

COMPARING *SELF* WITH *TRAVEL* - A MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS OF FIRST PERSON NARRATIVE



**Maria Salahuddin¹, Aram Yaqoob², Rabia Islam³, Man o
Salwa Khan⁴, Faria Naveed⁵, Rabia Hayat⁶**

¹EST English, Government Girls High School, Nusrat Lalian, Chiniot

maria.salahuddin05@gmail.com

²Vice Principal, Faisalabad Garrison School, Junnah Colony, Faisalabad

jannatyaqub510@gmail.com

³IELTS Instructor, Corporate Council, Faisalabad

february750@gmail.com

⁴English Language Teacher, Sapphire School of Learning, Sheikhpura

manosalwa.khan.bhatti@gmail.com

⁵PST, Government Middle and Primary School, Chiniot

farianaveedchudhry@gmail.com

⁶PST, Government Primary School, Tandianwala

rabiatlw0@gmail.com

Abstract

The present research aims to present comparative analysis of two genres of non-fiction: autobiographies and travelogues. Autobiographies are personal narratives or firsthand accounts of unique or dramatic events of an individual's life while travelogue is record of a person's journey to another place and the author's traveling experiences. The present study explores functional variations that exist in these genres based on the multidimensional analysis approach presented by Biber (1988). This corpus-based research employs triangulation methods to quantitatively analyze statistical techniques and to qualitatively interpret the function of co-occurring linguistic features. Statistical evidence suggests that significant variation exists between two genres with travelogues are more informational, more explicit and less persuasive than autobiographies. Nouns and prepositions are the major constituents of both these first person narratives. This research can be further extended to compare the functional dimensions of autobiographies and travelogues with other first-person narratives. A contrastive genre analysis can also be conducted to explore variations in native and non-native writings.

Keywords: Autobiographies, Travelogues, Multidimensional Analysis, Functional Dimensions, Genre Analysis

Introduction

Autobiographies and travelogues are the prominent non-fictional genre that is primarily written in first-person narrative. These both are considered as most readable genres. A first-person narrative autobiography is a work in which people identify themselves and comprehend their own experiences. A person's autobiography is their own account of their life. A formal book-length autobiography might range from the personal writings done during life that were not necessarily meant for publication (such as letters, diaries, journals, memoirs, and reminiscences). Formal autobiographies provide a unique form of biographical truth: a life that has been changed by memory, complete with all of memory's conscious and unconscious gaps and distortions. Because of this, autobiographies are merely "a type of existence," according to novelist Graham Greene, who also adopted this phrase as the title of his own book (1971).

Travel writing is, and seems to have always been, quite popular, and for its readers, it often works pretty well. What "always stay home" writers typically omit are the justifications for why it is the case. On the one hand, readers crave not only the fresh experiences they obtain from travelogues but also a fresh viewpoint or collection of viewpoints throughout the board. Not just from themselves, but also from the writers, they have that expectation.

This particular study will focus on the analysis of functionalities of autobiographies and travelogues on Biber's dimensions. Out of millions of autobiographies and travelogues, for this study corpus of 150 books is collected, 75 in each genre. Although a lot of work has been done on mentioned genres before, however, this study will particularly focus on first-person narrative on the dimensions stated by Biber. For this study MAT software is used, and the given results are analyzed.

Statement of the Problem

An autobiography is a document that is in first-person narration, through which individuals define themselves and understand their own experiences. On the other hand, travelogues are the genre of literature, dealing with nature, adventure and exploration. Autobiographies has been explored in terms of its role in triangulated research design (Mathias & Smith, 2015), to study emotions in organizational life (Sturdy, 2003) and to investigate activities of political leaders (Etheredge; 1978). Likewise, a comparative work on travelogues has also been carried out to explore the differences in books and blogs related to travel (Stefano Calzati, 2015) and to find the trends of early and contemporary travelogues. Both of these areas are important but their functional dimensions are still unexplored. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a thorough investigation to explore their functionalities.

Purpose

This research aims to explore the functional dimensions of two non-fiction genres that are written in first-person narration: autobiographies and travelogues.

Aims/Objectives

1. To compile the corpus of autobiographies and travelogues
2. To evaluate the genres of autobiographies and travelogues on functional dimensions
3. To compare these two genres on functional dimensions

Research Questions

1. What type of inter and intra-genre variation exists in autobiographies and travelogues on Biber's functional dimensions?
2. What are the linguistic features of autobiographies and travelogues with frequent co-occurrence according to multidimensional analysis?

3. Where do the genres of autobiographies and travelogues stand in terms of functional dimensions as compared to the other text types?

Limitation

Since the present study focuses on the analysis of functional dimensions of autobiographies and travelogues, therefore, it only encompasses variation within first-person narration and hence can't be applied to other researches of 2nd and 3rd person narration.

Delimitations

This study is delimited to the context of the tool as Andrea Nini's MAT offers a functional analysis of only 67 variables which can be enhanced by using Biber's lab's tools. The corpus of only 150 autobiographies and travelogues is being collected due to lack of time and access while diachronic study has also been left unfinished due to time constraint.

Significance

This research allows us to view textual varieties in autobiographies and travelogues from various viewpoints and enables us to spot trends or expectations in first-person narration.

Scope

This research aims to incorporate the use of MD analysis to explore linguistic and functional elements in autobiographies and travelogues. The comparisons were made on the basis of quantifiable evidence in the form of co-occurring patterns and features according to Biber's (1988) findings. The present research stands distinguished from earlier researches because autobiographies and travelogues have not specifically been analyzed yet from a multi-dimensional perspective.

Methodology

Methodological Framework

This particular research work will focus on two non-fiction genres that are autobiographies and travelogues. These two genres are non-fiction and are written in first-person narration. This research will do a comparative analysis. The functionality of autobiographies and travelogues will be observed in this study. Corpus of these two genres will be collected and will be converted into the files/format that the software MAT will support. The compiled corpus will be analyzed through MAT. MAT will give the result in quantitative form. Once the results will be produced by the software then they will be analyzed quantitatively. The analysis will fulfill the purpose of this research and will answer the questions that have been set for this research/study. The two genres will be compared on the basis of their functionalities and first-person narration.

Research Paradigm

For this study, data of 150 autobiographies and travelogues (75 each) was collected to explore the functionality of first person narration. This corpus-based research employs triangulation method wherein quantitative method is used to collect and analyze co-occurring linguistic features while qualitative method is applied to interpret statistical details of 5 dimensions.

Corpus Compilation

This section deals with collection and compilation of research data as no corpus was available before that suits our purpose. First of all, size of the corpus was decided and Autobiography & Travelogues Written English Corpus (ATWEC) was compiled as a part of investigation using online sources. We have extracted these files and made a excel sheet to keep records. Later on, the data was converted into MAT compatible .txt format for multidimensional analysis. Both

sub-corpora, autobiographies and travelogues, were consisted on 9.7 million and 7.3 million words respectively.

Tools For Data Collection

Free online version of Multidimensional Analysis Tagger (MAT), 1.3.2, by Andrea Nini was selected as a research tool that provides a grammatically annotated version of 67 linguistic features for genre analysis. This tool imitate Variation across Speech and Writing tagger of Douglas Biber (1988) and uses the Stanford Tagger for the division of parts of speech and to explore the Biber (1988) patterns. The corpus was tagged to get co-occurring linguistic features and dimension scores of both genres were compared and graphed to see the variations.

Data Type and Sampling

Research data comes in various types and formats such as text, audio, video, geospatial and so forth. The present research deals with textual data type, that was further stored in .text file format for multidimensional analysis.

Sampling Criteria

The sampling criterion of present study is specified only to explore the inter-genre variations of autobiographies and travelogues other than intra-genre variations. The established time frame for sample (autobiographies & travelogues) collection was set from 1921 to 2021 (100 years). Moreover, different samples often have different sizes in terms of number of words in each file therefore it is important to use frequencies which are normalized to compare the outcomes. MAT results are based on normalized frequencies per 1000 Hz so size of the sample is not a matter of grave concern.

Sampling Type

In present research, stratified sampling method, a type of random sampling, was

used as it is suitable to represent non-equal sample size.

Sample Size

Due to constraint of time, our sample size was limited to 150 files of autobiographies and travelogues (75 each) from 1921 to 2021.

Sample Representativeness

This study is consisted of two sub-corpora representing two major non-fiction genres: autobiography and travelogues. Both sub-corpora contain 75 texts each with 9.7 million and 7.3 million words respectively. Aziz et al (2016) uses the 100 samples scheme in his 2016 doctoral thesis to explore the linguistic variations across physical sciences and biological and health sciences. Hence, this sample size is large enough to get valid results as this research deals with millions of word corpora.

Number of Samples and Tokens in Autobiographies & Travelogues

Genre	Sample Size	Number of Tokens
Autobiographies	75	9.7 million
Travelogues	75	7.3 million

Results & Discussion

This section involves statistical details of multidimensional analysis in light of research questions. It further entails the qualitative interpretation of the MAT outcomes to conclude results.

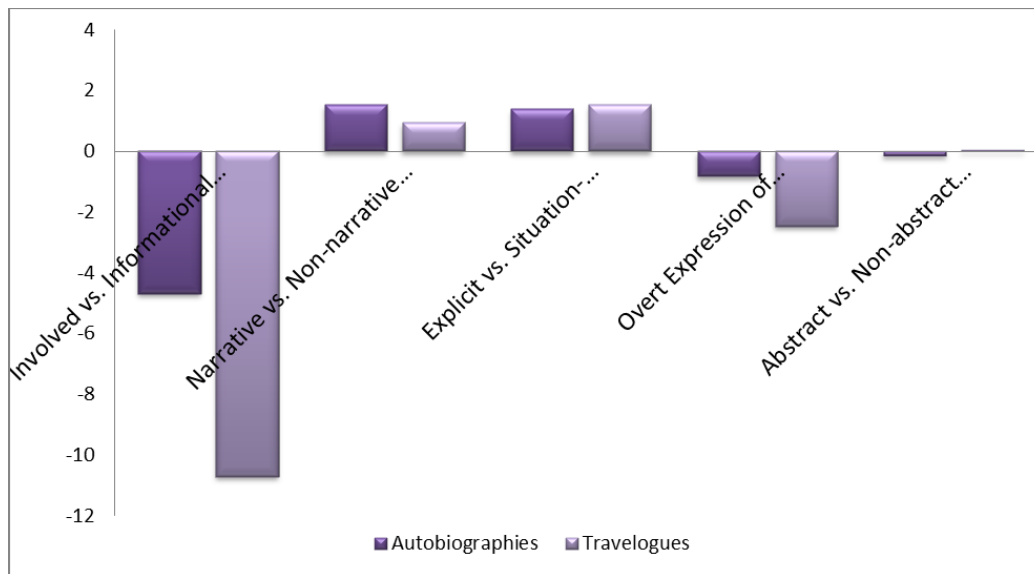


Figure.4. Comparison of autobiographies and travelogues on 5 dimensions

Results indicate that travelogues are more informational (93%), explicit (84%) and non-abstract than autobiographies. Meanwhile, autobiographies are more narrative (87%), with the highest score is 6.35 (ATB_9) than travelogues. Negative scores on dimension 4 shows that travelogues are covert in nature and do not contain persuasive linguistic features. The results of autobiographies and travelogues on D3 are almost the same and the closest text type is prepared speech. A little difference is observed on D2 and D5 results of autobiographies and travelogues with the closest text type is prepared speeches and press reportage respectively.

List of Highest and Lowest Values in Autobiographies & Travelogues

AUTOBIORAPHIES		
Factor	Highest Value	Lowest Value
D1	9.98(ATB_75)	-16.96(ATB_65)
D2	6.35(ATB_9)	-1.45(ATB_32)
D3	5.79(ATB_31)	-0.98(ATB_44)

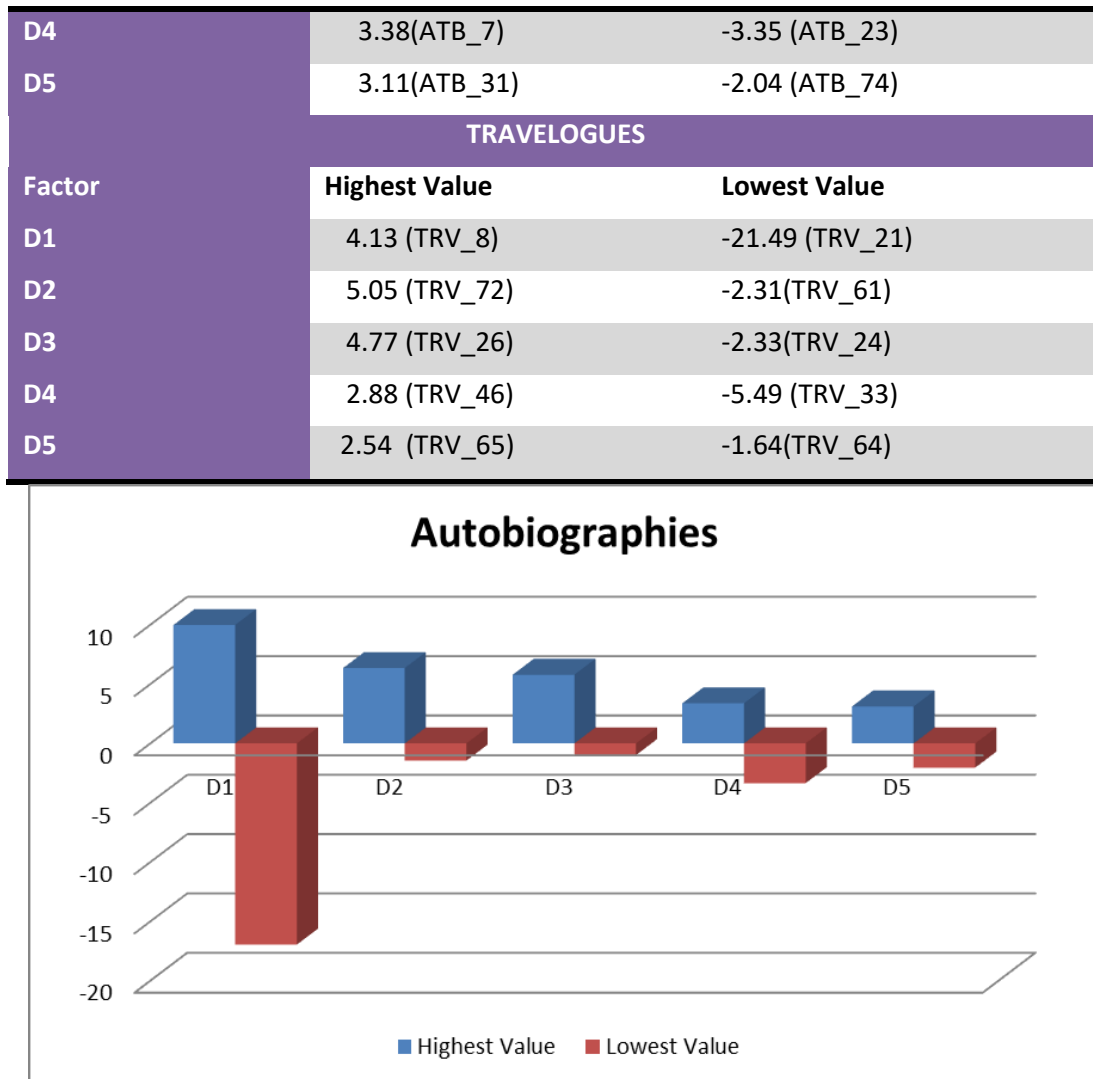


Figure: 5. A comparison of highest and lowest values in autobiographies

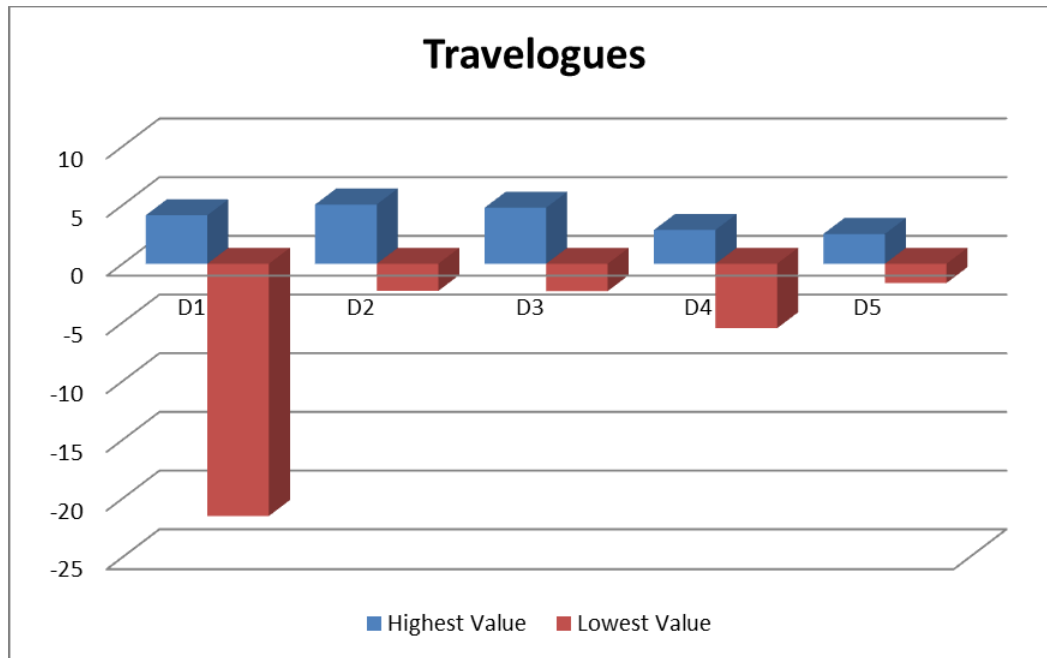


Figure: 6. A comparison of highest and lowest values in travelogues

Comparison of highest and lowest values in autobiographies and travelogues shows the little difference of range on D2, D3, D4 and D5. However, on D1, there are more features of involved discourse in autobiographies that makes it less informational than travelogues.

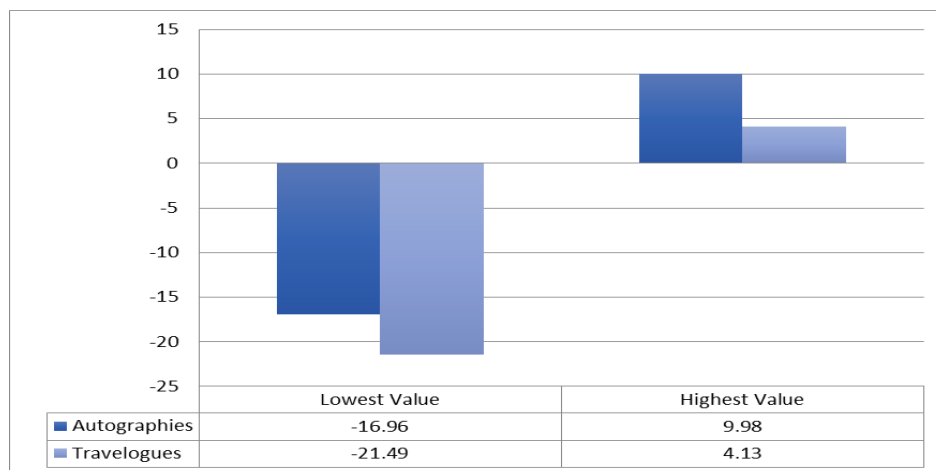


Figure: 9. Graph showing the variation exists in between highest and lowest values of autobiographies and travelogues on D1.

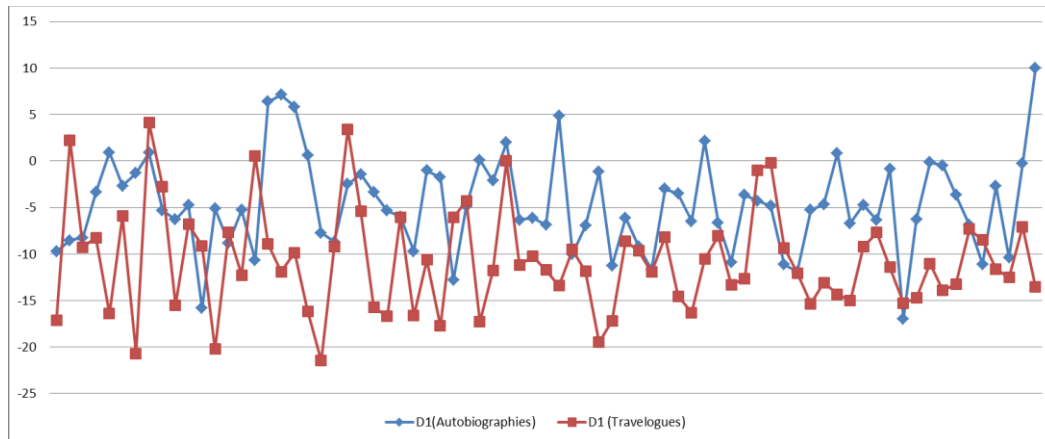


Figure: 7. Comparison of autobiographies and travelogues on D1.

Significant variation has been observed on D1 results of travelogues and autobiographies wherein negative values of both genres vary. For instance, the range of travelogues on D1 is more inclined downward with lowest value is -21.49 (TVR_21) than autobiographies whose lowest value is -16.96 (ATB_65). Closest genre of travelogues on D1 is academic prose and the difference of 7.4 was noticed when compared to Biber's 1988 results of the same genre. On the other hand, broadcast was the closest academic genre of autobiographies on D1.

Examples from the Text

Negative Score	Positive Score
Involved vs Informational D1 -16.96 ATB_65	Involved vs Informational D1 9.98 ATB_75
Our desperate poverty, with Father earning a miserable pittance by cobbling, made Mother earn a little extra by carting loads . She worked in the fields all spring , summer and early autumn ,	That's what happens. But we're so plagued with blindness today that we need a teacher , one who knows and can keep pointing out the way . Within you is unlimited power,

and thereupon went in late autumn to the district seat of Maloyaroslavets for groceries, which she carted to shopkeepers in Ugodsky Zavod. She never got more for a trip than a rouble or a rouble twenty, which, considering that she had to pay for her food and fodder for the horses, a place to sleep over in town, shoe repairs, etc., yielded an amount that was probably less than the alms beggars collected in the same time. But there was nothing to be done. Such was the lot of the poor. Mother meekly bore this heavy lot to keep body and soul together, like many other women in our villages. Despite the cold and the mud the womenfolk drove out to Maloyaroslavets, Serpukhov and elsewhere, leaving their small children in the care of the old people, who could hardly move themselves. Most of the peasants in our parts were poor.	knowledge and intelligence. You just open yourself up to that which you subconsciously already know, have always known and always will know. From the beginning, I was bewildered. I couldn't understand the world. I rebelled against it, yet I wanted to do right, be right with the world. From post-college days on until 1952, I just kept trying to do what I thought was the correct thing. I had a degree in physics and I wanted to be the world's greatest physicist. I was graduated from college in 1931. No jobs for physicists then, so I shifted into engineering. I worked as an aeronautical, civil, mechanical, electrical, marine and construction engineer. I'd get a job and wouldn't last a year because it just didn't feel right.
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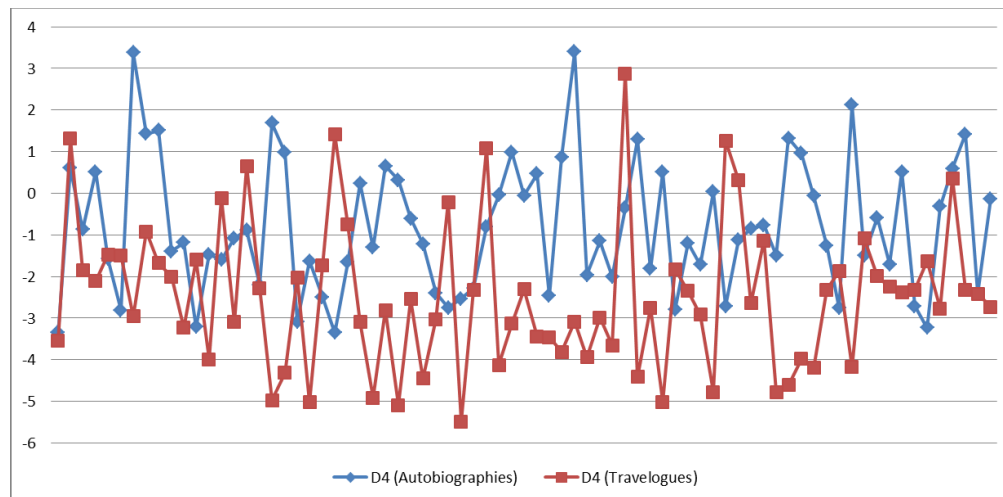


Figure: 8. Comparison of autobiographies and travelogues on D4.

MAT results on dimension 4 shows that the trend of autobiographies and travelogues is downward and closet text type is press reportage but still great variation exists. The minimum value of autobiography on D4 is -3.40 (ATB_42) and the difference with Biber's 1988 results is 2.7. Meanwhile, the difference of travelogue MAT results with Biber's 1988 results is 4.79.

Examples from the Text

Negative Score	Positive Score
Involved vs Informational D1 -21.49 TRV_21	Involved vs Informational D1 4.13 TRV_8
In the middle of Xishuanbanna Nature Reserve, we stopped in a Dai village walled by spiraling limestone peaks. Fellini got out, pulled off his director's coat, and stopped colorfully dressed hill tribes for our photo-ops.	For seven years I had been basking in California's perpetual sunlight, a sunlight artificially enhanced by the studio Cooper-Hewitts. For seven years I had been working and thinking along in a single channel and I wanted

Back at the wheel, Fellini goosed our flashy red taxi around every turn of the tortuous road the rest of the way to the border, while his co-driver enjoyed a drooling sleep. We roared up to the remote border outpost in a cloud of dust. Third World border crossings are almost always melting pots of diverse cultures, and duty-free zones for smugglers. In the case of southwest China and northern Laos, the crossings are also safe havens for anarchic tribes escaping the Han Chinese yoke.	to get away. Away from Hollywood, the cinema colony, away from scenarios, away from the celluloid smell of the studios, away from contracts, press notices, cutting rooms, crowds, bathing beauties, custard pies, big shoes, and little moustaches. I was in the atmosphere of achievement, but an achievement which, to me, was rapidly verging on stagnation. I wanted an emotional holiday. Perhaps I am projecting at the start a difficult condition for conception, but I assure you that even the clown has his rational moments and I needed a few.
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Normalized Frequency of Autobiographies and Travelogues

Features	Autobiographies	Travelogues
Factor 1 (Features of Negative Values)		
NN	23.75	25.63
PIN	9.81	10.79
JJ	5.6	7
PLACE	0.38	0.6

PASS	0.76	0.75
Factor 2 (Features of Positive Values)		
VBD	7.59	5.94
TPP3	3.04	2.97
PEAS	0.83	0.76
PUBV	0.64	0.52
SYNE	0.19	0.19
PRESP	0.19	0.25
Factor 3 (Features of Positive Values)		
NOMZ	1.4	1.43
WHSUB	0.14	0.14
PHC	0.66	0.86

The results indicate that travelogues have more nouns, adjectives, prepositions, place adverbials and agentless passives than autobiographies. Likewise, autobiographies have more past tense verbs, third-person pronouns, perfect aspect verbs and public verbs. Synthetic negation feature is equal in both genres while ratio of present participle clauses is little bit high in travelogues. Similarly, there is no significant variation in autobiographies and travelogues on Factor 3. Nouns are the major constituents of both genres while prepositions can be placed on second rank.

The findings shows that the closest text type of both genres is general narrative exposition (use narration to convey information). The researcher

observed negative score on D1 and positive score on D2 that is also resembles Biber's 1988 findings of the same text type.

Conclusion

The findings based on co-occurrence of the features reveal that travelogues are more informational, explicit and non-argumentative than autobiographies. Significant variation had been observed in both non-fiction genres on D1 and D4. There is little variation in the results of autobiographies and travelogues on D3 and D5. Nouns and prepositions are the major constituents of both genres. This research can be further extended to compare the functional dimensions of autobiographies and travelogues with other first-person narrative as well as a contrastive genre analysis can be done to explore variations in native and non-native writings.

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