

Metadiscourse in Academic Prose: a Contrastive Study of Academic Articles Written in English by English and Norwegian Native Speakers

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Abstract. The study represents a contrastive text-linguistic research* on metadiscourse evidenced in academic articles written in English by English and Norwegian native speakers, and tends to reveal and depict certain similarities and differences which exist between them. The research is based on the theoretical assumption that metadiscourse varies in academic writings across different cultural communities and relies on the traditional writing habits and rhetoric preferences within each writing culture. Moreover, the rhetoric habits from one's own writing culture are easily transferred to writing activities when done in a foreign language, often causing some kind of misunderstanding between the writer and his reader, thus diminishing the validity of propositional content conveyed through the discourse. Bearing this assumption in mind, the comparison undertaken in this research has been expressed in terms of similarities/differences between metadiscoursal items and groups identified in the two corpora and the results of the comparison have been discussed in the same vein. Besides cultural-specific differences, the present study also includes some metadiscoursal findings concerning the discipline-specific differences and tendencies which occur in academic articles regardless of the author's language and cultural background. Due to comparatively small research corpus, the presented results should be considered rather tentative: they are primarily aimed at pointing to some directions for further research. However, the author hopes that the method and procedure used in this research could be applied to similar studies in which academic discourses written by English native speakers are compared to those which are written by non- native speakers of English.