The Estonian Academic Writers’ Perceptions of the Most Important Aspects of Effective English Texts: a Questionnaire Survey Conducted at Tallinn University of Technology

Kärt Rummel

Abstract. Writing in English has become an important tool for communication in today’s international academic discourse community. This has motivated Estonian academic writers to produce increasingly more academic prose in English. There is a considerable concern, however, that the writers do not have the discourse and socio-cultural competences in Anglo-American academic writing essential for success in the target community. In an attempt to investigate how knowledgeable Estonian writers are about the various aspects of English academic writing, an experimental study was conducted at Tallinn University of Technology (2004-2008). This paper reports on a questionnaire survey into the perceptions of undergraduate students (N=23) and EAP instructors (N=16) on the most important aspects of writing effective English texts. The outcomes of the survey suggest that Estonian academic writers consider mastery of grammar and lexis as the key contributor to the production of effective English texts, and they are not sufficiently knowledgeable about the significance of text-level discourse in reader-based writing. Implications of the research include the necessity of raising writers’ awareness of the textual and socio-cultural aspects of English academic writing through a renewed, discourse-driven perspective for EAP writing instruction in Estonia.