



**2nd International PRISEAL Conference:
Publishing and Presenting Research Internationally:
Issues for Speakers of English as an Additional Language**

**Occupying niches: Interculturality, cross-culturality
and aculturality in academic research**

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Identifying Spanish researchers' needs for training in English for Research Publication Purposes: Methodological aspects of a large-scale online survey

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Introduction to Phase 1 of the ENEIDA project

In recent decades, there has been a growing move towards publication in English-medium journals among multilingual researchers and a growing demand for materials (Swales and Feak, 2004) and courses in skills relevant to publishing in English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP) (Moreno 2011). Research into academic writing has also flourished world-wide (Swales 2004), with crosscultural and intercultural studies of academic discourse across various languages and English being an area of increasing interest (Moreno 2010). Despite this, little is known about the training needs vis-à-vis ERPP of writers for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL) and how teaching resources might best address them (Swales 2002).

The present project focusses on a neglected population of EAL writers, Spanish researchers, and advocates for a critical pragmatic approach that addresses access and difference simultaneously. Thus the project highlights the importance of giving priority to those aspects of ERPP writing with which specific groups of Spanish researchers tend to have difficulties when communicating with an international audience (the intercultural perspective). Additionally, based on revealing results from Spanish-English crosscultural studies of academic discourse, the project seeks to explain some of Spanish researchers' writing problems by virtue of the contrastive rhetoric hypothesis, according to which writers from different cultural and language backgrounds have distinct preferences for articulating messages with share a similar purpose (the crosscultural perspective). It is believed that raising Spanish researchers' awareness of crosscultural differences in ERPP writing related to audience types (national/local versus international) will help them to produce more successful texts in the eyes of English-medium journal gatekeepers.

Convinced that this type of research would benefit from interdisciplinary collaborations, the ENEIDA (Spanish team for Intercultural Studies of Academic Discourse) research group was officially set up in 2010. It consists of researchers with background and expertise in supplementary research fields from one Spanish research-only institution (the CSIC), four Spanish universities (Universidad de León, Universidad de La Laguna, Universitat Jaume I and Universidad de Zaragoza) and three foreign universities (The University of London, The University of Michigan and the Open University). The first phase of the ENEIDA project on "Rhetorical Strategies to Get Published in International Journals from a Spanish-English Intercultural Perspective (I)" (Ref.: FFI2009-08336) sets out to collect relevant data to investigate Spanish researchers' writing difficulties publishing in English-medium international journals and carry out needs analyses of homogeneous groups of researchers vis-à-vis training in ERPP by means of a large-scale confidential online survey.

Abstract

This paper mainly aims to report on the survey method employed in Phase 1 of the project to fulfil the following aims: a) locating those researchers at the five institutions participating in the project who might be interested in receiving ERPP training and in collaborating in subsequent phases of the project; b) identifying their specific needs vis-à-vis ERPP; and c) providing a context for future studies of Spanish-English intercultural rhetoric for research publication purposes. The paper also offers an overall characterisation of the informants to our survey, discusses some of the results to assess the relevance and viability of further phases of the project, and evaluates the database thus created.

24 researchers were first interviewed in-depth from one research-only institution and two universities. Interview responses were then used to design a structured questionnaire comprising thirty-seven questions related to both English and Spanish for research publication purposes. The questionnaire was piloted with 200 researchers selected from the total population of staff with doctorates (8,794) at the three institutions mentioned above, plus another two universities. The questionnaire was then sent out to the total population, yielding responses from 1717 researchers, which are kept in the ENEIDA Database.

The findings suggest high levels of interest in ERPP amongst participants in that not only were 64% of respondents interested in future ERPP training, but also in that 96% of them were willing to receive information about how to participate in subsequent phases of the project. It is hoped that the information contained in the ENEIDA Database will allow us to: a) carry out precise needs analyses of specific groups of informants (e.g. according to specific disciplines); b) carry out in-depth studies of how relevant factors affect writing for research publication purposes of Spanish researchers, and c) design multiple case studies of their difficulties writing for research publication purposes grounded in sound research.

1. Paper 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 assess the relevance and viability of further phases of the project by answering some preliminary questions.

1. Preliminary questions to assess the relevance and viability of the project

1. To what extent Spanish researchers need training in ERPP by contrast to Spanish for similar purposes. In which knowledge/disciplinary areas is their need greatest?
2. How many of these researchers would benefit from an awareness of the typical difficulties Spanish researchers encounter in the process of publication?
3. How many of them would benefit from an awareness of the crosscultural differences and similarities between writing for research publication purposes in English- and in Spanish-medium journals?
4. How many of them would be willing to collaborate in further phases of the project?

2. Literature review

- We reviewed the literature in relation to:
 - needs analysis for EAP teaching-learning
 - factors that might affect writing for research publication purposes
 - Motivations, attitudes, feelings, writing strategies, writing difficulties for publication purposes, editorial processes, levels of proficiency, L1 transfer
 - questions asked in previous questionnaires on related topics
 - academic genres for research publication purposes
 - crosscultural studies of academic discourse
 - Intercultural studies of academic discourse
 - existing pedagogical materials
 - survey research methods
 - interviews methodology
- Aims clarified, but huge amount of questions

3.1. Population definition

- We decided to target postdoctoral researchers (*Spanish researchers* henceforth) to control for “lack of qualifications as a researcher” (Swales 2004).
- In April, 2010, we applied for the e-mail and ordinary mail addresses of all the staff with doctorates affiliated to the five institutions.
- Obstacles to obtain e-mail addresses.
- Raw population:
 - 8794 (valid e-mail and postal addresses of members of) staff with doctorates

3.2. Population distribution

Institution	Population of staff with doctorates at the five institutions participating in the project	%
Research-only institution	3919	44.6
University 1	637	7.2
University 2	677	7.7
University 3	1293	14.7
University 4	2268	25.8
Total	8794	100

4. Methods: In-depth interviews

- **Procedure of implementation:**
 - 24 face-to-face interviews at three of the institutions participating in the project (eight interviews in each institution) (April-May, 2010)
 - a cross-section of researchers in terms of gender, publication experience in English and knowledge areas
 - for an average of one and a half hours
 - on the same set of questions and answers with a certain degree of flexibility
 - each question was asked open-endedly and then formulated in closed format

4. Methods: In-depth interviews

- **Method of analysis:**

- content analysis of their recorded responses

- **Conclusions:**

- need for training in ERPP confirmed; need for training in Spanish for RPP suggested in some cases
- our linguistics jargon would need to be slightly adapted
- contradictions with some of the issues discussed in the literature
- importance of surveying postdoctoral researchers and of distinguishing between scientific fields, publication experience and proficiency in English
- structure of the survey clarified
- number of questions reduced to 37
- a close-ended questionnaire would be designed
- some issues would be best explored by ethnographically-oriented methods
- UNESCO codes sufficiently good for informants to self-classify
- difficulty compiling comparable corpora in some fields
- willingness to collaborate providing text histories

4. Methods: Survey tools

- **A 37-question structured questionnaire divided into six thematic sections:**
 - 1) Personal and professional information (academic and language background)
 - 2) Competence in the use of Spanish and English
 - 3) Language choices for research publication purposes (English- and Spanish-medium journals suitable for publication, motivations, attitudes and feelings)
 - 4) Experience with publishing research articles
 - 5) Current strategies for writing for publication in scientific journals in English
 - 6) Past and future training in writing research articles in Spanish and in English

4. Methods: Survey tools

- **The online questionnaire**
 - Converted into online format by the Limesurvey application
 - Hosted on a CSIC server
 - Accessible clicking a link and entering a password
 - Allowed us to filter out researchers that did not meet certain criteria
 - Allowed informants to skip irrelevant questions
- **The covering letter**
 - Explained who we were and the aims of the project
 - Asked for collaboration to fill in the questionnaire (30 min.)
 - Provided the link to the questionnaire and a password

4. Methods: Procedures for validating and implementing the survey

- **Experts validation**

- The online questionnaire was completed and comments made by expert informants:
 - some of our interviewees and
 - Phase 1 research group members
- Their comments and answers were analysed
- The questionnaire and the covering letter were revised
- The tools were presented to the team at a team meeting and approved of after
 - revision of text mistakes
 - reformulations of some items on sensitive issues

4. Methods: Procedures for validating and implementing the survey

- **Validation with a pilot sample** of 200 informants (2.3%)
 - 24 September 10: informants contacted by covering letter:
 - 100, by e-mail
 - 100, by ordinary mail (link to the questionnaire by e-mail on 5th October)
 - 1st October 10: reminder sent by e-mail to the e-mail sample
 - 13th October 10: reminder to the ordinary mail sample
 - 20th October 10: The pilot online questionnaire was closed
 - Responses and comments from the sample informants were analysed
 - The advantages and disadvantages of the two administration procedures used were weighed.

4. Methods: Procedures for validating and implementing the survey

- **Conclusions** from validation with pilot sample:
 - We revised the design of a question difficult to answer, typographical issues, inconsistencies, automatic comments to explain why some informants were being excluded and some instructions for users were added.
 - The UNESCO code application and the skips and filters seemed to work well.
 - The covering letter seemed appropriate and access to the online application worked well.
 - No statistical differences in the response rate obtained between contacting informants by e-mail or by ordinary mail.
 - The questionnaire had been attempted by 29% of the pilot sample but only 15% finalised it.
 - The rate of potential collaborators seemed low to us (21.5% of those who answered).
 - Yet we decided not to make the questionnaire shorter, since a more thorough analysis was preferred over a larger response rate.
 - We would do two reminders to increase the response rate and change the text of the subject in the e-mail message to make it more appealing.

4. Methods: Procedures for validating and implementing the survey

- **Survey implementation procedure:**
 - 2nd November 2010: the final test of online questionnaire was done.
 - 3rd November: The questionnaire was launched by e-mail message.
 - Subject of e-mail message: Publication experiences in scientific journals: request for collaboration in research project survey.
 - Server collapsed when 800 researchers tried to respond simultaneously. Questionnaire was migrated to a more powerful server.
 - 8th November: letter announcing solution sent to the 600 informants that had not been able to complete the questionnaire.
 - Follow-up messages: on technical problems accessing the questionnaire, queries about reasons for filtering out some informants (a few initial complaints), positive comments and congratulations.
 - A more complete automatic message was elaborated to explain why some informants were being excluded.
 - 22nd November and 30th November: 1st and 2nd reminders.
 - 10th(15th) December 10: the questionnaire was closed.
 - Subject: Publication experiences in scientific journals: end of survey.

4. Method: participants

From the raw population to our target sample

Staff with doctorates	8,794	100 %
Of whom completed the questionnaire	1,717	19.5%
Of whom have Castilian Spanish as L1	1,565	91.1%
Of whom have received their secondary and pre-doctoral education and training in Spain	1,502	96%
Of whom have received their secondary and pre-doctoral education and training in Spanish	1506	96.2%
Target sample	1,454	84.7%

4. Method: participants

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

4. Method: participants

		Age	N. of postdoctoral years
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

4. Method: participants

Academic status	n	%
Profesor Titular de Universidad	342	23.5%
Científico Titular CSIC	334	23.0%
Investigador Científico CSIC	225	15.5%
Investigador Doctor Contratado	139	9.6%
Profesor de Investigación CSIC	135	9.3%
Catedrático de Universidad	98	6.7%
Profesor Contratado Doctor	66	4.5%
Profesor Ayudante Doctor	35	2.4%
Profesor Asociado	29	2.0%
Other	51	3.5%
Subtotal	1454	100,0%

4. Method: participants

UNESCO CODES	DISTRIBUTION BY DISCIPLINARY AREAS	(N = 1454)	%
24	LIFE SCIENCES	399	27.4%
33	TECHNOLOGICAL SCIENCES	292	20.1%
23	CHEMISTRY	231	15.9%
22	PHYSICS	177	12.2%
31	AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES	154	10.6%
25	EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCES	121	8.3%
55	HISTORY	93	6.4%
32	MEDICAL SCIENCES	84	5.8%
53	ECONOMICS	74	5.1%
12	MATHEMATICS	69	4.7%
57	LINGUISTICS	50	3.4%
61	PSYCHOLOGY	50	3.4%
58	PEDAGOGY	38	2.6%
62	ARTS AND HUMANITIES	35	2.4%
56	LAW	34	2.3%
21	ASTRONOMY AND ASTROPHYSICS	27	1.9%
63	SOCIOLOGY	23	1.6%
54	GEOGRAPHY	20	1.4%
59	POLITICAL SCIENCES	20	1.4%
72	PHILOSOPHY	10	0.7%
51	ANTHROPOLOGY	6	0.4%
52	DEMOGRAPHY	6	0.4%
11	LOGICS	4	0.3%
71	ETHICS	2	0.1%
99	UNCLASSIFIED	2	0.1%
	TOTAL	1454	100%

4. Method: Other variables in the *ENEIDA Database*

- Self-reported level of proficiency in the use of Spanish and English for listening/speaking/interacting verbally/reading/writing for general and for specific purposes.
- Self-reported level of publication experience by number of articles published as corresponding authors over the last ten years and experience as peer reviewers.
- The scientific journals that informants regard as most suitable for the publication of their research in Spanish and in English.

4. Method: Other variables in the *ENEIDA Database*

- Motivations towards the publication of research articles in academic 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 academic 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.

5. Results: To what extent Spanish researchers need training in writing RAs in English for research publication purposes by contrast to Spanish?

Plan training in the writing of RAs	English		Spanish	
	N	%	N	%
Yes + Perhaps	956 _a	67.3%	348 _b	24.5%
No	388 _a	27.3%	982 _b	69.2%
I don't know	76 _a	5.4%	90 _a	6.3%
Total	1420	100.0%	1420	100.0%

5. Results: To what extent Spanish researchers need training in writing RAs just in English for publication purposes by contrast to just in Spanish or in both languages?

Plan training (just) in ...	N	%
English for research publication purposes	627	64.3
Spanish for research publication purposes	19	1.9
Both English and Spanish for RPPs	329	33.7
Total	975	100

5. Results: How many of these researchers would benefit from an awareness of the typical difficulties Spanish researchers encounter in the process of publication?

Training should familiarize them with the problems Spanish authors typically have when writing RAs	N	%	Total
English	536	56.1	956
Spanish	123	35.3	348

5. Results: How many of them would benefit from an awareness of the crosscultural differences and similarities between writing for research publication purposes in journals in Spanish and English?

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

Training should help them understand the differences and similarities between writing RAs for Spanish and international journals	English (Mean)	Spanish (Mean)
	3.04_a	3.43_b
Number of respondents	956	348

5. Results: In which knowledge areas their need for training and their willingness to collaborate in further phases of the project is greatest?

NEED TRAINING: (yes + perhaps)	JUST IN ENGLISH		IN BOTH LANGUAGES		IN ENGLISH ANYWAY		WILLING TO COLLABORATE	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Natural & Exact Sciences	379	60.4	129	39.2	508	53.1	386	76.0
Technological Sciences	108	17.2	92	28.0	200	20.9	160	80.0
Social Sciences	82	13.1	53	16.1	135	14.1	95	70.4
Arts & Humanities	44	7.0	45	13.7	89	9.3	73	82.0
Unclassified	14	2.2	10	3.0	24	2.5	22	91.7
TOTAL	627	100.0	329	100.0	956	100.0	736	77.0

5. Results: In which disciplinary areas their need for training and their willingness to collaborate in further phases of the project is greatest?

Q1. Do you plan to continue your training in the writing of RA so as to send them to scientific journals in Spanish? And in English? Closing Question. Are you interested in receiving information about how to collaborate in this project?				
UNESCO CODES	Disciplinary areas	Q.31 Those who need training in English	Closing Question Those who are interested in collaborating	% of potential collaborators
24	LIFE SCIENCES	255	199	78.0%
33	TECHNOLOGICAL SCIENCES	188	154	81.9%
23	CHEMISTRY	149	119	79.9%
31	AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES	103	80	77.7%
22	PHYSICS	101	71	70.3%
25	EARTH AND SPACE SCIENCES	73	59	80.8%
55	HISTORY	68	59	86.8%
32	MEDICAL SCIENCES	61	46	75.4%
53	ECONOMICS	55	41	74.5%
12	MATHEMATICS	52	36	69.2%
61	PSYCHOLOGY	41	32	78.0%
57	LINGUISTICS	34	26	76.5%
58	PEDAGOGY	30	25	83.3%
62	ARTS AND HUMANITIES	26	20	76.9%
56	LAW	24	20	83.3%
63	SOCIOLOGY	16	12	75.0%
59	POLITICAL SCIENCE	14	10	71.4%
54	GEOGRAPHY	13	6	46.2%
21	ASTRONOMY AND ASTROPHYSICS	12	9	75.0%
72	PHILOSOPHY	9	6	66.7%
51	ANTHROPOLOGY	5	3	60.0%
52	DEMOGRAPHY	4	4	100.0%
11	LOGICS	3	3	100.0%
71	ETHICS	2	0	0.0%
TOTAL		956*	919*	96.1%

6. Main conclusions

- High levels of interest amongst participants
 - in future ERPP training, the natural and exact sciences being in the greatest need
 - in receiving information about how to participate in subsequent phases of the ENEIDA project
- Most Spanish postdoctoral researchers (56.1%) would benefit from a teaching approach that familiarizes them with the problems Spanish authors typically have when writing RAs in English
- Spanish postdoctoral researchers consider that some of their training should help them understand the differences and similarities between writing RAs for Spanish and international journals

6. Conclusions about the *ENEIDA* database

- One of the few surveys that
 - tackles the issues of perceived difficulties of EAL researchers in writing for research publication purposes and perceived disadvantage (after Flowerdew, 1999, Burgess and Fagan, 2006, and Ferguson et al. 2011)
 - approaches these issues from a comparative perspective (after Hanouer and Englander, 2011), but is much more ambitious in terms of the number of issues explored
- Its comparative design and consideration of a greater number of influencing factors will allow for more reliable and greater number of studies on the factors affecting Spanish researchers' experiences and difficulties writing for research publication purposes in English-medium journals.

6. Conclusions about the *ENEIDA* database

- Various times larger in number of respondents than these previous more focussed surveys
- Created by means of a rigorous survey procedure based on preliminary interviews and piloting of the questionnaire before administration to the entire population
- Shares the limitations of all confidential surveys
- The way in which some of the questions have been asked may not be adequate for studies with different aims.

6. Conclusions about the *ENEIDA* database

- We hope that this database will serve to:
 - carry out analyses of the specific training needs vis-à-vis ERPP of homogenous groups of researchers in certain disciplinary areas (ENEIDA, In process).
 - carry out in-depth analyses of how specific factors affect writing for research publication purposes of Spanish postdoctoral researchers, e.g.:
 - Moreno et al. (2012). Spanish researchers' perceived difficulty writing research articles for English-medium journals: the impact of proficiency in English versus publication experience. *IBERICA*, Forthcoming.
 - inform the design of multiple-case studies of Spanish researchers' difficulties writing for research publication purposes, e.g.: Moreno et al. (In process).

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This paper may be cited as:

Moreno, A.I., Rey-Rocha, J., Burgess, S., López-Navarro, I. & I. Sachdev (2011). Identifying Spanish researchers' needs for training in English for Research Publication Purposes: Methodological aspects of a large-scale online survey. URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/10612/1823> [25/07/2012]