Research article introductions in English for specific purposes: A comparison between Brazilian Portuguese and English

Eliana Hirano *

Georgia State University, 34 Peachtree St. Suite 1200, One Park Tower Building, Atlanta, GA 30303, USA

Abstract

This paper compares the rhetorical organization of research article introductions in Brazilian Portuguese and in English within a subfield of Applied Linguistics. Using Swales’ (1990) CARS model as an analytical tool, this exploratory study investigated 20 research articles. The findings indicate that introductions in Brazilian Portuguese tend to follow a different pattern from that of the model, whereas the introductions in English follow it closely. Different explanations are offered to account for the cross-cultural differences.

1. Introduction

Since Swales’ (1990) publication of the revised CARS (Create a Research Space) model, a number of studies have been carried out (e.g., Anthony, 1999; Samraj, 2002) using the model as an analytical tool to investigate the characteristics of research article introductions in different academic fields and in different languages. The attention given to this specific part of the research article can be explained by the crucial role it plays in attending to:

- The need to re-establish in the eyes of the discourse community the significance of the research field itself;
- the need to ’situate’ the actual research in terms of that significance; and
- the need to show how this niche in the wider ecosystem will be occupied and defended (Swales, 1990, p. 142).

According to the CARS model, a research article introduction (RAI) typically comprises three moves: (1) establishing a territory, (2) establishing a niche, and (3) occupying the niche. Each of these moves is further divided into a number of obligatory and optional steps (see Appendix A for all the moves and steps). As different researchers used the framework to analyze RAIs in different fields and in different languages, a few modifications have been proposed to the model. Árvay and Tankó (2004), for instance, investigating introductions in theoretical research articles in English and in Hungarian, added two new steps to the CARS model to...
account for the rhetorical acts in their corpus. They claim that, unlike the primarily empirical articles studied by Swales, theoretical RAI s often present examples in Move 1 to illustrate the topic and Move 3 often contains analytical details of the present research (both steps unaccounted for by the CARS model). Similarly, Anthony (1999) found that Move 1 in RAI s in software engineering also included “definitions of important terms and examples to illustrate difficult concepts” (p. 43). Samraj (2002), who analyzed RAI s in Wildlife Behavior and Conservation Biology, found that, in the field of Wildlife Behavior, introductions often included “a background move that details the features of the species that is the object of observation or experimentation” (p. 14) in Move 3. Despite the different modifications proposed to the CARS model, researchers seem to agree that the move structure put forward by Swales (1990) is still generally valid and the changes that have been suggested often concern the steps within the moves rather than the moves themselves. In response to all the research that applied his model and suggested changes, and as an example of his “evolving thought” as discussed by Johns (2008, p. 123), and Swales (2004) himself later presented a revised version of the CARS model, keeping the overall move structure, but modifying some of the steps. As an analytical tool, the 1990 version still seems to be more widely used than the 2004 version, possibly due to the research tradition that has developed around that model. With a view to engaging with this tradition, this study also uses the 1990 model.

The CARS model was developed from an analysis of 158 RAI s in English distributed across various disciplinary areas (Swales, 1990). The model reflects a preferred order for the moves (Move 1, Move 2 and then Move 3) although examples of fronted-Move 3 RAI s are discussed (p. 166). It also assumes that RAI s include all the three moves and, even though a possible absence of Move 2 is acknowledged, it is considered uncommon (p. 159). Studies that have applied the model, however, have shown that some of the moves tend to be more frequent than others. In particular, if an RAI lacks one move, it often seems to be Move 2. Jogthong (2001), for instance, analyzed 40 RAI s in Thai journals in the educational and medical fields and found that 45% of these did not include a Move 2. In Ozturk’s (2007) corpus of 10 articles from the Journal of Second Language Writing, 30% lacked a Move 2. Similarly, 30% of the 20 Hungarian and 20 English RAI s analyzed by Avray and Tanko (2004) also lacked a Move 2.

Despite the fact that the CARS model has been used to analyze RAI s in languages other than English, to my knowledge, no study has used the model to investigate RAI s in Brazilian Portuguese. The few studies that have compared research articles in English and in Brazilian Portuguese have focused on different issues. de Rezende and Hemi (2004), for example, analyzed the use of hedging in research articles written in Portuguese and English by Brazilians and in English by native speakers of English. Their corpus contained six articles from sub-areas of Health Studies. Moraes (2005), on the other hand, looked at the use of metadiscourse in articles in English and in Brazilian Portuguese in two disciplinary areas (Biomedical Sciences and Linguistics, Letters and Arts).

The present exploratory study uses the CARS model to compare the structural organization of RAI s written in English and in Brazilian Portuguese, taken from the same research area, namely English for Specific Purposes. This specific discipline was chosen due to the existence of an English-medium journal and a predominantly Brazilian Portuguese-medium journal that specialize in this area. By focusing on the same area of interest, I believed that the cross-cultural differences in rhetorical organization (if there were any) would become more salient. The results of this kind of research can contribute to the understanding of some of the challenges authors in periphery countries may face when they try to publish in international journals (Salager-Meyer, 2008).

2. Data and method of analysis

The corpus used in this exploratory study consisted of 20 RAI s from two international journals in the field of English for Specific Purposes: The ESPecialist and English for Specific Purposes. The ESPecialist is published by a Brazilian University and accepts articles in Portuguese, English, French and Spanish although articles in Portuguese are prevalent. English for Specific Purposes is an English-medium journal published by a major international publishing house. Both journals are peer-reviewed and started publication in 1980.

The 10 articles selected from The ESPecialist (Appendix B1) are in Brazilian Portuguese and were published in 2005 and 2004. Articles more recent than 2005 are not publicly available, which determined the period chosen for the corpus. Starting from the most recent publicly available issue and going backwards, I selected the
first 10 articles written in Portuguese. To match the time frame, I selected 10 articles from *English for Specific Purposes* published in 2005 (Appendix B2). In the selection process I have excluded articles from special issues in both journals.

All the articles in the corpus were organized into clearly labeled sections, so that identifying the introduction was a straightforward process. Introductions were always labeled as such, except for article BESP4, which used the topic of the introduction as the heading of the first section. Introductions were always followed by another section on the same level of organization (i.e., introductions were numbered ‘1’ and the following section, ‘2’), except for article BESP9. In this article, the introduction was followed by a subheading (numbered 1.1). Following Ozturk (2007), the subsections within the introduction were not considered for the corpus since the CARS model does not deal with this possibility.

For the analysis of the structural organization of the RAIs, I have used Swales’ (1990) CARS model (Appendix A). An initial attempt was made to classify each sentence in the corpus into a move and step of the model. As other researchers have argued (e.g., Anthony, 1999; Samraj, 2002), however, such classification is not straightforward, with some sentences fitting into more than one step, and others not clearly fitting any. Quite a few times the steps suggested in the modified versions of the CARS model, as discussed above, would have been more adequate. Excerpt (1), for example, discusses definitions of terms, a step not accounted for in the original model.

(1) Inclusive alguns dicionários (por exemplo, *The American Heritage Dictionary of English Usage* e o *The American Heritage College Dictionary*) não possuem um verbete separado para actually e o listam como um advérbio derivado do adjetivo actual, ignorando assim importância daquele item (BESP5).

[Some dictionaries (for example, *The American Heritage Dictionary of English Usage* and *The American Heritage College Dictionary*) do not have a separate entry for actually and list it as an adverb derived from the adjective actual, thus ignoring the importance of the former.]

The assignment of moves, on the other hand, was less problematic, and an initial comparison of the two sets of articles indicated that relevant differences were found at this level. I have, therefore, decided to restrict my analysis mostly to the organization of moves, focusing on the macrostructure of the RAIs (see Appendix D, for a sample move analysis of a RAI). In the few instances in which a sentence contained two moves, I have followed Ozturk (2007) and assigned it to the move that seemed more salient. In excerpt (2), for example, the writer starts by referring to the present study (Move 3), but then moves on to indicate a gap in the literature (Move 2). I have assigned this sentence to Move 2, since this is the only instance that establishes a niche in this brief introduction. The other two sentences preceding this one are about the present research (Move 3).

(2) I will claim that the linguistic influence of Latin in early scientific English is a question which has rarely, if ever, been considered, but which deserves to be, and this contribution is a first step in that direction (ESPj1).

The analysis of the 20 RAIs was also independently carried out by another Portuguese/English bilingual researcher. My initial analysis contained 75 moves while hers contained 70. Of these, 65 were identical. Instances of disagreement were discussed until consensus was reached.

3. Results

Before presenting the results of the analysis using the CARS model, I provide some descriptive information about the RAIs in the corpus. Tables 1 and 2, below, provide information regarding the number of words, sentences, and paragraphs in each RAI, as well as the number of sentences per paragraph and the institutional location of the author(s).

As can be seen from the tables above, the length of the RAIs varied widely in the two subcorpora studied. In terms of number of words, the BESP corpus ranged from 149 to 928, whereas the ESPj corpus varied from 140 to 1277. Two of the introductions in the ESPj subcorpus were particularly long, exceeding 1000 words. It
is worth noting that these two long RAIs, as well as the longest introduction in the BESP subcorpus (i.e., BESP5, with 928 words), contained the whole literature review. The only other introduction that also exhausted the literature review was ESPj5.

Besides a higher average number of words per RAI, the ESPj subcorpus also had a higher average number of sentences per RAI. The number of paragraphs, however, was smaller in this subcorpus than in the BESP subcorpus. In fact, three of the 10 ESPj introductions only had one paragraph, whereas BESP introductions required at least two. The ratio between the number of sentences and paragraphs shows that eight out of the 10 BESP introductions had fewer than three sentences per paragraph while, in the ESPj corpus, three was the minimum found and the average was 5.2.

All the BESP authors are affiliated with a Brazilian University, which came as no surprise considering that Portuguese is not an international language and that researchers whose first language is not Portuguese have the option of submitting manuscripts to *The ESPecialist* in English, Spanish and French. To have a better idea of the institutional affiliation of the authors who publish in this journal, I have considered the remaining articles in the three issues from which the corpus was selected. Besides the 10 articles in Portuguese, there were five articles in English. There were no articles in Spanish or French. The authors of these five articles are: three from Brazil, one from Spain and one from Argentina, confirming the predominance of Brazilian authors. The authorship of the ESPj articles, as seen in Table 2, is quite varied, reflecting the international status of the journal.

The findings from the analysis using the CARS model are shown in Table 3 below. The move structure of the BESP RAIs show significant deviation from the structure proposed by the CARS model. To start with, seven out of the 10 BESP introductions do not contain a move 2 (i.e., they do not establish a niche). Three
of the introductions contain a single move: BESP1 only contains Move 1 whereas BESP3 and BESP8 only contain Move 3. None of them follow a strict M1–M2–M3 sequence. The only sequence that is repeated is M1–M3, which occurs four times. In summary, RAIs in *The ESPositive* do not seem to follow a pattern in the organization of their rhetorical moves although there seems to be a preference for the M1–M3 type. In this type of structural organization, the authors establish a territory (by making topic generalizations and giving background information, for example) and then present their current study (by announcing the present research and indicating the structure of the article, for example).

The ESPj RAIs, on the other hand, follow the pattern proposed by the CARS model more closely. Three of them follow the M1–M2–M3 sequence strictly while five others (i.e., ESPj3, ESPj5, ESPj7, ESPj8 and ESPj9) contain this sequence plus a repetition of one or more moves. Among these, ESPj5, ESPj7 and ESPj8 show very little variation from the canonical sequence: ESPj5 contains a one-sentence Move 1 between a 7-sentence Move 2 and a 7-sentence Move 3 while ESPj7 and ESPj8 each contain two instances of Move 2, establishing the niche in two separate installments.

With the exception of ESPj2, all the RAIs in this corpus contain a Move 2, and there was only one instance (i.e., ESPj1) of Move 3-fronting. ESPj1 did not contain a Move 1 either, being, overall, the introduction that was the most dissimilar from the model.

### Table 3
Move structure of the RAIs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RAI</th>
<th>Moves</th>
<th>RAI</th>
<th>Moves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BESP1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>ESPj1</td>
<td>3–2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BESP2</td>
<td>1–3</td>
<td>ESPj2</td>
<td>1–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BESP3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>ESPj3</td>
<td>1–2–3–1–2–3–2–1–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BESP4</td>
<td>1–3</td>
<td>ESPj4</td>
<td>1–2–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BESP5</td>
<td>1–3–1–2–3</td>
<td>ESPj5</td>
<td>1–2–1–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BESP6</td>
<td>1–3</td>
<td>ESPj6</td>
<td>1–2–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BESP7</td>
<td>1–3</td>
<td>ESPj7</td>
<td>1–2–1–2–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BESP8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>ESPj8</td>
<td>1–2–1–2–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BESP9</td>
<td>1–2</td>
<td>ESPj9</td>
<td>1–2–1–2–1–2–1–2–1–3–1–2–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BESP10</td>
<td>1–2–1–3</td>
<td>ESPj10</td>
<td>1–2–3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most striking difference between the BESP and the ESPj RAIs lies in the pervasive absence of Move 2 in the former. Other studies that looked at RAIs in languages other than English have found a similar pattern. As mentioned above, Jogthong (2001) reported an absence of Move 2 in 45% of the Thai articles studied while in Ahmad’s (1997) corpus of Malay RAIs 35% lacked a Move 2. In the present study, 70% of the RAIs in Portuguese did not contain this move, while only 10% of those in English lacked it.
A few potential explanations have been discussed in the literature to account for this apparent lack of need to establish a niche for one’s research. One of them is the emerging status of research areas in developing countries, in contrast to established fields. As discussed above, I do not believe this explains the BESP data. Another explanation, proposed by Najjar (1990) (as discussed in Jogthong, 2001, p. 71), is that in smaller discourse communities, more typical of developing countries, authors have less pressure for publication and therefore need not be competitive for a research space. Again, from my knowledge of the Brazilian academic context, that does not seem to apply, particularly in regard to the pressure for publication. To illustrate, a cursory look at the website of one of the major funding agencies in Brazil, the National Council on Scientific and Technological Development (www.CNPq.br), shows that funding is contingent on the researcher’s category within their system, which, in turn, is partly determined by the volume and quality of the researcher’s publications.

A possibility that appears more plausible for the present study regards solidarity with the local research community, as discussed in Taylor and Chen (1991), who compared Anglo-American and Chinese RAIs. These authors explain that Chinese scholars are not comfortable identifying gaps and shortcomings in previous research. Likewise, Jogthong (2001) claims that Thai writers tend “to avoid direct criticism on the work of others” (p. 72). de Rezende and Hemais (2004), going in the same direction, posit that Brazilian writers may avoid the strategy of establishing a niche for one’s research because doing so exposes a state of ignorance on the part of the scientific community, which may invoke a negative attitude from other researchers.

This possible avoidance of confrontation is further supported by a careful look at the three RAIs in the BESP corpus that do make use of Move 2. In BESP5 (excerpt 3), for example, the writer establishes a niche clearly, by providing a positive justification (Samraj, 2002) followed by indications of the gap using negation.

(3) Logo, existe uma necessidade evidente de encontrar uma maneira de unificar todos esses significados e conceitos. Além disso, todos os estudos prévios acima mencionados envolvendo actually e in fact simplesmente assumem que não existem diferenças entre os dois (…). Como resultado, nenhum estudo mais detalhado foi realizado para descobrir as possíveis diferenças (…).

[Therefore, there is a clear need for a way to unify all these meanings and concepts. Moreover, all the previous studies involving actually and in fact mentioned above simply assume that there are no differences between the two (…). As a result, no detailed studies have been carried out to find out the possible differences (…).]

At a first glance, this example seems to go against the tendency of not criticizing the work of others openly. However, looking at the reference list, it was interesting to notice that all the citations used to establish the gap were from articles in English, presumably non-Brazilian authors. It is possible to hypothesize that the author felt more comfortable establishing a niche in this case because it did not involve colleagues from his local discourse community.

BESP9 offers another interesting example of a Move 2. After eight Move 1 sentences, going from the origin of research articles to current studies of research articles in the area of Biomedical studies (citing works in English), the writer finishes the introduction with the following Move 2 sentence:

(4) Por outro lado, a literatura em português tendo como objeto de estudo o artigo científico é praticamente inexistente.

[On the other hand, studies in Portuguese focusing on the research article are practically nonexistent.]

In this case, the research space is once again established in reference to literature in English, but, instead of identifying a specific gap in the existing literature, the author justifies her study by mentioning that the topic has not been explored in Portuguese. Ahmad (1997) identified the same phenomenon and explained that “most of the Malay establishing-a-niche claim (Move 2) merely point out the limited (or nonexistent) research in the country on the particular topic” (p. 291).

Unlike BESP5 and BESP9, BESP10 does make reference to the work of other Brazilian researchers besides citing several references in English. The gap, however, is once again established by focusing on the Brazilian context.
These three examples seem to suggest that, when employing a Move 2, Brazilian writers writing in Portuguese tend to avoid establishing a gap within the Brazilian body of research, or, if they do, they avoid finding fault with Brazilian research.

Besides the lack of Move 2, RAIs in the BESP corpus, in general, presented fewer moves than those in the ESPj corpus. This seems to indicate that introductions in the ESPj corpus require more rhetorical work, with two of them (i.e., ESPj3 and ESPj9) being particularly cyclical and including many moves (8 and 13, respectively). It is interesting to note that the number of moves does not seem to correlate with the number of paragraphs. The ESPj corpus presented an average higher number of moves that were distributed in a smaller number of paragraphs than the BESP corpus. On the other hand, the ratio of sentences per paragraph seems to correlate with the number of moves. The ESPj corpus had an average of 5.2 sentences per paragraph compared to 2.9 in the BESP corpus, showing that paragraphs in the English corpus contained almost twice as many sentences than in the Portuguese corpus. Interestingly, the two BESP RAIs (i.e., BESP5 and BESP10) that had the highest ratio (4.3 sentences/paragraph) also had the highest number of moves (5 and 4, respectively).

5. Conclusion

In comparing introductions of academic articles in the ESP field written in Brazilian Portuguese and in English, the CARS model was found to be useful as an analytical tool to highlight differences related to rhetorical organization. A few explanations were discussed above to account for the differences found. In general, it seems to be the case that Brazilian scholars tend to favor solidarity, avoiding conflict with the local discourse community. As a result, an explicit gap statement is often not found in the BESP RAIs. Besides the possible explanations discussed above, it is important to recall the “rather simpler and more prosaic explanation” put forward by Taylor and Chen (1991, p. 332). They refer to the access researchers have (or do not) to bibliographic resources. In developing countries it may be more difficult to map the terrain of related studies than it is in more technologically advanced countries with more extensive libraries. Among other reasons, Salager-Meyer (2008) mentions the cost of scientific publications. Even though there is currently a movement toward differentiated prices for developing countries, Brazil is not always considered one and hence may not benefit from discounted rates some publishers offer. In my own personal experience doing research in Brazil from 2001 to 2003, I remember having to go through hard copies of journals, most of which were local, and reading each individual abstract to find articles that would be relevant to my study. Further studies including ethnographic data from Brazilian researchers would help explore this issue.

The analysis of the ESPj RAIs was very interesting in that the moves identified by the CARS model were found in almost all the introductions, even though the authors come from several different countries. This seems to indicate that, when submitting manuscripts in English (at least to this particular journal), following the CARS model may be a good strategy. As Duszak (1994) points out, when non-native speakers of English “transmit discoursal patterns typical of their own tongue but alien to English […] their products may obtain lower interest and/or appreciation, or they may simply fail to get themselves published” (p. 291).

Curious to see if Brazilian authors adjusted their rhetorical moves when writing in English, I went back to the three issues of The ES.Specialist where the corpus was taken from to look for articles written in English by Brazilian researchers. There were only three of them. One had a 1–2–1–2–1–2–1–3 move structure and the other two had a M1–M3 pattern. The latter two introductions, then, employed the rhetorical conventions that were found to be the most popular in the BESP subcorpus, with an occurrence of 40%. It is arguable that these authors transferred the rhetorical organization they would use in Portuguese to their articles in English. The resulting effect, an introduction without a clear gap statement, might have difficulty getting accepted in a journal like English for Specific Purposes, considering the results of the present study.

The possibility that Brazilian researchers might write articles in English using the same move structure they would use when writing in Portuguese gives support to the potential benefit of using the CARS model as a pedagogical tool. By becoming aware of the rhetorical organization most widely used in RAIs in English,
Brazilian authors might be in a better position to make informed rhetorical choices when writing in English. This is not to say that the model should be used as a template, since in the ESPj subcorpus, as well as in other corpora analyzed with the CARS model, variations always exist.

This exploratory study investigated a small corpus of article introductions in Brazilian Portuguese and in English from two journals that specialize in the same field of Applied Linguistics. As such, the findings reported here only reflect the rhetorical organization identified in this particular corpus. Larger studies investigating more RAIs from different academic fields are necessary to verify whether the cross-linguistic/cross-cultural differences between Brazilian Portuguese and English identified in this study can be generalized.

Lastly, as mentioned above, an ethnographic study of Brazilian scholars would cast light on several issues. First, it would be interesting to understand why some researchers might choose to write their articles in English in a predominantly Brazilian journal. Also, considering that there are Brazilian scholars who can write in English, an ethnographic study might help explain the virtual absence of Brazilian researchers in English for Specific Purposes, among other international journals. And, finally, following Casanave (1998), it would be interesting to learn how those who publish in both Portuguese and English manage the “loyalties” and “jugglings” that come with writing in different languages for (possibly) different discourse communities.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Diane Belcher for her encouragement and comments on an earlier version of this article, Brian Paltridge and the two anonymous reviewers for their detailed and constructive feedback, and Luciana Diniz for her help with data analysis.

Appendix A

A.1. CARS model (Swales, 1990, p. 141)

A.1.1. Move 1: establishing a territory

- Step 1: claiming centrality and/or
- Step 2: making topic generalization(s) and/or
- Step 3: reviewing items of previous research

A.1.2. Move 2: establishing a niche

- Step 1A: counter-claiming or
- Step 1B: indicating a gap or
- Step 1C: question-raising or
- Step 1D: continuing a tradition

A.1.3. Move 3: occupying the niche

- Step 1A: outlining purposes or
- Step 1B: announcing present research
- Step 2: announcing principal findings
- Step 3: indicating RA structure
Appendix B

B.1. Articles in corpus

B.1.1. The ESChpecialist


B.1.2. English for specific purposes


Appendix C

C.1. Editorial policies

The ESspecificist publishes articles and research notes related to questions concerned with languages for specific purposes.

Topics of interest may be: theoretical and applied approaches to the teaching and learning of both the mother tongue and foreign/second languages in specific contexts, either educational or professional/occupational; theoretical and applied approaches to teacher education for specific language teaching programmes; theoretical and applied descriptions of verbal communication in specific contexts, either educational or professional/occupational (discourse analysis, classroom interaction, contrastive analysis, genre analysis, corpus linguistics, etc.); reports of systematic classroom experiences. It also publishes letters from readers and promotes debates.

Teachers and researchers from all countries in the world are invited to submit their papers. Languages for contributions may be: English, Portuguese, French and Spanish. All articles must have abstracts in Portuguese and in English.

(From http://www2.lael.pucsp.br/especialist/, 11/30/07)

English for Specific Purposes is an international peer-reviewed journal that welcomes submissions from across the world. Authors are encouraged to submit articles and research/discussion notes on topics relevant to the teaching and learning of discourse for specific communities: academic, occupational, or otherwise specialized. Topics such as the following may be treated from the perspective of English for specific purposes: second language acquisition in specialized contexts, needs assessment, curriculum development and evaluation, materials preparation, discourse analysis, descriptions of specialized varieties of English, teaching and testing techniques, the effectiveness of various approaches to language learning and language teaching, and the training or retraining of teachers for the teaching of ESP. In addition, the journal welcomes articles and discussions that identify aspects of ESP needing development, areas into which the practice of ESP may be expanded, possible means of cooperation between ESP programs and learners’ professional or vocational interests, and implications that findings from related disciplines can have for the profession of ESP. The journal also carries reviews of scholarly books on topics of interest to the profession.

(From http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/682/description#description, 11/30/07)

Appendix D

Sample move analysis of a research article introduction (ESPj3)

[Move 1] As interest in writing conventions grows, contrastive analyses of various languages/cultures have revealed a number of important distinctions in the practice of writing. Academic writing, very frequently selected for analyses, is especially interesting from a contrastive perspective, since it involves an apparent paradox: in her study of academic rhetoric, Mauranen (1993) points out that scientific texts are at the same time culturally independent and culturally variable; she argues that this problem can be resolved by maintaining ‘a distinction between genre and rhetoric’ and assuming that ‘these are influenced by different cultural formations’ (Mauranen, 1993, p. 38). Cross-cultural studies of academic writing have identified various differences in rhetorical strategies between different national cultures (e.g. Backlund, 1998; Bortoluzzi, 2000; Clyne, 1987; Cmejrkova & Danes, 1997; Mauranen, 1993; Moreno, 1997; Vassileva, 2001; Yakhontova, 2002), even though the essential characteristics of its genres, e.g. the research article (RA), are universal. Such differences may be sources of potential problem areas in LSP teaching (in the field of academic writing, especially ESP teaching) and translating.

[Move 2] There are, however, a number of languages, such as Slovene, for which relatively little is known about their writing conventions. [Move 3] This study explores the similarities and differences in the use of selected writing conventions – the use of certain metatext categories – in English and Slovene research articles; the findings can be applied to the teaching of ESL and, above all, to EAP writing. The results also provide new information about rhetorical conventions regarding the use of selected metatext categories in English, and some basic data on the use of those metatext categories in Slovene.
In his influential paper on a new language typology based on reader versus writer responsibility, Hinds (1987) suggests that languages differ in attributing responsibility for effective communication to either the writer (speaker) or the reader (listener); he therefore distinguishes between reader-responsible and writer-responsible languages. So far, no research data on reader versus writer responsibility in Slovene is available. [Move 3] The aim of the present paper is to analyse the use of metatext in English and Slovene research articles, focusing on the categories used for ‘prospective and retrospective discourse labeling’ (Mauranen, 1993, pp. 156–157) – sometimes referred to as ‘previews and reviews’ (e.g. Crismore & Farnsworth, 1990; Mauranen, 1993) or endophoric markers (Hyland, 2000) – in order to provide some insight into the question of reader versus writer responsibility in Slovene language/culture. The analysis is based on the assumption that, because of their text-organizing function, the selected metatext categories are typically used more frequently in a writer-responsible language/culture, since they contribute to the explicitness of text organization and subsequently to the clarity and coherence of a text. [Move 2] The use of metatext in Slovene has not yet been systematically analyzed, although a few authors have examined the use of selected metatext categories in Slovene texts (e.g. Gorjanc, 1998; Kalin Golob, 2000). [Move 1] The assumption that the use of the selected metatext categories is more limited in Slovene than in English is based on the findings of previous contrastive rhetoric analyses of research articles. Contrastive rhetoric analyses in which English writing conventions were compared to those of other languages – e.g. German (Clyne, 1987), Finnish (Mauranen, 1993), Czech (Cmejrkova & Danes, 1997), Swedish and German (Backlund, 1998), Bulgarian (Vassileva, 2001), etc. – have indicated that the use of various metatext categories is among those conventions in which cultural communities differ considerably. The results of most studies show that metatext is often used more frequently and more systematically in English-language texts written by native speakers of English than in texts in other languages.

References


Eliana Hirano is currently a PhD student at the Department of Applied Linguistics and ESL at Georgia State University and she completed her Masters Degree at the Catholic University of Sao Paulo, Brazil. Her research interests include genre analysis and sociocultural theory.