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Academic communication: writing research papers as a culturally conditioned activity

Lately there has been growing pressure on modern academics to be a part of the globalized community. As a result, in all genres of communication, international academia has adopted Anglo-Saxon patterns of research presentation, both written and oral.

The first aim of this paper is to describe the differences in how scholars present their findings in research articles (RA) in international journals in English and in local journals in Russian. The second aim is to present the reasons for these differences, seeking explanations from the sociocultural contexts in which these RAs were written, as well as to provide advice to local authors as to how to make their RAs more competitive at the international level.

To achieve this aim, this study examines six RAs in English and six RAs in Russian, published in peer-reviewed international and local journals. The analysis draws upon the theory of contrastive rhetoric (Kaplan 1966; Connor 1996), which stresses the necessity of studying texts in the contexts of society and thus views academic writing as a culturally conditioned activity. The methodology used to unveil discursive conventions of RAs relies on a contrastive approach, which facilitates the identification of the structural differences and linguistic features of RAs in both English and Russian. The conclusion is made that the RAs differ in terms of writer/reader responsibility, form/content orientation, and reader engagement level. These differences are a result of sociocultural environments that affect the process of identity construction in academic discourse.