# BOOK REVIEW

## INTERCULTURAL SCHOLARSHIP AND NON-ANGLOPHONE RESEARCH WRITING

**Pilar Mur-Dueñas and Jolanta Šinkūnienė (Eds.).** INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON RESEARCH WRITING (2018), Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 310 pp. ISBN-978 -90-272-0197-3(HBK). ISBN-978-90-272-6309-4 (EBK).

English is "now unquestionably the language of international scholarship" (Hyland, 2009: 83), although non-Anglophone researchers seeking to publish in English medium journals far outnumber their English native speaking peers. This has raised issues of communicative inequality and concerns that non-Anglophone academics might be disadvantaged because their use of English differs from that of native English speakers. The concern is real and important and this book makes a vital contribution to a discussion that concerns all academics. This background to the volume is set out with admirable clarity in the preface by Ken Hyland.

In the introduction the editors explain that this book was based largely on papers presented at a one-day seminar held during the 13th European Society for the Study of English conference which took place in Ireland in August 2016. The seminar examined the research publication practices of scholars around the world. This edited volume focuses specifically on the challenges that writing academic texts holds for non-native speakers of English. After the preface and introduction the book is divided into three separate sections: the first, entitled "Three-fold intercultural analysis: Comparing national, L1 English and L2 English academic texts", focuses on research articles written in English by Czech and Lithuanian scholars and compares these articles to other research articles written in the authors' first languages. In turn, these texts are compared to those written by English speaking academics in the humanities.

In the first of the three chapters in this section Dontcheva-Navrátilová examines the use of citations in research articles in Czech and English texts. She argues that academics drawn from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds differ considerably in the choices they make in their use of citations in their first languages, and the way in which the citations are presented to the reader. However, Czech linguists adopt a different approach in articles aimed at an international readership and their use of citations in this context appears to be a compromise between Czech and English writing.

The second chapter by Ruzaitė and Petrauskaitė focuses on the way in which academic conventions are used differently in non-Anglophone medium journals as opposed to journals that publish solely in English. The authors compare the articles in two journals, one a Lithuanian journal which publishes articles in several languages, and the other an international journal published only in English. The authors found that there were a number of differences that indicate differing approaches to academic practices in the field of linguistics. The authors do not appear to be comparing journals of the same academic standing. They are critical of the Lithuanian journal but wonder if this is not a little unfair. In my view it might have been better to have investigated citation usage in a local English medium journal from an Anglophone country. The comments on collaboration are interesting but somewhat sketchy.

The final chapter in the first section is an interesting contribution by Šinkūnienė discussing the use of "I" and "we" in research writing. The author compares Lithuanian and British researchers and contends that cultural backgrounds influence the way in which authors choose to position themselves. It appears that British scholars are more likely to assume personal responsibility for arguments put forward in the text than Lithuanian researchers writing in their own language. However, Šinkūnienė demonstrates that when Lithuanian academics write in English, they are more likely to adapt their author stance patterns to correspond with those of their Anglophone peers.

The second section of the book is entitled "Two-fold intercultural analysis: Comparing L2 and L1 English academic texts/Anglophone writing conventions". This section, which is made up of four chapters, compares the academic English writing of French, Malaysian, Chinese and Czech researchers with their English speaking counterparts.

The first chapter in this section by Bordet examines the use of shell nouns in PhD abstracts written in English by English and French speaking students. Bordet argues that abstracts have become increasingly more important as the proliferation of academic texts has meant that this section can serve a gatekeeping role. The author analysed 400 abstracts and came to the conclusion that the French students had more difficulty handling abstract terms than discipline specific terms. She argues that this difficulty has the potential to undermine the writer's credibility and impact on the demonstration of their enculturation in their discipline areas.

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In the next chapter Mehrjooseresht and Ahmad also turn their attention to thesis abstracts – this time in the fields of Science and Engineering. Four hundred and fifty-five masters and 411 doctoral thesis abstracts from four leading research universities in Malaysia were examined. The authors focused on providing a description of the way in which evaluation was linguistically marked in these texts. They found that the novice research writers were particularly interested in highlighting the impact that their theses could have on their discipline areas. The authors also identified cross disciplinary differences with the science students employing certainty markers of status, while engineering students preferred to make use of value and relevance markers.

Chen's chapter discusses the way in which Chinese academics construct their identity as creators of a research space over a period of time. Chen focuses specifically on the introductory section of research articles and uses Swales's CARS model to analyse the data. In their earlier publications the authors did not generally claim the identity of creator of the research space. However, over time they began to make claims on this space, probably because they became more familiar with Anglophone conventions.

The final chapter in this section by Renata Povolná tackles the issue of conference abstracts and the challenge they pose for non-Anglophone writers. The author analysed the textual organisation of conference abstracts written in English by academics from countries where Slavonic languages are spoken, and compared these with similar abstracts written by Anglophone academics. The research indicates that conference abstracts differ from research abstracts, and thus can potentially pose a problem for non-Anglophone academics.

The third section of the book entitled "Intercultural analysis on the move: Exploring ELF academic texts" is the longest of the three with six chapters. This section is a logical next step in the book exploring as it does the way in which non-Anglophone academics are shaping English as an academic lingua franca.

In the first chapter Lorés-Sanz examines the abstracts of research articles in Sociology dividing them into three categories, namely Anglophone, Spanish and English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). In the case of the Spanish articles Lorés-Sanz examined the English translations of the Spanish abstracts. The Anglophone and ELF texts were taken from English medium journals with high impact factors. Identification of the ELF texts was done by looking at institutional affiliation and surname, a practice which the author acknowledges is a methodological weakness. The rhetorical structure was analysed using six moves identified by Lewin, Fine, and Young (2002), who based these moves on Swales's IMRD structure. The translated Spanish abstracts displayed a Spanish rhetorical organisation even though they were written in English, while the ELF texts displayed hybridised rhetorical patterns.

The second chapter of this section investigates how research writers project their authorial presence in their texts by examining their use of hedges, boosters and self-mentions. Wang and Jiang examined the writing of Chinese PhD students

from four different scientific disciplines, Physics, Life Science, Material Science, and Computer Science. The first two disciplines are hard pure disciplines while the latter two are hard applied. Interestingly, the research indicates that the students lacked awareness of the subtlety of stance making devices. Research such as this is very useful for those academics involved in the teaching of academic writing, and also for those involved in thesis supervision.

Bondi and Borelli investigated ELF writers, textual voices and meta-discourse. They compared two corpora, the first draws on texts on Economics from an ELF sub-corpus while the other is comprised of published texts in Business and Economics. The authors believe that the ELF texts demonstrate a "selling imperative" in that the writers of these texts emphasise the innovative nature and contribution of their research. Bondi and Borelli believe this emphasis might be traced to the influence of literacy brokers.

In the fourth chapter in this section by Murillo the author compares unedited ELF research articles with research articles written by native speakers of English. She focuses specifically on markers used to introduce reformulations. She found that while there were similarities between the two corpora the ELF corpus had less variety. Murillo argues that rhetorical heterogeneity she discovered in the ELF texts might well indicate a remodelling of academic ELF.

Lafuente-Millán focuses on evaluation in research writing. In this chapter the author turns his attention to the introductions in unpublished manuscripts written by non-Anglophone authors. He argues that published articles have frequently been edited by literacy brokers. Using Swales's CARS model he then compared these introductions to introductions in research articles published in international journals in the same discipline area. Lafuente-Millán found that the non-Anglophone authors of the unpublished manuscripts were loathe to evaluate their own work. He suggests that this tendency to avoid evaluative acts might well jeopardise their chances of publication.

The final chapter in the book by Pilar Mur-Dueñas looks at the use of the anticipatory *it* pattern in as far as it fulfils an interpersonal function in ELF. The author compares the use of the anticipatory *it* pattern as it appears in 150 unrevised manuscripts of research articles written by non-Anglophone researchers with those published by Anglophone writers in the same discipline areas. Mur-Dueñas found that the pattern was more common in ELF texts.

In the Afterword Connor underlines the importance of research in the area of intercultural studies of academic writing, pointing out its usefulness to teachers of academic writing.

I am a teacher of academic writing and found much in this volume that will be of use to me in my work with students. A number of these chapters will also be very useful for my research students investigating English academic writing at all levels of tertiary study. However, I did find the book a little disappointing in some regards. It appeared, particularly in the first part of the book, that there was a great deal of emphasis on abstracts and introductions. I find these relatively easy to

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teach. A discussion of language employed in the literature review and in the discussion sections of articles would have been very helpful. Also, if the book is aimed at those of us involved in teaching academic writing a few ideas as to how the information provided in the book could be put into practice would have been very useful.

For me the most important aspect of this book is the raising of awareness of how a new and vital academic English is developing. As Jenkins (2011) reminds us what is important in academic writing is clarity, effectiveness and the contextual appropriateness of the communication. She notes that "while high academic standards are vital, native-like English is not" (Jenkins, 2011: 932). For this reason alone this book deserves a place on our bookshelves.

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