

Moreno, A. I. & Suárez, L. (2011). Academic book reviews of literature in English and Spanish: writers' visibility and invisibility strategies for expressing critical comments, in Françoise Salager-Meyer and Beverly A. Lewin (eds). *Crossed Words: Criticism in the Academy: Criticism in the Academy*, pp. 225-256. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang.

Abstract

ANA I. MORENO AND LORENA SUÁREZ

Academic book reviews of literature in English and Spanish: writers' visibility and invisibility strategies for expressing critical comments

One important academic writing skill is the ability of writers to construe an appropriate representation of themselves and their work through their textual voice. One way in which writers achieve this is by intruding into their text in order to explicitly signal or conceal their personal responsibility for the ideas referenced in it. However, writers' decisions in this respect have shown to be highly problematic in English for Academic Purposes (EAP), especially for non-native English speakers. Our paper hypothesizes that a part of this problem might be related to differing crosscultural notions of *good face*, partly reflected in the ways and the extent to which writers typically intrude into their texts by means of writers' visibility and invisibility strategies. We explore this hypothesis by comparing the actual practices followed by writers from two different writing cultures to express one specific type of claim (a critical comment on a book under review) in one specific genre (an academic book review) and one disciplinary field (literature). Our comparison is based on two corpora consisting of 20 texts in British & American English and 20 in Castilian Spanish. The results show that reviewers from these two writing cultures differ greatly in their preferences for reaffirming or suppressing their personal identity when expressing critical comments on a book under review. This indicates that the notion of *good face* is culturally determined in this respect. We discuss our results in the light of information obtained through a pilot e-mail interview with relevant informants.