A linguistic Analysis of Book Reviews in English with Reference to Two Reviews on Crystal's: Txtng: the Gr8 Db8

Instructor. Besma Khalid Ingaish
University of al-Qadissiya\College of Education\Department of English

Abstract
A book review presents a summary of what the author of the book wants to say. Reviewers state their opinions about the book at hand and attempt to evaluate and assess the book in terms of the recent developments of the particular field which the book tackles.

The problem of this paper will address the question of what linguistic structures and rhetorical moves are employed in the two book reviews on Crystal's Txng.

It is hypothesized that moves are stable but sub-functions are not.

The aim of this paper is to analyze two such reviews. The two reviews are about the same book which deals with the ongoing sociolinguistic phenomenon of texting via cellphones. The title of the book itself is written in this style of communication: Txng: the Gr8 Db8 by the prominent linguist David Crystal.

The paper discusses these reviews which are written by Tagg (2008) and Carston (2008) in terms of their rhetorical moves and linguistic features. A model proposed by Motta-Roth (1998) is applied to these reviews.

The analysis has revealed that sub-functions are subject to variation in comparison with the moves which are fixed. These variations in the sub-functions depend on how the reviewer deals with the book.

1. Introduction
Booking reviewing has been attracting the attention of researcher for many years. The earliest journal began in many European countries in the latter part of the 17th century was de–scarans provided information about scientific subjects concerning the book review. The journal consisted entirely of summaries of scholarly or scientific work (Hyland, 2000:1) Osburn (1989:21) defines book review as a process whereby authorities in a given field determine the validity and assess the relative significance of a particular contribution of a scholar or scientist within that area. To be able to do this, the reviewer should have knowledge in the specific research area and have the authority in the literature of his field.
Sarton (1960:1182) and Miranda (1996:191) summarize the important features of a good book reviewer:
1. A reviewer should not describe and characterize the book in question only but the subjects with which it is connected.
2. The reviewer tries to make up pass information about the reader and its relation with the other books in the same area and similar topics.
3. A reliable reviewer is the person who is able to evaluate the quality of the book reviewed.
   Evaluating text is welcome but personal attacks are undesirable.

2. Book Review as an Academic Genera

Swales (1990:46) defines genre as a communicative event which includes a set of relationships between people that are acting in a specific social context and doing certain roles characterizing that occasion, in which language plays an essential part. A number of communicative events form a genre if they share a set of communicative purposes. Thus, genres are communicative vehicles for the achievement of goals that operate upon the discourse structure, offering constraints for the beginning development, and ending of the text.

Swales (1990:46) sets up a number of criteria to classify genre:
1. Genre consists of communicative events and a number of communicative purposes.
2. Such purposes can be distinguished by expert members of a discourse community and thus to form the ground of the genre.
3. This ground constructs formal schemata (reader's knowledge of previous text) and schemata (reader's previous background knowledge of the world) connected with genre.
4. Examples of genre have the same patterns as far as the structure, style, content and certain audience.

Following these criteria, a book review is considered as a kind of genre for three reasons. The first reason is that it consists of a set of communicative events. It includes a set of relationships between participants that are occurring in a certain social context and doing certain roles connected with that occasion and with specific goals introducing and evaluating new publications in the field. Secondly, the expert members of a discourse community recognize the communicative purposes. Expert reviewers and readers identify the exemplars of a genre by using their schemata. Expert reviewers and readers cope with book reviews using content schemata (previous knowledge of a academia in general and disciplinary culture in particular) and formal schema (background knowledge about textual features of book reviews). Furthermore, accurate reading and writing skills allow these experts to bring to the text sufficient suppositions about the potential content and form. Finally, the communicative purpose of introducing and evaluating new publications restrict the rhetoric of genre. Readers search the description and evaluation of the latest publications in the field and book reviewers try to make texts that respond to these expectations. As a result, instances of book reviews are expected to have the same patterns in structure, style, content and specific audience that help define genre.

3. Rhetorical Move in Book Reviews

In this paper, various studies on rhetorical moves are discussed, starting with the traditional analysis of book reviews by Swales (1981-1990) and Motta-Roth (1998).

3.1 Swale's model CAR

Swale's (1981) study is based on the introductions to forty-eight articles, from various fields in pure, applied and social science, sixteen for each. He proposes that these articles were built from four moves. (1) establishing the field (2) summarizing previous research (3) preparing for present research (4) introducing present research. Bley-Vroom and Selinker (1984:237) and Crookes (1984:56) criticize this model showing the difficulty of delimiting the boundaries between the first two moves. Swales (1990) reconstructed his earlier model and adopted another model (three-moves) by conflated the first two moves into a single one. Swale's CAR model (Creating A
Research space) consists of a form standardized description of language used by the writer to organize the boundaries for the work existing in the research article. Swale's the new model is as the following:

**Moves 1 Establishing a territory**
- Step 1 Claiming centrality and/or
- Step 2 Making topic generalization(s) and/or
- Step 3 Reviewing items of previous research

**Moves 2 Establishing a niche**
- Step 1A Counter-Claiming or
- Step 1B Indicating a gap or
- Step 1C Question-raising or
- Step 1D Continuing a tradition

**Moves 3 Occupying the niche**
- Step 1A Outlying purposes or
- Step 1B Announcing present research
- Step 2 Announcing principal findings
- Step 3 Indicating RA structure

Swale's model is a schema-theoretic. It is ranking of schematic units of information. Each schematic unit is rhetoric in that it supplies a pieces of information to the total text which is characterized as a move. Move is defined by Nwogu (1990:127) as a text block or a stretch of discourse that may be represented in one sentence or more and this move with other moves comprise the whole information structure that must be found in the text to recognize it as an example of a given genre. A move consists of a number of smaller functional units called steps. Steps are "constituent elements" that are mixed to build the information which comprises the move (Paltrige: 1994: 295).

Again, Swale's new model has been also criticized for not telling in advance the cyclical patterns of occurrence of moves and missing of given moves actually found in similar data analysis. (Motta-Roth, 1998:56).

### 3.2 Motta- Roth Model of Book Review

The developing work of Motta-Roth (1998) and other supportive studies by De Carvalho (2001) and Nicolaisen (2002) shows that the rhetorical organization of book reviews in many disciplines is fairly uniform. Motta-Roth's (1998:131) genre analytical study of book reviews in Chemistry, Economics, and Linguistics fields display specific invariable features of rhetorical organization in content and form. She formulated a schematic description of the typical structural organization of book review consisting of four rhetorical moves composing of a number of sub-function as the following figure:

**Typical rhetorical moves in book reviews**

**Move 1 introducing the book**
- Sub- function 1 defining the general topic of the book
- Sub-function 2 informing about potential readership
- Sub-function 3 informing about the author
- Sub-function 4 making topic generalization
- Sub- function 5 inserting the book in the field

**Move 2 Outlining the book**
- Sub – function 6 providing general view of the organization of the book
- sub – function 7 stating the topic of each chapter
- sub – function 8 citing extra – material
Move 3 Highlighting parts of the book
Sub-function 9 providing specific evaluation

Move 4 providing evaluation of the book
Sub-function 10A Defining recommending the book/disqualify the book
Sub-function 10B Recommending the book despite indicate shortcomings
In move 1, the reviewer starts the book review with an introduction composing of five sub-functions providing the reader with five types of information. In sub-function1, the writer gives the reader a pieces of information about the book or about the theoretical approach adopted by the author to talk about such topic as:
   In sub-function 2, the reviewer specifies the reader to which the book addressed (Suarez and Moreno, 2014:191). In the above example, the statement "for advanced ESL student " is sub-function 2 indicating the kind of readership who has much knowledge about the writing text book.
   In sub-function 3, information about the author's academic background and previous work is given. The writer, sometimes, uses author's name with terms referring to his/her profession (staff member, politician, scientist) or terms showing authority as expert, researcher, and thinker expressing his/her position in the field of the study.
2. Professor Roger Shuy would add a new category of forensic expertise to the pantheon: linguistics (Linnerger, 2005: 833).
   In (2), the name of the author with title is mentioned. The word "professor" means he has university degree in linguistics and is well-known in the field.
   In sub-function 4, the writer gives information about the book reviewed by using his own past knowledge. The reviewer points out the aim of the text and sums up the main findings or arguments, for instance:
3. Goodwin et al (2000) conduct a study on the influence of culture on ethical decision between two group of accountants from Australian and Singapore. This research aimed to provide further evidence on the effect of cultural differences.(Mort et al,2005:3)
   In sub-function 5, the writer puts the book in a specific area by speaking about the preceding books dealing with same subject or by showing the weak points in the previous books. The reviewer emphasizes the importance of this new book by filling up a gap as:
4. This book is the most wide-ranging account so far of the economics of privatization. (Nicolaisen ,2002: 129).
   The second move is the longest one. It is divided into three sub-functions. Although sub-function 6 is optional, it is very frequent. It provides a detailed description of the organization of the book as:
5. The book itself is organized into five parts.
   In sub-function 7, the content of each chapter is described either by giving a detailed description for each chapter as(6)or by discussing different views sustained along the book as in(7):.
6. Chapter 1 introduces the several techniques and cover……. the theory of chromatography is presented in chapter 2 ……..and resolution are the subjects in chapter 3. While chapter 4 covers some aspects of qualitative and quantitative .
7. Civic values can be eroded, even destroyed. In a telling phrase the authors assert that Gerald Ford's 1975 Whip inflation . ……They view the deliberate unemployment….. Their discussion of third World debt suffers from an exaggerated fear of the dangers of Latin American default to the banking system. (Motta-Roth,1998:170).
   The extra-text materials appears in sub-function 8 like bibliographies, appendices, tables, illustrations, graphs, pictures, etc.(Nicolaisen, 2002:140)
In move 3, the reviewer usually discusses and evaluates strong and weak points in the text to make the readers know the reviewer's opinion concerning the book as it is illustrated in (8)

8. Mr. Arditti has been written with sensitivity about many weighty issues ...(positive). So it is a puzzle that he could render such a compelling life story in a manner so dull. (negative). (Cacchiani, 2005:3)

The chief aim of move 4 is to close-up the text of the reviewer and to give a final evaluation of the text reviewed by total approving or disapproving or by mixing as in sub-function 10A or criticizing the text reviewed with a final positive evaluation as in sub-function 10B such as:

9. This is very interesting book ..... which provides a good introduction to the topic ...... and a good starting point for each chapter ......However two facts in particular student : the book is written in German Language and each page costs less than ten pfennig.

4. Linguistics Features of Book Review

4.1 Explicit lexemes

According to Nwogu (1990:129), explicit lexemes are words which indicate the components and functions of each move by giving explicit lexical clues that represent the stage of the development of the text. The reviewer uses explicit lexemes to denote the intended audience for the book such as:

10. This book is an accessible introduction.

The word "introduction" designates that the audience are beginners. Motta-Roth (1998: 197) states that the explicit lexemes are represented in the form of nouns as " shortcomings, weakness, criticism, problem, advantage , strength ..." or verbs like "fail, lacks, succeed, marveled at" explicit lexemes may appear in the form of superlative. (Leech, 2006:110) as the form of gradable word which ends in -est or -st. The superlatives specify the highest and lowest positions on some scale of quality or quantity as "one of, most, major, best, greatest part/chapter/section in the book".

The explicit lexemes like "special, distinguish, only....." are used to refer to a special status of certain parts of the books.(Nwogu,1990:129).

4.2 Validity markers

Validity markers such as "perhaps, may, might, would, should, may be, certainly", clearly, undoubtedly, according to " to express evaluation, the writer's assessment of the probability or the truth of the propositional contents of the text expressed as in :


4.3 Attitude markers

Attitude markers as "especially, unfortunately, surprisingly, simply, clearly, obviously, admirably, rather, extremely, and (more) importantly" indicate the writer's point of view towards the text reviewed. Attitude markers tell the readers the writer's attitude towards the proposition. They typically reveal the evaluation, value judgment or assessment of expectation( Biber et al,2000:856).

4.4 Text connectives

They are used to identify the stage of the texts. Text connectives as " first, second, third, next, following" help the readers to recognize the sequential or organization of the book (Koppel, 1985:84).Halliday and Hassan (1976:267) used the term "continuatives" to refer to cohesive devices used to make sequential relations between the items in book reviews. These devices are traditional discourse conjuncts as "firstly, secondly,thirdly, and finally ". The similarities between these two terms signal the sequential connection between the items in the text. The differences between the are that the text connectives refer to nouns like "part: part one begins with"; chapter: in the following chapter. The relation between the sets of the text is logical one rather than temporal relation.
4.5 Summary statements and Adversative expressions

Nwogu (1990: 133) mentions, the summary statements are expressed by means of concluding phrases like "to sum up, all in all, to conclude, to summarize" as in:
12. In sum, Coulthard succeeded in covering a remarkable amount of material. (Sankoff, 1979:180).

Adversative expressions relate two items in the text which show incompatibility between the information in different discourse units as "despite, in spite of, however, nevertheless" (Biber et al, 2000:878). The main meaning of the adversative relation is "contrary to expectation". Adversative expressions can be used to signal the closing moves in the book reviews (Halliday and Hassan, 1976:250) such as:

13. Despite some deficiencies in methodology, to the extent that this research is expository, the study has provided some insights to account for culture in developing ethical...(Mort et al, 2005:3).

5. The Analysis

Crystal, D, Txtng: the gr8 db8
Reviewed by CAROLINE TAGG
Ph.D. candidate in English, University of Birmingham

Move 1. Introducing the book

Sub-function 5: inserting the book in the field:

1. "Text messaging has arrived in the world of Linguistics."
   The reviewer starts with sub-function 5 instead of sub-function 1. He inserts the book in the field of linguistics by using the phrase "in the world of Linguistics". The explicit lexeme "world" is employed to emphasize the importance of the process of "Text messaging".

2. "David Crystal's Txtng: the gr8 db8 is an entertaining and enlightening discussion."
   Sub-function 1: Defining the general topic of the book.
   The reviewer gives information about the topic of the book by using its title and its author. He uses the simple sentence structure: S+V+Cs. The title and the author's name are included within the Subject element and the noun phrase "entertaining and enlightening discussion" as the Subject Complement.

Sub-function 2: Informing about potential reader:

3. "Texting can have beneficial effects on literacy."
   Sentences are classified as sub-function 2 whenever an explicit reference is made to the use of an explicit lexeme to the reader's interest (beneficial effects).

Sub-function 3: Informing about the author:

The reviewer does not make any reference to this sub-function 3.

Sub-function 4: Making topic generalizations:

3. "Crystal dispelling of this myth is both convincing and amusing; he gives, for example short shrift to the panic that ensued in 2003 when a girl wrote a homework assignment in textese."
   In this text, the reviewer refers to the "current body of knowledge" in the process of texting. An affirmative statement is used to present knowledge as a fact or a general truth (convincing and amusing).
Move 2. Outlining of the book
Sub-function 6: providing general view of the organization.
Sub-function 7: stating the topic of each chapter.

4. Crystal counter-argument is, firstly, (6) that variation in spelling is neither new nor unique to texting. (7)... Crystal's second point (6) is that the inevitable focus on these eye-catching forms obscures the fact that "nobody says you have to use abbreviated language "when texting .... (7).

Finally (6), Crystal argues that the manipulation of language in texting is appropriate and creative (7) ... . His conclusion (6) is that texting should be seen as "just another variety of language.

There is a strong bond between sub-function 6 and 7. In sub-function 6, the reviewer explains how the book is organized while 7 gives a detailed description of each point in sub-function 6.

The organization of the book is not defined by chapters or parts but by line of argument which is used by the author. Tagg uses the text connectives (firstly, second, finally) and (his conclusion). These discourse markers indicate the parts of the book. These text connectors gives the text a sequential order.

Move 3. Highlighting parts of the book
Sub-function 9: providing focused evaluation.

6: "Like the abbreviation he describes Crystal's argument is not new."

Tagg employs a negative expression (is not new) to evaluate the process of texting as being not recent.

7: "... the idea that texting is creative and appropriate is widely accepted."

The reviewer uses the attitude markers (widely) to express his subjective point of view that texting is applied extensively.

8. "The main limitation of Crystal's work is his relative lack of data."

The noun phrase "relative lack" is emotionally loaded. It is an explicit lexeme presented as a weak point in this book.

Sub-function 8: citing extra text material

9. "Of the 200 or so English texting abbreviations listed in the appendices, only around 60 are attested in my data."

The reviewer uses these appendices as a launching pad to level criticism at Crystal's limited data though these appendices are not a main part of the book.

Move 4: providing closing evaluation
Sub-function 10/A

10. "However, Crystal's Txtng: the gr8 db8 is possibly the first populist, full-length book to put together an argument for texting and it achieves this goal very well, with accessible, easy-to-read prose.... Texting is full of interesting tit bits. "

The reviewer uses the adversative marker "however" to show the contrary relation between what is said in the body of the book review and the concluding remark. Tagg praises the book using such phrases as" easy-to-read" and "full of interesting tit bits".

Subfunction 10. B recommending the book despite indicating shortcomings

11. "Though aimed at non-linguistic audience, the book draws on relevant academic sources and will not only be read widely for enjoyment but can also be used by A-level and undergraduate linguistic students carrying out investigating into the language of Txtng,....."

The above part of the review begins with "though" which introduces an adversative statement reflecting a contrast.
Move 1: Introducing the book

Sub-function 1 defining the general topic of the book
1. "In this neat little book, the veteran linguist David Crystal looks at a linguistic phenomenon of current popular culture: text messages sent via mobile phones."
   The reviewer does not mention the title of the book but does mention of the writer's name. The verb "look at" is in the present tense which points out the continuity of the investigation of this linguistic phenomenon.

Sub-function 3: Informing about the author
2. "..."the veteran linguist David Crystal..."

   The sub-function 3 makes reference to the author's name and his long-time expertise in the field of linguistics via the phrase "the veteran linguist". The word "veteran" is borrowed from the military vocabulary. It makes the text lively.

Sub-function 4: Making topic generalization
3. "DC brings to bear his considerable knowledge of the history of writing system and shows that virtually all of its characteristics have been around for centuries. Of course, specific instances of each of these within txng medium are new and the creative playful side of txng makes for further novelty."

   Carston provides his reader with background information about the topic explored by the book reviewed. In this sub-function, the statement in the present tense indicates the topic generalization of this book. So, the reviewer uses explicit lexemes "brings", "shows", "are", and "makes". These verbs are set in the present simple which paints the statement with viable instantaneity similar to a commentary on an ongoing a football match.

Sub-function 2: Informing about potential reader
4. "The answer to the 'who' question is just about anyone and everyone but predominately teenagers."

   The reviewer employs the pronouns "anyone" and "everyone" indicating that the phenomenon this book tackles is universal in terms of who uses it though it is mainly a teenagers' thing. The recency of texting speaks for its familiarity with teenagers.

Sub-function 5: Inserting the book in the field
5. "As well as informative uses such as practical (time and place) arrangements and company alters, on the one hand, and personal relationship uses such as flirtation, gossip and phatic communication on the other, texting is used for seeking help for depression, ending relationship... ."

   The reviewer does not insert the book in the field of study, but rather he uses explicit lexemes such as "arrangement", "company alters personal relationship" and "for seeking help for depression" to state that this book is beneficial in sociolinguistic perspectives.
Move 2: Outlining the book

Sub-function 6: Providing general view of the organization

Sub-function 7: Stating the topic of each chapter

6. "A primary purpose of the abbreviatory characteristics of textese (6) is of course to save the sender's time and effort (7)… . DC emphasizes (6) another function however, on which often entails a lot of extra effort, and that is what he calls the 'ludic dimension' of Txtng… . As he points out (6) people have always played all sorts of language games just for the sake of it… ." He illustrates (6) various literary genres attempted in the text message medium, including poems, songs, limericks, prayers, anthems, tales and even novels (7) and describes (6) how this has led to a move beyond the confines of the mobile phone. . ."

There is a close relation between sub-function (6) and sub-function (7). The book itself is not divided into different chapters so the reviewer divides it according to the main topics or the line of argumentation adopted. The verbs are set in third person singular "emphasizes", "points out", "illustrates" and "describes" to serve as indicators of four main arguments adopted by the book.

Sub-function 8: Listing extra-text material

7. "… in an appendix, DC lists and glosses (some of) the abbreviated txtng forms used in eleven very different languages. " The lexical phrase "in an appendix" is used to underscore the additional character of such section.

Move 3: Highlighting parts of the book

Sub-function 9: Providing focused evaluation.

8. "The tone of this book is good-humoured, open-minded, non-judgmental, genial and witty… . most of the winning entries in a competition for the best poem written with constraints of the 160-character mobile-phone screen were written in full English rather than Textese. So they do not serve particularly well DC's intended purpose of countering the various dismayed criticisms of Textese as 'bleak, bold, and shorthand'. Overall, though, he provides plenty of evidence weighing against the alarmist prophecies that txtng is destroying literacy and will lead eventually to the decline of the language as a whole."

Carston uses expressions that indicate the positive value of the book reviewed as "good-humoured, open-minded, non-judgmental, genial and witty". The reviewer then criticizes the textese by using negative expressions like "bleak, bold and shorthand". Carston starts with strong points in the book then he moves to the weak points in it. What he wants to say is that although this book is good and witty and although "Crystal provides plenty of evidence" that txtng does not destroy the literacy, yet this does not serve Crystal's intention. It describes textese as being "bleak, bold and shorthand."

Move 4: Closing evaluation of the book

Sub-function 10 A: Definitely recommending disquality of the book

9. "Ultimately, DC makes no grand academic or theoretical claims for textese and does not believe it will have much, if any, effect (good or bad) on the language as a whole. So the final message seems to be: t+&sc."

The reviewer uses summary statement that begins with (ultimately) to signal the beginning of a concluding move. Carston says that this book has not very much effect on language whether the good or bad. He says that the final message is (t+&sc.).
5. Concluding remarks

1. The analysis shows that the moves in both texts are fixed while the sub-functions are somehow mobile.

2. Concerning move 1, Tagg (in the first text) starts with sub-function 5 to emphasize the process of ‘txng’. Sub-function 5 is followed by sub-function 1 and sub-function 2. The reviewer does not make any reference to sub-function 3. The last sub-function in this move is 4. Carston (text 2) begins his review with sub-function 1 followed by sub-function 3. The sub-function 3 is embedded in sub-function inS. So the reviewer makes a reference to the book and the writer simultaneously. Sub-function 3 is followed by sub-function 4 as in the adopted model. Sub-function 2 is used to refer to the kind of people who are interested in such process. The reviewer describes the phenomenon of texting in details then he refers to teenagers who are more interested in such process so he postpones sub-function 2 followed by sub-function 5.

3. As far as move 2 is concerned, Tagg uses both sub-function 6 and 7 but he incorporates sub-function 8 (citing extra-material) in move 3 rather than move 2. The reason for this is that the sub-function 8 is optional so the reviewer changes its position to serve his own purposes. Carston follows the same steps in the adopted model. He begins with sub-function 6, 7 and 8.

4. In move 3, both reviewers start with sub-function 9. Tagg uses sub-function 8 in move 3 instead of move 2. In move 4, the reviewers employ sub-function 10 in their reviews.

5. Linguistically, move 1, in most cases, starts with the name of the author and the title of the book. In this move, Tagg and Carston use the S+V+Cs pattern in the present simple tense to give a tinge of recency and still-developing nature of the topic of texting.

6. Concerning move 2, Tagg undertakes the division of the book into chapters by means of the connectors: first, second, third… . Carston divides the book in terms of the type of verbal communication dominating each part of the book such as: DC brings to bear…, DC looks at…, DC emphasizes… and so on.

7. In move 3, Tagg and Carston evaluate the book by using explicit lexemes to show the strong as well as the weak points. In move 4, both reviewers are used summary statements to close off the texts reviewed.
References