" occurs to describe the analysis of the LTTE sections. In other words, the author The occurrence of the adverb "*bizarrely*" expresses the referee's attitude towards discussion of the LTTE group as it is tackled with in an unusual way. The conjunction adverb "*moreover*" is used to add new information to the evaluation of the LTTE group. The group is introduced in the manuscript as a constant or resident force without a reference to its end in 2009. The passive construction is employed to show that the reference to of the LTTE group is more importance than the reference to the author of the manuscript. Furthermore, the negative form of the existential "*there is no*" followed by the noun phrase "*mention of its decline*" showing that the author has ignored a vital information for the manuscript, which conveys the end of the LTTE group. Hence, the referee criticises the way the author has tackled with the LTTE groups in the submitted manuscript.

8. *The conclusions reflect the above and are inaccurate or superficial and the conclusion: "according to the researcher's view, the terms terrorism, attack and bombing can interchangeably be used in this study because the act of terror and violence can be carried out by a specific tactic that is of suicide" [sic] make little sense and hardly stand up to much scrutiny when we consider that the most infamous suicide attack in recent times (9/11) was a hijacking, not a bombing.*

The extract (8) shows an evaluation to the outcomes of the submitted manuscript. The adjectives "*inaccurate*" and "*superficial*" coordinated by "*or*" express negative values of the outcomes of the manuscript. According to the author's attitude the words "*terrorism*", "*attack*", and "*bombing*" may be interchangeably used in the manuscript as they share the same strategic method which is the suicide. However, the referee finds out that there are other tactics which can be considered as different of the above terms such as the "*9/11*" attacks in the USA, which was carried out through a "*hijacking*" rather than bombing. Therefore, the author's deduction is negatively evaluated through the use of the quantifier "*little*" which pre-modifies the noun "*sense*". Moreover, the additive coordinator "*and*" occurs before the verb phrase "*stand up*", which is re-modified by the adverb "*hardly*" showing negative meaning. This means that such deduction is not valid or plausible particularly in the case of (9/11) attack. The inclusive subject pronoun "*we*" is used to indicate a shared knowledge between the author and the referee in the context of the subject matter of the manuscript. Pragmatically, the referee may choose to perform a politeness strategy through employing the inclusive pronoun "*we*" as it occupies a sense of solidarity or closeness to the author.

#### 4. Conclusion and recommendation

The last paragraph of the analysed report represents the fourth generic move that sums up the referee's recommendation regarding the publication of the manuscript as discussed below.

9. *This paper has few, if any, redeeming features and it would be hard to see how it could be improved in its current form. In order to be accepted it would*

*have to be much more focused, more original, more specific, more rigorous in its analysis and incisive in its findings.*

The singular determiner "this" pre-modifies the noun "paper" making a reference to the at hand manuscript that has been just evaluated. The adjective "few" is used to express that the submitted manuscript contains little valuable material. The expression "if any" is employed to further emphasise the unlikelihood of including valuable contents through occupying the hyperbole. The referee also utilises the coordinator "and" to add more evaluation. The use of the pronoun "it" followed by the modal verb "would be" expresses prediction of the difficulty of quality improvement of the submitted manuscript. The wh-word "how" followed by the pronoun "it", which substitutes the noun phrase "this paper", expresses the method through which the manuscript might be improved. The occurrence of the adjective "hard" followed by the passive construction "be improved" with the modal verb "could" shows a low level of possibility to improve the quality of the submitted manuscript.

To improve the quality of the submitted manuscript, the referee utilises the pronoun "it", which refer to "the paper" followed by the modal verb construction "would have to be" recommending that the manuscript should be rewritten in a better way. The comparative adjectives pre-modified by the determiner "much" as in "it would have to be much more focused, more original, more specific, more rigorous in its analysis" are employed to indicate how the manuscript should be reconsidered by the author. The referee also uses the coordinator "and" to add that the results of the manuscript ought to be concise and effective. The use of these adjectives indicates that great efforts and corrections are needed for the improvement of the quality of the manuscript so as to be accepted for publication.

### 5.1.3 Content Analysis

A positive comment is given to objectives and the content material associated with the topic of the submitted manuscript as it aims to study the terrorist groups, which are very significant subject matter in the discourse of violence. However, because of its wide range the manuscript losses its focus and novelty. The style and the language used are negatively evaluated. Due to the grammatical mistakes, the manuscript has grown problematic issues in the



writing style. One of these problems is associated with the citation process which is negatively evaluated as there are some missing page numbers for essential quoted material.

Generally, each of the sections of the submitted manuscript is negatively evaluated. The sections of the manuscript offer superficial, unfocused or unsophisticated discussions for their titles. The section on defining the concept of terrorism does not represent an in-depth discussion for some substantial sources such as that of Schmid's work. The sections on suicide terrorism and jihad in Islam are also considered as being superficial and misleading. The sections on AQ and LTTE include some errors and insufficient investigation. Accordingly, these shortcomings and weak points in the analysis and presentation of data lead to an inadequate result. To be appropriate for publication, the manuscript should be carefully reconsidered according to the referee's assessment.

## **5.2. Peer Reviewed Report Two**

### **5.2.1 Contextual Analysis**

The analysed text begins with an information about the referee whose personal data is not revealed; therefore, this peer review report is a masked refereeing document. may indicate that it is intentionally the referee's identity is intended to be hidden to the authors of the manuscript who are the main addressed readers of the report. Thus, the authors of the submitted manuscript are likely expected to answer the received comments and suggestions from the revision of their manuscript. Additionally, the editor of the peer-reviewed journal can make use of the referee's recommendation and point of view regarding the status of the submitted manuscript to take the final decision to publish the manuscript. Hence, two main roles are attributed to the referee in this report according to the reader of the report; as an assistant for the editor of the journal, and as an advisor and a commentator for the author of the manuscript.

In the academic discourse, the text under discussion is a description and evaluation of an academic written work in the discipline of the Veterinary Medicine. The Veterinary science contributes in man health through monitoring infectious viruses transferred from domestic or wild animals to



human being. Thus, diagnosing and treating animals are the main concerns of veterinarians. The analysed report is an assessment to an academic work submitted to a Veterinary science journal known as *Macedonian Veterinary Review*. The topic of the submitted work indicates that it is concerned with detecting the presence of H5N1 virus which infects the poultry.

### 5.2.2 Generic Analysis

This PR report is built on the basis of the generic moves discussed below.

#### 1. Outlining the article

The report starts with a direct reference to the authors of the submitted manuscript through using the third person plural noun "*the authors*" as in:

*1. The authors describe the detection of HPAIV H5N1 clade 2.3.2.1c in a sample from diseased chickens in the city of Baghdad, Iraq.*

This sentence briefly shows the subject of the manuscript. The submitted work is concerned with diagnosing and identifying the existence of influenza virus "HPAIV" and its subtype "H5N1 clade 2.3.2.1c". This virus is perpetual in the poultry across different countries all over the world. Thus, the submitted work is applied to samples taken from Iraq particularly from Baghdad city. Although the avian influenza viruses affect different types of birds, nevertheless, the used samples of the study are infected poultries taken from a specific location of the world which is Baghdad city. Grammatically, the first sentence of the report includes an active present simple tense verb "*describe*", since the referee is reporting a scientific contribution attributed to the authors of the submitted manuscript.

#### 2. Summarising judgements regarding suitability for publication

The referee expresses his/her own point of view in the submitted manuscript as follows:

*2. Although only a single HA sequence is shown, the data nevertheless are interesting since not much is known about HPAIV in Iraq.*

In sentence (2), the correlative subordinators "*although ... nevertheless*" is employed to express the concessive meaning of the sentence. Structurally, the occurrences of the subordinator "*although*" in the initial position as adverbial clause with the optional conjunct "*nevertheless*" in the superordinate clause the conjunct endorses the meaning indicated by the subordinate clause. In the clausal level, the occurrence of the adverb "*only*" followed by the adjective "*single*" serves as an emphatic expression that stresses a certain element of the clause. Thus, they exclusively restrict the value of "*HA sequence*". The passive construction "*is shown*" is used to foster the objectivity of describe the aspects of scientific methodology and analysis used in the submitted manuscript. The noun phrase "*the data*" is described through the attributive adjective "*interesting*" which indicates the referee's heed in what presented in the manuscript. Then, the referee uses the disjunction "*since*" followed by the negation form "*not*" with the adjective "*much*" to justify and emphasise his/her evaluative attitude towards the content of the submitted manuscript. Thus, s/he finds the manuscript inspiring because in Iraq there are no reports that reveal enough information about the virus "*HPAIV*". In the same view, using the passive construction "*is known*" indicates the importance of the submitted material as it includes information which is never been talked before. Although the submitted manuscript covers only one category of *HA* virus, nevertheless, it contains new information and this makes the referee seems to be pleased with it.

### 3. Points of criticism

Despite being a new contribution in the field of Veterinary, the manuscript contains some attenuating circumstances as in:

3. *Unfortunately, however, the study lacks significantly in structure and carefulness of data presentation.*

This sentence starts with the adverb "*unfortunately*" which functions as an attitude marker, i.e. it reveals the referee's evaluative attitude towards the content material of the submitted manuscript. Furthermore, the referee employs the adversative marker "*however*" which expresses a contrary relationship between what is stated before and the current observation. This

means that although the referee finds out that the manuscript is stimulating, nevertheless it contains some shortcomings. The occurrence of the verb "lacks" indicates a weak point in the submitted manuscript. The item "lacks" is followed by the adverb "significantly" as an emphatic expression, which shows the importance of the missing aspects. The submitted manuscript contains some issues in the presentation of the analysed datasets. The referee uses the coordinator "and" to link the noun "structure" and the nominalised item "carefulness" specifying the problem with the presentation of the examined samples. Accordingly, the method of data presentation can greatly impact the results of the manuscript. This comment indicates that the topic is interesting, but the presentation and the design of the study are problematic and unclear; therefore, the presentation of the dataset ought to be high and persuasive.

#### 4. Conclusion and recommendation

In the middle of the report, the referee shifts from evaluating and describing the submitted manuscript to telling the authors what might to do in order to improve the quality of their manuscript as explained below.

*4. The authors should provide more precise description of the extent of the outbreak is required.*

A direct reference to the authors of the submitted manuscript is made through the use of the third person plural subject "the authors". The use of the modal verb "should" expresses imposition or obligation, i.e. the referee draws a conclusion from the content material of the manuscript and thus recommends that the authors must provide an in-depth account of the outbreak of the H5N1 virus. The referee employs the comparative construction "more precise" pre-modifying the noun phrase "description of" to show the extent of the description that the authors have to carry out. To emphasise his/her recommended action, providing an in-depth account of the outbreak, the referee ends the point with the verb phrase "is required" in passive voice. This type of recommendation is a face-threatening act for the authors of the manuscript as they are directly addressed.



5. *The authors should describe some details about how many farms in total have been affected, what kind of poultry, which clinical signs, what measures were taken to control the situation etc.*

Extract (5) involves some clarification requests for the authors to improve the quality of their manuscript. The third person reference is employed to address the authors of the submitted manuscript directly through the use of "*the authors*". The modal verb "*should*" appears to give a sense of necessity of providing a thorough clarification or further information about the tested samples. Three wh-constructions "*how many*", "*which*", and "*what*" are utilised to show the referee's inquiries and questions to the authors of the manuscript about the collected data. The first question begins with "*how many*" indicating an inquiry about the number of the farms that are infected with the virus. The present perfect in the passive voice "*have been affected*" is used to show the importance of knowing the overall number of infected farms. The second question starts with "*what*" asking about the type of infected chickens. The third question begins with "*which*" asking about the "symptoms" appeared on the affected chickens. The fourth question also includes "*what*" to ask about the procedures that are adopted to deal with infected poultry. The occurrence of the abbreviated form of the coordinator "*et cetera*" indicates that the list of inquiries has not exhaustively shown. Consequently, the authors ought to state all the details associated with the targeted farms of poultry so as to improve the quality of the manuscript. Pragmatically, these questions can express a face-threatening act for the authors of the manuscript as they are directly addressed.

6. *The authors should generate the phylogenetic tree.*

Repeatedly, the referee utilises the third person reference "*the authors*" and the modal verb "*should*", in order to recommend the authors of the submitted manuscript to establish an evolutionary diagram for the detected virus "*HPAIV H5N1 clade 2.3.2.1c*". This diverging diagram "*phylogenetic tree*" illustrates the evolutionary association among species on the bases of the physical and genetic similarities and dissimilarities. Therefore, the referee finds it very necessary for the enhancement of the manuscript to provide such diagram. The referee chooses to perform a face-threatening act to show the necessity of such material for the manuscript to be published.



At the end of his/her evaluation, the referee gives his/her judgement as in:

7. *A thorough revision is required including correction of the English language*

The submitted manuscript is in need of a major corrections and amendments. The adjective " *thorough* " is used to pre-modify the noun "*revision*" expressing the in-depth and detailed type of amendments that the authors are expected to do for improving the quality of the manuscript. A special attention ought to be paid to the corrections of the English language used in the manuscript. The passive voice "*is required*" is applied to give special emphasis on the type of corrections needed as it has occurred in the initial position and also to convey an impartial objectivity from what is being evaluated.

### 5.2.3 Content Analysis

This report elucidates that the submitted manuscript contains an impressive data; therefore, it deserves to be published after it gets profound and major corrections. Positive comment is shown about the examined dataset despite the manuscript deals with a limited number of gene sequences from H5N1. The topic of the manuscript introduces a novel contribution for the field of Veterinary as it is one of the first studies to be carried out in Iraq. However, the study has received negative comments associated with the inadequate design and presentation of the data.

The method of analysis is in need of more explanation and in-depth description particularly the details about the examined samples as there are some missing information. The referee also comments on the language and style and s/he states that the English language is in need of a careful revision so as to be a comprehensive for the readers of the manuscript.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The generic structuring of the two analysed reports includes four paramount moves that are; outlining the article, summarizing judgements regarding the suitability for publication, points of criticism, and conclusion and recommendation. Despite being of two different disciplines, the two reports



embrace the same moves. The fourth move is the most substantial as it involves the referee's recommendation regarding the publication of the manuscript and also some suggestions or inquiries that need to be addressed so as to improve the quality of the manuscript.

Grammatically, the reports include the use of the present simple tense to generalise the evaluated material. The interrogative sentences are employed to express the need for more in-depth discussion. The linking devices such as "and", "or", "but", "moreover", "however", "although", "nevertheless", and "again" occur to express cohesion in text. Additionally, the passive voice is employed to give prominence for some items of the manuscript or to indicate objectivity in evaluating some elements of the manuscript. The modal verb construction "should" is widely used to suggest to and recommend the authors of the manuscript to provide some necessary details related to the core of the manuscript. The report contains an extensive use of negative evaluation means as in; the use of adjectives such as: *superficial*, *misleading*, *dismissive*, and *inaccurate*, the use of some quantifiers such as *few* and *not all*, the use of the negative form *not* and *no*. Moreover, some adverbs are utilised; to show the referee's attitude such as *unsurprisingly*, *unfortunately*, *presumably*, and *not well*, to increase the level of evaluation such as *only*, *quickly*, *particularly*, *equally*, *too*, and *significantly*. Pragmatically, the referee's comments are mostly face-threatening acts as the authors of the manuscript are directly addressed. The use of this strategy is beneficial as it includes criticism and suggestions for both revision and improvement of the quality of the manuscript. In an attempt to eradicate such a criticism, most authors are able to amend their manuscripts to reach a high quality in future.



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## Appendix 1

Professor Max Taylor  
Editor  
Terrorism and Political Violence  
Department of Security and Crime Sciences  
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Reviewer: 2

#### Comments to the Author

This paper sets out by offering a series of hugely ambitious objectives including: ‘addressing’ suicide terrorism as a ‘provocative problem’, discussing problems of defining terrorism, developing specific case studies of the LTTE and AQ in this context – complete with background and context – and, finally, understanding the emergence of violent discourse as a ‘frame of reference’ for terrorist group formation.

Unsurprisingly, given its vast scope, this paper quickly loses focus and none of issues identified above are dealt with in a novel, sophisticated or rigorous way. Overall, the paper is not particularly well written and there are issues with syntax and grammar throughout. Referencing is poor and several claims and assertions, as well as direct quotes, are not attributed to a source. Where references are used, specific page numbers for direct quotes are not always provided.

Each of the sections, moreover, provides a rough overview pertaining to a particular issue without offering anything particularly novel or incisive. For example, the section on ‘Defining terrorism’ offers a few quotes from Schmid’s voluminous output concerning the topic, where the author comes to the dismissive conclusion that Schmid’s definition concerns only ‘secular terrorism where the victims are usually the ultimate goal’, despite Schmid’s emphasis on the propagandistic and psychological effects of violence as the intended outcome of violence and in spite of Schmid’s substantial work on faith-based terrorism in the Routledge Handbook and beyond.

The section on suicide terrorism is equally superficial and the section on the ‘average number of victims’ makes no sense at all. For example, it is stated that ‘...the highest number of victims would represent the most efficient way in the arsenal of the terrorist groups. In this regard, the average number of victims in a shooting attack is 3.32%...’ etc. But a percentage of what? Presumably 100% of casualties in a shooting attack are victims. Do these



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percentages pertain to number of deaths out of wounded, number of casualties out of those targeted?

The section on jihad in Islam, again, is superficial and misleading: not all Wahhabists for example ‘adopted the ideology of the global Salafi jihad’ as it is interpreted by AQ and notions concerning the individual (or collective) obligation of jihad are dependent on a number of factors and there are different opinions as to when these apply.

The section on AQ and suicide terrorism is too basic but yet contains errors (such as attributing the 1996 Khobar attacks to AQ and suggesting AQ existed as a force during the Soviet-Afghan war as opposed to emerging in its wake). Later on, the author confuses motivation and (post)justification in the context of usage of martyrdom ops and presents AQ as a tactical pioneer in this respect (ignoring the precedent of Shia militants in this context).

The LTTE sections present general overview and background material but little in the way of analysis. Bizarrely, moreover, the group is presented as a current and potent threat and there is no mention of its decline during the 2009 war.

The conclusions reflect the above and are inaccurate or superficial and the conclusion: ‘according to the researcher’s view, the terms terrorism, attack and bombing can interchangeably be used in this study because the act of terror and violence can be carried out by a specific tactic that is of suicide’ [sic] make little sense and hardly stand up to much scrutiny when we consider that the most infamous suicide attack in recent times (9/11) was a hijacking, not a bombing.

This paper has few, if any, redeeming features and it would be hard to see how it could be improved in its current form. In order to be accepted it would have to be much more focused, more original, more specific, more rigorous in its analysis and incisive in its findings.



## Appendix 2

From: Journal "Macedonian Veterinary Review  
<macvetrev@fvm.ukim.edu.mk>

Reviewer 2

The authors describe the detection of HPAIV H5N1 clade 2.3.2.1c in a sample from diseased chickens in the city of Baghdad, Iraq. Although only a single HA sequence is shown, the data nevertheless are interesting since not much is known about HPAIV in Iraq. Unfortunately, however, the study lacks significantly in structure and carefulness of data presentation.

- The authors should provide more precise description of the extent of the outbreak is required
- The authors should describe some details about how many farms in total have been affected, what kind of poultry, which clinical signs, what measures were taken to control the situation etc.
- The authors should generate the phylogenetic tree.
- A thorough revision is required including correction of the English language

### Biography:

#### Corresponding Author:

Sawsan Kareem Al-Saaidi is an assistant professor of English at the College of Education/ University of Al-Qadisiyah, Iraq. she held a PhD in applied linguistics/ critical discourse analysis obtained from Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). Her research interests include contrastive studies, critical discourse analysis, discourse and politics, and media discourse.

#### Co-Author:

Abdul-Ameer Hassan Al-Ubaidi is a teacher of English language at the elementary school. Currently, he is a MA candidate studying the genre of peer review reports. His interest lies in discourse analysis and genre analysis.