



## Analysing Show Cause Notices based on Applied Genre Analysis: a Multi-perspective Model

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**Abstract:** *The current research papers targets to investigate the genre of Show Cause notices (SCNs) based on theoretical approaches of genre analysis (Bhatia, 1999) and applied genre analysis (Bhatia, 2002). The reason to carry the said study is to identify the correlation among the textual, generic and social perspectives of Show cause notices. The corpus of ninety show cause notices was gathered and analyzed by applying applied genre analysis: a multi-perspective model of Bhatia (2002). The theoretical concerns (1999) directed towards the language use in four categories; purpose, products, process and players which are affirmed through the analytical analysis. The findings through qualitative and quantitative paradigms of research represented that purpose of the SCNs and lexico-grammatical features are the mainstreams to suggest the structure patterning in the text to shape such genre as highly formal, objective and professional. The social perspective reflected the participants in no personal terms, clear separate power zones and the addresser's cognitive understanding of communicative event and purpose.*

**Key Words:** Show Cause Notices, Genre Analysis, Applied Genre Analysis, Corpus

### Introduction

Show cause notices (SCNs) are professional and legal documents to warn the members of the discourse community. This is a written document to elicit the response of an individual by mentioning his wrongdoings or intensions in a specified discourse community. The Show Cause notices (SCNs) demand a written response as to why disciplinary action should not be taken against the individual. The SCNs are very direct in communication and avoid 'buffering' to nominate the person involved in misconduct. Such documents develop a particular discourse and communicate with a specific discourse community in a given context. Therefore, they develop a genre of

SCNs. The current study aims to investigate the communicative function/s of SCNs in the Pakistani context. In Pakistan, academically and professionally, there are public and private sectors and both have separate learning and working environment. The occurrence of any communicative event with desired communicative functions is more frequent in the public sector. It is a possibility to observe the overlapping of communicative events of different departments and their genres can be merged. The performance of genre is observed in the social context; therefore, the genre of show cause notices issued by the courts was ignored and genres of SCNs issued from the different Pakistani government offices were selected.

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The objective of the study is to deconstruct the textual, generic and social knowledge of the SCNs of Pakistani government offices and to identify whether such professional warning notices develop the social relations of a discourse community. It is not easy to deliver the SCNs as the genre is very much formal, structured and objective. This study helps to understand the textual inferences and to identify the reasons for such lexicogrammatical features. Bhatia (1993) presented the theoretical framework for analyzing genre; where linguistic analysis leads towards genre analysis. However, the current study targets to identify the micro and macro structures SCNs' genre. The current study is unique to represent the communicative purpose of SCNs in the Pakistani context. The study would, further, open up future research doors for the new analytical approach towards genre analysis and the genre of SCNs.

## Review of Literature

Usually, genres as "a class of communicative events that share some set of communicative purposes" (Swales, 1990) are identified. The content, form, and functionality of the selected communicative events reflect the communicative functions (Shaw, 2014) and performing this analysis process is actually a genre analysis. As previously explained, genre analysis is a social communication need (Bhatia, 1993 and Swales, 1990), which is gradually increasing due to the demands of communication in the context of globalization and ever-growing media. The language analysis enables the researchers to identify patterns of forms and functions in particular genres. Bhatia (2002) defined genre analysis as a multi-disciplinary activity used to determine the form of any specific text and to assist individuals to produce them in a varied way by using the appropriate choice of lexicon and grammar. In this sense, a variety of genres is constantly appearing in form of emails, chats, commercial brochures, websites and blogs in the written or spoken channel. Genres can

overlap their similarities and differences; therefore, each genre carries specific features that require the use of appropriate language code (Pfenniger, 2008). Fairclough (2013) highlighted that social power or any specific communicative purpose can be achieved in a specific context by involving an individual's social status. This is to make the language forms, in a particular discourse, unique for the said genre.

In order to analyze genres, there are different aspects that need to be in consideration by determining the purpose of the genre. Much work has been done concerning theoretical approaches and practical models for analyzing genre (Swales, 1990; Killingsworth & Gilbertson, 1992; Bhatia, 1993; Hyland, 2000; Lassen, 2003). Swales and Bhatia (1990, 1993) extended their own models to show further advancements in genre analysis.

However, all in the field of genre target to deduce the comprehensive theoretical approaches and elaborative analytical model to allow realistic genre analysis (Bhatia, 2002).

## Research Questions

The following research questions are bifurcated for the present study;

1. What is/are the communicative purpose/s of Show Cause Notices (SCNs) in the Pakistani context?
2. How do the textual aspects of Show Cause Notices (SCNs) perform the communicative purpose?
3. How do show Cause Notices (SCNs) represent multi-perspectives of discourse?

## Methodology and Theoretical Framework

### Corpus

For the current study, ninety show-cause notices were collected from three different government offices from December 2017 to September 2018; there were thirty show-cause notices from each office.

**Table 1.** Division and Frequency of Show Cause Notices.

Source of Show Cause Notices	Frequency
District Police Office, D.G.Khan	30
Office of Canals, D.G.Khan	30
Office of Forest, D.G.Khan	30
Total Show Cause Notices (SCN)	90

## Process

The random selection of the show cause notices was done. There are varieties of show cause notices; one is issued to elicit the response of the addressee for the stern warning and it is like the letter of hearing for the alleged behaviour or action of the addressee. The other is to implement the penalty after finding the person a real culprit. The current research is limited to the genre analysis of the former show cause notices. The gathered show-cause notices were analysed manually; first descriptive inferences were made concerning the purpose of the addresser for issuing show-cause notices. After that, textual knowledge of SCN was deduced by knowing the frequencies of each aspect. The textual knowledge led towards the structural patterning of the genre and finally, the social perspective of the SCN discourse was elicited by applying the knowledge of the first two aspects.

The theoretical frameworks of Bhatia's genre analysis (1999) and applied genre analysis (2002) provided the theoretical concern and the data was analysed by applying the model of applied genre analysis by Bhatia (2002). The theoretical concerns (1999) directed towards language use in four categories; *purpose, products, process and players*. The use of the mentioned four elements may vary in different discourse communities. Therefore, Bhatia (2002) devised a multi-perspective model covering products, processes and players. The model has some advantages for analyzing genres. The identification of three layers named 'perspectives of discourse' and its vast coverage over the discourse highlights the functional value of the model (Bhatia, 2002). Bhatia

(2002) mentioned three perspectives of discourse to interact with each other in any selected discourse. The model does not only talk about the structure or the patterns in a given discourse, rather it directs towards the application of those patterns and bridges the different aspects of discourse. Bhatia's applied genre analytical model (2002) represented three perspectives which are;

1. Discourse as text (Textual knowledge)
2. Discourse as genre (Genre knowledge)
3. Discourse as social practice (Social knowledge)

Habibi (2008) labelled such discourse analysis as 'a multi-functional analysis under Bhatia's model. Bhatia (1997) suggested two approaches for applying the analytical model; 'top-down' (social practices to textual information) or 'bottom-up' (textual information to social practices). The textual information helps to understand the connection between the structure of the genre and its practices in society.

Therefore, for analyzing show cause notices, Bhatia's multidisciplinary model was used as it gives the textual knowledge, structural pattern and social practices of the discourse and the Bottom-up approach was used to explore the connectivity among all three perspectives of discourse.

## Data Analysis and Findings

To explore the answers to research questions, qualitative and quantitative modes of research paradigm were used; descriptive and statistical aspects of the collected corpus were interpreted under the three perspectives of applied genre analysis which is the model of Bhatia (2002).

**Table 2.** Division and Frequency of show Cause Notices as Per Purpose/s.

SCNs Issuing Offices	The Purpose for SCNs(Reason for Warning)	Frequency
District Police Office, D.G.Khan	Inefficient and Irresponsible	28
	Misconduct	02
Office of Canals, D.G.Khan	Theft of water	18
	Absentee	12
Office of Forest, D.G.Khan	Plant/tree Damage	18
	Absentee	07
	Misconduct	05

The purpose of the SCN is regarded as the theme of the SCN. The table represents that 93% SCNs in District Police Office are issued on inefficiency and irresponsibility of the members of the police community whereas only seven per cent are due to the misconduct of the members. The SCN issued from the office of Canals is categorized as 60% and 40% for water theft and for being absentee on duty respectively. The 16% SCN, 23% SCN and 60% SCN from the office of forest represent the arena of misconduct, being absentee and for plant/tree damage. The nature of SCN represented the social power and context of the

discourse of SCN which, in turn, can affect the textual knowledge and law reforms of SCN of every discourse community.

From a textual perspective, the linguistic information and lexico-grammatical features were analyzed descriptively and statistically. In this domain, lexical items were studied carefully, as they convey the theme of the notices. There is much repetition of legal vocabulary and references to law reforms to support the word choices. The most common legal words found in SCN are enlisted.

**Table 3.** Frequency of Common Legal Lexis in Show Cause Notices.

Most Common Legal Words in SCN	District Police Office, D.G.Khan	Office of Canals, D.G.Khan	Office of Forest, D.G.Khan
Hereby	100	100%	100%
Whereas	85%	100%	100%
Hearing	04%	08%	36%
Aforesaid	100%	93%	90%
Ex-parte	100%	03%	Nil
Tantamount	100%	Nil	Nil
Undersigned	Nil	100%	100%

The frequency division of legal words highlights that the word 'hereby' is used in all SCN; the word is a reference word for the mentioned information and it is to convey the message formally and professionally. The SCN of the police department shows more frequency of legal words as compared to that of the other two offices. The high percentage of legal words in SCNs of police officers would be discussed from a social perspective in detail. Along with legal words, high use of affixes is used to shape

the compound words to convey objective information in a very formal and discrete way.

The use of the pronoun is restricted to first person (I) and second person (you). All SCNs represent the pronoun 'You' (100%) with the name of the addressee (For instance; You, Name...). It reflects the direct address from the addresser and the discourse of warning is identified. The first person pronoun (I) is used only in the SCNs of offices of canals, where 'I' is marked with 'undersigned' or 'competent authority'.

The textual information in all SCNs is in the form of paragraphs (paras) which are marked by numbers ranging from para No.1 to para No.5. First two paras are to mention the purpose of the SCN to the addressee with reference to the Acts/law reforms or rules of the said office. Para no.3 is to mention the possible penalties with reference to the law/Act or rules of the said office. Para no.4 is to elicit the response of the addressee in a given time (which is seven days in almost all SCNs). The threat of implementing penalties or penalties is already mentioned in para. no 3 is announced in case of no response from SCN. Para no.5 mentions the proposed ground of action. The SCNs represent objective, legal and highly formal language which ensures its communicative purpose through excessive but relevant referencing. For example; the SCNs reflect the allegation, legal action, rights and

feedback with authentic legal references concerning dates of action, witnesses, Acts and rule nos.

The mentioned first four paras are the combination of complex or compound sentences; there is no single simple sentence in the first four paras. Only para no.5 carries a single simple sentence to refer to para no.1

The textual detail varies as per the detail of the action or the conduct but there are two types of sentences active and passive sentences. Active sentences (30%) are used to mark the illegal act or conduct of the addressee whereas passive sentences (70%) are used to announce the threat of penalties and 'presumed' and 'supposed' verbs are also in use to drop the threatening sound. All sentences are declarative in nature to represent past, present and future tense.

**Table 4.** Frequency of Tenses in Show Cause Notices.

Offices to issue SCNs	Past Tense	Present Tense	Future Tense
District Police Office, D.G.Khan	54%	38%	08%
Office of Canals, D.G.Khan	14%	72%	14%
Office of Forest, D.G.Khan	20%	70%	10%

The SCNs of offices of forest and canals represent maximum use of present tense which reflects the policy of the said office to emphasize the present situation of the past action whereas the office of police shows the reverse situation. More use of the past tenses represents the detail of the past action and the present tense is just to highlight what is liable for the addressee to the response. Very limited use of future tense restricted to show the threat of future penalty implementation.

The textual information is the source to convey the hidden meanings which represent the social practices of a particular community in a specified context.

*From a genre perspective*, the structural patterning of the genre is observed. The genre can be divided into moves and steps to perform the communicative function. Swales (1990) identified moves as structured patterns of the

text with particular communicative purpose/s, which are further divided into steps. The following moves were identified in the corpus of SCNs

1. Announcement of the charge
  - (i) References for the charge
  - (ii) Naming witnesses or complainant
2. Detail of the charge
3. Placing legal References for the charge
4. Demand Response for the alleged charge
5. Announcement of assumed action

The genre of SCNs represented the mentioned above moves and steps but their arrangement is varied in different offices; the office of the forest first introduces the detail of the activity or the background of the action and after that announces the charge. The other two offices do not do so; they follow the mentioned pattern. Their frequency distribution is as under;

**Table 5.** Moves in SCNs by Different Government Offices.

Identified Moves in SCNs	Office of Police	Office of Forest	Office of Canals
Announcement of the charge	100%	100%	100%
Detail of the charge	80%	100%	75%
Placing legal References for the charge	100%	100%	100%
Demand Response for the alleged charge	100%	100%	100%
Announcement of assumed action	100%	100%	100%

Therefore, moves 1, 3, 4, and 5 are compulsory whereas move 2 is optional; sometimes it is merged with move 1 or move 3. It is the office of the forest which describes the detail of the charge as present action (present perfect and simple present tense) but announces the charge in the past tense. The domain of genre helps to identify the addresser's ideology and to interpret the text in a specified context. The patterning of the text identified the power roles of the members of the discourse.

The *social perspective* unfolds how the identities of the involved members can be changed in a social context (Bhatia, 2002). The social domain is understood with the understanding of textual knowledge. Therefore, the model suggests the interrelationship among the aspects of the discourse. The tone of the SCNs is very harsh as there is direct address by the second person pronoun. The discourse of SCNs starts with 'You' direct and the semiotic image of pointing a finger towards the addressee is developed which keeps the distance between the addresser and addressee. Social status can be identified by the use of the pronoun you. However, the harsh and negative tone is settled down by the use of supposed verbs in passive sentences. The use of passive sentences for demanding a response for the alleged charge (Move 4) and announcing the assumed action (Move 5) lessens the intensity of harshness in announcing the charge (Move 1). The use of legal words and references to Acts or law reforms reflect the power of the addresser. The direct use of 'undersigned' and 'competent authority' reveals the power show of the addresser.

## Discussion

The purpose of the SCNs and the lexico-grammatical features of the corpus is the mainstreams to identify the cognitive representation of the social perspective of the discourse critically and culturally. The current study identified three separate social contexts where warnings were made for different professional acts. As the social domains were changed, the purpose and lexico-grammatical features also varied. The office of the police is more at the use of legal lexis and technical language for the reason of being close to the law zone professionally and socially. The office of the forest is more in using simple language as compared to the other offices. It can be suggested that they are more in nature so the use of technical or legal words is limited to the mandatory impression of SCNs. The office of canals exhibits more power from the addresser to the addressee by mentioning 'I, Executive authority or undersigned' but such lexis hides the personal information and develops the environment of the professional communicative event. The announcement of the addressee with its designation identifies him in a professional setting. The very structured patterning of the genre also refers towards the professional setting. Therefore the textual and genre perspectives develop the social perspective and the language used in the specified setting and for the specified purpose determines the interlocutors in a given discourse and context. The use of passive sentences describes the social constraints of the SCNs which are issued by the authority to the person who is involved in the wrong action. The purpose of the SCNs is to perform the

communicative event in a given context. The textual perspective in a formal structure pattern devises the social strategy and perspective. The wrongdoings of the people in a specific context reflect the culture of the discourse.

## **Conclusion**

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The current study identified the inter-relationship among separate domains of Show cause notices. Various elements like background knowledge, the professional relationship between sender and receiver, formalities of a discourse community, context of writing and the purposes of the writer were observed which have effects on the textual representation of a particular discourse. To avoid miscommunication between writer and reader, absolute textual information can work as a structural and social bridge. The discourse of show cause notices is highly objective and professional; therefore, no informal text is required in the text of show cause notices. The textual, contextual and social perspectives work in a reciprocal way; the textual information leads towards social understanding which in turn refers to the textual information. For instance, the language used by the writer can be varied as if the addressee would be changed. The purpose of language change is to develop the connection between the discourse community and the text. Similarly, if there is a separate context, the language use would be different. Bhatia's

model of the applied genre (2002) is multi-perspective as it explores the hidden realities of a specific genre by considering individual aspects of any particular discourse without restricting the use of that discourse. The aim of the current research was to analyze show cause notices in order to find oddities in this genre. It was noticed how only the textual representation of show cause notices undercuts a number of covert but basic features of the said genre. The main feature of show cause notices, which is its formal representation, incurs this attitude toward the accepted genre. The current study suggests that there should be a correlation among all three perspectives of the genre. The said study contributed to the area of show cause notices by observing the generic features of SCNs. The purpose and meaning of the communicative event should be probed in a social context so that a formal representation of lexico-grammatical features can be done. Since the findings of the study explored that there are different purposes, so, one cannot adopt a particular style of representing all types of SCNs. It is suggested that the officials and members of the specific office should consider the nature of the specified genre. The findings of this study help EFL and EOP learners to seek better communication by identifying professional relationships which in turn, affect social relationships and the choice of lexico-grammatical features. This study was limited to observing the SCNs of three offices in the Pakistani context. There can be a further study in other fields like education, banks and health.

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