

Don't agonise, just organise: The rhetorical structure of Immunology and Allergy research papers

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The need to publish in English has become almost an imperative for those researchers who seek academic promotion and international recognition. This is particularly the case in disciplinary areas such as the Health Sciences, where the number of scientific journals published in languages other than English has shrunk virtually to zero. It is, however, a fact that the writing up of a research paper constitutes a major hurdle, especially for inexperienced writers and users of English as an Additional Language. In response to this situation, EAP researchers and practitioners have put their energies into providing support and practical instruction for academics working in this field carrying out and relying upon studies of research writing. Many of these studies have focused on the rhetorical structure of experimental research papers, concluding that their typical macro-structure adheres to the IMRD pattern, not only across disciplines but also across languages. Recent studies have also reported slight variations, mainly in terms of the order in which these sections appear throughout the papers. Rhetorical variation across subdisciplines has also been reported at the move level. In this paper we examine whether rhetorical variation may even occur within one specific subdiscipline in Medicine. To determine whether or not this is the case, we have analysed the schematic structure of 30 research articles selected at random from recent publications in the 5 top-ranked journals (Scimago Journal Rank) under the subject category of Immunology and Allergy, a leading research area which is currently generating a growing number of publications. Our results have revealed the existence of some rhetorical variation across the five sets of papers. We conclude that the main reason for this variation may be the result of the (lack of) specific instructions given in the journals' guidelines, the specific/general nature of the journal's readership and certain rhetorical specificities of the subdisciplinary discourse community.

Biodata

Pedro Martín is a tenured lecturer in EAP at the University of La Laguna (Spain). His main area of interest is inter-cultural and cross-disciplinary academic discourse. He has published a number of articles on this issue. He is also the author of the book *The Rhetoric of the Abstract in English and Spanish Scientific Discourse* (2005), and co-editor of the monograph *English as an Additional Language in Research Publication and Communication* (2008). He is currently a team member of a multidisciplinary project

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Isabel K. León, PhD, tenured lecturer (University of La Laguna, Spain), has done research in Applied Linguistics: cross-disciplinary/-linguistic discourse analysis, ESP and EMP. She has published in *ASp* (journal of the Groupe d'Etude et de Recherche en Anglais de Spécialité, GERAS), *IBÉRICA* (journal of the European Association of Languages for Specific Purposes), *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*, and as a co-author with Pedro Martín (2014) in *English for Specific Purposes*. She belongs to the ULL research group on Contrastive Academic Discourse Analysis, and also worked in the Multidisciplinary and Multilingual Research Group on Scientific Discourse Analysis, conducted by Françoise Salager-Meyer (ULA, Venezuela).