

Academic Discourse across Cultures

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Edited by

Igor Lakić, Branka Živković
and Milica Vuković

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ACADEMIC DISCOURSE ACROSS CULTURES: AN INTRODUCTION

IGOR LAKIĆ, BRANKA ŽIKOVIĆ
AND MILICA VUKOVIĆ

The monograph *Academic Discourse across Cultures* is an edited volume dedicated to exploring academic discourse from a variety of points of view. The authors of this volume work at the University of Montenegro, the University of Niš, the University of Belgrade and the University of Novi Sad. The idea of the editors is to spread knowledge of academic conventions among researchers outside the English-speaking area who publish in international journals. The editors believe that an awareness of cultural differences in academic discourse and international standards can equip authors with the necessary tools so that they can meet the requirements both of publishers and the academic community in general.

Bearing in mind that most research papers are published in English, the authors of this volume focus in Part I on the structure of research article abstracts, introductions and conclusions, as well as the linguistic exponents that point to the macrostructure of texts. Part II deals with hedging and cohesion devices, while Part III discusses some of the syntactic and semantic features of academic discourse.

Part I consists of five chapters. Chapter One, *National Writing Habits as a Potential Hindrance to International Academic Communication*, written by Savka Blagojević, starts from the fact that non-English speaking authors still adhere to their national writing styles when producing their articles for international journals. The chapter addresses some of the writing differences as they appear in abstracts and the main text of academic articles written by English and Serbian academics. Chapter Two, *Genre Analysis of Linguistic Abstracts in Montenegrin and English*, whose author is Milena Dževerdanović-Pejović, focuses on abstracts as a significant part of the research article. The chapter discusses their macro and micro structure, which are important indicators of the text content. The next two chapters deal with introductions to research articles.

Igor Lakić presents his model of the structure of research article introductions in economics in Chapter Three, *The Rhetorical Structure of Economics Research Article Introductions and its Syntactic and Lexical Exponents*, while Ana Šćepanović presents her model of introductions in civil engineering in Chapter Four, *Genre Characteristics of Research Article Introductions in Civil Engineering*. These two chapters point to the fact that the structure of the same genre is bound by the characteristics of the discipline and its conventions. Chapter Five, *The Rhetorical Structure of Conclusions in Linguistic Academic Articles Published in National and International Journals*, written by Milica Vuković and Vesna Bratić, compares the structure of conclusions in Montenegrin national journals and in the leading international journals of linguistics. The authors start from the hypothesis that the structures largely differ due to differences in the writing conventions of the authors who follow national rules and those who publish in international journals.

Part II includes three chapters. In Chapter Six, *Hedging in Linguistic Academic Discourse*, Milica Vuković presents an approach to hedging from the point of view of weak epistemic modality. She concludes that there is abundant hedging visible both in articles written in Montenegrin journals, and those published in leading international journals, with the latter articles being significantly richer in it as a result of reviewers' and editors' demands. Nataša Milivojević and Stanka Radojičić, the authors of Chapter Seven, *Types of Cohesion and Hedging Devices in Scientific Texts—A Classroom Perspective*, pay attention to lexical cohesion and hedging devices based on a discourse analysis of teaching materials at the university level. Discourse markers, as cohesive devices employed in English discourses of electrical engineering and mechanical engineering, are dealt with in Chapter Eight, *Some Aspects of Discourse Markers in the Academic Discourse*, whose author is Miloš D. Đurić.

Although it also deals with macrostructures, Part III focuses on the semantic, syntactic and lexical levels of discourse. In Chapter Nine, *The Discourse of University Lectures in Linguistics: Structural, Lexical and Syntactic Variations across Cultures*, Branka Živković presents a contrastive analysis of university lectures in linguistics in English and Montenegrin, where all the identified structural units of the lectures are signaled by typical lexical and syntactic features. The chapter also indicates what the two cultures consider as key aspects of lecture introductions. Chapter Ten, *The Syntax and Semantics of English and Serbian Adverbs in Academic Written Discourse*, written by Gordana Dimaković-Telebaković, explores the correlations between the positions of English and Serbian adverbs, which may assume different interpretations,

which they receive based on these positions. Finally, in Chapter Eleven, *Academic Discourse—A Semantic and Syntactic Analysis*, Miodarka Tepavčević analyses Montenegrin research articles in linguistics, exploring their syntactic and semantic specificities.

We hope that this monograph will be a useful tool for authors who are not native English speakers when they write papers published in English in accordance with Anglo-Saxon conventions. The volume is also aimed at raising awareness of different discourse communities and their writing standards.

PART I

**RHETORICAL STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH
ARTICLES ACROSS CULTURES**

CHAPTER ONE

NATIONAL WRITING HABITS AS A POTENTIAL HINDRANCE TO INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION¹

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1. Introduction

It is a well-known fact that English is nowadays widely recognised as an academic *lingua franca*, since "more than 90 per cent of the journal literature in some scientific domains is printed in English" (Hyland 2006, 24). This has, inevitably, established the Anglo-American academic writing style as the standard for modern international academic communication, but, at the same time, this fact has forced non-Anglophone academics to reconsider their own writing styles and compare them to those that they are expected to produce in order to publish abroad. Thus, the question of gaining international communicative competence has become crucial for non-Anglophone academics in their endeavours to disseminate their scientific results to members of the international academic community. However, in practice, it often happens that academic writers from non-English speaking countries, especially those working in the humanities, persistently adhere to their national writing styles, even when they are writing in English for international journals. In this way they risk having their articles rejected by the editors of international publications, or when they are accepted for publishing, research articles written in line with national writing styles might get a poor reception from international readers, due to their much less powerful communicative effect.

¹ This paper is a part of a national project (no. 17814) sponsored by the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Serbia.

Although the problem of cross-cultural academic communication in English was addressed for the first time by Kaplan (1966) more than half a century ago, it seems to continue to exist as a problem, to a greater or lesser degree, even nowadays. Since Kaplan, a great number of linguists have been engaged in studying the differences in academic styles between writers of different nationalities. A significant place in these studies belongs to the linguists who examine the differences in writing between English academics and those from Slavic cultural backgrounds (Duszak 1994, 1997; Čmejrková and Daneš 1997; Čmejrková 1996, 2004, 2007; Yakhontova 2002, 2003; Vassileva 2000, 2002; Chamonikolasová 2005; Blagojević 2010, 2012, 2013; Chovanec 2012; Povolna 2010, 2012; Dontcheva-Navratilova 2008, 2012, and others). These scholars have found that academics from Slavic cultural backgrounds share similar writing inclinations, so that besides the overall impression of the Slavic academic style as one which, compared to the Anglo-American, comprises too much indirectness, long digressions, and associativeness, this style has also been viewed as one which produces texts that are generally not easy to read and often require "reading between the lines".

Being a part of the large Slavic language community, Serbian academic writers seem to share similar writing habits with their Slavic colleagues (Blagojević 2010, 2011, 2012). Some Serbian academic writers, especially among the young generation of researchers, are presently making noteworthy efforts to comprehend the existing differences in writing styles, which could be the first step in their attempts to adapt their own writing style to that required by the international academic community. Therefore, by examining research articles in three academic disciplines—sociology, psychology and pedagogy, written by Serbian-speaking writers and published in Serbian national journals, and then comparing them to the articles written by English writers, we shall focus our attention on two areas in which English and Serbian academic styles differ most strikingly², and which we predict to be a potential hindrance to Serbian academics, putting them in an unfavourable position compared to other academic authors when seeking to publish their articles in international publications.

We shall discuss the differences in two academic writing practices at the level of the discourse organisation of abstracts and the texts of research articles from the aspect of their potential communicability to an international readership. The two writing practices have been compared by analysing the same number of research articles (thirty in each case) in

² The choice of these two areas has been made according to the author's previous contrastive studies on Serbian and English academic discourse (Blagojević 2010, 2011, 2012, 2012a).

three academic disciplines: sociology, psychology and pedagogy, written by English and Serbian academic writers. The three academic disciplines have been selected in order to provide a cross-disciplinary approach to the planned research and to reduce the specific features of each discipline, which could appear as interfering factors in discerning the writing habits of each group of writers. However, since each of the three disciplines has several branches which differ to a great extent, the examined articles have been selected from similar branches, so that the research corpus includes only articles on educational sociology, educational psychology and pedagogy. In order to provide full comparability, each of the examined articles is of approximately the same length (around 5,200 words in each article, including its abstract).

2. Different practices in composing research article abstracts

Training people how to write a good abstract to a research article is an indispensable activity in any English academic writing course, especially nowadays, when abstracts have turned into "a tool of mastering and managing the ever increasing information flow in the scientific community" (Ventola 1994, 281). Its role in promoting a research article is highly valued, as "the abstract is generally the readers' first encounter with a text, and is often the point at which they decide whether to continue and give the accompanying article further attention or to ignore it" (Hyland 2002, 63). However, numerous cross-linguistic studies which mainly compare English abstracts with those in other languages (e.g. Bonn and Swales 2007; Busch-Lauer 1995; Santos 1996; Martín-Martín 2005; Pho 2008; Saboori and Hashemi 2013; Suntara and Siriluck 2013, and others) have shown some variations in their design, due to the different writing practices cherished within each national academic writing style. These abstract variations may sometimes result in failing to meet the discourse expectations of the members of the international academic community, who are accustomed to the rhetorical pattern of abstracts that appears within the Anglo-American writing culture. Consequently, the abstracts under consideration cannot fulfil their most important aim—to draw the readers' attention and invite them to read the entire research article. This fact has been acknowledged by the Ukrainian scholar, Tatyana Yakhontova (2002) who made an interesting comparison between the Anglo-American and Slavic types of abstracts, and discovered two different attitudes which underlie their designs: "... the Slavic abstracts appeal to their addressees by 'telling', while promotional English texts do

their 'selling' jobs". This means that the Slavic abstracts incline "to incorporating an appropriate theoretical background, and a detailed description of the paper..., while English abstracts are characterised by scene-settings that show the importance and novelty of the research, intriguing concluding parts, 'eye-catching' titles, and appealing language" (Yakhontova 2002, 156-157).

In order to check whether the article abstracts written by Serbian academics share the same characteristics of the so-called "Slavic type" of article abstracts, and also to reveal whether the rhetorical structure of Serbian abstracts differs from that of English abstracts, and if it does, to what degree, small-scale research has been undertaken, the results of which are presented in Table 1-1. For this comparison, the model produced by Mauro B. dos Santos (1996) has been used³. According to this scholar, a typical English article abstract comprises five rhetorical moves⁴, each of which contains specific rhetorical steps, which he formulated as following:

SITUATING THE RESEARCH (e.g. by stating current knowledge in the field or a research problem)

PRESENTING THE RESEARCH (e.g. by indicating its main purpose or main features)

DESCRIBING ITS METHODOLOGY

SUMMARISING THE RESULTS

DISCUSSING THE RESEARCH (by drawing conclusions and/or giving recommendations)

The results obtained by comparing the abstracts written by English and Serbian writers indicate an apparent uniformity in abstract structure on the part of the English corpus, so that 26 out of 30 abstracts in this corpus contain all the moves listed above, while the five-move abstract structure has been identified only in 18 out of 30 Serbian abstracts. As for the individual moves which have been identified in the examined abstracts, quantitative analysis has offered this data:

³ The same model was used by Yakhontova (1998) for comparing English and Ukrainian/Russian article abstracts, which was the reason for choosing it for the current research, in order to view the structure of abstracts of Serbian authors in the light of Slavic writing culture.

⁴ The terms "moves" and "steps" were first introduced into genre analysis by Swales (1990) to denote rhetorical strategies used by academic writers in composing the introductory part of their research articles, but they later became widely used in discourse analysis.

| English abstracts / Serbian abstracts | | |
|---------------------------------------|----|----|
| Situating the research | 28 | 25 |
| Presenting the research | 30 | 30 |
| Describing the research methodology | 27 | 19 |
| Summarising the results | 30 | 28 |
| Discussing the research | 29 | 25 |

Table 1-1. Quantitative distribution of rhetorical moves in English and Serbian abstracts

The results indicate the different preferences between English and Serbian writers as far as the use of rhetorical moves in abstract structure is concerned: while the first move is presented in almost all abstracts, regardless of the writer's cultural background (28 in the English and 25 in the Serbian corpus), the most apparent differences can be noticed in the use of the third move. Whereas this move has been identified in 27 English abstracts, only 19 of the Serbian abstracts contain the move labelled as: *Describing the research methodology*. This leads us to the conclusion that Serbian writers are not inclined towards providing the readers with data about the methodology they have used in their research, and generally skip this move, emphasising the obtained results⁵.

A more detailed analysis of the rhetorical moves has shown that English writers, on average, dedicate one sentence to the first move (*Situating the research*), in contrast to Serbian writers, who pay more attention to it and who usually use two or three long and complex sentences within this move, by means of which they provide their readers with the precise theoretical background of the research. This is a common practice among Serbian academic researchers, and according to Yakhontova (2002), the same kind of writing practice has been identified among other academic writers with a Slavic background. English academic writers, however, might consider this characteristic of Slavic abstracts to be an unnecessary, redundant part of the abstract which should

⁵ This finding is in line with previous findings of Blagojević (2013) on research articles written by English and Serbian writers, which proved that English writers devote more space in their articles to describing the process of their research, including a detailed description of the method, research instruments and research procedure, while Serbian writers focus on the results and findings and do not pay considerable attention to what has preceded the presentation of these data. This means that Serbian abstracts reflect the same kind of writing habits that their authors exhibit while composing the main part of their research articles.

be mentioned later, in the main body of a research article, and extensively discussed if it is of vital importance to the research which is being presented.

The second qualitative difference between the abstracts written by English and Serbian writers relates to the second rhetorical move—*Presenting the research*, i.e. the way the two groups of academic writers compose a short report of the research which will be presented in detail later in the text. While English writers make significant efforts to emphasise the novelty and interest of the research which will be presented later, in order to draw the reader's attention to it and invite him/her to begin to read the whole text, Serbian writers generally offer a global outline of the research and quickly turn to the next move of the abstract—*Summarising the results*. However, they usually present their research results in a vague way, using, for example, "The obtained results will be presented and discussed", and are not explicit in their wording. One can notice here that Serbian writers use a rhetorical strategy which is common in literature genres, such as novels and short stories, whose author, by promising a certain but not an explicit solution to the literary plot, tends to arouse the curiosity of his/her readers. However, this does not seem to be a convincing strategy for academic readers who are accustomed to an English type of abstract, who expect the abstract to contain the exact results of the research and help them continue to read the whole text, provided they have gauged the presented results to be intriguing enough to pursue and worthy of their attention. On the basis of this comparison, it can be concluded that Serbian academics who adhere to the same writing habits which they manifest in their abstracts intended for local, i.e. national readers, when they write for international readership, might be faced with a negative reception by these readers.

If we compare the findings concerning the Serbian abstracts on the basis of the analysis of the research papers in sociology, psychology and pedagogy to Yakhontova's findings on the Slavic type of abstract, we may notice both similarities and differences: for example, too much space devoted to the theoretical background of the research places Serbian abstracts in line with the abstracts written by other academics from Slavic cultural backgrounds; however, the Serbian abstracts (as far as the examined corpus is concerned) do not contain "a detailed description of the paper", as Yakhontova (2002) put it, but are rather characterised by their brief description and fairly vague presentation of the obtained research results. This implies that some additional variants can be evidenced even within the so-called Slavic type of research abstract, so that each of the sub-types, such as abstracts produced by Serbian writers, should be analysed independently, in order to make their own peculiarities

known to Serbian authors and help them adjust their writing styles to one which is appreciated by the global academic community.

3. Different discourse practices in composing a research article

It has been mentioned that Slavic academic texts are often considered difficult to read. Their authors do not seem to be supportive enough to the reader and do not offer him/her appropriate landmarks through the text to make it easier to understand. In literature, this writing style is often referred to as the reader-responsible type of writing (Hinds 1987), in contrast to the writer-responsible type of academic writing, such as the one practised in the Anglo-American writing tradition. In this vein, Hyland (2005, ix) claims that "successful writing in English is *reader-friendly*. It must fit together logically, be signposted to guide readers, and take their likely responses and processing difficulties into account".

Starting from the assumption that the Serbian academic writing tradition has developed writing habits different from those of the Anglo-American's and similar to the Slavic ones, one can predict that Serbian research articles do not contain a sufficient number of guidelines which assist readers in comprehending the text, but rather leave them to rely on their own intuition and intelligence. The most explicit ways by which readers can be helped through the text, according to English academic writing courses, are the employment of discourse linkers and the use of the proper segmentation of the text into rhetorical units and sub-units. These two features of academic articles have been excerpted from research articles written by English and Serbian authors and compared in order to reveal their quantitative relationship and draw corresponding conclusions concerning the writing practices of the two groups of academic writers.

3.1. The use of discourse linkers

Discourse linkers are language devices which serve to connect a piece of writing into a meaningful unit, so that it can be easily processed by the readers' minds. In this way, they contribute to the readers' interpretation and orientation through the text, but, at the same time, they help them experience an academic article as a coherent entity. In literature, discourse linkers are defined as "natural language expressions, whose primary function is to facilitate the process of interpretation of the coherence relation(s) between a particular unit of discourse and other, surrounding

units and/or aspects of the communicative situation" (Risselda and Spooen 1998, 132).

Discourse linkers employ words and expressions which are syntactically and semantically heterogeneous, but easily recognised on the basis of their explicitly stated functions⁶. The following groups of expressions are the most prominent among them:

1) Expressions which serve to remind the reader of the previously exposed material and thus facilitate the flow of information are commonly called *reminders*. They are characterised by the use of verbs such as: *to state, to say, to suggest, to see* and so on, combined with adverbs of time or place: *as stated earlier, as suggested above, as already discussed* and others. For the same purpose, the author may use expressions with the inclusive type of personal pronoun "we" (as in the following example: *as we have already seen*) as a rhetorical strategy by which he/she invites the reader to consider the previously conveyed piece of information.

2) Expressions which serve to direct the reader to what to expect will feature later in the text can be conveniently labelled as *announcers*. They can be used both in passive and active forms, where in the case of the latter, the pronouns "I/we" are interchangeable: *As it will be seen in the next section, I shall show below/ Further, we shall discuss* and so on.

3) Expressions which are commonly called *action markers* are used to point to a discourse activity which will be undertaken by the author of a research article, such as in the following examples: *to sum up, to give an example, to outline briefly*, and others. However, as they may, similarly to announcers, contain pronouns for the first person singular or plural, it is not easy to decide which of the two groups they belong to. For example, the expression *I shall outline briefly* can be treated both as an announcer and as an action marker. Since our research includes a quantitative analysis which requires a precise classification of the three groups of expressions according to their functions in the research article, their delimitation has been made on the basis of closer semantic inspection. Thus, the expressions by which a larger or a global portion of the text is announced by the author, usually with an adverb which denotes a special relationship (*in the next section, below, further, and the like*), are categorised as announcers, while the expressions which indicate an immediate performance of the author's discourse action, are considered to be action markers.

⁶ These expressions are commonly referred to as the metadiscoursal part of a piece of academic writing (Vande Kopple 1985).

The discourse linkers identified in the two examined corpora have been classified into three groups according to the function which each of them displays in the research article, added up for each category, and then divided by the number of examined articles (30 of each), in order to obtain the average number per article (the percentage relationship). This procedure allows for a quantitative comparison of the examined elements and interpretation on the basis of their presence in the two groups of research articles.

| Discourse linkers | English corpus | English article | Serbian corpus | Serbian article |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Reminders | 129 | 4.30 | 61 | 2.03 |
| Announcers | 98 | 3.26 | 45 | 1.5 |
| Discourse actions | 164 | 5.46 | 89 | 2.96 |
| Total | 391 | 13.02 | 195 | 6.49 |

Table 1-2. Quantitative distribution of discourse linkers in English and Serbian research articles

The results obtained by comparing the presence of discourse linkers in research articles written by Serbian and English writers show that English writers use them generally twice as often as Serbian writers; that is, 13.02 to 6.49 per article in each of the examined corpora. As can be noticed from the table, discourse actions are used most frequently in both cases, but even there, much more prominently on the part of English writers (5.46 compared to 2.96). The findings of the comparison imply that Serbian academics use discourse linkers throughout their research articles only occasionally. Moreover, some of them even consider their usage in an academic article as "too personal" and inappropriate to the scientific style, which, in their opinion, has to be strictly formal⁷. The overall conclusion is that Serbian academics do not consider academic writing as a kind of communication between the author and the readers and do not appreciate the function of discourse linkers as valuable "helpers" to the ability of readers to "move" easily through the text.

⁷ This remark is based on my conversations with colleagues from the Sociology Department of the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš, who consider discourse linkers redundant elements of academic articles and even suggest that their students should discard them from their academic papers.

3.2. The use of rhetorical units and sub-units

Even a superficial view of the formal realisation of the examined academic articles written by Serbian and English writers shows a difference in their appearance: while English articles in sociology, psychology and pedagogy are regularly divided into several rhetorical units and some sub-units within them, the same type of academic articles written by Serbian authors are characterised by long, unbroken stretches of text. If it is assumed that the content of an academic article is much easier to follow when the author divides the text into rhetorical units and sub-units, it follows that the academic writers who use this discourse strategy show more concern for their readers and try to facilitate their role. This assumption underlies the closer inspection of the text division of academic articles written by English and Serbian writers. The division into larger rhetorical units such as *Introduction*, *The Main Body of the Text*, *Methods and Procedures*, *Results*, *Discussion and Conclusion*, as well as their further partition into smaller units within these larger rhetorical parts, is a recommended writing strategy in manuals on English academic writing, because of its contribution to text comprehensibility. These units are explicitly indicated through headings and sub-headings and often stated through sentences which contain specific words, such as *to introduce*, *introduction*, *method*, *procedure*, *results*, *discussion*, *to conclude*, *conclusion*, and others.

The comparison of the number of global units identified in the two groups of academic articles has revealed a similar tendency in the two groups of authors concerning overall text division, with a slight advantage on the part of English writers. It has been found that the average number of rhetorical units is 5.5 per English research article and 5.1 per Serbian article. However, a more prominent difference has been demonstrated concerning the presence of sub-units in the examined articles: the average number of sub-units per English article is 4.2, while it is 2.6 sub-units per Serbian article. This fact reveals that English writers, in comparison to Serbian ones, are more inclined to segment their texts into smaller units, and in this way show their willingness to assist the readers' 'journey' through the text; thus demonstrating their reader-friendly attitude.

4. Conclusion

Bearing in mind that, due to constant exposure to a diversity of writing styles, the international academic community has gradually become more tolerant to certain non-English academic writing habits (mostly to those

which are not significant for understanding the content of an academic article, such as, for example, the use of hedging statements and attitudinal expressions in academic style), the paper has addressed some global features of academic writing which can be instantaneously noticed while reading research articles. Although these features do not interfere with the meaning of the content of an article, they could significantly facilitate its understanding and help readers to experience it as reader-friendly discourse. They are easily noticed by inspecting the way in which academic authors structure the abstracts and entire texts of their research articles. The comparison of these features, extracted from the academic articles written by English and Serbian authors, has shown different writing preferences and inclinations on the part of the two groups of writers. At the same time, the analysis of the articles written by Serbian authors has revealed that academic writers of a Slavic cultural background share similar writing habits, though with certain exceptions. Namely, the latter observation is true for the structure of articles' abstracts in that the abstracts written by Serbian authors contain too extensive a presentation of the theoretical assumptions that lie behind the research, which is, according to Yakhontova (2002), a notorious characteristic of the Slavic type of academic abstracts, while the inclination of Serbian writers to omit a detailed description of the paper in their abstracts, might be taken as a specific characteristic of their writing style.

A further analysis of academic articles has comprised a consideration of the use of discourse devices, which are intended to facilitate readers' comprehension of the content of the research article—discourse linkers and rhetorical units of the text. A quantitative comparison of these devices in the articles written by English and Serbian writers has proved that Serbian writers use them considerably less frequently than English authors. This is possibly due to the fact that Serbian writers are neither aware of, nor sufficiently informed about, their importance in academic discourse.

It is obvious that different writing habits operate within both English and Serbian writing cultures. Although Serbian writing habits, unquestionably, operate successfully at the so-called "local level", that is, within the national academic community, they might not be equally appreciated by the international academic community, if applied in research articles which are intended for publishing beyond their national borders. This is because they do not meet the discourse expectations of the international discourse community, in which the Anglo-American discursive norms are globally dominant. By this supposition we may raise, one more time, "the question about the degree to which locally published

research articles deviate from international research articles, and even may constitute a different subgenre with its own generic integrity" (Millan 2012, 79). Nevertheless, by tackling the issue from a practical angle and by comparing national writing styles to that which is established as primary among the members of the international academic community, we may help domestic academic writers to get a better insight into the problem and overcome the possible obstacles and hindrances when they are preparing to publish their research articles in international journals.

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CHAPTER TWO

GENRE ANALYSIS OF LINGUISTIC ABSTRACTS IN MONTENEGRIN AND ENGLISH

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1. Introduction

Abstracts represent a powerful linguistic tool for the members of an academic discourse community. Its peculiarity as a genre lies in its specific combination of structure and content aimed at drawing scholars' attention to a particular research article. Given the lack of time for thorough research, scholars look for clear and informative abstracts. The aim of this chapter is to compare the current discourse exponents of research article abstracts written by English and Montenegrin linguists.

Since its introduction into linguistic science, genre-based analysis has been applied to the analysis of various written and oral genres. The interrelationship between recurrent textual patterns and social regularities has become an essential notion in the research of specialised discourses (political, academic or legal). Swales (1990, 45), the originator of genre analysis, claims that genre is a set of communicative means aimed at reaching a certain communicative goal. The concept of interrelationship between textual regularities and social regularities has long been the focus of academic research. The application of genre-based knowledge can be said to go far beyond the theory, especially in the analysis of special genres within ESP teaching. It seems that "ESP practice has marched ahead of discussion of ideas" (Basturkmen 2006, 9).

Bakhtin said that in each epoch, literary work had its own recipients, be they readers, listeners or an audience of people (2000, 94). This thought was the main source of inspiration for this chapter and directed the methodological approach, combining both the identification of discourse patterns and their interpretation.

In this sense, the application of a genre-based approach in this chapter is used to shed light on the structural aspect or scheme of the research abstract in linguistics as a surface aspect of much more deeply embedded sociolinguistic elements. The interrelation between linguistic traits and pragmatic aspects calls for a multilayered approach; that is, the convention of language use is interpreted in the light of both the Montenegrin and the Anglo-Saxon mental scripts.

2. Corpus

The English corpus comprises 20 research articles published by recognised linguistic scientific journals such as publications by Routledge (The *Australian Journal of Linguistics*), Cambridge (*English Language and Linguistics*), Sage Publications (The *Journal of English Linguistics*) and Elsevier (*Language and Communication*). Likewise, the Montenegrin corpus consists of another 20 research articles abstracts issued by Montenegrin publishers in the field of linguistics such as *Časopis Riječ* (The Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Montenegro), Conference Proceedings from the 4th International Conference of the Institute of Foreign Languages (Podgorica), The *Lingua Montenegrina Journal* (The Montenegrin Cultural Portal) and *Folia Linguistica and Litteraria* (The University of Montenegro).

3. Purpose of the research and methodology

The purpose of the research is to compare the linguistic practices of linguists writing research article abstracts. On the one hand, the aim is to define the generic forms pertaining to linguistic abstracts, and on the other, to compare the results of the research between the two analysed corpora and grasp the differences and similarities between the Montenegrin and the Anglo-Saxon discourse and rhetorical practices.

The methodological approach taken in this chapter relies on the move—step model set forward by Swales (1990), the four-move model based on the analysis of research article abstracts (Bhatia 1993), and the model provided by Lakić (1997).

After analysing the collection of abstracts, the author provides a 6-move model indicating the structural pattern of this specific genre. After that, the author moves on to the micro-analysis of the discourse exponents of the individual moves and steps.

| LINGUISTIC ABSTRACTS | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| MOVE 1 Step 1 | SETTING THE SCENE Claiming centrality a. by topic prominence b. by indicating a gap in the previous research |
| Step 2 | Presenting the state-of-the art |
| MOVE 2 | SUMMARISING PREVIOUS RESEARCH |
| MOVE 3 Step 1 | INTRODUCING PURPOSE Describing the present research |
| Step 2 | Stating purpose |
| Step 3 | Problem elaboration |
| MOVE 4 Step 1 | DESCRIBING THE METHODOLOGY Presenting methods and theoretical foundations |
| Step 2 | Corpus and structure description |
| MOVE 5 Step 1 | SUMMARISING RESULTS Presenting conclusions |
| Step 2 | Extension of findings |
| Step 3 | Expectations and suggestions |
| MOVE 6 | KEY WORDS |

Table 2-1. Moves and steps established in linguistic research abstracts

4. Analysis

4.1. The abstracts in the English language

The analysis of the abstracts in English showed that the structure of linguistic abstract is neatly organised. The transition between steps and moves is easy to discern. There is no doubt that with English abstracts, genre is a "schematic world with its predictable contours" (Frow 2006, 7).

The Textanz programme (Cro Code 2010) was used to examine the basic technical features of the analysed abstracts. Thus, the average number of words in the sentences in the English corpus is 21.17. The average coefficient of readability is 15, indicating that the texts are not among the most readable ones. Our analysis implies that this is due to the use of long sentences loaded with content words, attitudinal adverbs, premodifiers and frequent nominalisation.

The longest words presented in Table 2-2, such as the word *conceptualisations*, mainly occur in the key words section.

| Abs. Number | Number of words | Average words per sentence | Number of sentences | Longest word | Readability |
|-------------|-----------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Abs. 1 | 116 | 19 | 6 | Conceptualisations | 15 |
| Abs. 2 | 188 | 28 | 7 | Significantly | 16 |
| Abs. 3 | 268 | 24 | 11 | Interrelationship | 17 |
| Abs. 4 | 236 | 33 | 7 | Quintessentially | 17 |
| Abs. 5 | 122 | 30 | 4 | Phraseological | 21 |
| Abs. 6 | 175 | 25 | 7 | Grammaticalisation | 16 |
| Abs. 7 | 140 | 23 | 6 | Noncategorical | 18 |
| Abs. 8 | 187 | 23 | 8 | International | 14 |
| Abs. 9 | 152 | 10 | 15 | Undergraduates | 7 |
| Abs. 10 | 202 | 25 | 8 | Relativisation | 16 |
| Abs. 11 | 134 | 33 | 4 | Pregrammaticalised | 23 |
| Abs. 12 | 156 | 26 | 6 | Complementarity | 18 |
| Abs. 13 | 355 | 23 | 15 | Counterparts | 13 |
| Abs. 14 | 295 | 24 | 12 | Characteristics | 16 |
| Abs. 15 | 297 | 24 | 12 | Restrictiveness | 16 |
| Abs. 16 | 211 | 26 | 8 | Characteristics | 20 |
| Abs. 17 | 291 | 26 | 11 | Sociolinguistics | 17 |
| Abs. 18 | 106 | 26 | 4 | Appropriateness | 21 |
| Abs. 19 | 194 | 24 | 6 | Prototypically | 19 |
| Abs. 20 | 131 | 26 | 6 | Responsibility | 22 |

Table 2-2. Description of the English abstracts (Textanz programme)

Bearing in mind the pragmatic function of **Move 1**, the author has named it **Setting the scene**. Specifically, the aim is to introduce the importance of the topic in question. The analysis showed that in the English corpus, **Move 1** appears in 4 instances and whenever it appears, it is placed at the beginning of the text. **Move 1** comprises two steps.

Step 1a is focused on claiming centrality by topic prominence. It is interesting to note that an argumentative effect is obtained by means of long, compound sentences. Subordination, aimed at amplifying rhetorical effect, is avoided through the use of non-finite forms (ex. 1 and 2). Moreover, claiming centrality by topic prominence is also accomplished through subtle semantic choices referring to quantity or volume, as in *prototypically*, *encapsulating*, *rationality* or *quintessentially*, or force, as in *disrupts*:

- (1) *Language enlargement disrupts indexical relationships between languages and communities prototypically defined by use of those*

languages, **complicating** notions of language community and speech community.

(2) *The concepts of mate and mateship have been held up as **quintessentially** Australian, **encapsulating** all that it might mean to be Australian, including such ideas as having a fair go, camaraderie, working together.*

Step 1b—Indicating a gap in previous research is found in two examples. The aim of the author is to indicate a gap in the previous research and this lack of knowledge is highlighted by means of the negative determiners *very little* and *no*. Discourse markers showing contrast such as *although* or *while* are placed in the initial position in these sentences. The use of the Present Perfect implies that the lack of knowledge about the problem started in the past and has continued to the present moment:

(3) ***While** the address term mate is generally included in discussions of mate and mateship, **very little** analysis of how it is actually used in Australian English has been carried out.*

(4) ***Although** from a synchronic perspective the evidential NCI construction can be constructed as grammaticalisation of the passive NCI, **no** such grammaticalisation has taken place in English.*

Step 2—Presenting the state-of-the-art is present in only one example. Its purpose is to shed light on the contemporary relevance of the topic in question. In the example below the contemporary nature of the topic is recognised by the pragmatically effective semantic choice *rivalry*, adding a dramatic tone to the noun *issue* and the use of the Present Perfect tense of the verb *to be*:

(4) ***Rivalry** between the two English nominalising suffixes *-ity* and *-ness* has long been an **issue** in the literature on English word-formation.*

Move 2—Summarising previous research is present in 6 out of 20 abstracts in English. In this move, the author mentions previous research in the field in order to bridge the gap or form the basis for what follows. It is a kind of transition move that enables the author's own upgrading of past knowledge. In all examples of **Move 2—Summarising previous**