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ENGAGEMENT IN WRITTEN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE: A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH RESEARCH ARTICLES

IRINA KHOUTYZ*

Summary

This paper analyzes cross-cultural features of engagement demonstrated by native English- and Russian-speaking academics in their research articles (RAs) in linguistics and communication theory. To observe the differences, the engagement features^[1] are identified and analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The focus of this research is on the relationship between the use of engagement features and academics' sociocultural environment. A mixed method approach has been applied in conducting this analysis. The research shows that academic discursive traditions are molded by the sociocultural environment, which either creates or removes incentives for a writer to become involved in a dialog with the reader.

We can see that academic encounters in English are more interactive than in Russian because of much more generous use of reader-inclusive pronouns and questions establishing an interpersonal connection between the author and the reader of a RA. The Russian academic discourse demonstrates numerous cases of passive voice and reflexive verbs. In the Russian articles, there wasn't a single use of pronoun *I* (я); instead, the pronoun *we* (мы) was used, expressing collectivity and solidarity. These and other differences in expressing engagement in academic discourse obviously stem from sociocultural characteristics of the language speakers. The analysis of the most typical engagement techniques in academic discourse gives us insights into general communication preferences in this sphere.

Keywords: Academic Discourse; Engagement; Research Article; Sociocultural Environment.

Introduction: academic discourse and its dialogic and culturally specific nature

Academic discourse is a means of communication for those involved in educational and scientific professional domains. The discourse used in professional or institutional settings refers to “all kinds of workplace settings”.^[2] Depending on specific communicative goals, academic discourse can be represented by various genres, such as seminars, reports, or handouts that take into consideration the addressee. By means of this academic discourse, knowledge transfer is carried out, with one communicator delivering the information and the other communicator receiving it.

Academic discourse can be described as dialogic, as academics are involved in interactions with their counterparts, students, or perhaps even with a wider circle of readers. An author’s need to express his or her new perspective in an existing disciplinary field, while at the same time being accepted by the academic community, creates “a dialogic perspective on academic communication as a dynamic network of interpersonal relations”.^[3] Hyland^[4], who discusses how the addressee can be featured in academic articles, refers to Bakhtin’s^[5] notion of dialogicity, i.e., a dialog is always created when an addresser tries to present and support his or her idea. Moreover, a speaker / writer, when constructing discourse, always thinks about potential addressees and takes their characteristics into consideration, while at the same time anticipating their response. Hyland^[6] shows that written academic discourse abounds with various discursive devices (engagement features) that help to establish contact between the author and the reader. He argues that a dialog between individuals is established when authors treat their readers as “real players in the discourse rather than merely as implied observers of the discussion”.^[7] Engagement features help authors build solidarity: authors seek agreement with readers using reader pronouns, directives, personal aides, appeals to shared knowledge, and questions.^[8] Within this theoretical framework, academic discourse can show the way people in a community, in addition to expressing their beliefs and ideas, communicate collegiality, (dis)agreement, and standpoints.^[9]

Understanding that the construction of academic discourse follows certain accepted norms and traditions from the society in which the discourse is embedded, we can suppose that various genres of academic discourse will exhibit culturally specific features. For instance, research articles (RA) written by scholars who are native speakers of English typically follow the IMRD (introduction/ method/ results/ discussion) structure. This structure is far from being typical of RAs written by non-English-speaking scholars. For example, RAs written in Russian have no distinct structure; the conclusion (or discussion) section can be absent as authors want their readers to make a conclusion on their own. The writing styles of scholars from other non-English-speaking cultures may be more narrative, informal or indirect. According to Canagarajah^[10], examples can be found where whole sections may be absent, as it is the case with the methodology section in a RA written in Tamil: “The local audience takes for granted that the author has adopted a reasonably acceptable research procedure within his means”.^[11] These patterns represent socially accepted traditions of knowledge construction.

Cultural differences present in academic discourse have attracted researchers from various cultural backgrounds. In Europe, for instance, there are three major centers, at the University of Bergamo (Italy), the University of Bergen (Norway), and the University of Zaragoza (Spain) that study how academics construct their scholarly identities through written language. In addition, these research centers examine the ways in which writers engage readers in the subject matter.^[12]

The research group *Interpersonality in Written Academic Discourse* (InterLAE), based at the University of Zaragoza, Spain, emphasizes “the growing awareness of the critical importance of interpersonal aspects in academic communication”.^[13] This group has studied interpersonal rhetorical

features used in RAs and abstracts from different fields of knowledge, applying interdisciplinary, intercultural and intergeneric perspectives of analysis. The texts they examine are either written in English by scholars working in Anglophone institutions and Spanish institutions, or in Spanish by Spanish scholars. The group has found that there are culturally distinctive features of RAs written by Spanish authors in Spanish compared with those used by their English-speaking peers. The team also discovered that Spanish scholars are usually less interactive with their readers and do not make explicit connections between various parts of their research through the inclusion of an extensive review of the pertinent, previous literature, nor do they cross-reference their material. As Lafuente-Millan et al.^[14] state, “What is more, they do not tend to emphasize to the same extent as their international peers their role as authors, their stance and the critical role of readers in the acceptance or rejection of the new knowledge being communicated”.

Another prominent project is being carried out in the *Research Centre on Languages for Specific Purposes* (CERLIS), at the University of Bergamo, Italy, which focuses on how the process of globalization and the use of English as a lingua franca affect written and oral academic communication worldwide. This project examines the ways in which numerous social factors (e.g. professional, ideological, or ethno-geographic) are reflected through various “socioculturally-oriented identity constructing factors and textual variation in academic discourse”.^[15] The project has analyzed identity markers found in the linguistic corpus of academic texts in English and Italian. The resulting data show that “academic discourse is not at all uniform but varies according to different factors, such as language competence, professional expertise, gender and generic conventions”.^[16] The findings also indicate that factors such as age, experience, and academic standing are perhaps more important in establishing an author as a respected scientist than gender or native language and culture.^[17]

The work done by the *Cultural Identity in Academic Prose* (KIAP) research group is especially relevant to this paper, as this organization investigates the discursive construction of identities cross-culturally. Researchers based at the University of Bergen, Norway, examine the ways in which cultural identities are revealed in professional discourses. Their research relies on various approaches, one of which is the study of interpersonal features of discourse construction in RAs. The interaction between the author and the audience is realized through academic voices, representing “the *self*- and the *other*- dimensions”.^[18]

KIAP’s findings indicate that cultural background seems to be of great importance for representing the author’s research and voice in the RA. The group has found that English-speaking cultures, described as low-context^[19], tend to lay out arguments explicitly instead of relying on implied information, which is commonplace in high-context, for instance, French-speaking cultures. They also argue that authors from individualistic cultures use more first-person singular pronouns, as compared to authors from collectivist cultures in which plural ‘we’ is more common, even in single-authored articles. Hofstede^[20] is the first one establishing individualism / collectivism as a dimension applied to reveal cross-cultural differences. The distinction between individualistic and collectivist cultures is based on the nature of the relationship between an individual and a group. Triandis^[21] describes collectivism as “a social pattern consisting of closely linked individuals who see themselves as parts of one or more collectives...; are primarily motivated by the norms of, and duties imposed by, those collectives”. Individualism represents a social order in which individuals consider themselves independent of collectives and are usually motivated by their own preferences, needs and rights.

Studies devoted to the analysis of academic discourse are not limited to those conducted by the above-mentioned research groups. However, a review of the literature on academic discourse

and its connection with cultural context shows that little research has been conducted on the culturally-specific properties of Russian academic written discourse. Indeed, only a few publications are devoted to this field of research. Lipaev's^[22] dissertation is a case study of the role of pedagogical discourse in a rural school, while Melnikova's^[23] dissertation analyzes the role of metaphor in pedagogical discourse. Although there are a few RAs about academic discourse at the university level^[24], there is a dearth of current research studying the dialogic (engagement) qualities of academic discourse within Russia, and there is virtually no research about the culturally specific features of Russian academic discourse and how these might differ from the characteristics of English academic written discourse.

Studies of academic discourse have been steadily expanding in scope. Hyland^[25] names three main reasons for the growing scholarly interest in academic discourse. Firstly, with academic mobility programs on the rise and increased intercultural exchange, the diversity of students has made it necessary for university staff and academics to be aware of varieties of academic discourses. Secondly, more attention is being paid to teaching and learning in order to attract fee-paying students, who have become an important source of revenue to contemporary universities. Finally, as English has become a lingua franca of the academic community and knowledge of English a basic qualification for modern academics, much is being said about how the use of English affects discourses within local and international academic domains. Hyland argues that in order to grasp the essence of academic discourse, it is essential to focus on three key areas of the academic world: "education, knowledge and reputation".^[26] It is significant that all these changes in educational domains affected academic publishing, most of which is presented in English to be heard at the international level. The push to publish in English has revealed many differences in how academics from different cultures construct their discourses and engage in professional discussions.

Scholars who study academic discourse focus on various aspects. For instance, it is scrutinized from the general discourse theory perspective, paying attention to how academic discourse can be improved in terms of cohesion, coherence and information organisation^[27], ways of combining academic and other professional discourses.^[28]

Where researchers perceive academic discourse to be a dialog between the author and her audience, they often examine markers of modality, stance, and engagement^[29] and explore the ways that authors voice their opinions, making them heard by the audience while at the same time establishing one's identity in a globalized academic environment.^[30] This has become especially important as publishing has grown more competitive and authors must strive to interest editors and then readers in their ideas. Through engagement techniques, authors successfully manage to:

acknowledge and connect to others, recognizing the presence of their readers,
pulling them along with their argument, focusing their attention, acknowledging
their uncertainties, including them as discourse participants, and guiding them to
interpretations.^[31]

Engagement is expressed through various markers. Hyland^[32] identified markers of engagement such as reader pronouns, personal asides, appeals to shared knowledge, directives, and questions based on his interaction model between authors and writers. Using these tools, academics further explored how interpersonality (contact between authors and readers) can be established in academic discourses. Researchers have found that scholars writing in English^[33], Italian^[34], Spanish^[35], and Russian^[36] express their ideas and establish a relationship with their readers differently. For instance, scholarly texts in English may address or acknowledge the target audience more directly than articles written in other languages.

These differences stem from writers' sociocultural backgrounds, which are reflected in their

thought patterns and language use. This idea that sociocultural practices affect the way language is used^[37], is certainly not new. It has long been established that the presentation of ideas in written and oral discourse is culturally predetermined.^[38] Digression to extraneous information often happens in Italian, Spanish, Latin American and German discourses.^[39] Regarding the last one, Clyne^[40] indicates that linearity—the English ideal of academic written discourse—“is not a prerequisite of academic writing in German”. East European and Russian academic discourses usually feature an absence of concluding (rounding off) information.^[41] The linear / non-linear approach to presenting information can be explained by the form / content distinction.^[42] Form-oriented cultures, including many English-speaking cultures, usually present information in linear structures, which might seem “dubious and unprofessional” to those cultures accustomed to a content-oriented presentation of ideas, where the reader is supposed to “make an effort to understand the text produced by the knowledgeable, and therefore, authoritative person”.^[43]

This takes us back to contrastive rhetoric theory, which stresses the necessity of studying texts in the contexts in which they were written. Kaplan^[44] claimed that logic—the basis of rhetoric—is connected with cultural thought patterns and evolves out of culture: “Rhetoric, then, is not universal either, but varies from culture to culture and even from time to time within a given culture”.^[45] Having compared the rhetoric of written essays of students, who were native speakers of English, as well as speakers of Asian, Semitic, Romance languages and Russian, Kaplan discovered differences in how they structured their essays, in directness, in digression, and in paragraph order. Although Kaplan’s research was later criticized for using the essays in English as a benchmark to measure certain qualities (for example, their directness) in other languages without trying to grasp the reasons behind differences in rhetoric^[46], it gave rise to further cross-cultural studies on second-language writing^[47] and literacy practices in connection with academic cultures.^[48]

Cultural differences in rhetorical traditions have become especially obvious in the context of globalization when, according to Shea^[49], international students from different cultures appear in the same (usually American) university classroom. She points out that American academic writing follows the Socratic tradition according to which the main idea, a concluding point in a way, should be stated at the beginning: “Stating one’s opinion first and stating it directly are not necessarily rhetorical strategies shared by all cultures, but it is perhaps the most important, and most widely accepted and taught, component of Western rhetoric”.^[50] The conclusion, which often provides guidelines for further research, is also very important in Western rhetoric. But Chinese students ascribe a different function to their conclusion, in which they may finish their essay with a proverb or another question. Shea notes that Chinese students may never voice their opinion and focus on both sides of the argument, which may have its roots in the Confucian tradition of peace and harmony, which plays a very important role in Asian cultures. The classical Chinese pedagogical tradition of writing does not stress the importance of expressing one’s opinion, but instead focuses on expository and argumentative writing styles.^[51]

Organization patterns, argument development, as well as relevance and uniformity of formal structures^[52] may reveal culturally specific preferences of research presentation. In this paper, engagement construction is examined as a dimension that brings to light a number of differences in how authors establish contact with their audiences in Russian and English RAs. Dimensions such as collectivism / individualism are also studied. Since the 1950s, extensive research on individualism / collectivism has shown this dimension to be a valid measuring tool in understanding cultural behavior. Contemporary research in this area has established a connection between the individualism / collectivism pattern and occupational plans and work values^[53], reward allocation^[54], implications for investment^[55], and education.^[56]

Therefore, the analysis presented in this paper uses both discursive and cultural dimensions to reveal culturally preconditioned characteristics of engagement construction in academic discourse. The objective of this research is to establish a connection between academic discourse, a means of communication in educational and scientific environment; cultural dimensions, which are aspects of cultures “that can be measured relative to other cultures”^[57]; and the use of engagement markers that link the author and their reader(s). Engagement markers are discursive devices that help authors involve their readers in the information transmitted and thus enhance the writer-reader interaction. The use of these markers can vary depending on communicators’ cultural^[58], gender^[59] and professional differences.^[60] Taking into consideration the reviewed literature in these academic fields, I hypothesize that the authors (native speakers) of RAs in English and Russian, affected by local sociocultural environments, have different ways of expressing engagement.

Methodology

This paper attempts to uncover cross-cultural features of engagement within Russian and English academic written discourse. The methodology followed is based on methods applied by Hyland^[61] in his extensive study of engagement features in academic discourse. Before the analysis, a text corpus of RAs of 220 pages in each analyzed language was compiled. Then, engagement features in Russian and English RAs were selected manually and classified according to their type. Finally, the findings were analyzed by means of a comparative analysis of engagement markers used in RAs by Russian- and English-speaking authors.

The RAs in Russian were written by Russian-speaking linguists in a well-regarded, peer-reviewed journal whose title is *Vestnik Leningradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta imeni Pushkina* (2012). This journal translates into English tables of contents, authors’ names, and titles of their RAs, as well as abstracts and keywords, an indication of the attempt to attract a wider, not just Russian-speaking, readership. The Russian authors are linguists from various parts of the country. Most of the authors happen to be female, as the majority of Russian academics engaged in studying linguistics, literature or foreign languages are women. Altogether 28 RAs in Russian were analysed (220 pages excluding references).

As the current paper claims to analyze the engagement features in English, no distinction is made among British, American, Canadian or Australian English. This research does not attempt to ignore the differences existing in these varieties of the English language, but the journals analyzed have a truly international status, with editorial boards comprising English-speaking academics from different countries. For instance, the editorial board of the *Journal of Pragmatics* comprises academics from the USA (18), the United Kingdom (9), Australia (2), New Zealand (1), and Germany (6), as well as academics from Belgium, Italy, Israel, Netherlands, and Switzerland. The *Journal of Pragmatics*, published by Elsevier, is located in Amsterdam with offices in the United Kingdom, the USA and other countries. It would be inaccurate to describe the discourse of the RAs published in this journal—and others like it—as British or American English, and thus, no distinction is made.

There were a few difficulties when trying to find equivalent material for research in English: many authors who write within the field of linguistics or intercultural communication are non-native speakers of English, and many RAs have two or more authors. To overcome this obstacle, RAs published by native speakers of English were selected from a variety of sources. The RAs analyzed were from 12 publications, including *Written Communication Journal*, *Journal of Pragmatics*, *Discourse & Society*, *Discourse Studies*, *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, *Journal of*

English Linguistics, *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *Language and Literature Journal*, *Media and Communication Studies*, *Interventions and Intersections* (Monograph), and *Identities in Transition* (Monograph). Around half the English-speaking authors were male (from the USA, the UK, Australia and Canada) and half were female (from the USA and the UK). Altogether, 18 RAs in English were analyzed (220 pages excluding references).

Thus, the paper compares the Anglo-Saxon pattern of academic writing with academic writing produced by speakers of Russian. A similar research stance has been adopted by Canagarajah^[62] who argues that globalization has led to the spread of an Anglo-American pattern of academic writing that is very different from non-English academic discourses. This approach allows us to contrast the differences of knowledge construction between those who are native speakers of English and “claim ownership over the language”^[63] and those who publish for their local audience in their native tongues.

As noted earlier, discursive tools that involve the prospective reader in the discussion were identified by Hyland with a special focus on academic discourse. Bakhtin’s^[64] dialogicity theory serves as the conceptual groundwork for Hyland’s research. Hyland identified the following engagement features:

Reader pronouns. The inclusive (‘we’) or the second-person pronoun (‘you’) allow writers to bring the readers into their research by directly addressing them. That is why they can be termed ‘reader pronouns’.^[65] The pronoun ‘you’ is not examined in this research, because it implies a separation between participants, rather than a connection.^[66] First-person reader pronouns involve the addressee in the discussion of ideas or beliefs expressed in a RA.

Directives. In exploring the definition of ‘directives’, Hyland^[67] borrowed the term from the literature on speech act theory. Cutting explains that directives are conversational acts in which “the words are aimed at making the hearer do something, such as ‘commanding’, ‘requesting’, ‘inviting’, ‘forbidding’, ‘suggesting’ and so on”.^[68] By expressing a desire to make the readers take some action, authors guide them through the important points of their research.

Personal aides. Personal aides are insertions intended to provide readers with extra information and help them to better understand the point under discussion. These insertions are introduced in brackets or with the help of dashes and serve to enhance the writer-reader relationship by providing more context.

Appeals to shared knowledge. These are explicit signals of solidarity construction. Authors appeal to shared knowledge through the use of adverbs (‘obviously’, ‘of course’), stressing the fact that the information is equally understood and shared by both the author and the reader. Some phrases may also be used to construct solidarity (‘as we know’).

Questions. Posing questions to the author’s audience is a “strategy of dialogic involvement par excellence, often functioning to express an imbalance of knowledge between participants, but also working to create rapport and intimacy”.^[69] Questions arouse readers’ interest by bringing the main points of the academic discussion into focus.

In order to discover whether there are differences in the use of these types of engagement features, a contrastive analysis approach is used. During the analysis, the frequency of use of each engagement feature is established and its role in the discourse of the RAs in both languages is discussed. In addition, an attempt is made to discover possible reasons behind the differences in usage of these features. This approach ensures that engagement features selected from the Russian RAs correspond in their discursive role to engagement features found in the English RAs. The results of the analysis are presented with an attempt to explain the differences through the cultural

characteristics of the authors. A qualitative analysis of written examples containing engagement features is helpful in getting to the bottom of the phenomena. Examples from the RAs in Russian are provided with English translation.

Engagement features in research articles in Russian and English

The comparative analysis of engagement markers used in RAs by Russian and English-speaking authors will examine variation in terms of reader pronouns, directives, personal aides, appeals to shared knowledge and questions.

Reader pronouns. First-person reader pronouns ('we') involve the addressee in the discussion of ideas or beliefs presented in a RA. As academic writing "is not the faceless, formal prose it is often depicted to be"^[70], more and more personal references are applied by academics to express their point of view; at the same time, authors realize how important it is for them to get their peers' approval.

Among the Russian RAs, 150 examples of first person plural self-reference pronouns (in various cases declinations, such as dative, accusative, etc.) were noted in the single-authored RAs. A similar observation was made by a group of Spanish researchers, who found that Spanish scholars used the inclusive 'we' even in single-authored texts, which allowed them "to claim authority and respect as scholars but without risking too much, as the use of *we* has the effect of 'diluting' the authorship".^[71]

After these cases of self-reference were analyzed in context, it was established that most of them did not include the reader: only 35 cases out of 150 (23%) were reader inclusive. The majority (77%) of these first-person plural pronouns were used to represent the author and express a collective outcome of publishing the RA:

- (1) Важным для *нашего* исследования представляется столкновение чрезвычайно формальной манеры речи камердинера Дживса и неформальной манеры его хозяина Вустера.^[72] (It seems that for *our* research the clash between Jeeves's extremely formal manner of speech and the informal manner of his master Wooster is very important.)

Hyland^[73] provides a few reasons for the use of 'we' in single-authored RAs: it expresses humility, modesty and distance, and it reminds the reader "of the collaborative nature of the research activity." These reasons seem to also explain why Russian linguists use either first person plural pronouns or no pronouns at all (passive voice or impersonal expressions are used instead): Russia's strong collectivist past seems to have influenced the academic writing tradition, as "collectivists employ 'we' often and they depend on context ...to convey meaning".^[74]

Self-reference in RAs written in English is represented more variably than in the Russian RAs. There are first person singular and plural pronouns, and the scholar's previous work is often referred to in a third person voice. There is a distinction between the scholar's identity and the academic community, expressed by the alternating usage of pronouns 'I' and 'we'. Perhaps that is why 171 of 173 (99 %) of 'we' pronouns are reader inclusive:

- (2) I propose that we are not given the positives and negatives associated with focusing solely on culture.^[75]
- (3) ...we cannot escape from the fact that the accelerating transition from old to new media forms of production and reception of communication is a major intellectual challenge.^[76]

These findings are consistent with Hyland's^[77] observation that "the pronouns *we* and *I* were the most commonly used devices for self-representation." However, there was not even one Russian RA that had at least one first person singular reference as was the case with the RAs in English.

Instead, the identity of the Russian author often merged with the academic community.

It seems that English-speaking scholars voice their opinions and emphasize contributions to their fields more actively than their Russian counterparts, expressing more directly their relationship “to their arguments, their discipline, and their readers”.^[78] In this way, authors in individualist cultures stress their identities and emphasize clarity.^[79] the author’s extent of contribution to the research area is clearly stated. Russian authors either tend to use the so-called ‘Official Voice’^[80] or do not include the reader in first person plural pronouns. As a result, the RA is written in a more impersonal manner with a much weaker authorial presence, which affects the extent to which the readers are engaged in the scientific discussion.

Directives. Hyland sees directives as utterances usually expressed “by the presence of an imperative, ...or by a predicative adjective expressing the writer’s judgment of necessity/importance”.^[81] Directives convey a whole range of meanings, determined within their context of usage: they can be textual, physical or cognitive, depending on their function in a RA, which is usually to prompt the reader to perform intellectual actions.

Textual directives guide readers to “some textual act, referring them to another part of the text or to another text”.^[82] Therefore, they navigate readers’ attention within the expanse of a RA or turn readers’ attention to external resources mentioned in a RA:

- (4) Numerous empirical studies document the assimilative trend (*see* Kim, 2001, for an extensive literature review).^[83]
- (5) ...121 tokens of indirection in 34 out of the 57 samples of African Americans identified as low SES and 10 tokens of indirection in only 1 out of 17 samples of African Americans identified as medium SES (*see Table 4*).^[84]

Directives that invite readers to perform a physical act are described as physical directives. This act can be performed within the article (research focus, i.e. ‘to summarize,’ ‘to re-orient,’ ‘to look at’) or directed towards real world action (real-world focus, i.e. ‘to check,’ ‘to hold,’ ‘to fill,’ ‘to set’). Example 6 illustrates the use of a physical directive with a real-world focus, although this type of directives is more typical of hard sciences such as electronic engineering and physics, where research is more experiment-oriented.^[85]

- (6) Теперь необходимо проверить текстовую частотность наиболее информативных звуков. ^[86] (Now it is necessary to *check* the frequency of the most meaningful sounds.)

Directives can also engage readers in cognitive acts “where readers are invited into a new domain of argument, led through a line of reasoning, or directed to understand a point in a certain way”^[87]: for example, ‘to note,’ ‘to clarify,’ ‘to take into account,’ and ‘to determine.’ Such cognitive-oriented directives can have a rhetorical, elaborative, or emphatic purpose in a RA. Hyland^[88] concludes that in academic discourse, directives are better seen as complex rhetorical strategies writers can use to manipulate a relationship with readers and indicate the ways they are intended to follow the text.

Example (7) illustrates the use of a cognitive directive to draw the reader’s attention to an important part of the analysis:

- (7) Note that Nancy’s ‘so’ at line 2 does not mark inference from the prior talk and is an example of the target phenomenon.^[89]

The quantitative analysis shows a more frequent application of directives by Russian authors than their English-speaking counterparts. In the Russian-language corpus, 315 cases of directives were identified, but the RAs in English featured only 158 cases. Russian authors employ more directives expressing cognitive acts, and they use emphatic directives more frequently than rhetorical directives. This is similar to the frequent appearance of cognitive directives in RAs

published in English according to Hyland.^[90] It is possible to make a conjecture that cognitive directives in RAs of Russian authors emphasize the most important points in narration from their perspective while simultaneously preserving an impersonal style of writing:

(8) *Необходимо отметить, что в языке Вудхауза мы можем найти огромное количество эпитетов.*^[91] (*It is necessary to note that in Wodehouse's discourse we can find a great number of epithets.*)

Naturally, out of 315 directives found in Russian RAs, 198 of them are impersonal (63%), which means that they do not state explicitly who is directed to act. Russian authors also frequently use collective directives (the equivalent of the English phrases ‘let us’ or ‘we will’), which makes directives less obvious and invites readers, rather than commands them, to participate in the discussion^[92]:

(9) *Рассмотрим еще несколько примеров данного речевого акта...*^[93] (*Let's analyze a few more examples of this speech act...*)

In contrast to the use of textual directives by Russian linguists, the examples of textual directives in the English RAs under analysis are external. It seems to be expected that those who publish in English will place their research within a wide international context of the discipline^[94] through a careful reference to preliminary research:

(10) A number of sources have associated internationalisation with the developing notions surrounding global citizenship (see Bourn 2010: 21; Caruana 2010: 30; Shiel 2009) though the concept of internationalisation, like global citizenship has not yet been clearly defined (Bourn 2010: 27; Caruana 2010: 30).^[95]

As with the RAs published in Russian, the majority of cognitive directives were emphatic. There were 53 examples of emphatic directives in the English RAs (33.5% from the total number of directives found in the RAs written by English-speaking authors). The similarity might be explained by the fact that all RAs, both in Russian and in English, refer to the same scientific area of Linguistics and Communication Theory:

(11) It is, however, *interesting to note* that the ‘misunderstood’ email was attributed to cultural differences rather than say, some aspect of the learning context or confusion about how the tasks should be approached and by whom.^[96]

(12) In interpreting the results for citizen response styles, it is *important to bear* in mind that (as noted earlier) disagreement correlates significantly negatively with agreement but positively with extremity.^[97]

The findings of the comparative analysis show that Russian authors use directives more often than their English-speaking counterparts mostly to draw their readers' attention to the parts of the paper that they consider to be important. By the frequent use of directives, Russian authors seem to compensate for the lack of reader inclusive pronouns in their RAs. Russian authors use impersonal constructions or collective directives to sound less authoritative. English-speaking authors specify external sources and place their research within an international context. As the readership of the RAs in Russian is much more limited than the number of potential readers of the RAs in English, this difference may explain why Russian RAs (like their Spanish counterparts) are not overly focused on justifying “their research in relation to previous work more thoroughly”.^[98] It is just the opposite with RAs published in English, where external textual directives may actually exceed the internal ones.^[99]

A dearth of external references in the RAs of Russian linguists may be explained by several factors. First of all, RAs are typically much shorter – usually about half the length of RAs published in English. Second, RAs are not necessarily based on empirical data and often summarize (or even

paraphrase) theoretical observations made by the authors. This is well illustrated by a RA in the Russian corpus that references only three sources, two of them being previous RAs by the author.^[100]

It is also possible to conclude that the differences in the types of directives used in the Russian and English RAs illustrate differences in academic traditions and approaches to knowledge construction. Russian discourse construction has been strongly influenced by a preference for collectivist ideology with a focus on collective nature of the research. Directives, rather than reader pronouns, make the main points of RAs clear for the reader and at the same time blur the identity of the author and preserve impersonal and formal style of academic writing.

Personal aides. Personal aides “allow writers to address readers directly by briefly interrupting the argument to offer a comment of what has been said”.^[101] These means of engagement are intended to create a dialog and enhance the writer-reader relationship:

(13) Hillel Crandus, a teacher of eleventh-grade English, asked his class to write short papers (*which Crandus shared with me*) expressing how they felt about analysis...^[102]

(14) В этом произведении два актора – *Петр Иваныч и Иван Петрович, по очереди каждый в своих письмах к другому – повествуют о происходящих с ними событиях*.^[103] (In this work of literature there are two actors – *Petr Ivanovich and Ivan Petrovich taking turns to write letters to each other* – who narrate the events that happen to them).

Since the Russian academic discourse tends to be impersonal (as shown by the analysis of the 28 RAs in this study), it is not surprising that this engagement feature is not truly personal; personal aides in Russian RAs are additional remarks intended to help the reader to better understand the information:

(15) ...вмешает все свои эмоции – или их отсутствие – в один-единственный звук.^[104] ((he) ...contains all his emotions – or their absence – in just one sound...).

A total of 243 cases of personal aides were found in 220 analyzed pages in Russian. The use of personal aides in the Russian RAs did not seem to briefly interrupt the argument. Instead, their function seemed to clarify and expand upon the information presented; still, they sound like friendly (yet formal) tips, offering help in case a reader is not familiar enough with the subject matter being discussed.

There were 230 instances of these kinds of aides used in the English RAs, similar to the rate of usage in the Russian RAs. Interestingly, the way the personal aides were introduced in English was similar to how they were introduced in Russian. The main function of these aides in the English RAs is explanatory and is achieved through the introduction of additional clarifying information:

(16) A total of 27 students in Australia participated in the project, 11 of whom were international students (*i.e., holding student visas in Australia*) and came from countries such as Botswana, China, Korea, India, Malaysia and Singapore.^[105]

Thus, we can conclude that both English- and Russian-speaking authors used personal aide engagement features similarly. However, English authors often used personal aides to share their personal experience with their readers, whereas Russian authors preserved the impersonal style of their RAs, using personal aides mostly to add extra information considered interesting by the author.

Appeals to shared knowledge. Appeals to shared knowledge are features of engagement, usually represented by explicit signals stimulating readers to recognize the information they read about as familiar.^[106] Hyland^[107] describes this strategy as a less imposing involvement strategy that allows the author to position readers within the disciplinary field by constructing a feeling of solidarity. This feeling can be achieved by introducing various expressions of shared knowledge into

discourse. These can include words and expressions used by an author to emphasize “a common frame for seeing the world, identifying problems and resolving issues”^[108] together with a reader. The use of shared knowledge can include appeals to readers’ sense of solidarity, for instance, through the use of ‘as we know’, ‘naturally’, ‘as we understand’, and similar phrases.

There were 64 examples of appeals to shared knowledge in the researched pages in Russian. The most common were phrases like ‘разумеется’ (‘of course’; ‘it goes without saying’), ‘конечно’ (‘of course’), ‘очевидно’ (‘obviously’), ‘традиционно’ (‘traditionally’):

(17) *Очевидно*, что проксематический фактор речеповеденческого кода позволяет говорить о пространственных стереотипах...^[109] (The proxemics factor in the speech behaviour, *obviously*, makes it possible to talk about spatial stereotypes...)

In the RAs published in English, surprisingly, there were 64 examples of appeals to shared knowledge. Their use (zero to six signals used per RA) did not seem to be as evenly distributed throughout the RAs as other features of engagement. Shared knowledge signals in English RAs included the typical ‘of course’ and references to the shared pools of information derived from a specific RA or from other sources:

(18) There are, *of course*, limitations and failures.^[110]

(19) As we have seen, a key item used by Minkov (2007) to define monumentalism is strong pride in one’s nation.^[111]

It is essential to stress the presence of less subtle appeals to shared knowledge, which are not only discipline-related, but express a common understanding of how research within the structure of a RA should be presented in order to be understood by peers. It is especially felt by those presenting their research in both their native languages (and thus for their local academic community) and in English. These subtle appeals to shared knowledge include avoiding rounding off and avoiding obvious linear structure in Russian RAs, giving information from the general and then getting down to specifics in high context cultures^[112], blurring the identity of the author, or frequently citing references and theories that focus on and reflect research conducted in the native language, common in Russian RAs.

Questions. Questions – “one way that writers explicitly bring readers into their texts” – help to effectively “establish rapport and intimacy”^[113], mostly in spoken discourse. However, as Hyland^[114] observes, they are more and more often encountered in academic prose and can perform numerous functions: arousing interest, framing purposes, establishing a research niche, organizing the discourse, expressing an attitude or evaluation, conveying a claim, or suggesting further research. Unlike appeals to shared knowledge, questions are “largely confined to the soft disciplines, this common strategy seems to be principally interpersonal”.^[115]

The seven questions found in the Russian RAs are aimed at arousing readers’ interest, drawing their attention to the point at issue and eventually provoking a discussion:

(20) Возникает вопрос: каким образом соотносится разграничение трёх вышеперечисленных видов анафорических структур с разграничением тематических, опорных и ключевых слов?^[116] (A question arises: how does the distinction among the three above mentioned types of anaphoric structures correlate with thematic and reference differences of the key words?)

(21) Не о таком ли своем будущем размышляет Алкивиад в стихотворении поэта? Не потому ли уже в своем настоящем герой Боратинского утрачивает юношескую энергию?^[117] (Is Alcibiades in the poem thinking about his similar future? Is it the reason for Boratinsky’s character losing his youthful energy in the present?)

With questions, the authors explicitly identify the essential point of their research and direct

readers' thoughts in a certain direction.

Questions (usually implying a personal tone) are avoided by Russian linguists who are accustomed to writing in a formal and impersonal style (see Examples 20, 21). Moreover, in addition to intimacy, questions tend to convey authority. That is why they are more often used by textbook authors^[118] and, as the analysis shows, are usually avoided by Russian authors. The Russian RAs analyzed in this study were mostly written by linguists working on their Ph.D. dissertations (according to the information about the authors provided in the journal) and trying to publish the number of RAs in high-profile peer-reviewed journals prerequisite to being allowed to defend their theses. Their relatively low status in the academic hierarchy may be one reason they would find expressing authority inappropriate.

Because "successful academic writing in English incorporates an awareness of audience"^[119], one would expect more questions in the RAs in English. There were twenty-six questions used in the RAs in English:

(22) How do we lead within a pluralistic and diverse setting with multiple worldviews and differing cultural contexts?^[120]

(23) Does the existence of that pronoun make a slide to 'we' easier? Perhaps.^[121]

It is quite obvious that Russian linguists use this strategy of engagement much less often than their English-speaking counterparts: it is employed in only 3% of cases from the total number of pagers as compared to 12% featured in the RAs by English-speaking scholars. As can be seen, Russian-speaking authors are not used to expressing interpersonality, authority and strong reader involvement in their RAs.

Discussion of the results

The results of the comparative analysis show that English-speaking academics use reader pronouns and questions more actively than their Russian-speaking counterparts. At the same time, Russian authors demonstrated a more frequent use of directives in their RAs than English-speaking authors. The most significant differences are found in the use of those features that emphasize the expression of personal standing (reader pronouns), those which try to establish a sense of personal involvement with the reader (questions), and those that guide readers through specific points of the research (directives).

However, the authors of the analyzed RAs in both languages demonstrated an equal attempt to construct a sense of solidarity, for example, through personal aides and appeals to shared knowledge:

	Reader Pronouns	Directives	Personal Aides	Shared Knowledge	Questions
Russian	35	315	242	64	7
English	171	158	230	64	26

Table 1: Results of the cross-cultural analysis of the use of engagement features (220 pages in each language)

There are several possible reasons for the lower number of engagement signals in Russian RAs. First, the academic environment in modern Russia, in which the peer-review culture is very

weak^[122], does not motivate authors to establish rapport with their readers. Although Ph.D. students are required to have a certain number of RAs published in high-profile journals before defending their dissertations, the fact is that publishing is usually determined by payment of an official publishing fee and a positive reference from an academic working in the same field, generally easily obtainable. As a result, “many journals do not check the research quality but rather publish all material presented in proper formatting and paid for”.^[123] Often RAs are “seen by many people only as a means of fulfilling obligations or simply as reporting”^[124]; they are neither based on discussions with colleagues, nor tested at conferences. Thus, it seems that Russian Ph.D. students are more concerned about publishing the required amount of articles than about establishing a dialog or a professional discussion with their readers.

Second, the isolation of Russian academics from the international world of academia may be another reason for not following international (usually English-speaking) standards of conducting research, engaging in discussion and further presentation of that research. Leaders at Russian universities in early 2013 began discussing incentives to make Russian academics publish in international peer-reviewed journals.^[125] Before 2013, Russian academics—whether doctoral candidates, post-doc researchers, or professors—had not been expected to produce English-language publications.^[126] If isolated in this way, university professors are unable to participate in the life of the international academic community because they do not speak English and even if they do, often their knowledge is not enough to participate at international conferences and adequately express their ideas in writing: “Academic English writing is clearly a very different proposition from merely having a command of professional English”.^[127]

The third reason why Russian scholars are less interactive and, at the same time, tend to give more guidance to their readers is the sociocultural tradition of discourse construction in academic encounters. The fact that Russian academics are reluctant to include engagement features and follow international standards of research presentation can also be explained by the historic past of the country, when the Soviet collectivist system was not conducive to professionals expressing their individual, creative arguments. This collectivist influence continues to make authors less active in expressing their identity and stating their contribution to the particular area of the research. This affects the clarity of their writing: apart from the absence of the information about the author’s input into the research, Russian linguists—representatives of a high-context culture—often write their RAs starting from very general information about their research, never getting to the specifics. This generality in the presentation coupled with a lack of rounding off information and absence of linear structure make RAs written in Russian very different from RAs written in English. The emphasis on the collectivist nature of research, usually transmitted through the use of pronoun ‘мы’ (‘we’) in single-authored RAs, expresses professional modesty and makes it possible to maintain in-group harmony. The collectivist past, high-power distance and high-context characteristics of the Russian culture might be the factors that have most greatly affected the existing traditions of academic writing.^[128]

Conclusion

The analysis of RAs written in English and in Russian shows that the use of engagement features depends not only on each author’s personal preferences, but is largely preconditioned by communication specifics typical among a disciplinary community. Furthermore, the sociocultural tradition of discourse construction in academia, as well as in any other area of society, plays a key role in the use of engagement features.

In Russian RAs, reader pronouns and questions appear less often because of the possible lack of incentives to involve the reader in the discussion. Russian academics used almost four times fewer questions and almost five times fewer reader pronouns than English-speaking academics in the articles analyzed. At the same time, directives were employed in Russian RAs almost twice as often as in English RAs. As directives effectively draw readers' attention to the important parts of the RA while maintaining an impersonal tone, it is quite reasonable to suppose that their utilization in Russian RAs compensates for the absence of reader pronouns. However, there are differences in the types of directives used in RAs that can be explained by the academic environment and its sociocultural characteristics.

Above all, Russian linguists seem to be reluctant to express their personal standing in research (reader pronouns) and to establish rapport (questions) with their readers. The authors of the RAs analyzed might also have avoided using questions because many of them have not yet reached the prime of their academic careers and feel that it is improper to express their opinion openly and convey authority.

Similarities in the use of personal aides and shared knowledge expressions might indicate that academics with similar research backgrounds still have certain commonalities in the way they express engagement in their RAs, despite coming from different sociocultural environments.

In conclusion, it should be stressed again that academic discourse is a variety of institutional discourse that is deeply rooted in sociocultural context and is typically constructed under the influence of social roles ascribed to its participants. In an international context the cultural nature of institutional communication should always be taken into consideration because "a profound difference in cultural values has a powerful impact on the personality styles favored by each culture".^[129]

The implications of these profound differences for Russian academics, who have only recently begun to engage more actively with the international academic community, should be explored. An awareness of differences in academic discourse construction, including differences in engagement expression, along with an acceptance of international (usually English-language) standards of research presentation will allow Russian academics to integrate into the international academic environment.

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^[2]Almut Koester, *Investigating Workplace Discourse (Domains of Discourse)* (Oxon, New York: Routledge, 2006).

^[3]Krystyna Warchał, Moulding Interpersonal Relations through Conditional Clauses: Consensus-Building Strategies in Written Academic Discourse, *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 9 (2), (2010): 140-141.

[⁴]Ken Hyland, Bringing in the Reader. Addressee Features in Academic Articles, *Written Communication* 18, 4, (2001): 549-574.

[⁵]Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (University of Texas Press, 1982).

[⁶]See Hyland, *Bringing in the Reader. Addressee Features in Academic Articles*, or Hyland, *Academic Discourse*.

[⁷]Hyland, *Bringing in the Reader. Addressee Features in Academic Articles*, 552.

[⁸]Hyland, *Academic Discourse*.

[⁹]Warchał, *Moulding Interpersonal Relations through Conditional Clauses: Consensus-Building Strategies in Written Academic Discourse*, 141.

[¹⁰]Suresh A. Canagarajah, *Critical Academic Writing and Multilingual Students* (Kindle edition), (University of Michigan Press, 2002).

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[¹²]Rosa Lorés-Sanz, Pilar Mur-Dueñas, and Enrique Lafuente-Millán, “Introduction”, in *Constructing Interpersonality*, eds. Rosa Lorés-Sanz, Pilar Mur-Dueñas and Enrique Lafuente-Millán (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 1-10.

[¹³]Ibid., 2.

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[¹⁶]Ibid., 55.

[¹⁷]Ibid.

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[¹⁹]Edward T Hall, *Beyond Culture* (New York: Anchor Books, 1976).

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[²¹]Harry Triandis, *Individualism and Collectivism* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), 2.

[²²]Alexey Lipaev, *Pedagogicheskiy diskurs kak sredstvo vospitaniya selskikh shkolnikov* (Kostroma: Kostromskoy gosudarstvenny universitet, 2004).

[²³]Natalia Melnikova, *Metaphora v pedagogicheskem diskurse* (Rostov-na-Donu: Juzhnij Federalnij universitet, 2007).

[²⁴]For example: Vladimir Maksimov, Evgenia Najdon, and Anna Serebrennikova, “Kontseptualnoe jadro universitetskogo diskursa”, *Izvestia Tomskogo politekhnicheskogo universiteta* 317, 6 (2010): 199-203; Jana Zubkova, “Tsennosti akademicheskogo diskursa”, *Jazik, kommunikatsiya i sotsialnaya sreda* 7 (2009):135-141.

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[²⁶]Ibid., 5.

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[³⁰]Gotti, *Identity Traits in Written Academic Discourse Across Languages and Cultures*; Lafuente-Millán et al., *Interpersonality in Written Academic Discourse: Three Analytical Perspectives*.

[³¹]Stance and Engagement: A Model of Interaction in Academic Discourse, 176.

[³²]For example, see: Hyland, *Stance and Engagement: A Model of Interaction in Academic Discourse*; Hyland, *Academic Discourse*.

[³³]Hyland, *Bringing in the Reader. Addressee Features in Academic Articles*.

[³⁴]Gotti, *Identity Traits in Written Academic Discourse Across Languages and Cultures*.

[³⁵]Lafuente-Millán et al., *Interpersonality in Written Academic Discourse: Three Analytical Perspectives*.

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[⁷⁰] Ken Hyland, “Humble Servants of the Discipline? Self-mention in Research Articles”, *English for Specific Purposes* 20 (2001): 212.

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[125] Jana Hlustova, “Otkritost’ na ruku uchenim”, *Gazeta.ru* (2013), http://www.gazeta.ru/science/2013/10/02_a_5674741.shtml. 2013

[126] Oleg Barabanov, “Putin’s Challenge: Can Russian Universities Join the World Education Leaders?”, *Valdai Discussion Club*, May 17 (2012), <http://valdaiclub.com/culture/42880.html>.

[127] Ibid.

[128] See Hofstede, Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations. Software of the Mind* for more information on cultural dimensions.

[129] Susan Cain, *Quiet* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012), 190.

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***Irina Khoutyz** - is professor of Linguistics, Head of Applied Linguistics and Information Technology Division at the Department of Romance and Germanic Philology at Kuban State University in Krasnodar (south of Russia). Current academic interests include pragmatics, discourse studies, intercultural communication, applied linguistics, language acquisition, sociolinguistics e mail: ir_khoutyz@hotmail.com

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