

PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES IN RESEARCH ARTICLE INTRODUCTIONS: AN INTERLINGUISTIC AND CROSS-DISCIPLINARY GENRE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Publishing research unavoidably involves an adequate use of promotional strategies in order to meet the expectations of the members of particular scientific communities, which may vary both across cultures and disciplines. In this paper, we examine comparatively the presence of rhetorical promotion in the Introduction section of 80 research articles written in English and Spanish in the two related subdisciplines of Clinical and Health Psychology, and Dermatology. The results revealed that, overall, the English texts present a higher degree of rhetorical promotion in both fields, although some degree of cross-disciplinary variation was also found. This indicates that, in shaping the promotional features of the genre, when professional and national cultural factors interact simultaneously, cultural factors tend to override the influence of disciplinary context.

KEY WORDS: Promotional rhetorical strategies, research articles, move analysis.

RESUMEN

La publicación científica inevitablemente lleva consigo un uso apropiado de estrategias de promoción (persuasión retórica) con la finalidad de satisfacer las expectativas de los miembros de las distintas comunidades científicas, que pueden variar tanto de una cultura a otra como entre disciplinas. En este artículo examinamos de forma comparada la presencia de persuasión retórica en las Introducciones de 80 artículos de investigación escritos en inglés y español en dos subdisciplinas afines: Psicología Clínica y de la Salud, y Dermatología. Los resultados revelan que, en términos generales, los textos en inglés presentan un grado mayor de promoción retórica en ambas especialidades, aunque también se encontró un grado relativo de variación interdisciplinar, lo que indica que, en la configuración de los elementos persuasivos de este género, cuando interactúan simultáneamente factores socio-culturales y profesionales, los culturales tienden a predominar sobre la influencia del contexto disciplinario.

PALABRAS CLAVE: estrategias retóricas de persuasión, artículos de investigación, análisis de movimientos retóricos.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of academic writing, the need to publish scientific papers has become an essential issue for those researchers who want to promote their careers. In order to get their papers accepted, researchers have to meet the expectations of the members of their particular disciplinary communities, especially those of the editors of international journals in which the degree of competitiveness is increasingly high. This implies the use of promotional rhetorical strategies that allow writers to “sell” their “product” (Fairclough; Hyland), such as highlighting the novel contribution of their work to the discipline and anticipating findings, even in the Introduction section of the research article (RA). Writers also typically put forward the value of their work by creating a research space which permits them to present their new claims. This basically involves the indication of a knowledge gap and/or the criticism of deficiencies in previously published work by other researchers in the same scientific community. The latter strategy implies a face-threatening act (Myers; Hunston; Salager-Meyer; Burgess and Fagan).

Since Swales' (*Aspects, Genre Analysis*) ground-breaking move analysis of RA Introductions, a good number of studies have analysed the structural organization of the various sections of research papers in English: Nwogu in Medicine; Posteguillo and Shehzad in Computer Science; Ruiying and Allison in Applied Linguistics; Kanoksilapatham in Biochemistry, to cite just a few. A major focus of attention has been the Introduction, since this section generally entails a great deal of complexity in terms of rhetorical options, among them promotional discourse. Although Swales' (*Genre Analysis*) CARS model initially postulated a common structure for RA Introductions in English, subsequent research has revealed that the rhetorical choices that writers make to promote themselves and their work in relation to the other members of their discourse community may vary not only across divergent disciplines (Anthony; Posteguillo), but also across related disciplines (Samraj). This variation depends on the particular social interactions which are established between writers and readers and the actual writing conventions of the discipline itself. In her analysis of RA Introductions from two related fields, Samraj found that the Conservation Biology Introductions fulfil a greater promotional function than the Wildlife Behaviour Introductions through the use of steps such as centrality claims. On the basis of these findings, Swales (*Research*) revised his CARS model and presented a new version, (see our discussion of this version below), which better accounts for most of the limitations encountered in these more recent publications. Studies conducted in the last five years have also shown the existence of intradisciplinary variation. Thus Ozturk investigated the degree of variability in the structure of RA Introductions within two subdisciplines of Applied Linguistics, namely Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Writing. His results revealed a predominant move structure in the first subdiscipline, whereas in the second, two different types of move structure were almost equally frequent. He accounts for the differences encountered in terms of an emerging-established field distinction.

Despite the importance of RA writing for non English-speaking background academics, the studies which have applied the notion of “move analysis” from a



cross-cultural perspective are relatively scarce although, over the last few decades, there has been an increasing number of works comparing English academic writing to other languages, such as, Chinese (Taylor and Chen), Polish (Duszak), Swedish (Fredrickson and Swales), Malay (Ahmad), Spanish (Burgess), Arabic (Fakhri) and Indonesian (Adnan). All these studies have concluded that RA Introductions are influenced, to some extent, by socio-cultural variables and the specific features of the socio-pragmatic context where the texts have been produced (i.e. local constraints). This is clearly seen in a tendency to avoid direct confrontation and an apparent lack of self-promotion as compared with RA Introductions written in English.

In this paper, we attempt to expand this area of genre analytic research by examining comparatively the presence of rhetorical promotion in the Introduction of RAs written in English and Spanish in the two related sub-disciplines of Psychology and Medicine, namely Clinical and Health Psychology, and Dermatology.

2. CORPUS AND METHOD

A total of 40 Psychology and Medicine RA Introductions written in English and another 40 written in Spanish over a period of five years (2001-2005) were selected for the present study. Considering that Psychology is divided into several subfields (i.e. Clinical and Health, Behavioural, Cognitive and Neural, Social, Developmental and Educational), in order to avoid any possible rhetorical variation across subdisciplines (see, Ozturk), we have compiled the corpus from research papers reporting empirical investigation (disregarding review and theory/position papers) in the specific subfield of Clinical and Health Psychology alone. The texts in English were selected at random from publications in two of the most prestigious international journals in this subdiscipline: *Health Psychology* and the *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*. Similarly, the Spanish texts in this subfield were drawn from the two leading journals in this discipline in Spain: *Anales de Psicología y Revista de Psicología General y Aplicada*. Regarding the Medicine corpus, the 40 papers in both languages were also randomly selected, over the same period of time, from the following leading journals in the related subdiscipline of Dermatology: *Archives of Dermatology*, *Journal of Investigative Dermatology*, *Actas Dermo-Sifilográficas* and *Piel*.

2.1. THE USE OF “MOVE” AS A UNIT OF GENRE ANALYSIS

For the description of rhetorical promotion in the Introduction of the texts in both disciplines and languages, we have used “move” and “step” as the units of analysis following the pioneering work by Swales (*Aspects*) and then revised and expanded in 1990 and 2004, in which he uses the concept of “move” to describe patterns of organisational content and genre-specific language features. Swales (*Genre Analysis; Research*) emphasises the functional nature of a move, although recognis-



ing its frequent alignment with grammatical units (i.e. clauses or sentences) and lexical signals. Rhetorical moves consist then of functional text elements, as viewed in relation to the rhetorical goal of a text. Moves manifest themselves as text units that occur in typical sequences, and these can be realised by either one or a combination of “steps” or submoves. The concept of “move” thus captures the function of a segment of text at a more general level, whereas “step” refers to the more specific rhetorical choices available to authors to realise the function of “move”.

After conducting an analysis of some 48 article Introductions from a wide range of disciplines, Swales (*Aspects*) posited a four-move structure for a typical article Introduction, a structure that he modified in 1990 reducing the number of moves to three and terming it the “Create a Research Space” (CARS) model. The three moves are: Move 1 (Establishing a territory), Move 2 (Establishing a niche) and Move 3 (Occupying the niche). In order to establish a territory, the writers have to indicate the importance of their research field. This can be achieved by Step 1 (Claiming centrality), Step 2 (Making topic generalizations) and/or Step 3 (Reviewing items of previous research). In Move 2, the writers justify their study by means of Step 1A (Counter-claiming), Step 1B (Indicating a gap), Step 1C (Question-raising) or Step 1C (Continuing a tradition). Finally, Move 3 presents the research through Step 1A (Outlining purposes), Step 1B (Announcing present research), Step 2 (Announcing principal findings) or Step 3 (Indicating RA structure).

In response to the findings in more recent research (e.g. Anthony; Samraj) and changes in the genre itself over time, Swales (*Research*) proposed a revised model that basically involves the reduction of the number of possible steps in Moves 1 and 2, and the inclusion of further steps in Move 3. In this more recent version, Swales takes on board the potential cycling of Moves 1 and 2 sequences, and the fact that citations (Reviewing items of previous research) are not restricted to Move 1 but may occur throughout the whole Introduction. Therefore, he proposes that this Step 3 (Move 1) should not be considered any longer as a separate element of an independent move. He also points out the difficulties inherent in making a distinction between Move 1-Step 1 (Claiming centrality) and Move 1-Step 2 (Making topic generalizations) since, on many occasions, it is difficult to tell whether the main function of the authors is to highlight the importance of the research or to report what is known about the topic of their research, as illustrated in the following example taken from our own corpus:

- (1) Novel biological therapeutics that target specific cytokines are emerging as agents that are capable of controlling inflammation in autoimmune disorders. (Eng. Med. 1)

Therefore, Swales eliminates Step 1 from Move 1 and only leaves Step 2 as performing the function of both steps. This is labelled “Topic generalizations of increasing specificity”. As regards Move 2, Swales also removes Step 1D (Continuing a tradition) since it seems to him a “rather odd choice of nomenclature” (Swales, *Research* 229) and proposes “Adding to what is known” instead. He, furthermore,



argues that “Counter claiming” and “Question-raising” perform a similar function to “Indicating a gap” and, consequently, suggests that the first two can be subsumed under “Indicating a gap”. Additionally, taking into consideration Samraj’s findings, he includes another optional step in Move 2 (Presenting positive evaluation) which typically follows a gap indication. Regarding Move 3, Swales (*Research*) recognises the difficulty of separating a purposive statement of Step 1A (Outlining purposes) and Step 1B (Announcing present research) and puts forward the fusion of both steps into one that he labels “Announcing present research descriptively and/or purposively.” In this revised version, Swales keeps the other two remaining steps of his 1990 model (*Genre Analysis*), although he uses a new wording: “Announcing principal outcomes” and “Outlining the structure of the paper”. Finally, he adds four further optional steps (Presenting research questions or hypotheses, Definitional clarifications, Summarizing methods, and Stating the value of the present research).

2.2. A PROPOSED MODEL FOR ANALYSING PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES IN RA INTRODUCTIONS

For the purposes of analysing comparatively the promotional strategies in RA Introductions, as we do in the present study, we consider that some points of Swales (*Research*) model should be modified so as to better specify the different degrees of rhetorical promotion and levels of face-threatening acts involved in the writers’ process of creating a research space.

Regarding Move 1, we consider it appropriate to establish a difference between those communicative categories which have a prevalent function of claiming centrality (Claiming importance of the research topic) and those in which the prevalent function is merely the reporting of what is known about the research topic (Reviewing previous research), since the levels of promotional value clearly differ. Although we acknowledge, as mentioned above, the difficulty inherent, on some occasions, in making a distinction between these two steps, we have opted for classifying as examples of “Claiming importance of research topic” those instances in which the authors include explicit lexical items that boost the relevance of the research topic and that, therefore, contain an added value of promotion (e.g. *interest, increasing attention, considerable revival, significant role, innovative, essential, particularly important*) as in the following examples:

- (2) Despite the *established value* of examining CHD risk factors in childhood (Berenson et al., 1992; Newman et al., 1986), there is a dearth of information about the association between central adiposity and cardiovascular reactivity in adolescents. (Engl. Psych. 10)
- (3) *Growing interest* in S1P *has been increased* by the discovery of a family of distinct G-protein-coupled receptors, which originally were designated endothelial differentiation gene receptors. (Engl. Med. 13)



In relation to Move 2, we agree that “Question-raising” has the same function as “Indicating a gap” and, therefore, should be reduced to just one step; but we believe that it is useful to maintain a distinction between “Indicating a gap” and “Counter-claiming” since the rhetorical effect is different. By indicating a gap, the authors merely point out that more research needs to be done in that specific area of knowledge. Counter-claiming, however, is a more face-threatening act which encompasses the criticism (in a direct or indirect manner) of the other members of the research community. We, therefore, propose a model in which a distinction prevails between those cases where there is a criticism addressed to the research community, by stating the methodology flaws or the limitations of previous research (Criticising previous studies), and those cases in which there is a gap creation function (Indicating a gap in existing literature). We have also included a new step in between these two (Reporting contradictory findings), which corresponds to those communicative events in which the authors report on the inconsistent findings in the literature, as a way of justifying their own research. This step we see as having a weaker threatening rhetorical effect than “Criticising previous studies” but stronger than “Indicating a gap”, as seen in the following examples:

- (4) Some studies support the notion that alcohol use is related to sexual risk-taking, whereas others find no relation [...]. Based on the inconsistent findings in the literature, we attempted to replicate past studies using... (Psych. Engl. 3)
- (5) Algunos investigadores han encontrado que la tasa de recurrencia de la criocirugía es menor o igual que la observada en cirugía convencional y radioterapia; sin embargo, otros mencionan que es un método de tratamiento menos efectivo y con resultados cosméticos no siempre buenos. En consideración a la controversia sobre la efectividad de esta técnica, decidimos realizar... (Med. Span. 11)

As regards Move 3 (Step 2), we also consider that a distinction should be established between those cases in which the authors present research questions and those in which hypotheses are put forward. In the former, it seems that the main function is simply to announce the purpose of the investigation, whereas in the latter, the main function seems to be equivalent to the announcement of principal findings (if the hypotheses become confirmed), especially in those cases in which the authors use the verbs *predict*, *anticipate* and *expect*, as in the following examples:

- (6) At the general association level, the alcohol and risky sex link was *predicted* to be stronger for individuals who did not have a regular partner. The association between alcohol use and sexual behavior at the event level was also *expected* to be strongest for events with a new partner. (Psych. Engl. 3)
- (7) We *anticipated* that the long-interval treatment condition would produce significantly better health outcomes than the short-interval control condition. (Psych. Engl. 8)



Since we, therefore, perceive a different degree of promotional value, in our adapted model we have included the instances of “research questions” as part of Move 3 (Step 1), whereas the instances of “hypotheses” are reported as a separate step.

Finally, we should point out that a preliminary analysis of the article Introductions that make up the corpus of the present study revealed that there were no instances of the step “Presenting positive justification” (Move 2) nor of the steps “Definitional clarifications”, “Summarizing methods” and “Outlining the structure of the paper” (Move 3) as proposed in Swales (*Research*) model. Consequently, since these steps do not seem to be operative in the disciplines analysed in this study in either of the languages, we decided not to include them as part of the adapted model, as seen in Fig.1.

Move 1 Establishing the research context (citations required)
via
Step 1* <i>Claiming importance of the research topic</i>
and/or
Step 2 <i>Reviewing the research topic</i>

Move 2 Creating a research space (citations possible)
via
Step 1A** <i>Criticising previous studies</i>
and/or
Step 1B <i>Reporting contradictory findings</i>
and/or
Step 1C <i>Indicating a gap in existing literature</i>
and/or
Step 1D <i>Adding to what is known</i>

Move 3 Presenting the research (citations possible)
via
Step 1* <i>Announcing present research (descriptively and/or purposively)</i>
Step 2 <i>Presenting hypotheses</i>
Step 3 <i>Announcing principal outcomes</i>
Step 4 <i>Stating the value of the present research</i>

* The degree of promotional value is decreasing from Step 1-2 (Move 1) and increasing from Step 1-4 (Move 3)

**The degree of the face-threatening act is decreasing from Step 1A-1D (Move 2)

Fig. 1. Adapted model from Swales (*Research*) for analysing comparatively (across languages and disciplines) promotional strategies in RA Introductions.

2.3. PROCEDURES

The move analyses of the texts recorded were firstly carried out independently by each of the authors and then compared. In each case complete agreement was reached after discussion. In those cases in which discrepancies occurred, we

resorted to the assistance of a specialist informant in each discipline. With regard to the identification of move boundaries and the assignment of discourse values to the various moves and steps, our approach was primarily based on semantic or functional criteria rather than formal criteria. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that, on those occasions in which there was ambiguity, linguistic exponents were particularly useful in the identification of certain moves. Clearly the analyses of rhetorico-pragmatic features always involve a certain degree of subjectivity that is perhaps unavoidable, but this was kept to a minimum in the study reported here.

3. RESULTS

The findings obtained in the present analysis of the promotional strategies employed by the English and Spanish writers in Psychology and Medicine research papers, as seen in Tables 1 and 2, revealed that, overall, the Introduction section of the English texts exhibits a higher degree of promotion in both disciplines. This is seen in the higher frequency of occurrence of the most promotional steps associated with each of the moves in the English texts, especially in Psychology, as compared to the Spanish texts.

TABLE 1. FREQUENCY AND DISTRIBUTION OF MOVES
IN THE INTRODUCTION SECTION OF THE PSYCHOLOGY TEXTS

	NUMBER OF ENGLISH INTRODUCTIONS	NUMBER OF SPANISH INTRODUCTIONS
Move 1 Establishing the research context	20 (100%)	20 (100%)
Step 1 <i>Claiming importance of the research topic</i>	13	8
Step 2 <i>Reviewing the research topic</i>	20	20
Move 2 Creating a research space	20 (100%)	12 (60%)
Step 1A <i>Criticising previous studies</i>	11	4
Step 1B <i>Reporting contradictory findings</i>	5	2
Step 1C <i>Indicating a gap in existing literature</i>	15	7
Step 1D <i>Adding to what is known</i>	6	–
Move 3 Presenting the research	20 (100%)	20 (100%)
Step 1 <i>Announcing present research</i>	20	20
Step 2 <i>Presenting hypotheses</i>	13	4
Step 3 <i>Announcing principal outcomes</i>	1	–
Step 4 <i>Stating the value of the present research</i>	9	2



TABLE 2. FREQUENCY AND DISTRIBUTION OF MOVES IN THE INTRODUCTION SECTION OF THE MEDICINE TEXTS

	NUMBER OF ENGLISH INTRODUCTIONS	NUMBER OF SPANISH INTRODUCTIONS
Move 1 Establishing the research context	20 (100%)	20 (100%)
Step 1 <i>Claiming importance of the research topic</i>	9	1
Step 2 <i>Reviewing the research topic</i>	20	20
Move 2 Creating a research space	17 (85%)	10 (50%)
Step 1A <i>Criticising previous studies</i>	5	1
Step 1B <i>Reporting contradictory findings</i>	8	4
Step 1C <i>Indicating a gap in existing literature</i>	7	6
Step 1D <i>Adding to what is known</i>	1	–
Move 3 Presenting the research	20 (100%)	20 (100%)
Step 1 <i>Announcing present research</i>	19	19
Step 2 <i>Presenting hypotheses</i>	4	1
Step 3 <i>Announcing principal outcomes</i>	4	4
Step 4 <i>Stating the value of the present research</i>	8	3

Initial Move 1 is an obligatory communicative category which occurs in all the Introductions analysed. In all the texts, the writers made use of Step 2 (Reviewing the research topic) as a means of establishing the background of their research field. However, the incidence of occurrence of the other more promotional strategy in this move, namely Step 1 (Claiming importance of the research topic), varied mainly across the two disciplines: in the Psychology texts, 13 instances (65%) were reported in English and 8 (40%) in Spanish, as opposed to 9 (45%) in English and 1 (5%) in Spanish, in the Medicine texts.

Move 3 is another communicative category that occurred in all the Introductions analysed, being predominantly realised through Step 1 (Announcing present research). However, the frequency of occurrence of the other three steps associated with this move, and which present a higher degree of promotional value, varied across the two disciplines and languages: Step 2 (Presenting hypothesis) seems to be a more popular option among the English Psychology texts, since it was used in 13 Introductions (65%) of the sample texts. The frequency of occurrence of this step was similar both in the English Medicine texts and the Spanish Psychology ones (4 instances -20%-), whereas in the Spanish Medicine texts only 1 Introduction (5%) exhibited this use. Conversely, Step 3 (Announcing principal findings) was reported more frequently in Medicine (4 instances -20%- in both languages) in opposition to the only instance (5%) that was found in the English Psychology texts. No instances of this step occurred in the Spanish Psychology sample. It is worth men-



tioning that in one of the Spanish Medicine texts, the findings were presented in two tables at the end of the Introduction. This represents an atypical strategy of persuasion used as an attention-catching device, motivating the reader to read further to understand how the researcher arrived at the findings later reported extensively in the Results section. Mostly, in the rest of the cases, the information concerning the findings consisted of only a brief statement, as seen in the following examples:

- (8) In agreement with results of several fibroblast cell lines S1P induced proliferation of primary fibroblasts. Moreover, matrix protein formation by S1P was observed. (Med. Engl. 13)
- (9) Participants with dysfunctional attitudes showed increases in depressed mood following a negative admission outcome because they developed both a negative view of the self and the future. (Psych. Engl. 13)

As regards final Step 4 (Stating the value of the present research) in Move 3, it constitutes the step with the highest degree of rhetorical promotion. It is here that writers emphasise the value of their research for the disciplinary community. On some occasions the writers opted for enhancing the implications of their research in a tentative way through the use of hedging devices, mainly epistemic modality, as in the following examples:

- (10) Sensitizing clinicians to the morbidity of the disease *may help improve* psoriasis management. This insight *may allow the clinician to offer patients more effective* therapies. (Med. Engl. 2)
- (11) En estos casos la biopsia de dichas lesiones y el estudio histopatológico posterior *puede ser de gran ayuda* diagnóstica. (Med. Span. 6)

On other occasions, however, the importance and novelty of the research is directly put forward in a bid to convince readers of the validity of their claims.

- (12) Because this study examines the entire NPF patient population, these findings are *especially important*. (Med. Engl. 2)
- (13) These results further emphasize the functional *importance* of the nonhelical tail domains of keratin molecules. (Med. Engl. 8)
- (14) We used a *novel* variation on the naturalistic approach, by evaluating the relationship between life stress and a range of eating behaviors. (Psych. Engl. 6)

We also found a few instances in which the value of the research is enhanced by comparison to previous work.



- (15) Thus, our study adds to the small literature base and *improves on past studies* in a number of ways. (Psych. Engl. 1)
- (16) Nuestro meta-análisis *no es una mera réplica de los anteriores* ya que, en primer lugar limitamos nuestro periodo de búsqueda desde el año [...]. En segundo lugar, nos centramos principalmente en los distintos subtipos de fobia social [...]. En tercer lugar, limitamos los estudios al contexto europeo [...]. En cuarto lugar, aplicamos técnicas de meta-análisis más potentes que ponderan [...]. Finalmente, incluimos estudios realizados en lengua castellana, que no suelen estar representados en los meta-análisis ya realizados sobre este tema. (Psych. Span. 8)

There were also instances in which the writers explicitly mention the uniqueness of their work by expressing the novelty that their research represents for the disciplinary community.

- (17) Advancing beyond our previous research (Kalichman et al. 2002), this study is *the first* that we are aware of to examine the association between Internet use and coping and social support in people living with HIV/AIDS. (Psych. Engl. 5)
- (18) Currently, no study can be found in the literature that has directly examined the relationship between TAF and schizotypy. The present investigation was *a first attempt* to address this issue. (Psych. Engl. 15)
- (19) This report is *the first* in a series on the prevalence of these conditions found. (Med. Engl. 3)

The high level of competitiveness, especially in the Psychology field, is well illustrated in the following example in which the authors are forced to enhance the value of their work with the aim of creating a gap which justifies their research, even though it implies the criticism of their peers.

- (20) During the course of the current research, Gilbert and colleagues (2001) reported that self-criticism was related to entrapment and to poorer social comparison. Therefore, these investigators partially addressed similar questions but did not have a validated measure of the self-critical personality style. The present study used the Depressive Experiences Questionnaire (Blatt et al., 1976), the most widely used instrument to assess self-criticism. (Psych. Engl. 20)

As seen in the example above, in order to convince the readers of the importance of the research, writers typically need to previously emphasise their work by creating a research space. This is achieved by means of Move 2 which is mainly realized via four steps (see Fig. 1). The use of these steps clearly involves a certain



degree of face-threatening act which is decreasing from steps 1A to 1C. In relation to the frequency of occurrence of this Move 2, a striking difference between the two languages was found. In English, it was reported in 100% of the Psychology texts and in 85% of the Medicine texts. This indicates that it is an obligatory move in this language. In Spanish, however, this move seems to be optional as it was used in 60% of the Psychology texts and in only 50% of the Medicine texts.

A more popular option in all groups of texts was, as seen in Tables 1 and 2, the realization of Move 2 via Step 1C (Indicating a gap in existing literature) to point out the possible topics or areas that still need research in relation to previous work. The majority of the examples of this step typically consisted of a short statement, especially in Spanish, and was often initiated with an adversative conjunction:

- (21) El mecanismo de acción de los antibióticos no está aclarado suficientemente. (Med. Span. 3)
- (22) However, very little is known about the nature of the membrane transporters involved in either acid secretion or the regulation of intracellular pH. (Med. Engl. 11)

As regards the use of Step 1A, the writers in the English Psychology texts engaged far more frequently than the authors of the other groups of texts in criticising one's peers as a way of justifying their research. This is illustrated in the following example:

- (23) An important limitation of Treiber's (1998) study is that the sample was restricted to adolescents with a family history of hypertension, which significantly limited the generalizability of the study of population at large. In addition, the author did not examine race differences in this association. (Psych. Engl. 10)

Another preferred rhetorical strategy, especially in the English Medicine texts, was the use of Step 1B (Reporting contradictory findings), which also serves as a way of justifying research but also involves a lessened degree of threat. As for the use of Step 1D (Adding to what is known), by means of which writers present their work as a continuation of a previous research topic, although 6 instances (30%) were reported in the English Psychology sample, only one example (5%) was found in the English Medicine texts and no instances were reported in Spanish in any of the disciplines. The low level of incidence of this step can arguably be attributed to its low degree of rhetorical force in the creation of a research space.

- (24) The present study complemented these theoretical developments. It aimed to further elucidate the nature of staff beliefs and feelings about challenging behaviour. (Psych. Engl. 19)



We should, finally, point out that overall the English Introductions in both related subdisciplines are quite homogeneous in terms of length and rhetorical structure, whereas the Spanish Introductions, although they seem to conform to a great extent to the international rhetorical norms, present a greater variety... For instance, two of the Spanish Psychology texts (n. 2 and 5) include the aims of the study and the working hypothesis as part of a following section of Methods, under the subheading “Objetivos e Hipótesis”; in another text (n. 14) Move 3 is included as part of the Methods section under the subheading “Descripción y Justificación”, and in n. 20, Move 3 appears as an independent section after the Introduction and before the Methods section under the heading “Objetivos”. In the middle of the Introductions n. 11 and 20, a figure with explanatory graphs and a table are included, respectively. Similarly, the Spanish Medicine Introduction present some examples of atypical structure: text 4 is divided into several subsections under different subheadings (Definición, Antecedentes históricos, Manifestaciones clínicas, Histología, Formas clínicas) and the aims of the study, much the same as in text 19, are presented in an independent, follow-on section (“Objetivos”). In text n. 7 the main findings are presented in two tables at the end of the Introduction; and the sequence of moves in text n. 12 (M3 + M1) does not follow the typical linear structure.

4. CONCLUSION

Our results suggest that, when presenting their research, in both subfields of Clinical and Health Psychology, and Dermatology, for the English-speaking writers the RA Introduction is viewed to a greater extent as a promotional genre than it is by the Spanish academics, inasmuch as the overall frequency of occurrence of promotional strategies is higher in the English texts. However, even within the same language, some degree of cross-disciplinary variation was noted, as seen in Fig. 2.

Psych. Engl. \geq Med. Engl. \geq Psych. Span. \geq Med. Span.

Fig. 2. Degree of rhetorical promotion across subdisciplines and languages.

It seems that the need to promote one's work and to create a research space in order to justify publication is greater among the members of the international English-speaking Psychology community, since the Introductions in this field, overall, present the highest degree of rhetorical promotion (Moves 1 and 3) and engage more frequently in criticising previous work (Move 2). This tendency is followed on a continuum by the English Medicine texts, in which writers use a slightly higher number of promotional strategies and put their faces more at risk than the writers in the Spanish Psychology Introductions. Finally, the Spanish Medicine texts present the lowest amount of promotional strategies and face-threatening speech acts.



Whereas intercultural variation can be explained in terms of the different levels of competition to publish in the national and international arenas, cross-disciplinary variation can be accounted for by the influence of discourse practices in specific professional subcultures. It should be noted, however, that when both of these variables are considered, it is not clear, as Yakhontova points out, how professional and national cultural factors interact in particular languages and fields, although the results obtained in this study indicate that in shaping the rhetorical and promotional features of the genre in question, cultural factors tend to override the influence of disciplinary conventions.

In today's context of academic globalisation, being heard internationally is regarded essential and, therefore, an adequate use of promotional strategies becomes a central issue especially for speakers of English as an additional language. Although it seems that Spanish writers in the fields analysed in this study are familiar, to a certain extent, with the rhetorical practices of the international English-speaking scientific community, it would be interesting to study in further research to what extent Spanish academics modify their preferred national rhetorical practices in order to meet the expectations of their particular reference disciplinary communities in an international publication context.

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