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ENEIDA Presenter:

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Publishing in English-medium scientific journals as challenge: a comparative study of Spanish researchers writing practices in Chemistry and Business

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Challenges for Chemistry and Business Academics: Thematic Areas

- The effect of their mother tongue.
- Experiences in publishing RAs.
- Difficulties in drafting their RAs.
- Writing strategies.
- Effort put and satisfaction gained.
- Helpful strategies in learning to write RAs.

The effect of their mother tongue on the evaluation of their texts

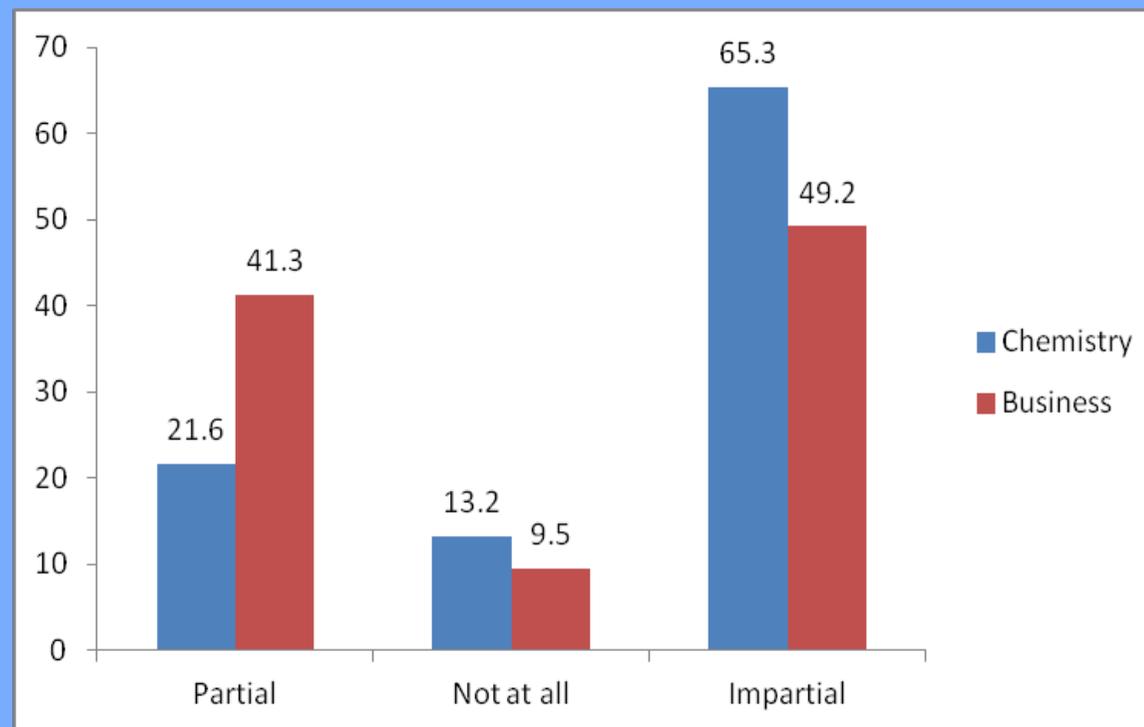


Figure 1. Self-perceived effect of Spanish as a mother tongue on the evaluation of their manuscripts (partial-impartial)

The effect of their mother tongue on the evaluation of their texts

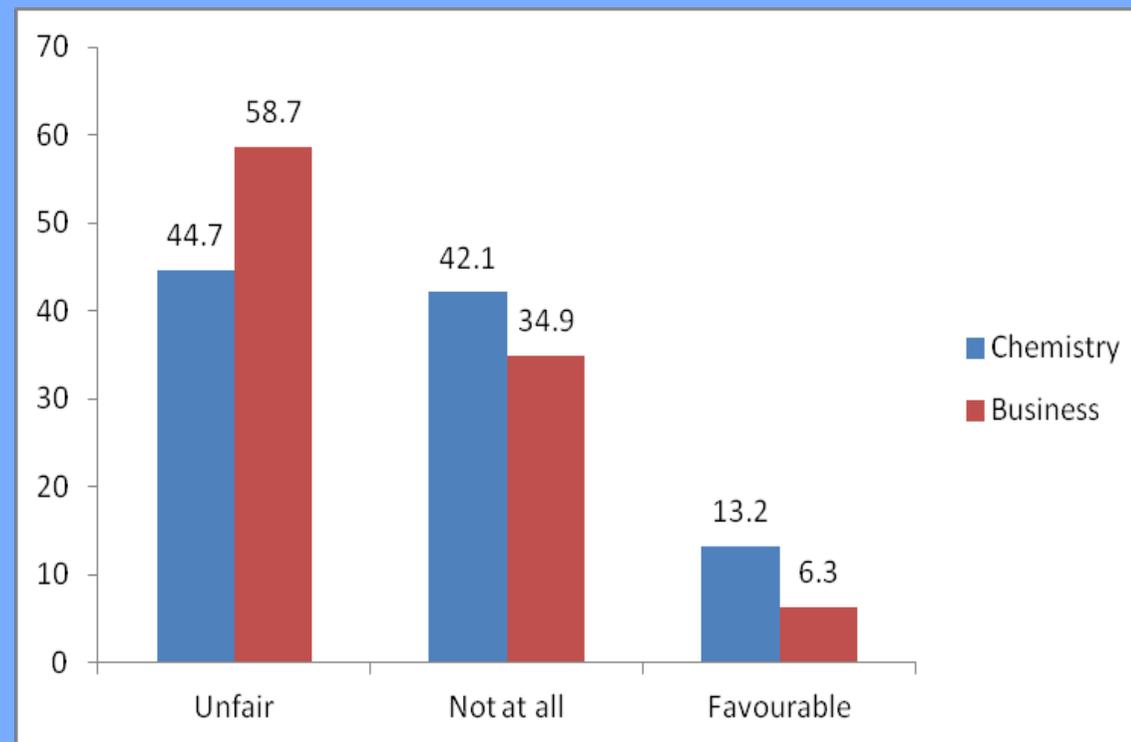


Figure 2. Self-perceived effect of Spanish as a mother tongue on the evaluation of their manuscripts (unfair-favourable)

Experiences in publishing RAs

✓ A high number of answers in both disciplines → Spanish Chemistry and Business scholars are significantly contributing to the international exchange of scientific knowledge in their fields.

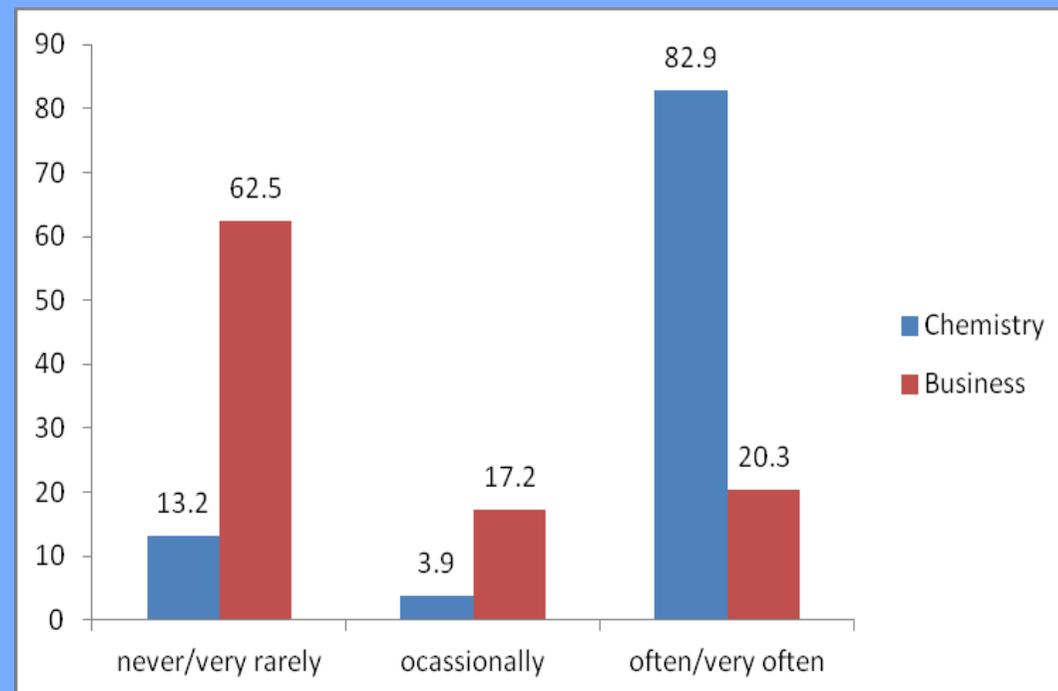


Figure 3. Percentages of publication acceptance with minor changes.

Experiences in publishing RAs

✓ Higher percentages of Business scholars report to have needed to very often or quite often meet the following conditions to be granted publication:

	Chemistry	Business
making changes to the content of the study	13.2%	53.1%
revise some features of the writing of the paper	10.5%	53.1%
more closely reflect the writing conventions expected by the journal	10.5%	45.3%

Table 1. Aspects very often or quite often stated by referees to improve before granting publication.

Difficulties in drafting RAs

✓ Chemistry academics find less difficulty than Business scholars in drafting the different sections of the RAs in English.

Scale of 1 to 5 (1 = no difficulty; 5 = great difficulty)

	Chemistry	Business	All disciplines
Abstract	2.56	3.13	2.63
Introduction	2.80	3.70	2.88
Theoretical framework	2.63	3.57	2.79
Material and methods	1.92	3.32	2.30
Results	2.59	3.47	2.65
Discussion	3.20	4.00	3.30
Conclusions	2.69	3.76	2.85
Acknowledgements	1.38	2.11	1.67
Submission letter	2.23	2.15	2.15
Response to reviewers	2.65	3.30	2.75
Correspondence with editor	2.19	2.70	2.25

Table 2. Difficulty in producing given (parts of) academic texts.

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Writing strategies

Chemistry

- Able to draft their full papers in English.
- Very few recur to someone who helps them translate parts or the whole text.
- A high percentage send them off without any revision.
- When they seek someone to help them in the writing process, it is usually someone who has knowledge in their field, and not necessarily a native speaker of the language.
- Expertise and specialized knowledge seems to be prioritized over language nativeness by Chemistry academics when seeking the help of literacy brokers.

Business

- Not all of them able to produce their texts in English fully.
- They very commonly have their papers revised before submission.
- They seek the help of mainly native speakers commonly but not necessarily familiar with the field.
- This reliance on native speakers, either experts in the field or not, is above the percentage for all disciplines.

Effort put and satisfaction gained from the writing strategies used

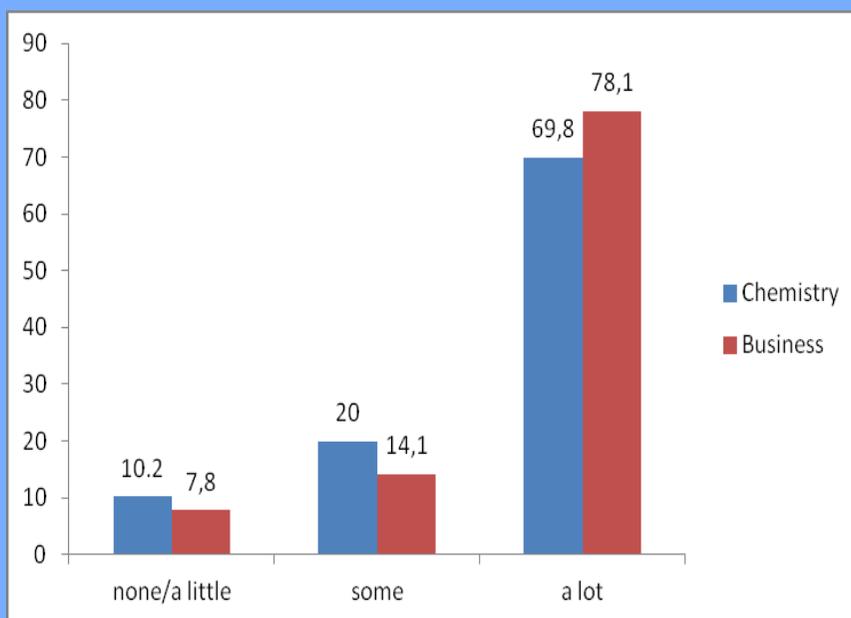


Figure 4. Effort put into publishing research in English-medium journals.

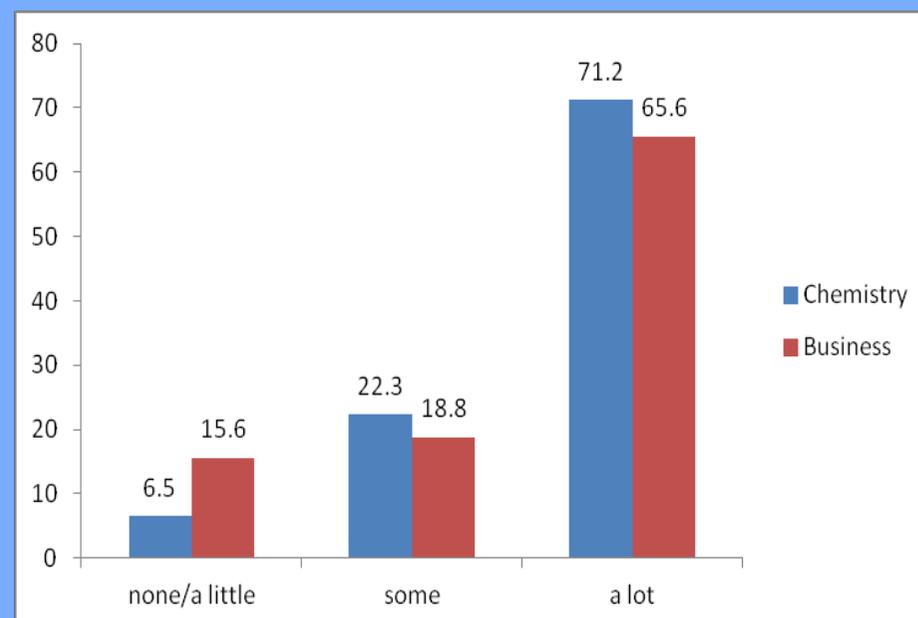


Figure 5. Satisfaction with the process of getting research published in English-medium journals.

Helpful strategies in learning to write RAs

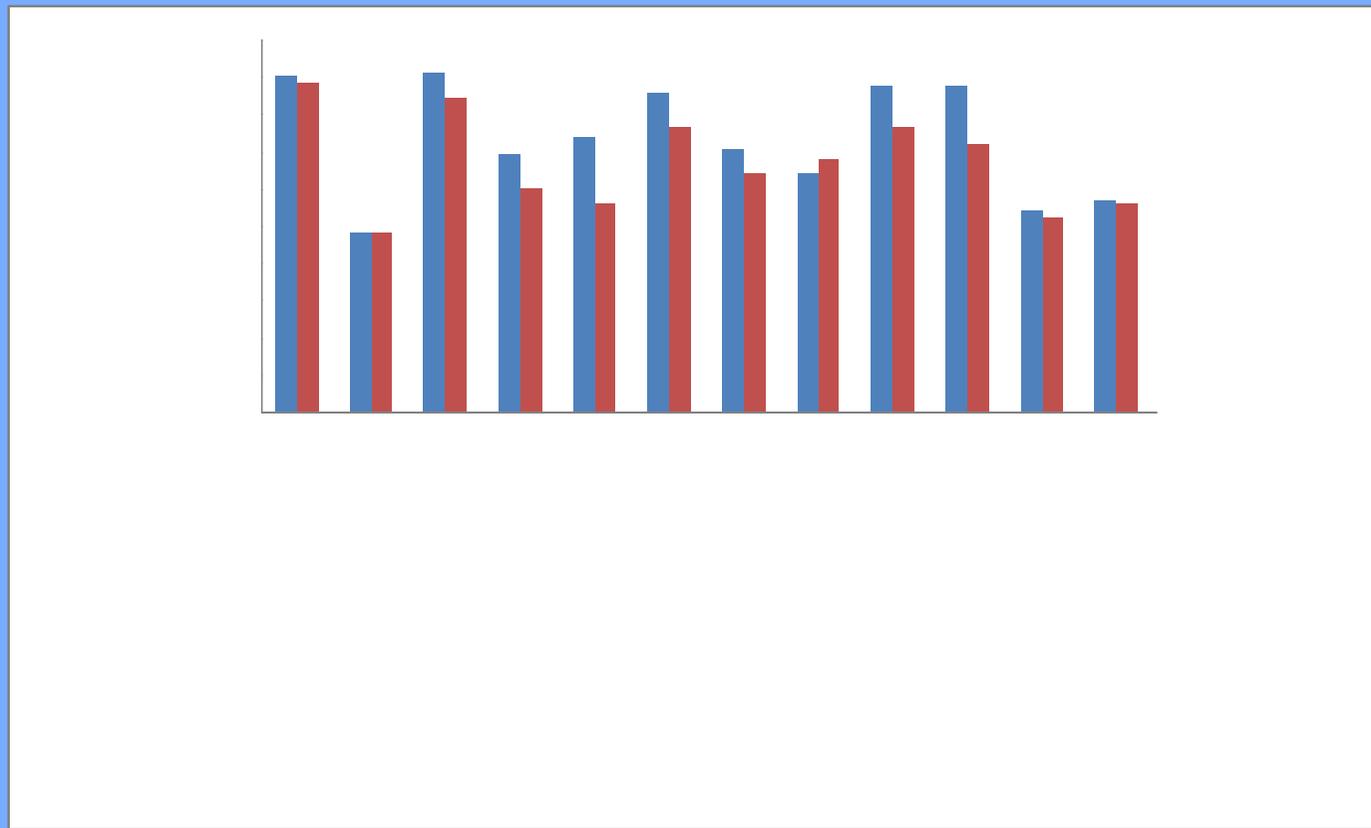


Figure 4. Usefulness of topics to be covered in EAP training sessions.

Conclusions: opportunities and challenges in Chemistry and Business

- ➔ Chemistry and Business: two discipline communities highly productive in English at an international level.
- ➔ Similar attitudes towards the opportunities of using English as a language of publication:
 - international dissemination of research results
 - professional promotion and
 - academic projection.
- ➔ Different perceptions of their linguistic, rhetorical and discursive competence in English, considered higher by Spanish Chemistry scholars:
 - higher number of RAs published
 - lower difficulties perceived to draft their RAs
 - scarcer use of strategies employed to revise or translate their texts
 - higher rates of successful publication with minor changes.

Conclusions: opportunities and challenges in Chemistry and Business

- ➔ Different attitudes towards the use of Spanish as a language of academic publication: not an option for Chemistry scholars but a valid vehicle of communication for Business academics in our country.
- ➔ Divergent degree of internationalisation due to inherent characteristics of the discipline itself: universal in the case of Chemistry and more locally-oriented in the case of Business.

Interaction of disciplinary and linguistic factors, i.e. Spanish Business scholars might have more in common in terms of opportunities and challenges with their colleagues from other linguistic communities than with their Spanish peers from a different disciplinary background.

Implications



- ➔ A need for specialised training in terms of discipline, in combination with the input given by research in intercultural rhetoric.
- ➔ Business scholars seem to need more training and direct instruction than Chemistry scholars, thus revealing that institutional efforts on this side should be discipline-oriented.
- ➔ Consolidation of English as a Lingua Franca, which seems to be a reality in the case of Chemistry academics but not to the same extent in Business.
- ➔ Possible resulting domain-loss (Ferguson 2007) in specialized academic Spanish communication.



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