Mediating Specialized Knowledge and L2 Abilities

New Research in Spanish/English Bilingual Models and Beyond

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Navigating Corpora for Self-Directed LSP Writing: A Comparative Study of Digital Method and Resource Integration in L1 Versus L2 Language Courses

Loredana Bercuci, Ana-Maria Pop, Mădălina Chitez, and Andreea Dincă

Introduction

University students around the world have to write academic texts in order to demonstrate their ability to assimilate imparted knowledge or to enact "knowledge transformation" (Kirk 2017, p. 110). Academic writing is the doorway from and towards the students' cognitive mechanisms of learning and creation of knowledge (Karlen & Compagnoni 2017; Tusting et al., 2019). One of the challenges students face when asked to complete academic writing tasks is linguistic in nature. This is, in turn, influenced by additional factors, such as academic traditions (Pernet-Liu,

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2017) and pedagogical practice (Wingate & Tribble, 2012). At the interface between educational systems and teaching methods comes the second challenge that students encounter in academic writing activities at the university: navigating between academic writing norms in the native language and those of the foreign language (Ene et al., 2019; Kafle, 2020). In the majority of cases, students are left alone in this endeavour since there are few cases of contrastive academic writing courses (Petric, 2005) or, in some national educational systems, no curriculum-embedded academic writing courses for either of the language varieties, that is, L1 or L2 (Chitez et al., 2018).

This chapter further explores the potential of corpus linguistics for self-directed academic writing initiated in previous studies (e.g. Jablonkai & Čebron, 2017) by focusing on a parallel intervention in different language course settings. Given the scarcity of comparative analyses assessing the impact corpus consultation has on the students' academic writing in L1 versus L2, we decided to replicate a pedagogical intervention approach tested initially during courses of English for Specific Academic Purposes (EAP) (Bercuci & Chitez, 2019; Chitez & Bercuci 2019, 2020) for the native-language courses (Romanian). Our study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Does the use of linguistic corpora impact the students' academic writing in a different way when they write in their mother tongue (i.e. Romanian) compared to a foreign language (i.e. EAP)?
2. How do students evaluate the usefulness of linguistic corpora for the improvement of their academic writing in their mother tongue (i.e. Romanian) compared to a foreign language (i.e. EAP)?

Method

Teaching Context

The teaching intervention was carried out in two linguistic contexts: (a) a compulsory EAP course for undergraduate students of Geography and (b) a compulsory course of Romanian language for undergraduate