INVESTIGATING ASPECTS OF ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

RENATA **PÍPALOVÁ**

Investigating Aspects of Academic Discourse

Renata Pípalová

————

**Funded by
the European Union**
NextGenerationEU

**CZECH
RECOVERY
PLAN**

MŠMT
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
YOUTH AND SPORTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD

This monograph focuses on academic discourse and deals with some of its conspicuous characteristics. Although a variety of particular topics are addressed, including style, genres, themes, citations, metadiscourse, paragraphs, titles, and keywords, the monograph is largely centred on three fundamental areas of academic textuality, namely intertextuality, coherence, and informativity. In this book, all these standards meet in the Global Theme, which is grasped here uniquely as a cluster of relevant features – embodied by the titles, lists of keywords and their in-text use, and further developed and elaborated through diverse academic subgenres, through paragraph themes and enhanced by a suitable choice of relevant citations and their appropriate integration. This way the volume strives to address some of the most crucial notions constituting academic discourse. Interestingly, keywords have so far received only marginal attention in linguistics.

This monograph focuses on written academic discourse exclusively and is firmly established on the investigation of authentic data. The specialized corpora upon which the findings are based feature the discourse of the humanities. Special attention is paid to what I believed I was qualified enough to scrutinize, viz. linguistics discourse. Chapter Two adopts a cross-disciplinary approach, displaying the differences between linguistic and literary discourse. In addition, the first two chapters compare the practices pursued by native and non-native academic writers. The volume explores several academic genres (monographs, diploma projects, empirical research articles and their subgenres) to find out various register- or genre-specific features.

This monograph investigates authentic academic data, employing a range of relevant theories, and thus indirectly verifying their viability. All the chapters present quantitative as well as qualitative analyses of data, striving to achieve an appropriate balance between these two considerations and to interpret the findings functionally.

From the epistemological viewpoint, all of the studies involved in this monograph are rooted in the Prague functionalist tradition, naturally enriched by world linguistics of the recent decades. The monograph profiles stylistic, text linguistic and discourse analyses, even if occasionally other disciplinary methods and perspectives are

adopted, including semantic, pragmatic and sociolinguistic ones. As a result, academic discourse is investigated in view of its selected lexico-semantic, syntactic, textual or discourse patternings and stylistic features, which are treated in their mutual interaction, forming clusters that ultimately point to the Global Theme.

Apart from the focus put on academic register, one of the recurrent topics especially in the second part of the monograph is the Theory of Functional Sentence Perspective (even if the area of research has received more treatments and labels). Indeed, many of the studies collected in this volume are the author's modest contribution to the research into one of the traditional domains of Czech linguistics – the theory of FSP, as developed by Mathesius and elaborated on by numerous linguists, including Jan Firbas, Libuše Dušková, František Daneš, Eva Hajičová, Martin Adam, Jana Chamonikolasová, and many others. Particular attention is paid to the notion of theme, its aspects and the hierarchy of its types. The monograph features studies investigating FSP parameters in academic structures of various complexities, ranging from phrases, via clauses/sentences all the way to paragraphs and entire texts.

There are two types of studies in the monograph. Five (relatively) recent papers were recontextualized from earlier publications issued over the past nine years, both in the Czech Republic and abroad, while the last one is very new and is being published for the first time. No major interventions have been made into the first two studies, apart from formally-unifying editorial ones. However, in hindsight, I am aware that in the future it would be rewarding to explore these topics further. For example, it would be worthwhile to explore also patterns of use adopted by native novices in their academic discourse, to investigate diverse degrees of dialogicality in various constructions interweaving citations or to examine various semantic groups of reporting verbs which point to the stages of the research process (e.g., analyzing, classifying, describing, etc.). Chapter Three has been developed and upgraded in various respects, especially in view of the discourse functions of clause titles and with regard to the multi-layered notion of context. Chapter Four has been modified in a number of particular aspects, and its impact has been enhanced owing to the elaboration of the existing FSP research of the noun phrase and particularly thanks to richer conclusions. Although an abridged and preliminary version of Chapter Five has recently been published by a journal, the present version offers its substantial elaboration. Moreover, among others, in all the studies different understandings of the notion of theme have been consistently distinguished graphically. It should be noted that keyword sets have been retained in chapters, as they rank among the topics researched in this work.

Hence, the monograph comprises six chapters arranged both thematically and chronologically to form two parts. In the first part centred on intertextuality, I initially look at various structures interweaving citations in the current unfolding discourse. Not only do these forms ensure proper referencing to the source texts, but they also provide the recipient with subtle clues regarding the degree of integration and faithful representation of the original message. The findings compare the usage of native and non-native writers on the one hand and of professional and novice discourse on the other.

The second study of the first part is also concerned with the structures representing other discourses, and aims to uncover prominent tendencies and conventions in establishing intertextuality links in literary and linguistic discourse. To that end, a number of parameters are investigated, including the practices pursued by native and non-native producers, together with the possible impact of academic culture, or else the distinct patternings characterizing professional and novice discourse. Particular attention is paid to the verb featured in diverse constructions reporting discourse.

In the second part of the monograph, attention is turned to coherence and informativity in academic discourse, as epitomized by the Global Theme and its the individual aspects. In Chapter Three, focusing on academic titles and keyword sets, I examine both the similarities and differences between these two encodings of the Global Theme. I observe their largely nominal character, reveal their contrastive syntactic and FSP characteristics and compare their distinct functions.

Chapter Four in this part is designed to explore in-text use of keywords. I strive to verify their thematic status and to uncover diverse patterns of keyword use across the individual subgenres of Research Articles. To achieve this objective, I designed an original method and investigate the role of keyword tokens simultaneously at several levels of the FSP hierarchy.

The last two twinned studies share their corpus and in fact complement each other. Chapter Five explores paragraphing tendencies in academic discourse, while Chapter Six examines the role of keywords in facilitating paragraph thematic coherence. Chapter Five aims to identify prominent paragraphing patterns in academic discourse and their transformations across Research Articles. Chapter Six cannot but build on the results yielded from the scrutiny of academic paragraphing in order to investigate the role keywords take in the thematic build-up of paragraphs. The research points to the paradoxical quantitative in-text under-representation of keywords and their crucial role in the conceptual and thematic architecture of academic discourse.

Naturally, the two relatively independent parts of the present monograph are also interconnected as both may be deemed relevant to the explored standards of textuality in some way. Indeed, titles and keywords may be perceived as exponents of the Global Theme of discourse and simultaneously as a means ensuring intertextuality (and interdiscursivity) links to other relevant discourses. Similarly, by representing other discourses and integrating their relevant portions in the unfolding discourse, the author also facilitates the reader's perception of coherence, among others by clearly setting off the diverse voices (Bakhtin), passages or layers of the current discourse, and enhances and enriches the reader's current knowledge. Ultimately, it is even through such intertextuality links that the Global Theme of the discourse is developed.

I hope that this collection of studies will serve the reader's comfort. By gathering the studies in a single volume I intend to allow the studies to interact, to offer a deeper focus, to provide a multifaceted account of the selected areas, and simultaneously to stimulate further discourse with the prospective reader.

I am immensely indebted to both of my reviewers Professor Libuše Dušková and Professor Ludmila Urbanová, for their time, kindness, invaluable comments and sug-

gestions on the final version of this volume. Professor Dušková has been my teacher since my university studies and a true mentor who inspired my linguistic career, has witnessed all of its major steps, offering generously her expertise and has been of unrelenting support. With her life-long interest in discourse and style, Professor Urbanová has stimulated the research into several particular topics featured in the present monograph and she has also been an enthusiastic supporter, constantly encouraging me to complete the volume. Many thanks are also extended to my other inspiring teachers, including Professor Daneš, with his seminal works on thematic progressions and thematic build-up of paragraphs and Professor Hajičová, who helped me appreciate especially various dynamic aspects of unfolding discourse in her treatment of Topic-Focus Articulation. There are numerous other linguists, teachers, colleagues and peer-reviewers, both in this country and abroad, whose invaluable expertise and suggestions helped me arrive at a more faithful and balanced representation of the selected phenomena. My sincere appreciation goes to my dear former colleagues, Mark Farrell and Declan Geaney, for their careful proofreading without which the work would not have reached this form. The errors and deficiencies, of course, are all mine.

I acknowledge with many thanks the permission for reprints granted by the following representatives of publishing institutions, namely Heini Lehtonen on behalf of AFinLA, Ourania Kalogeri on behalf of Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Petr Mareš on behalf of AUC Philologica, Pavel Štichauer and Ondřej Pittauer on behalf of Linguistica Pragensia and Vydavatelství FF UK and Olga Dontcheva-Navrátilová, Renata Jančaříková and Renata Povolná on behalf of *Discourse and Interaction*. Thanks to their permissions, "Interweaving Citations in Academic Discourse by (Non)Native (Non) Professionals", *AFinLA* 6/2014, 99–118, is published with the permission of *AFinLA*; "Reporting Verbs in Native and Non-Native Academic Discourse", *Lexical Issues in L2 Writing* (2015), is published with the permission of *Cambridge Scholars Publishing*; "Encoding the Global Theme in Research Articles: Syntactic and FSP Parameters of Academic Titles and Keyword Sets", *AUC Philologica* 1/2017, 91–113, is published with the permission of *AUC Philologica*; and "Constructing the Global from the Local: On the FSP Status of Keywords in Academic Discourse", *Linguistica Pragensia* 29/2, 2019, 192–212, is published with the permission of Linguistica Pragensia and "What is in the Paragraphs of Various Sections of Research Articles?", *Discourse and Interaction* 16(2), 2023, 93–117, is published with the permission of *Discourse and Interaction*.

For transparency's sake, here are the author's articles used in this book by chapters:

CHAPTER 1
Pípalová, R. 2014a. "Interweaving Citations in Academic Discourse by (Non)Native (Non)Professionals." *AFinLa-e, Soveltavan kielitieteen tutkimuksia* 6, 99–118. http://ojs.tsv.fi/index.php/afinla/article/view/46283.

CHAPTER 2

Pípalová, R. 2015. "Reporting Verbs in Native and Non-Native Academic Discourse." In *Lexical Issues in L2 Writing*, edited by P. Pietilä, K. Doró, & R. Pípalová. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 127–154.

CHAPTER 3

Pípalová, R. 2017. "Encoding the Global Theme in Research Articles: Syntactic and FSP Parameters of Academic Titles and Keyword Sets." *Acta Universitatis Carolinae, Philologica 1/Prague Studies in English*, 91–113. Revised and elaborated for Karolinum Press.

CHAPTER 4

Pípalová, R. 2019. "Constructing the Global from the Local: On the FSP Status of Keywords in Academic Discourse." *Linguistica Pragensia* 29(2): 192–212. Revised and elaborated for Karolinum Press.

CHAPTER 5

Pípalová, R. 2023. "What is in the Paragraphs of Various Sections of Research Articles?" *Discourse and Interaction* 16(2): 93–117. https://doi.org/10.5817/DI2023-1-93. Revised and elaborated for Karolinum Press.

PART I.
ACADEMIC DISCOURSE
AND INTERTEXTUALITY

CHAPTER ONE.
INTERWEAVING CITATIONS
IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE BY (NON)NATIVE
(NON)PROFESSIONALS

ABSTRACT

This chapter studies manifest intertextuality, namely (free) direct speech in academic discourse. To that end, a corpus was assembled consisting of four samples of professional academic prose written by native speakers, four samples of professional academic prose written by non-native Czech linguists and four samples written by non-native (Czech) undergraduates. The research has two specific foci: initially, attention is given to the discourse parameters of academic citing (i.e., who is quoting whom, from where, what, how frequently, etc.), and later, the research aims at a range of framing structures, interweaving the citations in the current text. The chapter offers a comprehensive analysis of reporting frames and related structures introducing citations in academic writing, examining their range, positions, the subjects featured, the word order, type of verbs, etc. The findings of this chapter, comparing tendencies in native and non-native samples on the one hand, and in professional and novice discourse on the other, may be of use in academic writing courses at universities.

KEYWORDS: academic discourse; reporting frame; citation; EFL

1 INTRODUCTION

In line with most research in English for academic purposes (EAP) (see, e.g., Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993; Hyland, 2000, 2006; etc.), this chapter investigates written academic discourse exclusively. More specifically, it studies its manifest intertextuality

as it is shown in reporting. Reporting (direct speech, reported speech, citing, quoting, represented discourse, etc.; see, e.g., Leech & Short, 1981/2007; Fludernik, 1993; Lipson, 2006; Hoffmannová, 2008; Keizer, 2009; Brendel, Meibauer, & Steinbach, 2011; Johansen, 2011; Pípalová, 2012) constitutes one of the defining characteristics of academic discourse, and serves a number of functions. To name but a few, it displays the writer's concern for interactions with an audience, has a persuasive function, appeals to the community's shared knowledge in order to build firm ground for the writer's line of argumentation, creates a rhetorical niche in research, acknowledges a debt of precedent, invokes the respective epistemological and literacy traditions, facilitates the writer-reader interaction, cements cooperation and disciplinary peer relationships, helps create a dialogic space for the introduction, negotiation and acceptance of claims, etc. (see, e.g., Hyland, 2000).

This chapter focuses solely on manifest intertextuality where the cited text is explicitly present in the sample under analysis and must also be clearly marked graphically, even though it is frequently inseparable from constitutive intertextuality (i.e., configuration of discourse conventions that go into its production, see Fairclough, 1992: 104 cited in Hyland, 2000: 21). According to Hyland (2000: 21),

> explicit reference to prior literature is a substantial indication of a text's dependence on contextual knowledge and thus a vital piece in the collaborative construction of new knowledge between writers and readers. The embedding of arguments in networks of reference not only suggests an appropriate disciplinary orientation, but reminds us that statements are invariably a response to previous statements and are themselves available for further statements of others.

In a single English-language academic study, the author may cite themselves or others, they may refer to one author or to many, once or repeatedly, using a single source or numerous sources, in the original or in translations, they may cite their contemporaries as well as academics from previous generations, scholars coming from diverse language and cultural backgrounds, from various schools and epistemological traditions, using varied codes (e.g., ENL, EFL, or other languages), etc. Thus, academic English is constantly exposed to new incentives and enrichments from a web of local discourses.

This chapter explores manifest intertextuality in linguistic discourse. Actually, linguistics is a rather special field, as authors may cite secondary, as well as primary sources, and from the secondary sources they may quote examples rather than metalinguistic passages. Depending on the topic, in the absence of appropriate research, authors may occasionally cite diverse non-academic sources, e.g., the popular press. Hence, linguistic discourse is a par excellence embodiment of what Bakhtin (1980/1981) calls heteroglossia.

This chapter aims to explore linguistic discourses in view of two non-regional variables: code (native vs. non-native English) and experience (discourse by professionals and novices). The choice of these foci is meant to reflect some of the significant characteristics of the vast, diffuse and constantly changing academic community. Members

of the academia, who as a rule do not know all the members personally (imagined communities), usually establish weak ties. As Mauranen, Hynninen, & Ranta (2010: 11), following Milroy, note, "networks of weak social ties tend to favor linguistic innovation and dialect leveling, in contrast to networks where strong ties dominate." It is due to academic mobility, scholars' participation in global networks of research, etc., that at present English serves as a Lingua Franca (ELF) for world-wide academic interactions and, in quantitative terms, the non-native academic discourse naturally prevails over its native counterpart. Indeed, academia has been dominated by non-native performance, which may explain the striking attention recently given to ELF (e.g., Mauranen *et al.*, 2010; Björkman, 2011; Ferenčík, 2012; Povolná & Dontcheva-Navrátilová, 2012). As a rule, ELF arises in multilingual communities. According to Mauranen *et al.* (2010: 11), "this is very clear in universities: the matrix culture is frequently one where English has no major status, and speakers invariably possess other language resources." It should be recalled that citation is an integral part of the intended reader's expectations and is indispensable in particular sections of academic discourse. Therefore, familiarity with its techniques has become a firm element of novice socialization into the academic discourse community and is given thorough attention in diverse style manuals.

2 DATA

The research corpus was composed of twelve relatively recent academic samples (all published within the last fifteen years). There were four monographs written by native speakers of British English who were also professional linguists (English Professional Subcorpus, hereinafter **EPS**); there were four monographs by non-native speakers, i.e., Czech professional Anglicists (Czech Professional Subcorpus, hereinafter **CPS**); last of all, there were also four final projects produced by non-native undergraduates (Czech students, Anglicists) in their final years of study (Czech Novice (Undergraduate) Subcorpus, hereinafter **CNS**). Hence, the non-native subcorpus comprised four samples by renowned linguists of different generations, and four samples by students, novices to the academic community, the diploma thesis being their very first attempt at an academic study. A complete overview of the subcorpora samples is provided at the end of this chapter. Since the sources in the corpus differed in the frequency of the phenomenon in question, to ensure comparability of data, I extracted the first 25 specimens from each. Thus, the corpus was composed of 300 excerpts altogether, each of the three subcorpora comprising 100 specimens. Naturally, the size of the corpus cannot but provide preliminary insight, which should be tested further.

As to the criteria, to count as a specimen, the citation itself had to be at least one sentence in length, syntactically self-contained and sufficient, whether or not the first letter was capitalized. Hence, the quoted passage had to be syntactically complete, featuring a capital or lower-case letter at the beginning and a terminating stop in the

end, or possibly several stops at the beginning and/or in the end to suggest deliberate ellipsis. The boundary was marked graphically (by single or double quotes, by distinct fonts, or else by a set-off paragraph). Last but not least, the Reporting Clause or a similar, immediately preceding structure clearly suggested the source, creating an explicit intertextuality link to another discourse. Occasionally, though, such a structure was missing and was compensated for only by the bracketed cross-reference to the source, or to the footnotes or endnotes giving such information. That said, however, the source also had to be listed in the bibliography or references section of the citing sample. Hence, my specimens complied with what Leech & Short (1981/2007) call Direct Speech or Free Direct Speech, disregarding other structures suggesting intertextuality (e.g., Mixed Citations or Indirect Speech passages).

3 FINDINGS

The research was done in two steps. Initially, attention was given to some of the prominent discourse parameters of citations, such as who is citing whom, what is cited, from which source or genre, which medium and channel are employed, how frequently, etc. (3.1). Later on, attention was shifted away from the citation to the stretch introducing it, as the chapter examines the ways the authors employ to integrate citations in their texts (3.2, 3.3).

3.1 CONSPICUOUS DISCOURSE PARAMETERS OF CITATIONS

In their quotes drawn from secondary literature, the professionals cited their peers, while the novices cited renowned members of academia. It follows that the social distance between the undergraduates and cited experts was rather maximal. Surprisingly, self-citations were not detected in the corpus at all. Since most authors cited directly from sources, mediated citation turned out to be very rare. Nevertheless, it was detected in all the subcorpora, with somewhat higher incidence in the novices' data.

The number of authors quoted per sample or per subcorpus varied, and the same holds for the number of cited sources. There were samples with a striking cited-author turnover, and samples focusing on some authors and/or titles. On average, each author appeared twice per sample and was represented by one source. However, striking differences surfaced. Only to mention two extremes, one sample in the CNS quoted five authors and sources. Conversely, in the EPS, a sample referred to nineteen distinct authors and sources.

Nearly all the corpus citations were formulated in English, the majority coming from speakers of ENL (79%). Only a small proportion was phrased by speakers of EFL (20%). As regards citations obtained chiefly in the non-native subcorpora, over