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Intercultural Perspective (I)

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*Spanish Researchers Publishing in
English-medium Scientific Journals:
opportunities, challenges and
threats across disciplinary areas*

*Authors: Ana I. Moreno, Rosa Lorés, Pilar Mur, Sally Burgess,
Jesús Rey, Irene López Navarro and Itesh Sachdev*

Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación
(Ref.: FFI2009-08336/FILO) (2010-2012)

ENEIDA PRESENTERS AND TOPICS

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- *Creating a large-scale database of Spanish scholars' publication experiences in English and Spanish-medium scientific journals: Methodological considerations*

Rosa Lorés (Universidad de Zaragoza, Spain)

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

Pilar Mur (Universidad de Zaragoza, Spain)

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

Sally Burgess (Universidad de La Laguna, Spain)

- *Under threat from all sides: Historians and English for Research Publication Purposes*



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Creating a large-scale database
of Spanish scholars' publication experiences
in English and Spanish-medium scientific journals:
Methodological considerations

*Authors: Ana I. Moreno, Jesús Rey, Sally Burgess, Irene López
Navarro and Itesh Sachdev*

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1. Introduction

- Increasing move by multilingual scholars to publish RAs in English-medium journals (e.g. Lillis and Curry, 2010)
- Additional challenge faced by English as an Additional Language (EAL) scholars (Flowerdew, 1999): 24% increased burden (Hanouer and Englander, 2011)
- Spanish scholars, not an exception (St. John, 1987, Curry and Lillis, 2004; Burgess et al., 2005; Moreno, 2008b, Pérez-Llantada, 2010)
- Their motivations to use English for research publication:
 - Extrinsic motivations (Rey et al., 1998; Moreno, 2010)
 - Extrinsic and intrinsic motivations (Moreno et al., 2011)
- Their perceived linguistic disadvantage relative to native speakers of English: over 95% agree (Ferguson et al., 2011)
- Spanish scholars' need for scientific writing courses: 32.4% (Fernández Polo and Cal Varela, 2009)
- English academic writing skills courses offered in Spain (Moreno, 2011)

1. Introduction

- Specific pedagogical resources needed for training Spanish scholars in ERPP skills (e.g. Moreno, 2010)
- Emphasis on specific recurrent difficulties with writing RAs for English-medium journals and the reasons for these difficulties (Moreno, 2010)
- Little knowledge about their difficulties and real WOE (writing obstacles in English) (Moreno, 2010; Moreno et al., 2012)
- ENEIDA's gained knowledge of Spanish scholars' challenges, past learning strategies and publication experiences, current writing strategies, preferred journals, future training needs, motivations, feelings and attitudes towards writing for publication in English (as L2) versus doing so in Spanish (as L1) (Moreno et al., 2011)
- Unresolved issue: the extent to which these factors vary according to disciplinary fields

1. Introduction

- This panel aims:
 - To contribute to clarifying the effect of cross-disciplinary variation on the extent to which Spanish scholars' perceive using English for research publication purposes as opportunity or as threat (and challenge)

1. Introduction

- Paper 1 aims:
 - To describe the survey method used to create the ENEIDA database: a database of Spanish postdoctoral researchers including relevant variables affecting writing and learning to write in ERPP and regarding their general training needs vis-à-vis ERPP.
 - To offer overall descriptive results on the contextual variables of the database that help us to characterize our informants.
 - To identify the RA section which is perceived as the most difficult for most Spanish scholars to write in English (as L2) across broad knowledge areas
 - To offer explanations for their perceived increased difficulty.

2. Theoretical assumptions

- The RA is not a stable genre (Salager-Meyer, 1999)
- Writers also experience difficulties writing in their L1 for research publication purposes (Swales, 2004)
- The RA is not a monolithic genre (Swales, 2004)
- Some RA sections are, in fact, more difficult to write than others (Flowerdew, 1999)
- Correlation between disciplinary cultures and knowledge domains (Becher, 1994)
- RA writing features, communicative skills and discourse practices vary across disciplines (Hyland, 2000)
- Novice academic writers have similar writing problems (Swales, 2004)

2. Theoretical assumptions

- Writers from diverse language and cultural backgrounds also have distinct preferences for articulating messages which share a similar purpose (Kaplan, 1996, Connor, 2004; review of English-Spanish CADA studies in Moreno, 2010)
- These L1 preferences seem to transfer when writing in ERPP (Mauranen, 1993; Moreno, 1998; Flowerdew, 1999)
- Scholars' self-reported language proficiency varies according to communication skill (e.g. reading/writing) (Fernández del Polo and Cal Varela 2009) and communication context (e.g. for academic/general purposes) (Moreno et al., 2011)
- Scholars' research publication experience may affect their perceived difficulties writing in English (as L2) for English-medium journals (common sense)

2. Research questions

- A. Which section of the RA is implicated in the perceived increased difficulty in writing RAs in English (as L2) as opposed to Spanish (as L1)?
- B. Does the perception of increased difficulty with writing this section of the RA in English (as L2) vary across knowledge areas?
- C. What is the relative impact of the scholars' writing proficiency in English versus their RA publication experience on their perception of difficulty writing the section of the RA they find most challenging to write in English (as L2)?

3. Method: online survey

- Data from the ENEIDA Database about Spanish scholars' publication experience in scientific journals in Spanish and English
- ENEIDA Database created in 2010 by means of a large-scale online survey
- See Moreno et al. (2011a) for details about survey:
 - Design
 - In-depth interviews to 24 scholars in April-May 2010
 - Questionnaire divided into 6 thematic areas: 37 questions
 - Validation: expert validation + pilot with 200 scholars in Sept-October 2010
 - Implementation: November-December 2010

3. Method: valid sample

<i>From the raw population to our target sample</i>		
Staff with doctorates	8,794	100 %
Who completed the questionnaire	1,717	19.5%
Who have Castilian Spanish as L1	1,565	91.1%
Who have received their secondary and pre-doctoral education and training in Spain	1,502	96%
Who have received their secondary and pre-doctoral education and training in Spanish	1506	96.2%
Target sample	1,454	84.7%

3. Method: participants

Type of institution	N	%
Universities	619	42.6
Research-only institution	835	57.4
Total	1454	100

3. Method: participants

Gender	N	%
Male	925	63.6
Female	529	36.4
Total	1454	100

3. Method: participants

		Age	N. of years as a doctor
Mean		46.34	16.18
Median		46	16
Mode		44	7
Standard deviation		8.769	9.148
Smallest value		28	0
Largest value		70	44
Percentiles	25	40	9
	50	46	16
	75	52	22

3. Method: participants

Academic status	n	%
Permanent junior staff	881	60.6%
Permanent senior staff	458	31.5%
Non-permanent staff	115	7.9%

3. Method: participants

Knowledge areas	n	%
Natural & Exact Sciences	817	56.2
Technological Sciences	245	16.9
Arts & Humanities	118	8.1
Social Sciences	237	16.3
Unclassified (*)	37	2.5
Total	1454	100.0

3. Method: Tools

Q25. Indicate how much difficulty you experience in writing the following sections of research articles or the documentation involved in their publication in Spanish and in English. Use the following scale

1 = none; 2= a little; 3 = some; 4 = quite a lot; 5 = a lot

	In Spanish						In English					
	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
1. The abstract												
2. The introduction												
3. The theoretical framework												
4. The materials and methods												
5. The results												
6. The discussion												
7. Other sections												
8. The conclusions												
9. The acknowledgements												
10. The letter accompanying the articles when it is sent to the journal												
11. The response to peer reviewers' comments.												
12. The correspondence with the editor during the evaluation process												
13. Other:												
(Please specify) _____												
(Please specify) _____												
(Please specify) _____												

3. Method: Tools

Q9. What is your research field? Please indicate this using one or more of the UNESCO codes in the scroll-down menus. Choose the code or codes that best fits your research area.

Q10. What is your level of competence in the use of Spanish and English for general purposes? Please use the following scale: 1 = very low 2 = low 3 = medium 4 = high 5 = very high

		Spanish					English				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. Listening	e.g. Understanding TV and radio programmes										
2. Speaking	e.g. Describing events, giving instructions										
3. Interacting	e.g. Discussing topics of general interest										
4. Reading	e.g. Reading newspapers and popular science magazines										
5. Writing	e.g. Writing short stories, personal letters and letters of complaint.										

Q11. What is your level of competence in the use of Spanish and English for academic purposes? Please use the following scale: 1 = very low 2 = low 3 = medium 4 = high 5 = very high

		Spanish					English				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. Listening	e.g. Understanding lectures										
2. Speaking	e.g. Giving papers at conferences										
3. Interacting	e.g. Asking and responding to questions at a conference										
4. Reading	e.g. Reading articles about my research field										
5. Writing	e.g. Writing research articles and book chapters e.g. Corresponding with editors and peer reviewers										

3. Method: Tools

Q12. Please give the number of scientific articles you have published as corresponding author in each language over the last ten years.

	Number of articles
A. Spanish	
B. English	
C. Other languages	
(please specify)_____	
(please specify)_____	

3. Other variables in the ENEIDA database

- **MOTIVATIONS** towards the publication of research articles in scientific journals in Spanish and in English.
- **ATTITUDES and VIEWS** towards Spanish and English as languages for publication purposes.
- **PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE and DIFFICULTIES** with publishing research articles in scientific journals in Spanish and in English over the last ten years
- **CURRENT STRATEGIES for WRITING** for publication purposes in scientific journals in English.
- **PAST STRATEGIES for LEARNING** how to write research articles in Spanish and in English.
- **VIEWS about the TYPE OF TRAINING NEEDED** to learn how to write research articles or to improve their current results
- **SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS** that informants regard as most suitable for the publication of their research **in Spanish and in English**

Note: See Moreno et al. (2011b) for descriptive results of these variables.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- A. Which section of the RA is most implicated in the perceived increased difficulty in writing RAs in English (as L2) as opposed to Spanish (as L1)?
- B. Does the perception of increased difficulty with writing this section of the RA in English (as L2) vary across knowledge areas?
- C. What is the relative impact of the scholars' writing proficiency in English versus their RA publication experience on their perception of difficulty writing the section of the RA they find most challenging to write in English (as L2)?

4A. Which section of the RA is most implicated in the perceived increased difficulty in writing RAs in English (as L2) as opposed to Spanish (as L1)?

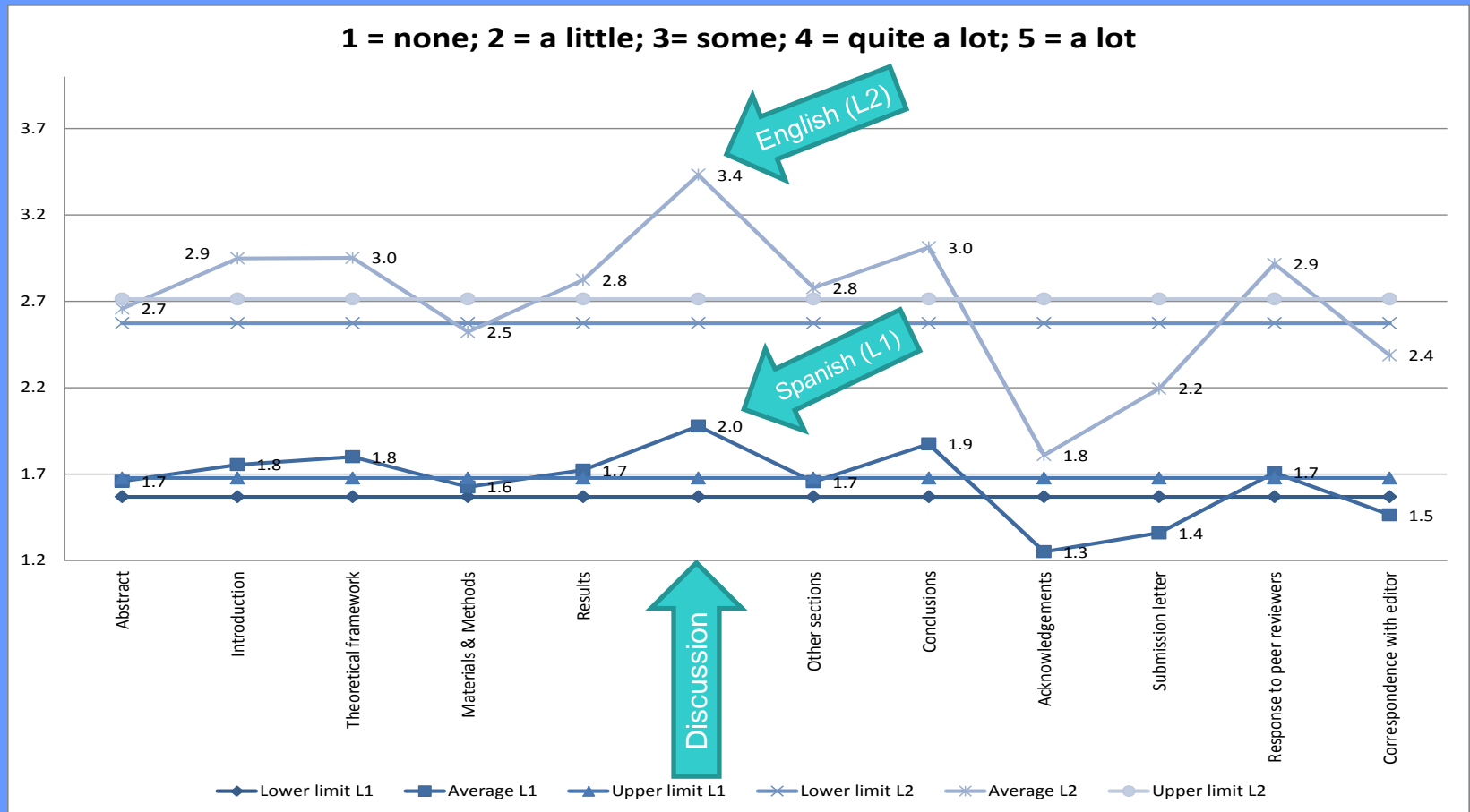
Table 1. Difficulty experienced in writing the various sections of RAs and publication-related documentation

(n = 742)	(1 = none; 2 = a little; 3 = some; 4 = quite a lot; 5 = a lot)		
Q25. RA article section or publication-related document	Spanish (as L1)	English (as L2)	Difference
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	D-score (%)
Abstract	1.66 _b (0.94)	2.66 _a (1.17)	20.0%
Introduction	1.75 _b (0.94)	2.95 _a (1.18)	24.0%
Theoretical framework	1.80 _b (0.94)	2.95 _a (1.19)	23.0%
Materials & Methods	1.63 _b (0.85)	2.52 _a (1.18)	17.8%
Results	1.72 _b (0.90)	2.82 _a (1.17)	22.0%
Discussion	1.98_b (1.09)	3.43_a (1.20)	29.0%
Other sections	1.66 _b (0.88)	2.78 _a (1.22)	22.4%
Conclusions	1.87 _b (1.10)	3.01 _a (1.26)	22.8%
Acknowledgements	1.25 _b (0.59)	1.81 _a (1.06)	11.2%
Submission letter	1.36 _b (0.70)	2.19 _a (1.21)	16.6%
Response to peer reviewers	1.71 _b (0.98)	2.92 _a (1.25)	24.2%
Correspondence with Editor	1.46 _b (0.81)	2.39 _a (1.20)	18.6%



4A. Which section of the RA is most implicated in the perceived increased difficulty in writing RAs in English (as L2) as opposed to Spanish (as L1)?

Figure 1. Spanish scholars' perceived difficulty writing RA sections or publication-related documents



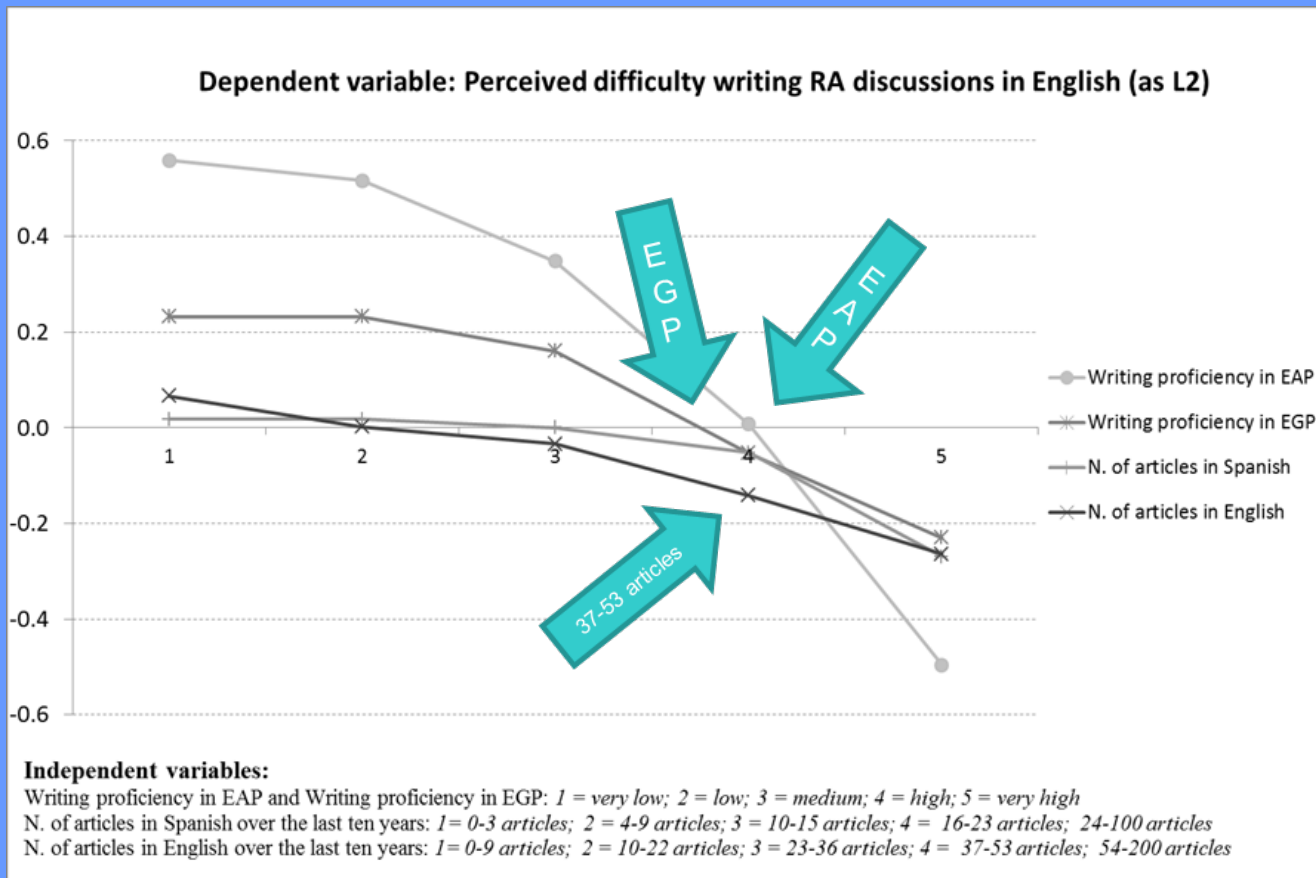
4B. Does the perception of increased difficulty with writing this section of the RA in English (as L2) vary across knowledge areas?

Table 2. Perceived difficulty writing RA sections and publication-related documents in English (as L2)

Q25. RA section and document	(n = 742) (1 = none; 2 = a little; 3= some; 4 = quite a lot; 5 = a lot) Mean (SD)				
	Natural and exact sciences (NS)	Tech. sciences (TS)	Arts and humanities (AH)	Social sciences (SS)	Contrast
Abstract	2.62 _{ab} (1.16)	2.77 _{ab} (1.09)	2.37 _a (1.11)	2.85 _b (1.24)	SS > AH
Introduction	2.81 _a (1.15)	2.98 _{ab} (1.06)	2.79 _a (1.19)	3.33 _b (1.20)	SS > (AH,NS)
Theoretical framework	2.70 _a (1.14)	2.89 _a (1.08)	3.11 _{ab} (1.24)	3.51 _b (1.21)	SS > (NS,TS)
Materials & Methods	2.21 _a (1.06)	2.37 _a (1.15)	2.99 _b (1.22)	3.12 _b (1.17)	(SS,AH) > (NS,TS)
Results	2.62 _a (1.11)	2.85 _a (1.11)	2.93 _{ab} (1.25)	3.27 _b (1.16)	SS > (NS,TS)
Discussion	3.36_a (1.21)	3.32_a (1.09)	3.19_a (1.22)	3.79_b (1.18)	SS > (NS,TS,AH)
Other sections	2.51 _a (1.15)	2.73 _{ab} (1.09)	3.06 _{b,c} (1.23)	3.28 _c (1.25)	SS > (NS,TS) AH > NS
Conclusions	2.86 _c (1.25)	2.83 _a (1.19)	2.93 _a (1.18)	3.55 _b (1.22)	SS > (NS,TS,AH)
Acknowledgements	1.70 _a (1.01)	1.76 _{ab} (0.98)	2.00 _{ab} (1.02)	2.05 _b (1.23)	SS > NS
Submission letter	2.12 _a (1.19)	2.16 _a (1.18)	2.24 _a (1.08)	2.36 _a (1.27)	None
Response to peer reviewers	2.86 _a (1.25)	2.97 _{ab} (1.19)	2.44 _a (1.09)	3.23 _b (1.26)	SS > (NS,AH)
Correspondence with editor	2.28 _a (1.17)	2.41 _{ab} (1.18)	2.19 _{ab} (1.03)	2.66 _b (1.28)	SS > NS



4C. What is the relative impact of the researchers' writing proficiency in English (as L2) versus their RA publication experience on their perception of difficulty writing the Discussion section in English?



5. Conclusions

- The most difficult section to write in English (as L2) for most Spanish scholars with doctorates across all knowledge areas is the Discussion section (29% = 8% more difficult than the rest of sections on average: 21%).
- The level of proficiency in English (as L2) is a more influential factor (Hanouer and Englander 2011) than familiarity with the disciplinary conventions of scientific writing (Swales, 2004).
- The effect of increased proficiency in EAP on informants' perceived level of difficulty writing Discussions in English (as L2) can be said to be more gradual and effective than that of increased proficiency in EGP.
- For scholars with doctorates, the kind of familiarity with the disciplinary conventions of scientific writing that clearly contributes to experiencing a lower degree of difficulty writing Discussions in English (as L2) is the one gained through publication experience in English-medium journals. Interestingly, publication experience in Spanish-medium journals does not count significantly.
- Publication experience in English-medium journals seems to provide Spanish scholars with an additional understanding of writing conventions in their discipline that goes beyond a better command of written English (whether EGP or EAP).
- We concur with Moreno (2010) that this increased understanding may encompass, among other things, an awareness of differences in the use of language resources to evaluate the literature in their own field and their own findings when writing Discussion sections across Spanish and English-medium journals, as indicated by Mur's (2007) crosscultural findings about all sections of the RA in the field of Business Management. This type of difference is also consistent with Moreno and Suárez' (2008) crosscultural findings about the use of evaluation resources in book reviews in the field of literature.

5. Conclusions

- Recommendations:

- It would be more productive for Spanish scholars to attend EAP than EGP courses.
- They should get familiar with the writing conventions used by successful RA authors to write Discussion sections in English-medium journals by comparison to those used by successful RA writers in Spanish-medium journals (as suggested in Moreno, 2010).
- This increased awareness would be more productive if it happened in the earlier stages of their research career so that they soon learned how to cancel out the potential effect of negative transfer of evaluation strategies (and other writing conventions) from their L1.

- Limitations:

- Our findings need to be treated with some caution since they are based on Spanish scholars' self-reported perceptions of difficulty.
- Moreno's (2010) suggestions about negative transfer of Spanish scholars' L1 critical attitude still need to be proven.

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