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INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON RESEARCH WRITING

Pilar Mur-Dueñas and Jolanta Šinkūnienė, eds.
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We live in an interconnected globalized world in which English plays a major role as a hegemonic language of communication. Consequently, English has also become the dominant language in international academic publications (Hamel 2007; Pérez-Llantada 2012). The most prestigious international journals and research metrics prioritize its use, which increases the pressure on scientists around the world to publish their research in English. Within the framework of Intercultural Rhetoric (Connor 2011), this volume offers a wide range of cross-cultural corpus text analyses of different languages (Czech, Lithuanian, Spanish, French, Italian, Chinese, and Malaysian) and disciplines (Linguistics, Anthropology, Astrophysics, Engineering, Applied Linguistics, Education, Sociology, Computer Science, Economics, etc.). The book provides empirical data of lexico-grammatical features, rhetorical devices and discursive conventions (citations, move structures, personal pronouns, shell nouns, reformulation markers, metadiscourse features, evaluative language, and the anticipatory *it* pattern) in contrastive studies that analyze L1, English L1, and English L2 texts in two of the genres—the research article (RA) and the abstract—most widely used to disseminate scientific knowledge in the disciplinary fields.

In many of the chapters in this collection, the reader can observe how the L1 influences academic writing in English and the many challenges met by scholars when publishing their research in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). Accordingly,

this volume reveals the unequal opportunities for non-native scholars trying to publish their research in English while concurrently supporting the idea of regarding non-Anglophone scholars as legitimate users of ELF. Given the growing amount of research published in English by multilingual scholars from minority linguacultural backgrounds, the different perspectives that these authors bring to their fields can only be seen as positive contributions that enrich scientific knowledge from different intercultural perspectives (e.g. Sánchez-Jiménez 2020). Moreover, the fact that academic communication takes place largely among non-native scholars using English as a Lingua Franca (Mauranen et al. 2010) begs the question of whether there is a need to assimilate to academic rhetorical styles and discursive conventions often decided by native writers of the language. In this regard, the authors of the studies included in this book—all of them non-native speakers of English—affirm through their studies how ELF is shaped by its global users in academia.

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The book includes thirteen chapters edited and introduced by Pilar Mur-Dueñas and Jolanta Šinkūnienė, accompanied by a preface and an afterword written by two of the most respected experts in the field, Ken Hyland and Ulla Connor. Hyland offers relevant data supporting the importance of publishing in English for an international audience as well as a thorough rationale of why journals' scientific committees and reviewers should not necessarily stick to the rhetorical conventions and norms institutionalized by native speakers of English but accept with flexibility the research production of non-Anglophone scholars from different L1 backgrounds who provide a wider perspective and a better understanding of this universal language. Connor defines how this contribution is framed within the discipline of Intercultural Rhetoric.

The chapters are divided into three thematic sections, centered on the varied perspectives of intercultural variation in written academic English. The first part is entitled “Three-Fold Intercultural Analysis: Comparing National, L1 English and L2 English Academic Texts”, which contains three chapters on contrasting L1, L1 English, and L2 English academic texts. The next four chapters are grouped under the title “Two-Fold Intercultural Analysis”, in which L2 and L1 academic texts are compared. The last six chapters conclude the book by exploring ELF academic texts under the title “Intercultural Analysis on the Move”.

In Chapter 1, Olga Dontcheva-Navrátilová analyzes the variation in the use of citation in Linguistics research articles written in L1 English, Czech, and L2 (Czech) English. She contrasts the rhetorical functions of citation produced in L1 and L2 research with the goal of discovering and describing how these samples of intertextuality contribute to facilitating a persuasive dialogue with the reader. The author concludes that the rhetorical choices of non-Anglophone scholars may

affect the persuasive force of their texts when they write for their native academic communities with dominant Anglophone conventions.

Still within the Linguistics discipline, the second chapter written by Jūratė Ruzaitė and Rūta Petrauskaitė focuses on the internationalization of research works and acknowledges the discursive challenges non-native English speakers face when preparing research publications. In this chapter, the authors study the academic conventions used in articles published in Lithuania as compared to others published in a well-established international journal. To this end, they analyze and contrast the overall structure of the journals and the research articles selected for the study. The authors find academic practices in the two journals that differ across cultures and publishing houses.

In Chapter 3, Jolanta Šinkūnienė explores the use of personal pronouns in relation to the writer's disciplinary and cultural background in Linguistics research articles written by Lithuanian scholars in English and Lithuanian, and by British English speakers in their native tongue. She tackles the use of *I* and *we* because of the relevance of these two pronouns to express the author's stance. The ultimate goal of this research is to better understand and dig deeper into the different academic identities based on the writer's cultural background. An interesting finding of this research is that when a Lithuanian scholar writes in L2 English, he/she employs similar rhetorical patterns (a more explicit author's stance expression) to those used by the Anglo-American researcher, which are commonly different from those used in their L1.

Geneviève Bordet analyzes a corpus of 400 PhD abstracts written in English by Anglophone and Francophone native scholars in different disciplines (Anthropology and Astrophysics). The chapter compares a selection of shell nouns determined by *this*, which contribute to building credibility based on linguistic choices in order to persuade the audience of the importance of the research described in the abstract. The results show the problems Francophone writers encounter to achieve a more cohesive and persuasive tone in their arguments when they write in English compared to native speakers of this language.

With the pedagogical goal of offering L2 scholars from Science and Engineering fields new tools to elaborate efficient and persuasive research abstracts, Maryam Mehrjooseresht and Ummul K. Ahmad's contribution focuses on the use of evaluation in thesis abstracts. The analysis of authors' attitudes in this genre brings new insights into the different ways in which novice Malaysian scholars use evaluative language when writing in English to make their research claims and assessments in relation to the content in eleven different disciplines, although certain uniformity was observed in both fields.

Xinren Chen uses the CARS model in Chapter 6 to examine a large corpus of research articles published in English by Chinese researchers over the course of

twenty years in a diachronic study (1996-2006) in the field of Applied Linguistics. English discourse conventions have influenced and modified the Chinese English-language writers' academic style over the years. The most visible change—promoted by journals—occurring in this period is that researchers are determined to establish a niche and create research spaces in the RA to convince readers of their role as innovative researchers in their scientific community. This is a departure from certain cultural conventions on how texts are organized in Chinese, by adopting Anglophone rhetorical conventions and constructing a new identity directed towards a global audience.

Renata Povolná's chapter centers on an analysis of the textual organization of conference abstracts written in English by native scholars and non-Anglophone researchers from different countries where Slavonic languages are spoken. This research reveals intercultural variations in the moves that make up the abstract by scholars from different language backgrounds. Differences and similarities in the global structure and other linguistic features of conference abstracts are described exhaustively in the results section.

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Rosa Lorés-Sanz contrasts the rhetorical structure of Sociology research article abstracts written in English as L1, in English as a Lingua Franca, and English abstracts translated from Spanish. This study has important implications for non-native speakers of English who wish to publish in English in order to have their research internationally disseminated. In the concluding remarks of her chapter, the author states that there has been a surge in the number of non-Anglophone speakers in the discipline of Sociology in recent years. This factor has paved the way for a more globalized scientific community, thereby integrating a more diverse set of rhetorical conventions in research articles.

One of the various contributions on authorial presence and its implications for the writer's identity in academic texts is that by Jingjing Wang and Feng (Kevin) Jiang in Chapter 9. They examine the use of hedges, boosters, and self-mentions written in English by Chinese PhD students and Anglophone expert writers across four science disciplines as the primary rhetorical means of epistemic positioning. The study reveals that the first group uses the stance markers more frequently, making their presence more explicit in texts while persuading readers of their claims when making epistemic judgements. The chapter explores not only expertise, but also the cultural influence on stance-making practice.

Marina Bondi and Carlotta Borelli's work is the first of the chapters in this section that uses the SciEFL corpus (compiled at the University of Helsinki, this comprises 150 unedited research papers written by L2 English users from many different disciplines and fields) to establish intercultural comparisons with other corpora. In this case, the authors contrast a small subcorpus of SciELF collected from articles

in the field of Economics with research articles published in different Business and Economics journals. The researchers investigate the use of intertextuality and reflexivity features in these texts. The main differences found among the various metadiscursive devices analyzed in the study are the use of a generally more explicit authorial voice in the published articles and specifically a more frequent use of the resources that express intertextuality and reflexivity (deictic personal self-mentions, deictic and conjunctive cohesion, and epistemic markers of authorial presence). The results indicate that the Anglophone writing conventions as well as the corrections by the reviewers of the journal influence the constant use of metadiscursive features aimed to highlight the author's presence in the text.

In Chapter 11, Silvia Murillo explores the similarities and differences in the reformulation markers found in two corpora—the first is the abovementioned SciELF corpus and the other is the L1 English part of SERAC, a comparable corpus compiled by the research group InterLAE (University of Zaragoza, Spain). The analysis of the markers used to introduce reformulations reveals the tendency towards simplification in the unpublished ELF research articles in the types of reformulation markers used and the functions performed (explanation and specification). As the author states, the results imply, in a broader view, that the use of English as an international language may be contributing to a gradual remodeling of this language.

The expression of evaluation is a fundamental aspect of the rhetoric in research writing, which defines the maturity of a scholar who directly gives his/her opinions and his/her personal attitude towards the sources. Through this feature, writers promote their work by highlighting their findings and persuading their readers of the value of their research. In chapter 12, Enrique Lafuente-Millán investigates the type of evaluation used across L1 and L2 English RA introductions in the Social Sciences checking the writers' use of evaluation against the CARS rhetorical structure, in an attempt to connect evaluation to its rhetorical context. The study finds intercultural differences in the use of evaluation, revealing that introductions produced by ELF writers do not comply with the CARS structure. The study shows that while texts written by Anglophone scholars seem to have a more promotional nature, non-native writers tend to avoid evaluative acts which may entail greater interpersonal risk. This implies that non-Anglophone speakers of English face significant challenges when they try to establish the importance of their own research.

In Chapter 13, Pilar Mur-Dueñas explores the function of anticipatory *it* patterns in expressing the interpersonal nature of RAs written by non-native and native writers of various disciplines. Overall, this lexico-grammatical structure is more frequently used in the SciEFL corpus than in the abovementioned SERAC,

establishing a clear contrast between the Anglophone scholars and those authors from different linguacultural backgrounds. This is also confirmed by the analysis of the three interpersonal functions of the feature, in which Pilar Mur-Dueñas found differences between the two corpora.

Overall, the chapters present extensive intercultural research from various fields and linguacultural backgrounds, which will allow readers to better understand the rhetorical style and discursive conventions of academic texts written in English as a Lingua Franca. This will be extremely useful for students, scholars, and teachers of English as an Additional Language and English for Academic Purposes, who will benefit from the multiple intercultural perspectives of contrastive analyses. Finally, I believe this volume will inspire and foster acceptance of more diverse rhetorical styles, discursive conventions, and intercultural insights in ELF research in academia.

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