

Contrastive rhetoric in the analysis of criticism: How do linguists evaluate their research?

Maria ZAŁĘSKA

University of Warsaw

maria.m.zaleska@gmail.com

Criticism is a discourse of the second degree, i.e. a discourse about a previous discourse. It both reveals and creates a set of the underlying criteria, used by the critics to evaluate the discourse of the first degree. The corpus used in the study to be reported is composed of English, Italian and Polish review articles concerning linguistic research, published in specialized linguistic journals. The paper has three main goals. The descriptive goal is to point out similarities, shared by the “community of discourse” of linguists and to identify the differences in the three “communities of language”. What difference does it make to be an English, Italian or Polish linguist? What counts as good linguistic research in the three “discourse-and-language communities”? The theoretical goal is to outline a rhetorical framework that permits an analysis of content and form of the review articles. The proposed framework applies the system of the three rhetorical ‘genera dicendi’ (i.e. speech genres), claiming that any review article may contain the elements of each of them. The “genus iudiciale” (i.e. judicial speech genre), used as an analytical category, allows for investigating systematically the errors imputed, as well as the alleged responsibility for them. The “genus demonstrativum” (i.e. demonstrative speech genre) permits exploration of the evaluative stance, revealing the underlying expectations towards the quality of research. The “genus deliberativum” (i.e. deliberative speech genre) that manifests itself in the form of advice makes it possible to reconstruct the disciplinary imagination in the expert discourse of the three “language communities”. Since all scholars are expected to make their research internationally known by publishing in English, the third problem addressed concerns a practical question: while writing in English, should non-native speakers of English adopt accommodation or resistance strategies? What are the consequences for the discipline if “good research” means only “good [according to the English-language standards] research”?

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Biodata

Maria Załęska (Assistant Professor, University of Warsaw) teaches courses in linguistics and discourse analysis, rhetoric and theory of argumentation, methodology of linguistics, methodology of foreign languages teaching. Her areas of research include: rhetoric in the transmission of knowledge; professional communication; critical discourses; creativity; humor and rhetoric. Her publications include papers and chapters in edited anthologies and journals, as well as books (recently: *Rhetoric and politics: Eastern and Central Europe Perspectives* ed.; 2012, Cambridge Scholars Publishing; *Retorica della linguistica. Scienza, struttura, scrittura*, 2014, Peter Lang).