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The textual function of listing in the genre of abstract

Abstract

The academic genre of abstract is characteristic of a set of communicative functions ranging from purely informative up to potentially manipulative ones. The latter may be interpreted as the writer's aim to persuade the readership on the significance of original work which he or she happens to fulfill by the use of different linguistic and textual practices. The present research homes in on the textual tool of listing from Jeffries' stylistic framework (2007, 2010, 2014) and examines its usage and potential ideological effects in the chosen academic genre. For this purpose, the corpus of English thesis abstracts written by non-native users of English is compiled and investigated from the structural and functional perspectives. Based on the analysis, the fact that three-part lists tend to be of greatest ideological potential in the academic writing in question corroborates the previous research. More importantly, according to the interpretation of a number of instances in the present corpus, the two-part and four and more-part lists may be potentially symbolic, too; however this finding needs to be further thoroughly investigated.

Key words: listing, exemplifying and enumerating, abstract, analysis, critical stylistics, ideology.

1. Introduction

Academics, like everyone else, have to attract people to their work. In today's research world, it is the genre of abstract which seems to fulfil this need and apart from its underlying communicative function (Swales, 1990, p. 58), it inherently aims at persuading the receiver of a communicative message to read the original writing. In doing so, the authors of abstracts are given the option of employing the ideologically-loaded textual and linguistic practices whose effects on the readership are subjected to research in the present paper.

The evidence of ideology in non-literary genres has been previously studied with the aim to reveal the role of author and reader in constructing and interpreting an ideological meaning (cf. Jeffries, 2007, 2010). In these studies, the concept of style reifies unconscious and conscious choices of a text producer which appear to be subject to the pressure of a particular subgenre or text type and thus may be interpreted as always ideologically-loaded, sometimes even manipulative (Jeffries, 2010, p. 3). An individual choice of style subsequently influences a choice of genre, subgenre or text type which is characterised by rhetorical strategies used within the chosen genre form. The rhetorical strategies are directly reflected in the use of textual and linguistic practices amongst which a set of textual tools may be identified.

Given the overall purpose and common methodological basis of the present publication, the tools of exemplifying and enumerating appear to fit best into the picture of the non-literary genre of abstract at hand. The tools blend the formal and functional aspects of language since they textually construct semantic relations in form of one or more examples of a general case or in form of enumeration of all the different variants. Based on the previous research on the stylistic ideology, it is the three-part list which seems to frequently function as a symbolic form indicating completeness without being a real list, predominantly employed in political speech (Jeffries, 2007, p. 105). Nevertheless, other cases of examples and enumeration as well as different settings may present potential ideological consequences and a particular world view, too (Jeffries, 2014, p. 414).

This study thus investigates the power and potential ideology of listing in language employed in a particular text type, hence English thesis abstracts written in the Slovak academic setting of Prešov University. In doing so, it draws on a set of methodological approaches in order to reveal the frequency of lists, their structural and functional properties with the primary focus on potential ideological effects. What is more, it partially outlines the peculiarities of listing in connection with the rhetorical moves forming a thesis abstract.

2. The concept of ideology and the genre of abstract

Drawing on Jeffries' definition of style (2010, p. 3), the style of academic writing may be interpreted as specific choices of a text producer, hence his or her selections from a set of characteristics of language and structure which indicate a particular genre, subgenre or text type. The academic genres are conventionally centred around the communication function which happens to be superordinate to their linguistic and structural features (Jeffries, 2007, p. 26). The genre of abstract with its text subtypes thus primarily functions as a 'communicator' of the information on the original academic work. What is more, in the setting of Slovak academia whose majority of publications happen to be still written in the Slovak language, it is the genre of English-written abstract which can be construed as the only contact with non-Slovak speaking research world. This seems to be a rationale behind considering the abstract in this particular case to be even more ideologically powerful than their Slovak or native English counterparts.

In order to narrow down the scope of the present research, one particular text type, i.e. thesis abstract (TA), whose use is closely interconnected with the academic subgenre of final thesis, is put under scrutiny here. Since the 1950s, its customary position at the beginning of

final theses may, ideologically speaking, imply the significance of this genre for the thesis academic writing in general (Stašková, 2005, p. 29). Further from the structural perspective, it represents the linear and informative type of research article abstract which follows the form of the original final thesis. The structure of TA is thus reflected in a set of rhetorical moves in co-called Koopman's model (1997) which includes Motivation; Problem Statement; Methodology, Approaches and Procedures; Results and Conclusion. The rhetorical moves happen to mirror the persuasive strategies aiming to fulfil the basic communicative goals of the individual parts of TA; hence Motivation draws the reader's attention and raises his or her interest in the topic; Problem Statement shows the author's orientation in the area of study and states the research aims; the move of Methodology, Approaches and Procedures introduces the fundamental principles of the original thesis and its research, it further makes the thesis and research up-to-date and technically well-grounded; the Results part demonstrates the contribution of the final thesis and its significance for a wider research community and Conclusion summarises the previous moves in form of repetition which may illustrate a potential process of naturalisation of the communicative message.

The rhetorical moves reflected in the persuasive strategies with specific communicative goals point to axiomatic functions of TA which comprise informing the readership on the original thesis, motivating the readers to read the original thesis, and thus persuading them of its relevance in the context of other academic writings. In order to fulfil these functions, the writer opts for different types of linguistic and textual practices which happen to be carriers of a potential ideological effect. Amongst them, the present research homes in on the tool of listing employed in the academic discourse written by non-native English users and examines its structural properties, functional interpretation and ideological potential.

3. Data and methodology

As the preliminary section indicates, the primary aim of the empirical research is to reveal the power and potential ideology of listing in the text type of thesis abstract written in English by Slovak students in the setting of the Faculty of Management at Prešov University, Slovakia. Since English represents a key element in profiling future successful managers, it became an integral part of the curricula of this study programme. According to the study plan and syllabi, the students of Management are offered 26 hours per semester per academic year of 'English for Managers' which fosters the skills of reading and communication in the field of

business, marketing and advertising and the development of student's grammar and style in academic English. In addition, the students take an exam in 'Academic English' in the course of their PhD studies which includes abstract writing as well. Except for these courses, Prešov University provides the standards for writing thesis abstracts summed up in the document *STN ISO 214 Abstracts (Reports) for Publication and Documentation* which is valid in the setting of all its faculties. Based on the foregoing, the chosen sample of writers for the present analysis appears to share a reasonable background in the use of English and in the stylistic peculiarities of TA writing.

Drawing on the given academic setting and its participants, a small-scale corpus is compiled for the purpose of the present research and further determines the methodological choice of a case study which enables this study to “observe effects in real contexts” (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 181). The written academic discourse is considered here to be a real context since TA writing is not interfered by the present author as well as the investigated data are not set up for the research purposes. The corpus thus illustrates natural outputs of the process of thesis writing fulfilling its inherent communicative function.

Three aspects, i.e. English versions of TA, the Slovak university setting and the stylistic tool with the potential ideological consequences, provide the study with the external criteria for data collection and their subsequent analysis. Firstly, it is the choice of listing and its ideological effects in the sample of discourse at hand as a subject of the analysis. Secondly, the analysed discourse is limited to the setting of the Faculty of Management at Prešov University whose students, be they undergraduates, graduates and postgraduates, fall into the profile of non-native English users with a reasonable linguistic background. Last but not least, the research homes in on the naturally occurring written academic text type of TA retrieved from the electronic database of *Centrálny register záverečných a kvalifikačných prác*⁴. A total of a hundred and thirty-nine thesis abstracts covers Bachelor, Master's and PhD levels of education which, for the purpose of the present research of ideological effects, fall into the category of a complete model of TA, i.e. including all five rhetorical moves.

In the first step of data collection, a pre-corpus including both complete and incomplete models of TA is compiled. Its overall size is determined by the number of PhD theses with English-written abstracts available in the electronic database at the time of data collection as the identical number of Master's and Bachelor thesis abstracts are subsequently retrieved from the database. All collected abstracts are transferred into text documents and

⁴ The author's translation: The Central Registry of Final and Qualification Theses.

their individual rhetorical moves are examined and highlighted manually within the documents. This helps the present author identify the move in which a list occurs in the course of analysis. Finally, the complete thesis abstracts are selected from the pre-corpus to compile the final sample subjected to research here.

Turning to the methodological approach, the present paper follows the analytical framework (Jeffries, 2010, pp. 66-76) referring to the linguistic model of exemplifying and enumerating, their form, function and ideological effects. Therefore in the early stages of the research at hand, the quantitative approach is applied in order to provide the frequency of individual lists which are identified manually; additional assistance is provided by the software *AntConc 3.4.3* (Anthony, 2014) when opting for the search word 'and' frequently employed between penultimate and final items in lists. Since the present sample represents a small-scale corpus, the manual analysis happens to be predominant here that may bring about its subjective character not completely avoidable during the research process. All sentences including identified lists are subsequently sorted into five tables according to the rhetorical moves in which they occur. The lists are further categorised dependent on the number of textual items and the type of phrase they represent, hence noun phrase, adjective phrase, verb phrase etc. On this basis, other structural properties of TA such as textual triggers and catch-all items can be identified.

What is more important here is the qualitative interpretation of individual lists from the linguistic and functional perspectives since it is the interpretation which seems to be a key point in revealing the potential ideological effects. Moreover, the present analysis partially focuses on the interconnection between listing and rhetorical moves which may shed some light on how a particular type of list fulfils the function peculiar to a rhetorical move. To put it in other words, it can be the ideology hidden behind the use of individual listing structures which enhances the specific communicative function representing a move in TA. As a result, some of the lists can be construed as being characteristic of a rhetorical move regarding their use in the non-native English-speaking academic setting.

Based on the foregoing, the research questions are formulated as follows:

- 1) What is the occurrence of lists in the corpus of thesis abstracts regarding their structural properties?
- 2) Is there a stylistic preference for the specific forms of listing within the individual rhetorical moves in the sample at hand?
- 3) How can the revealed lists be interpreted in terms of their potential ideological effects?
- 4) Is the symbolic function of completeness restricted to three-part lists?

- 5) What is a functional interconnection between listing and rhetorical moves?
- 6) Which rhetorical move can be interpreted as the most ideologically-loaded?

4. Analysis and discussion

4.1 Structural properties of listing

Starting with the quantitative view on the data in question, three-part lists slightly predominate in the corpus of TA and thus may evince the greatest potential for an ideological interpretation. On the whole, the total number of 122 instances of three-part listing is followed by four and more⁵ in 118 and two-part lists in 114 cases. Based on these results, it can be however implied that the instances of individual listing types are not different enough to be significant here.

The internal structure of the majority of lists in the present data is made up of noun phrases. However, only four and more-part lists demonstrate a hundred per cent presence of noun phrases with 'and' as a penultimate element. Another outcome concerning four and more-part listing is the highest occurrence of textual triggers such as *named as; this is such as; including; especially* and punctuation marks : and = .

As to the structural properties of three-part lists, they have a relatively low incidence of noun phrases compared with longer lists since the noun phrase provides 60% here, followed by the use of infinitives within verb phrases, adjective phrases⁶ and other verb phrases. Similarly to the previous type of listing, the overwhelming majority of instances (95 %) are accompanied by 'and' in its penultimate position within the phrases; on the other hand, there are only two instances of the textual triggers revealed, both represented by *e.g.*.

Although noun phrases are not totally absent from two-part listing, the leading position belongs to adjective phrases (59%) followed by infinitives within verb phrases, noun phrases and other verb phrases – all characteristic of the usage of the penultimate item 'and' in lists. Interestingly enough, there is a zero occurrence of textual triggers employed in this type of listing.

⁵ This type of listing ranges from four up to eleven items in the corpus at hand with 50 % standing for four-part lists.

⁶ A complex nature of adjective phrase in English morphology is most evident in its close link to the concept of substantiality reflected by noun phrases. Adjective phrase tends to encode qualitative aspects of a substance, frequently in form of its modifier, thus it can be seen as a part of noun phrase (Ferenčík, 2013, p. 138). In the study at hand, the lexical items generating lists are categorised into adjective phrases on condition they modify the same head of the phrase, e.g. *the theoretical and practical part*. All other cases are considered to be noun phrases, e.g. *the theoretical framework and practical application*. Both examples are taken from the corpus in question.

Another infrequent textual item in the data at hand is the use of catch-all phrases which are present in only 6% of all lists, e.g. *etc.*, *and other areas*. This partial result may thus imply a non-characteristic feature of academic writing and a lower degree of potential ideological effect on the readership of TA; however, the ideological function of catch-all items may be supplanted by other textual practices.

Given the corpus consists of structurally ideal thesis abstracts with five rhetorical moves, the overall distribution and use of lists within them can be clearly identified. The following figures show the structural dependence between listing and moves. The highest occurrence of listing seems to be in the move of Problem Statement (45%), followed by Methodology, Approaches and Procedures (38%), Motivation (7%), Results (7%) and Conclusion (3%).

Drawing on the occurrences of individual types of lists within the moves in the present corpus, two-part and three-part listing are both most frequently employed within Problem Statement. Four and more-part listing are equally predominantly used in the moves of Methodology, Approaches and Procedures and Results. However, the overall distribution of lists shows a low percentage in the moves of Motivation and Conclusion. By way of illustration, the perspective of rhetorical moves demonstrates slightly different results. Motivation seems to predominantly make use of three-part lists; Problem Statement of two-part lists; the moves of Methodology, Approaches and Procedures and Results of four and more-part lists; and Conclusion of two-part listing.

It is evident that this quantitative picture reflects potential ideological effects behind the lists by means of a significant difference in type of listing by section and provides a picture of the usage of lists within the text type of thesis abstract and its rhetorical moves. This happens to be a reasonable starting point for their functional interpretation and further investigation of the relation between the type of listing and the content of individual rhetorical moves.

4.2 Functional interpretation of listing

Given the fact that all four and more-part lists fall under one structural category, one can expect the same when it comes to their functional effects. Generally speaking, the number of items in four and more-part listing underpinned by the use of textual triggers mirror the function of explicitness being in opposition to the symbolic function. Based on the foregoing, the fact that these lists are taken to be literal corroborates the general assumption and previous

research studies (cf. Jeffries, 2010, p. 70), hence its least potential ideological impact on the readership can be confirmed.

However, looking at the issue from a different perspective, the literal completeness may have in a specific textual type the ideological consequences, too. The following examples illustrate the recurring patterns evinced in the moves of Methodology, Approaches and Procedures and Results respectively; (1) enumerating all parts included in the second chapter of the original thesis and (2) stating the recommended practices arising out of the analysis carried out in the original thesis.

(1) The second chapter describes research project, methodology, the main objective, sub-objectives, research questions, research hypothesis and research sample.

(2) [Their business should focus on individual practices HRM under the influence of globalization.] These are a HR planning, recruitment and selection, training and development as well as remuneration employees.

(1) and (2) appear to represent genuine lists whose function of explicitness and completeness can be moreover construed as a form of the actual involvement of authors in their research. According to this interpretation, the instances overemphasise the presence of authors in the text which is beyond the usual assumption that an author is present behind a text. In fact, the text in this case represents the process of research done by the authors. Therefore, the lists in (1) and (2) similarly aim the reader's attention to the authors' responsibility for the process or results of the research, orientation in the field of study and, most importantly, these lists happen to enable the authors to promote themselves and their individual contributions. This interpretation is certainly not applicable to all four and more-part lists in the corpus; however, it does demonstrate a potential ideological motivation behind this type of listing, too.

As mentioned above, there are also a considerable number of explicitly genuine lists in the data at hand. These are identified from the original set by the present author according to the semantic characteristics of the individual textual items. The lists considered genuine include references to different models, analytical processes and terms, i.e. words which convey the specific meaning in the given context as illustrated in the following excerpts.

(3) The analysis of the Slovak market of the legal services includes also numbers of professionals in the following professions: attorney-at-law, notary public, tax advisors, patent agent, trustee in bankruptcy in particular counties and districts.

(4) Further, a potential relationship between regional growth is measured using regional GDP per capita and other factors are examined: state of direct foreign investments, trends in unemployment claims, employment, number of new employment positions, financing sources, the cost of creation of industrial parks, and the effects of regional development.

(5) Group of credibility models were included in the research: Douchová balance sheet analysis and Quick test, the bankruptcy models Altman Z-score, Fulmer model, Creditworthiness index, Index IN, Taffler model and Springate model.

These longer lists happen to be most frequent in the move of Methodology, Approaches and Procedures which inherently calls for the exact steps and workings of the research done and described in the original theses. What is more, the individual textual items within genuine lists in the data at hand seems to be of one-off occurrence which stands in opposition to the symbolic lists whose items appear to be more recurrent in the sample, e.g. the occurrence of *Index IN* in the example of a genuine list (5) and *the analytical research* in the instance of a symbolic list (3). Further comments on their use in relation to the rhetorical moves are discussed in the following section.

As pointed out above, the greatest ideological effect is believed to be in three-part listing frequently fulfilling the symbolic function. In the present corpus of academic writing, these lists appear to be characteristic of the move of Problem Statement and partially Motivation that are, in a way, connected with their symbolic function since the underlying goals of these moves are to draw reader's attention, raise his or her interest in the topic and state the research aims. Sentences (6) and (7) instantiate the representative structures of the occurrences of three-part lists in the sample; (6) describing the objective of the original thesis in the move of Problem Statement and (7) naming the demands of a modern customer of spas in the Motivation part.

(6) The main objective of this work is to find the solution for problems in theoretical study, analytical research and application area.

(7) However, even spas have been influenced by new trends and the modern customer demands health prevention, relaxation as well as wellness services.

The first illustration represents a structural model of three-part lists which can be found in several variations in the corpus at hand, particularly within the move of Problem Statement. These lists are predominately made of three noun phrases, here being a part of the prepositional phrase post-modifying the noun *problems*. The pre-modifiers in form of adjectives *theoretical*, *analytical* and a compound noun *application area* seem to be general in their lexical meaning and thus can cover a wide range of academic areas. What is more, *theoretical* and *analytical* overlap the model of opposites and *analytical* and *application* overlap in their meaning synonymous with empirical. To put it in other words, the pre-modifiers imply that all possible areas of research are involved in the original study.

As to the heads of noun phrases *study – research – area*, they also appear to stand for linguistically broad terms covering different academic activities. What is interesting here is that on the one hand, *study* and *research* overlap in their meaning, however on the other hand, they may be considered the opposites since *research* is usually associated with analyses and *study* with a theoretical framework that is in this case underpinned by the use of their pre-modifiers. All in all, the analysed three-part list, representing the recurring structural and lexical pattern in the move of Problem Statement, appears not to be a genuine list example since it aims at making the impression of completeness and representativeness indicating that all research possibilities are covered in the original thesis.

As to the example (7), it needs to be noted that Motivation seems not to be characteristic of the usage of lists in general, thus in this case, one cannot speak of the recurring pattern in the sample. However, since the main communicative goal of this move is, according to its name, motivation, it appears to be worthwhile to investigate the example in detail.

(7) introduces the issue of spas and their management with the focus on customers' demands. The three-part list consists of three noun phrases, two of them compound nouns pre-modified by *health* and *wellness*. The two pre-modifiers are relatively synonymous and do not appear to overlap the category of opposites explicitly, however on a connotative level, *health* representing a traditional value and *wellness* being a more trendy new term may imply the spas can offer both the traditional procedures in order to cure a disease and trendy new services providing extra care. As to the heads of noun phrases *prevention – relaxation – services*, they can be also put on the continuum of conventional versus trendy and new, hence prevention of an illness on its one end versus additional (wellness) services on the other with the neutral and inherent spa activity in the middle. Therefore, the combination of three items once again seems to implicitly cover all kinds of possible customers' demands which can be offered by spas. This thus upholds its symbolic function within the textual realisation.

As indicated in the examples of three-part listing, there are a significant number of lexical items which overlap the category of opposites. Their most visible ideological effect is, however, connected with the usage of two-part lists by and large represented by adjective phrases as can be seen in the following representative phrase:

(8) The main objectives of this work can be divided into theoretical and practical.

The opposite pairs consisting of *theoretical* and *practical*, including the alternatives of *empirical* and *analytical* in the corpus, conventionally modify the head denoting parts of the

original thesis or the nature of academic activities carried out in the original research. One can notice that their usage demonstrates a high degree of clichéd or prefabricated language which in effect does not convey a new piece of information since the majority of, if not all, final theses are supposed to include both theory and actual research. The underlying purpose of such a phrase is therefore other than informative and its use is certainly rhetorical if not completely ideological here.

This repetition of the fact that should be well-known by participants of the academic community seems to function as a deliberate indicator of its importance in discourse. Overdoing the emphasis on this fact is even underscored by the stylistic choice of opposites and together lead to the symbolic function of completeness. To put it in other words, if the writer of thesis abstract stresses the fact that the original thesis comprises theoretical and practical objectives, what can the reader deduce from it? Probably that the thesis *does* (based on the repetition of this fact) cover *everything* (drawing on the opposites) – hence the picture-perfect structure in which the theoretical objective, being the umbrella term for a chosen theoretical framework, the outline of previous studies and the like, is fulfilled and followed by the author's contribution to the field of study in the practical part, including methodology, its results etc. Whether the individual parts are included and the objectives fulfilled in the original thesis or not is irrelevant here; on the other hand, the important thing is that the phrase made of two-part listing implies that the reader can virtually find everything in the original work he or she can think of which is without a shadow of doubt ideologically-loaded.

On the whole, the functional interpretation indicates a link behind the symbolic use of individual listing types and rhetorical moves in the present corpus of thesis abstracts which is aimed to be further investigated in the following section.

4.3 Listing and rhetorical moves

Partially indicated in the course of structural and functional interpretation of individual lists, there is a potential connection between the chosen textual-conceptual tools and the rhetorical moves. On the basis of the analysis, one can see a couple of recurring patterns present in the corpus which reveal the preference for the specific lists in the individual moves in the data of thesis abstracts.

The first move conventionally forming the beginning of TA with the communicative goal of drawing the reader's attention is interestingly not characterised by the frequent use of listing. Although a couple of instances reveal the symbolic effects of three-part lists, e.g.

excerpts (9) and (10), it is not possible to make generalisations regarding the links between the move of Motivation, three-part listing and ideological effects on their basis.

(9) Educational level is important indicator of prosperity, country and region development as well as whole society.

(10) However, even spas have been influenced by new trends affecting customers' demand e.g. health prevention, the need for rest and relaxation, interest in wellness services.

A different case in point seems to be the second rhetorical move of Problem Statement which most frequently employs the textual-conceptual tool of listing with the equal evidence of two-part and three-part lists. What is important here is that the communicative purpose of this move is fulfilled by the use of ideologically-loaded listing usually centred around the opposites which imply the completeness of such lists. In order to answer one of the research questions, it is the move of Problem Statement within which the writers appear to consciously or subconsciously rely on the potential ideological effects of lists and which can be therefore characterised as most ideologically-loaded in the analysed sample.

The two types of listing apparently demonstrate a difference in relation to perceived completeness. As far as the analysed three-part lists are concerned, the interpretation of their symbolic nature corresponds with the Beard's view. He points out their symbolic sense of unity which is embedded in certain cultures; they thus happen to be attractive to the speakers and writers as well as the listeners and readers (Beard, 2000, p. 38 cited in Jeffries, 2010, p. 70). On the other hand, the ideological power of two-part lists appears to lie in the lexical choice of the items. In order to underpin the symbolic function of these lists, the authors of TA seem to make use of the opposites which are mutually exclusive in their meanings. This enables the writers to cover the two opposite aspects and merge them into a symbolic sense of completeness. The symbolic use of three-part and two-part lists within the move of Problem Statement is illustrated as follows:

(11) The main objective of this work is filled with the realization of partial targets, which imply the solution of problems in theoretical research, analytical and application area.

(12) The main objective of this work is theoretical definition and practical application of scientific solutions to the problem of the impact of human resource management practices on organizational performance.

The nature of the following two moves, hence Methodology, Approaches and Procedures and Results, happens to be apt for employing four and more-part listing. These generally genuine lists seem not to be inherently ideological. However, when taking a different perspective, there can be evinced a hint of ideology, though. It seems that the more-

part lists aim to impress the readership by 'the more, the better' – the longer the list is, the more time was dedicated to the research or the greater involvement of the author may be perceived – and such an impression can be ideologically-loaded here.

At this point, an interesting question arises out of the difference between the explicitly genuine lists and genuine lists which are according to this study also employed in order to achieve an ideological effect (cf. 4.2). As to the explicitly genuine lists, they are predominantly used for communicative and informative reasons, in particular within the move of Methodology, Approaches and Procedures; and include only three-part and four and more-part listing in the data at hand with the predominance of the latter. It is obvious that the move of Methodology, Approaches and Procedures aims at providing the details of the process of the given research which clearly influences the content of these lists. The individual textual and linguistic items within the genuine lists in question therefore exclusively pertain to the lexical words which are much narrowed in their meanings. They mainly cover the area of terminology, references to actual models and types of analytical processes which are critical to the given research and thesis. The following examples demonstrate two different uses of four and more-part lists within the move of Methodology, Approaches and Procedures employed in the present corpus, i.e. the symbolic (13) and genuine listing (14).

(13) In the last chapter theoretical and practical, scientific-research and pedagogical benefits of the thesis as well as limitations of the research and recommendations for further research are presented.

(14) For questionnaire evaluation we used mathematic-statistical analyses especially Pearson correlation analysis, descriptive statistic methods – Eta coefficient, frequent tables and describing characteristics of numeral variables (statistical average and statistical divergence), factor analysis etc.

Finally, the move of Conclusion seems to be beyond the ideological interpretation regarding its structural as well as functional properties in the corpus at hand which is particularly due to the low frequency of listing in this move. However, this partial result does not aim to claim this move cannot be ideologically effective in a larger corpus of abstracts or in a different academic setting.

5. Conclusion

The analysed genre type of English thesis abstract written by non-native English users seems to take in a handful of examples of the recurring lists employed in a symbolic way. The preliminary quantitative point of view already implies the ideological nature of the sample

and provides a solid basis for further investigation of the symbolic listing by way of stating the fundamental frequency-based characteristics of the data. These characteristics show a slight predominance of three-part listing, the highest occurrences of lists within the move of Problem Statement and the prototypical structure of lists consisting of noun phrases.

The potential ideology behind the lists can be, however, revealed on the basis of its qualitative interpretation. Although the present research generally supports the claim that the greatest ideological potential is evident in three-part lists, it regards some of the two- and four and more-part lists as symbolic, too. The two-part lists characteristic of Problem Statement seem to overlap the function of opposition which helps them achieve the effect of completeness in the analysed type of discourse. As to the four and more-part listing, it does form complete or genuine lists and finds its hegemonic tendency in the moves of Methodology, Approaches and Procedures and Results. However, their literal completeness may be ideologically-motivated as by its usage the writer intentionally stresses his or her involvement in the research which raises the relevance of the original thesis.

All in all, while the overall findings of the present analysis correlate with the outcomes of previous studies on ideological effects of listing underlining the symbolic function of three-part lists, the interpretation of a couple of instances simultaneously shows the rationale behind considering other types of lists to be ideologically-loaded which may be a good case in point for further empirical research.

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