

Navigating the rhetorical space of Spanish- and English-medium biomedical research articles: author positioning, genre and culture

Oana Maria CARCIU
San Jorge University (Spain)
oana.carcu@gmail.com

Research conducted on academic discourse as a result of the globalization of academia and prevalence of English as an international language of research and publication now contributes an important body of knowledge to the consequences of the need to acculturate the English as an Additional Language writer to English rhetorical patterns (see Bennett, 2014; Lillis & Curry, 2010; among others). The present study is developed on the backdrop of this previous research and conjectures that author positioning, genre (standard national vs. international rhetorical conventions) as well as the already internationalized disciplinary discourse conventions (i.e. adherence to the recommendations for manuscript publication of the ICMJE, 2013) – subsumed under the category of culture – are important points of interferences between languages when endeavoring to navigate the rhetorical space of Spanish- and English-medium biomedical research articles (RAs). Taking a genre view, the occurrence of “we” pronouns and their function in larger stretches of text (i.e. phrase units) as cues of author positioning is examined here across the Introduction-Methods-Results-Discussion (I-M-R-D) sections to support this claim. The interaction effects of the factors of genre and culture on author positioning are approximated and described by the use of text mining and discourse analysis to compare Spanish-medium RAs published in Spain-based journals and RAs published in English-medium international journals against a control corpus of RAs authored only by Spanish scholars and drawn from the same journals as the English-medium RAs. Genre rhetorical structure is shown to be a strong predictor of both the occurrence and function of “we” phrase units. In addition, patterns of pronoun use across sections seem amenable to interpretation from the perspective of standard national and international rhetorical conventions as regards author positioning. Finally, the findings of this study are discussed in association with their likely implications for supporting international research communication.

References

Bennett, K. (2014). *The semiperiphery of academic writing. Discourses, communities and practices*. Basingstoke, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICJME) (2013). *Recommendations for the conduct, reporting, and publication of scholarly work in medical journals*. Retrieved 03/23/2012, from <http://www.icjme.org/>

Lillis, T. & Curry, J. (2010). *Academic writing in a global context: The politics and practices of publishing in English*. London, New York: Routledge.

Biodata

Oana Maria Carciu has a PhD in English Studies from the University of Zaragoza (Spain). She is a lecturer in ESP at the University of San Jorge (Spain) where she teaches students of Physiotherapy and Sports Sciences. Her research interests include English-medium research publication and English as a medium of instruction, linguistic diversity and the internationalization of higher education. She is also an editorial assistant for Ibérica, the Journal of the European Association of Languages for Specific Purposes <http://www.aelfe.org/?s=presentacio> .