REVIEWS

Pípalová, R. (2024) *Investigating Aspects of Academic Discourse.* **Prague: Charles University, Karolinum Press. 174 pp.**

Renata Pípalová has been one of the leading Czech researchers in text and discourse analysis and in English academic discourse for almost three decades. Study of the linguistic conventions and structure of the representative research genres has had a long tradition in Czech functional linguistics, and Pípalová builds upon the work of her predecessors as well as contemporaries, many of whom were her teachers, mentors and inspirers. She shares a linguistic interest in academic textuality with Olga Dontcheva-Navratilova, Světla Čmejrková and other current researchers, but this tradition goes back to Vilém Mathesius. A linguistic approach that she repeatedly applies in her analysis of research articles (RAs) and abstracts is the Theory of Functional Sentence Perspective (FSP), rooted in the works of Vilém Mathesius and Jan Firbas and developed by their disciples and successors, such as František Daneš, Libuše Dušková, Eva Hajičová, Aleš Svoboda and Martin Adam.

The book *Investigating Aspects of Academic Discourse* is designed as a collection of several Pípalová's studies published between 2014 and 2023, addressing basically the phenomena of intertextuality, coherence and informativity in English-language written academic discourse. The author's intention is to show that various aspects of academic discourse are interdependent and their interaction in one volume can enhance readers' understanding of academic discursive practices.

The first part of the collection (Part I) is devoted to academic discourse and textuality.

The important features characterising the content and functions of an academic text, including the title, keywords, themes of paragraphs, citations scattered throughout the text and the interplay of all of these, are subsumed into the Global Theme. The shared theme of the first two chapters (forming Part I) are citations in academic texts. The studies trace differences in two respects: in the linguistic practices of native vs non-native authors writing in English, and in those of experienced (professional) vs novice writers.

Chapter 1 ("Interweaving citations in academic discourse by (non)native (non)professionals") represents a convenient introduction to the whole book by

focusing on different aspects of intertextuality in RAs, as manifested by direct citations. Pípalová contrasts small sets of articles divided into three categories: written by native English writers, non-native professional Czech writers (linguists) and their non-native novice (Czech) counterparts (undergraduate students). The findings involve many aspects of citation practice; for instance, majority of quotations coming from native sources, a bigger density of citations in the novice non-native group, a strong affiliation with the local (non-native) linguistic community in the Czech sample and a clear prevalence of peer citation over reference to non-peers. The verbal framing structures are clearly preferred in the initial position, underlining thus the thematic position of reporting frames. A variety of framing structures have been identified, of which reporting clauses form less than a half in all three subcorpora, followed by content anticipators (less common in the non-native novice subcorpus) and stance adverbials (overrepresented in the professional native texts).

After contrasting RAs on the basis of the origin and academic experience of writers, an additional criterion of comparison comes into play in Chapter 2 ("Reporting verbs in native and non-native academic discourse"), namely the difference between literary and linguistic discourse. Intertextuality is studied on articles divided according to the identical criteria as in Chapter 1, namely into native professional, non-native professional and non-native novice subcorpora, each being further divided into linguistic and literary subcorpora. Examination of reference to secondary sources informs the reader about respective tendencies in the use of direct and indirect speech in citations, as well as about various types of reporting verbs, and even about the differences between reporting practices of male and female writers. Influence of a different academic culture must be included among the factors too.

The findings of this multifaceted study of explicit intertextuality are very complex, revealing numerous significant tendencies. Pípalová has identified e.g. a higher rate of direct speech (DSp) in the Czech professional subcorpus, which is exactly the reverse of the Czech novice subcorpus with clear prevalence of indirect speech (ISp). Reporting frames including verbs (while ignoring verbless ones) with both direct and indirect speech were divided into four types, depending on whether they are formed by a reporting clause followed by DSp, a matrix clause in ISp and stance adverbials (formed by finite clauses), followed by DSp or ISp. The dominant type in L1 and L2 texts alike are matrix clauses, but a different picture appears using the disciplinary criterion, where the frame structures seem to be more equally represented in the obviously more open register of literature than in that of linguistics, governed by focus on the content.

The classification of reporting verbs by frequency (top frequency, medium-frequency and infrequent verbs) demonstrates different choices made by L1 vs L2, professional vs novice, male vs female authors, as well as by linguists vs literary scholars. Czech professionals and male authors display a lower propensity for top-frequency verbs (such as *argue*, *say* and *claim*) than L2 novices and females, respectively. On the other hand, medium-frequency and infrequent verbs are favoured by Czech professionals and by male authors. Verbs in all categories were clearly followed by indirect speech in Pípalová's corpora. The semantic analysis employs Hyland's division of acts realised by reporting verbs into Research Acts (Ra), Cognition Acts (Ca) and Discourse Acts (Da), with Da verbs strongly dominant among top-frequency verbs, Da verbs among medium-frequency ones, and Ca verbs among infrequent verbs, with a more equal ratio of the types, though. Da verbs account for over 70 per cent of reporting verbs in L2 novice linguistic discourse and in the literary discourse, but for considerably less in L1 and L2 (Czech) professional discourses. Such intricate relationships among the various categories examined in the research make this chapter immensely informative, particularly for teachers and students of academic writing. Despite the complexity of the network of researched categories, the author herself admits that a detailed semantic and functional analysis of reporting verbs remains a topic for possible future research.

The main theme of research studies in Part 2 is achieving coherence and informativity in academic discourse. Chapters 3 and 4 look into academic subgenres through the prism of the Functional Sentence Perspective. Chapter 3 ("Encoding the global theme in research articles: Syntactic and FSP parameters of academic titles and keywords") examines titles and sets of keywords in RAs and their contribution to the Global Theme. Keywords (KWs), rarely subjected to linguistic research before, are very originally analysed also from the pespective of FSP in this study.

RA titles had been studied before Pípalová set out to do her analysis, so she could rely on numerous studies of the syntax of titles (e.g. Haggan 2004, Cianflone 2010) and their composition (e.g. Anthony 2001, Haggan 2004, Jalilifar 2010). In her corpus composed of 300 RA titles (and an equal number of keyword sets) from L1 texts in renowned linguistic journals, Pípalová chose to distinguish between simple and compound (or hanging) titles, and phrase-type vs clause-type components within them. With noun phrases as clearly dominant (85%) among simple titles (slightly prevalent in the whole corpus), the phrase + phrase structure makes up two thirds of compound titles, followed by the phrase + clause type. Pípalová goes even further to identify individual types of constituent phrases and clauses (main, subordinate, finite, non-finite, verbless)

forming RA titles. She pays attention to pre- and postmodification of the NP head, characteristic of the nominal titles.

In line with Svoboda (1987), Firbas (1992) and Dušková (2015), Pípalová explores the FSP roles of the components of NP titles. The modifier has been proved to be the rheme of this distributional field, the head serves as the theme. Similarly, KWs are subjected to a structural and FSP analysis, highlighting their differences from RA titles. Due to their brevity and uniformity, KWs express the top and central layers of the Global Theme, manifest almost exclusive premodification and are based on the rheme-theme pattern, in contrast with longer and syntactically more complex RA titles with the rising communicative dynamism (thus with the rheme placed finally).

As in Chapter 3, Pípalová investigates KWs in Chapter 4 ("Constructing the global from the local: On the FSP status of keywords in academic discourse"), particularly their iteration in texts and their thematic status. She looks into their frequencies and realisations across various sections of RAs, taking into consideration explicit as well as implicit realisations (including pronominal reference). A quantitative analysis of the Broad Corpus (20 authentic RAs) is complemented by a detailed qualitative analysis of two papers in the Narrow Corpus. Building upon Svoboda (1968), Firbas (1992) and Dušková (2015), Pípalová distinguishes the main clause level, subordinate clause level and phrase level of the Communicative Fields represented by KWs for the sake of an FSP analysis. Interesting and original results are yielded by examination of iteration of KWs in parts of RAs, revealing their highest density and range in Introductions, Discussions and Abstracts, the shorter subgenres of RAs, and a very strong correlation to RA titles. The chapter contains numerous tables quantifying the Communicative Field patterns (theme only, mixed, rheme only, and various R-T configurations) carried out by KW clusters across seven sections of RAs. The study of the Narrow Corpus offers often surprising results in terms of correlation between KWs and the most frequent content words, their frequently implicit realisations and distribution across the papers.

Chapter 5 ("Composing paragraphs in three subgenres of academic discourse: a distributional study of paragraph patterning") seeks to uncover the major paragraphing patterns in RAs and how they develop in an unfolding discourse. The examined RA sections, Abstracts, Introductions and Conclusions, are described via the author's own typology drawing from Mathesius' original typology of paragraphs from 1942, developed further by Daneš (1994, 1995) within his theory of thematic progressions. Pípalová thus divides paragraphs into two supratypes (reflecting a Narrow P-theme and a Broad P-theme), the former represented by Stable P-theme or Unfolded P-theme paragraphs, the latter by

Content Frame P-theme and Developing P-theme paragraphs. The Unfolded P-theme paragraphs have inclusive, focusing, split and subsuming subtypes.

Pípalová's examination of the three RA subgenres from her monodisciplinary (linguistics) and monogeneric (RAs) corpus reveals a dominant share of Broad-P paragraphs in all subgenres, particularly significant in Introductions. The Unfolded or Developing patterns often appeared in Abstracts. Generally, the paragraphs in the corpus are characterised by high build-up heterogeneity. The discussion in this chapter is devoted to non-canonical realisations of paragraph patterns, frequent coherence ellipsis due to space constraints, use of deixis, textual and interpersonal metadiscourse, vagueness and thematic indeterminacy.

Unlike the previous five, Chapter 6 is not based on a published study and appears for the first time in this volume. This chapter, titled "Enhancing coherence in academic discourse: on the role of keywords in the thematic construction of paragraphs", draws from the same corpus as Chapter 5, while focusing on the role of KWs in the thematic structure of academic texts. The topic of coherence, realised by the appropriate thematic progression, combines integrally with the themes of intertextuality and interdiscursivity, characteristic of KWs and article titles. Pípalová creatively integrates knowledge and inspiration drawn from her teachers and predecessors, namely Daneš, Firbas and Hajičová in respect of information processing, thematic progression and FSP, and Dušková and Urbanová with regard to the structural and pragmatic properties of the academic discourse.

A debatable property of this study is its very object – linguistic discourse. Pípalová chose it as she feels, naturally, most competent to examine the discourse of her own field of work, and she has done it with admirable expertise, confidence and insight. On the other hand, it would be desirable for such distinguished experts to pay more analytical attention to discourses different from their own, as it would broaden and deepen our understanding of diverse language areas and their discourse practices. However, this minor complaint in no way diminishes the quality of this study, achieved thanks to devotion to one type of discourse, a well-devised methodology, meticulous and multifactorial analysis, and appropriate interpretation of the findings by establishing the possible causes and purposes of the studied linguistic phenomena.

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