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A Contribution to the Intercultural and Interlinguistic Analysis of Interpersonal Metadiscourse Devices in Business Management Research Articles

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1. AIM AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The global use of English has been clearly evidenced in academic literature (see Ferguson, 2005; Ammon, 2000; Cristal, 1997; Gunnarson, 2000; Tardy, 2004). From the several options multilinguals have at their disposal, today's globalized world has positioned English as the lingua franca for intercultural communication (Hülmbauer et al. 2008). Moreover, English has become the global language of academia and international community, a group that keeps growing to the point where most of the non-native speakers outnumber speakers from an Anglophone context (Mauranen, 2010; Hülmbauer et al. 2008). That is why, the academic use of English must be dissociated from the cultural or national norms natives employ it, in order to understand nowadays English use as a lingua franca, especially when it is employed for academic and professional areas (Mauranen, 2010; Tardy, 2004, Hülmbauer et al. 2008).

Along with the effect technology and pioneering advances have had in the scientific scenario, it is only logical to realize that there is a growing need to publish faster and up-to-date findings. This has increased enormously the number of scientific journals and current publications (Tardy, 2004). In line with this observation, globalization and the need to communicate cutting edge results have facilitated the growing use of English as an international language of science (EILS). That is why, the hierarchy of English when publishing research articles (RAs) has been broadly studied in the last decades (see Ferguson, 2005; Ammon, 2000; Cristal, 1997; Gunnarson, 2000; Tardy, 2004). These documents discuss the different roles that English play in scientific

publications. All of them agree that English has affected scientific community both ways: positively and negatively.

On the one hand, English offers a common ground in which researchers can intertwine and exchange information. Also, it has helped the research world to advance in a rapid way by facilitating a more global use of knowledge and a tool for international, cross-cultural communication, which helps investigators use a common language to access and exchange new facts, a lot simpler than translation (Tardy, 2004). In this sense, researchers cannot deny the advantages they receive when publishing in English. Members of the academia seek to publish their papers in different journals using EILS, so they can benefit from the many 'rewards' and the status gained thanks to the extensive reception among worldwide peers as well as the chance to promote themselves (Tardy, 2004; Belcher, 2006).

On the other hand, the effects of English as a dominating language have also created large controversy because of the uneven opportunities researchers have to access publications. The analysis of the negative role of English in scientific communication is presented in Mauranen et al. (2011) where it is analyzed the obstacle non- native scholars have to get through when using EILS. They argue that researchers feel at disadvantage when writing in English to their Anglophone peers, because non-native scholars think they have limited linguistic resources (2011: 26). Although Hülmbauer et al. (2008) argues that native speakers are frequently at disadvantage because of their over-reliance on their English and the use of EILS as a representation of their national culture and norms, becoming an obstacle for them in intercultural communications (27). Still writers from a non-Anglophone context describe their experience, when

publishing in international journals, as a usually traumatic experience due to the particular difficulty they have to fulfill gatekeepers and editors requirements (Belcher, 2006; Flowerdew, 2001; Swales, 2004; Tardy, 2004). In the same way, Tardy states that in general, writers that come from an Anglophone context, the United States in particular, publish more research papers as well as they become the “gatekeepers’ of published works (2004: 248), becoming later the main obstacle for non-native writers publications. Vassileva (2001) argues that scholars writing in English as a second language are criticised and they usually have to follow the English culture requirements when writing.

When analyzing this dilemma, we have to take into account that the research article (RA) is the genre more commonly used by academics to present their new findings, perhaps because, as Hyland states, it is the tool scientists use to publish their findings so their readers can interpret and negotiate their claims (2005: 89). Since Swales researched this genre two decades ago in order to analyze its structure, social construction and historical evolution, there has been an increased number of research articles published every year. Swales (1990) also describes that the RA follows a standard Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion (IMRD) model as its prototypical structure. These four sections help readers to follow the process of the research and have a clear cut view of the paper and its purpose. As mentioned before, the number of RAs written by non-native scholars is on the increase, taking researchers to analyze the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic variation in the RA. Becher and Trowler (2001) point out the influence and the linguistic differences that exist across disciplinary domains. In this paper, I will take a look at the study of this genre in order to get an insight of the structure used by

researchers of business management and the use of rhetorical devices according to this community. As Mur states “the values and beliefs prevailing in a given disciplinary community constrain generic choices” (2007:26).

Moreover, there are other social variations involved in the RA writing process. Theorists have drawn together language analysis and social theory since they argue that writing is a social construct that shape and constrain RA writing (Kaplan, 1966; Connor, 2008). Also, Holliday (1994) claims that it is important to understand the many interacting social and educational influences which could be overlapping with national cultural norms and bear on the writing process and product. The increased number of RAs written by non-native speakers (NNS) to publish in international publications and gain prestige have led to researchers carry out studies to compare native’s writing with non-native’s writing papers. There has been considerable work carried out to compare Chinese, Scandinavian and Swiss languages with English, examining the contrastive rhetorical problems second language students might have. However, there are not many researches done on the publishing practices of Spanish scholars. This might occur because Spanish is consider to be itself a world language (Pérez et al., 2011) and Spain’s attitude towards English is recognized as an obstacle because of the social and historical reasons compared to other countries. Bearing this in mind, I intend to inquire into the extent to which culture brought up by researchers’ culture influence their writing. I sought to identify to what extent do writers brought up their social culture when writing and the influence their disciplinary culture transcends writer’s national culture.

Broadly speaking, this study explores cross-cultural and cross-linguistic variations in business management research articles published in major Anglophone journals. In order to conduct this research, I particularly take into account Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse framework by investigating the use of two interactional metadiscourse categories, hedges and boosters. I will analyze the use of hedges and boosters between an English corpus written by English researchers (Native Scholars) [ENG] and Spanish researchers (Non Native Scholars) for an international readership [SPENG] and, Spanish scholars writing in Spanish [SP] within the disciplinary domain of business management. It is my attempt to inquire in the use of the two interactional metadiscourse categories in business management research articles (BM RAs). My interest to study the cultural and disciplinary factors in these articles was in order to continue the preliminary investigation I carried out to analyze in two small scale studies about the intercultural differences in BM RAs written by native scholars and non-native scholars writing in English when using hedges and boosters. I intend here to continue with this line of enquiry but this time, the purpose of this Master Thesis is to deepening into the relation of boosters and hedges in the intercultural variations between English writer scholars, Spanish scholars writing in English and, in addition, the use of hedges and boosters by Spanish scholars writing in their native language.

In order to analyze the BM RAs, I applied Swales' (1990) prototypical structure, the IMRD format, dividing the corpus in four categories, introduction, methodology, results and discussion (IMRD). The categories were explicitly found in the corpus and only a few times discussion was changed for conclusion. Each one of these categories provided the paper with different

information and rhetorical differences. Each category has characteristic features that allow linguists to study research article according to the IMRD format. After asserting that all BM RAs contain the format, I analyzed in detail each one of the categories in order to compare the frequency of use of hedges and boosters in the three sub-corpora (ENG-SPENG-SP). The analysis of hedges and boosters as 'a continuum' (Vázquez and Giner, 2009: 221) allows me to analyze the differences between these categories and their cultural implication when used by the two languages as well as the influence of L1 when writing an L2 RA. In order to do this, I will answer the following research questions:

1. What is the amount of occurrences of use of hedges and boosters in RAs written by scholars from two cultural contexts using English as L1 and scholars writing in English as L2?
2. Also, I would like to know, what is the difference between the use of hedges and boosters used by L1 Spanish RAs and the L2 English texts?

In order to reply the previous questions, I chose to use intercultural rhetoric in order to analyze the academic texts from the two different cultures and contexts, based on the premix that although the texts belong to the same disciplinary category, might not be standardized since they come from different cultural contexts. In addition, I will study the way both cultures conceptualized the genre under analysis and how affects its genre conventions. In the same way, Corpus Linguists is used for the analysis of metadiscourse by using a comparable group of data compiled specifically for this paper. In addition, to complement intercultural rhetoric approach, genre theory and corpus linguistics, metadiscourse theory will be used as well as second language acquisition

theory. An investigation of these theoretical frameworks is given in the next chapter.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Since this paper analysis texts written in two different languages, two different socio-cultural contexts, and texts written in a second language, this study contributes to the field of contrastive rhetoric (or intercultural rhetoric as Connor, 2008 states). In the same way, this paper follows Connor's (2008) view, where she states that it is important not only to take into account writers' national culture but also other social and educational factors when analyzing a text. The use of Intercultural rhetoric can be extremely helpful for me as a teacher of English as a foreign language. I am particularly aware of the cultural factors that affect foreign and second language learners not only when speaking but also when writing, a skill that shows most of the cultural factors that influence writers. Moreover, due to the cultural and linguistic factors that affect second language learning, I also found it interesting to analyse in the present Master Thesis an intercultural, genre-based analysis of research articles written in English (as L1 and L2 English) and research articles written in Spanish (as L1).

In order to narrow down the different variables, I have decided to analyse only one disciplinary community, BM, and to notice if there are any conventionalized use of language in this discourse community. The reason why I chose this discipline is because in my teaching practice at Industrial University of Santander, I encounter with the need economists and business management people had to learn English in order to communicate with other companies around the world and the need professors had to write their papers in this language in order to be published not only in national journals but also abroad.

For that reason, I found interesting to study the standardised academic practices of this discipline and how it affects the use of persuasive devices like hedges and boosters or to what extent they are defined by cultural preferences or contextual factors and how this linguistic analysis can help students and me to improve the use of interpersonal metadiscourse devices improving their English writing. In addition, I will examine the different use of hedges and boosters in each of the IMRaD format established by Swales to analyse how the rhetorical sections purpose influences in the use of interpersonal metadiscourse devices establishing differences across the rhetorical sections.

In the same way, as genre studies are used to define the linguistic behaviour of a discourse community, I decided to rely on metadiscourse theory to examine the means of persuasion used in an interdisciplinary community and writers' social context. In this case, I decided to study hedges and boosters, useful metadiscourse resources in academic writing, employed as part of the persuasion repertoire. During the Master course, I carried out two preliminary studies of hedges and boosters in BM RAs. These small scale linguistic analyses proved that there are linguistic and cultural influences in the use of tentative and commitment devices in the BM RAs written by L2 English scholars. In my first preliminary goal, I tried to obtain a more comprehensive view of the use of commitment devices in business management writing. Then, I examined tentative metadiscourse devices in BM RAs to obtain a more comprehensive view of the intercultural and interlinguistic variation. Deeping into this line of enquiry I intend to follow an intercultural rhetoric approach complemented with genre theory and metadiscourse. These theoretical frameworks are provided in the following chapter.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Intercultural Rhetoric

Intercultural rhetoric (or contrastive rhetoric) started many years ago with Kaplan's first article in 1966. Kaplan could perceive in his classroom observations, that ESL students with a similar L1 had the same recurrent problems when writing. He realized he could predict most of their mistakes due to the fact that their L1 influenced the way they wrote in English (Connor 2008; 2004). However, it has continued with two major constructs that have guided intercultural rhetoric through the decades. First of all, intercultural rhetoric (IR) concern has been the focus on multilingual writers; also, IR has considered persuasion and the audience as important features that influence the writing process. All of the above, in order to identify and try to explain problems in composition that ESL writers have because of the rhetorical strategies of their first language. In addition, Hyland (2005) states that rhetorical identity is influenced by the writer's culture, specially for students familiarized with academic contexts which might be different from those practiced in English (Hyland, 2002:1110-1111)

In order to explain contrastive rhetoric, Connor (2008) summarizes its framework in three main parts. First, in the 80's the aim of IR was to obtain teachable and measurable methods and then, in the 90's was focused on specific genres and on L2 students started to socialised in those genres. Connor argues instead that the new directions of CR when studying texts, it should not be limited to the corpora but taken into account the discursive and social practice surrounding by adding language analysis and social theory.

Second, she claims that it is important to bear in mind national and cultural features, which are seen as large culture, as well as small cultures like other interacting social and educational influences that might overlap cultural norms during the writing process and outcome. Finally, Connor, following Sarangi's, establishes differences between intercultural and cross-cultural communication. On the one hand, intercultural communication takes part when two participants interact although they belong to different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. On the other hand, as in this paper, cross-cultural communication analyzes similar corpora produced in two different linguistic or cultural contexts.

Many cross-cultural studies have been reported, since at the beginning, contrastive rhetoric was focused on ESL writing (compared with native English papers). An example of these are papers such as Dahl's (2004), which carried out a complete comparison between English, French and Norwegian, taking into account not only their social background but also different disciplines. In the same way, Vassileva (2001) carried out a cross-cultural study in order to examine the differences and similarities of Bulgarian writers, English writers and the influence in L2 writing when Bulgarians write in English as a second language. When comparing English to languages such as Finish (Mendiluce, 2004) or German (Busch-Lauer, 1998), researchers use intercultural studies to analyze mainly research articles, although the research article is the genre that has attracted most attention (Vassileva, 2000, 2001; Vázquez et al. 2010; Carciu, 2009; Beverly, 1998; Blagojevic, 2004; Dahl, 2004; Ferrari, 2005), different academic settings such as introductions (Samraj, 2002) and book reviews (Salager-Meyer and Alcaraz, M., 2004) have also been studied.

Moreover, researchers have also done contrastive studies between English and Spanish in different disciplines such as Moreno (2008), Vázquez et al. (2006), Vázquez and Giner (2008), and Mur (2007). As an example, Mur's (2007) paper studies the use of self-mentions in both languages, English and Spanish. Both papers concluded that, in those cases, self-mentions were conditioned to cultural context rather than disciplinary constraints. The paper concludes that cultural peculiarities tend to influence the writing conventions of the business and economics RA a lot more than genre conventions.

The multiple difficulties that Spanish writers claim to have when writing RAs in English for an international readership can be verified by the low number of publications and their concern in Pérez-Llantada et al. (2011) paper. That is why this study might be a helpful tool by analyzing and comparing RAs in Spanish and in English and RA's written by Spanish researchers in English. This study intends to compare the three sub-corpora in order to identify and explain differences and similarities that might create potential difficulties for Spanish writers when writing in English.

3.2 *Metadiscourse*

According to Hyland (1998a), metadiscourse is the tool employed by EAP scholars to refer to the writers' particular use of language to signpost, engage and persuade their readers. Based on the previous, the following study follows this theoretical framework for the intercultural analysis of how the writer-reader relationship is textually and discursively coded in the chosen BM RAs.

Holliday's (1994) categorizes metadiscourse in three different functions: .However, this Master Thesis will only focus in the interpersonal function of metadiscourse. Moreover, Hyland and Tse (2004) differentiate interactive and interactional resources from the interpersonal function, when analyzing the relationship and interaction between writers and readers. On the one hand, interactive metadiscourse is more text related, organizing texts in order to guide readers through it. On the other hand, interactional metadiscourse engages and orients readers towards writers' opinion on propositional content, their imagined readers and themselves (Hyland, 2005; Hyland and Tse, 2004, Gillaerts and Vand de Velde, 2010). Following the previous statement, I have decided to restrict the research to only this type of resources, specifically with two resources that constitute part of interactional metadiscourse, hedges and boosters.

Hedges and boosters have been broadly used resources in academic writing, especially RAs, in order to persuade the readership. According to Vázquez and Giner (2008) hedges and boosters are 'significant communicative resources to construe and attain persuasion in different field and particular genres of academic writing'. Hedges and boosters can be seen as the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, since both of them contribute to persuade readers by the degree of commitment towards what writers are claiming in their texts. Doing this, writers use these communicative strategies in order to increase or reduce the force of their statements (Vázquez, 2010). In addition, many researchers establish that hedges and boosters can only be used appropriately if the writer maintains a balance when using both of them (Mur, 2007: 324; Hyland, 1998a: 440; Hyland, 1998b: 373; Mendiluce, 2004: 376). However, hedges and

boosters mark commitments, beliefs and attitudes which are usually socially and culturally established. That is why, it is expected to be used differently across cultures and languages, which influence writers' rhetorical standards and communicative norms (Connor 1996; Holmes, 1992; Hyland, 2005; Guangwei and Feng, 2011) However, even though boosters and hedges are opposite sides of the same coin (Vázquez and Gines, 2009), none of them is still consensus on a clear definition. It is difficult to achieve to an agreement on what counts as a hedge or a booster, making problematic to classify both groups.

Firstly, I will provide an overview of hedging in academic writing, an interpersonal metadiscourse device that has been highly studied by many researchers. The first author who wrote about hedges was Lakoff (1972). He was the first author who defined these devices as expressions "whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy" (1972). Moreover, Hyland (2005) states that hedges are used by writers in order not to commit completely to one statement by not making it a fact, but an opinion. Also, hedges are linguistic expressions employed by writers to modify the level of commitment with their statements. (Hyland 2005; Vande Kopple, 1985; Crismore et al., 1993).

As mentioned before, hedges have been broadly studied, perhaps because of the difficulties that represent to non-native scholars when writing in a second language resulting in a proliferation of studies to help students overcome this difficulty. An example of this is Jalilifar and Shoostari's (2011) study of the effect of explicit instruction of hedging resources to English Language Learning students to improve their use of hedges when writing. However, hedges have been studied for different purposes as well; for example, Vázquez and Giner (2008) studied the use of hedges in different disciplines in

order to understand the genre influence when scholars employed detachment devices. Moreover, Varttala (1998) researched hedging in medical discourse in order to demonstrate the use of these devices in all kind of specialized papers. In the same way, his study demonstrates that hedges, expressions of tentativeness and possibility, are very common in all kind of specialized text with different characteristics according to the writer's need. In the same way, she considers that hedging can be used as a feature of positive politeness, acceptance or as a textual tool for accuracy or vagueness. In addition, He et al. (2010) have approached this issue from a genre-based perspective by analyzing English abstract writing.

On the other hand, assertive statements used by BM scholars are also examined in the present study. However, *contraire* to hedging, there is not much research done on the use of boosters, even though it is an equally important writing strategy to reflect a higher degree of commitment, enhancing readers' credibility on the writer, as well as an important aspect of rhetorical persuasion (Vassileva, 2001: 86; Vázquez and Giner, 2009: 219). Only a few studies have examined boosters solely or concentrated on boosting resources to a great extent, for example, Vázquez and Giner (2008) who concluded that the use of boosters' devices varies across disciplines such as Marketing, Biology and Mechanical Engineering. Moreover, a large amount of researchers have compared the use of hedges and boosters in different languages, cultures and disciplines (Mendiluce, 2004; Suau, 2005; Guangwei and Feng, 2011; Kong, 2006; Abdi, 2002). In the same way, Vassileva (2001) contrasted the use of hedges and boosters to convey different levels of commitment and detachment in three groups of corpora, English research articles by Anglo-

American and Bulgarian scholars and English research articles by Bulgarian researchers. In addition, Mendiluce and Hernández (2005a) analyzed the use of hedges and boosters in biomedical RAs, particularly the discussion section, in order to notice how writers balanced the use of these rhetorical strategies. Boosting is considered a highly difficult device for ESL writers to use. Scholars, who write in English as a second language, tend to transfer their rhetorical traditions, which usually understand a high level of commitment as an effective mean of persuasion. However, employing boosters in academic writing papers in English is generally discouraged.

3.3 Genre Studies

Genre studies have dealt with the study of academic discourse since its outset in the 80s. Bhatia (1997) defines genre analysis as the ‘study of situated linguistic behaviour in institutionalized academic or professional settings’ (181). However, Swales (1990) also claims that the focus of genres is to follow a defined use of language in conventionalized communicative setting in order to communicate members of a specific discourse community. In the same way, genre analysis establishes texts within textual and social contexts, emphasizing the social nature of the production and reading of texts (Mur, 2007; Hyland, 2005).

Moreover, the continuous and dynamic change of genres appears to be affected by the social and cultural changes. Nowadays, it is recognized that genres vary in diverse communities and cultures (Swales, 2004; Bhatia 2004; Hyland, 2002). Because of these changes, Bhatia (2004) claims that genres

have come to line up with other genres, creating a new genre where prevailed mutual communicative purposes. An example of these 'colonies', as Bhatia (1993) denominates these joints, is his work about academic introductions in 2004. In his paper, he attempts to clarify the nature and function of introductions used in academic books from different disciplines, identifying the common aspects. All of the above, in order to identify and understand the criteria needed to identify genres.

Furthermore, the study of genres within disciplinary communities appears to require the analysis of contents as social practices, which are the final product that allows interaction between members of the same community (Bhatia, 2004; Mur, 2007). The disciplinary communities are identified and can be classified according to the constraints and conventions shared by their members and their writing practices (Bhatia, 2004). By doing this, scholars take into account the social characteristics of the texts and so, they can understand and interpret the distinctive attributes of the texts (Hyland, 2005). An example of these communities is the Business Management disciplinary community, which will be analyzed through the RAs in this Master Thesis. According to genre analyst, it is expected that the BM discipline to affect the use of rhetorical features by the scholars. In the same way, it is anticipated a likely difference in the use of certain rhetorical features, due to the different values and conventions of the BM discipline. However, it is also acknowledge that there is a multiplicity of memberships that might bring different individual views.

Swales devotes his longest chapter in *Genre Analysis* (1990), as well as in his book *Research Genres* (2004) to the RA. He claims that the research article has attracted considerable attention in the field, because it has become

the most important research genre for academic publication. The RA, however, it is not essentially a single genre, but as Swales states, it can be divided in theoretical and experimental papers. Nonetheless, Hyland (1998a) argues that genres, like the RA, are essential to a discipline since they provide a method for scientists to communicate with other members of the same community about the results of their research.

Moreover, Swales (1990) establishes the rhetorical structure of the RA, the IMRaD format. The standard RA is usually divided into Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion. When analyzing the BM RAs in the corpus showed that most of them followed Swales' format and only in a small number of cases the division of sections is not explicitly signalled.

The first division of Swales' IMRaD pattern is the Introduction section. The function of the Introduction part of the RA is to present the aim and scope of the study and to give some theoretical preliminaries (Swales, 1990; Vassileva, 2001). This section has attracted more scholars' interest than any of the other three sections. Here, Swales divides this part in the CARS (Create a Research Space) model, where he establishes a series of moves and steps that can be applied to the Introduction. Still, theorists agree that not all research papers implement all moves or steps, but they vary according to the area of specialization. In the case of BM Introductions (English and Spanish), Mur establishes that they partly diverge with Swales' CARS model. Moreover, she determined that, in this case, not only the disciplinary nature of the RA is the one that influences the rhetorical structure of Introductions, but also the cultural context of the writers as well as the readers they address to (115-116).

Next, the methods section is the research tools used to analyze the process needed to interpret and analyze the object of research. It is usually carried out differently in the vary fields, that is the case of humanities and hard sciences. Still, Swales put forward that 'major differences do not lie so much in Introductions and Discussions, but rather in the Methods and Results section' (1990:175-176). That is why, the Methods sections is affected by the disciplinary conventions and the cultural conditions where is written and to whom is written for.

In the same way, the belief about the kind of communicative purposes the Result section should cover, it is different between hard sciences, which usually avoid making comments about them, and the social sciences, which many times include extensive remarks. Also, it is expected some rhetorical differences between the Results sections written in English and Spanish due to the different culture context and the international and national intended readership that affects how writers present their findings.

Finally, the Discussion section in BM RAs tends to have similarities and differences with other disciplines (Mur, 2007). The rhetorical peculiarities in this section are, however, different in English and Spanish. As Mur states (2007), due to the international purpose of the English papers, scholars writing in English include a 'Recommendations' section for further studies. Also, they tend to include more references than the Spanish scholars, avoiding future criticism by other peers.

4. METHODOLOGY

To carry out this Master Thesis, I collected a range of RAs published in the BM discipline. The reason to choose this discipline was motivated by two reasons. First, there are only a few studies that compare the use of interpersonal metadiscourse resources in RA written in English by native scholars, Spanish papers written by native researchers and English papers written by Spanish scholars. Additionally, the selection of the BM discipline was necessary in order to focus only in the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic effects, keeping the disciplinary variable constant when analysing the use of hedges and boosters.

To analyze the cross-cultural differences when using two interactional metadiscourse features, hedges and boosters, I decided to group three different sub-corpora. I chose BM RAs written in English, Spanish and Spanish scholars writing in English as L2. In order to carry out the analysis for, I comprised a corpora built from 90 business management, particularly research articles, taken from SERAC (Spanish-English Research Article Corpus). The corpus of this study compares 30 research articles written in English by scholars from an Anglophone context (coded as ENG sub-corpus), 30 research articles written in Spanish by Spanish native scholars (coded as SP sub-corpus), for the cross-linguistic analysis; and 30 research articles written in English by scholars from a non-Anglophone (Spanish) context (coded SPENG sub-corpus) in order to examine possible transfer and interlanguage processes.

Since this paper carries out a cross-cultural analysis, I examined the fact that both groups of texts were published in the same international English

journals, and, I took into account the contextual variables which remain constant. As a result, the study was conformed in a common platform of comparison with elements that can, in fact, be comparable sub-corpora (Moreno, 2008; Connor and Moreno, 2005). Also, the three groups of writers belong to a university level, guaranteeing that they were familiar with academic writing practices, especially the research articles genre. The final count of the corpora is 511.652 words distributed across the three sub-corpora as follows:

	Nº OF TEXTS	CORPUS SIZE
ENG SUB-CORPUS	30	197,655
SPENG SUB-CORPUS	30	194,145
SP SUB-CORPUS	30	177,440

Table 1. Overall size of the corpus.

Furthermore, the RAs were divided into Swales' four macro-sections, Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion, previously stated as the IMRaD format. The reason to do this comes from Swales claim that each section has diverse communicative intentions, as well as each one of them employ different rhetorical features. The next table summarises the total number of words of the corpus across the IMRaD format:

SUB-CORPUS	INTRODUCTIONS	METHODS	RESULTS	DISCUSSION
ENG	93,012	22,252	35,185	47,206
SPENG	39,830	65,785	54,276	34,254
SP	76,273	42,893	44,659	13,615

Table 2. Total number of words of the corpus across rhetorical sections.

In order to analyze the frequency of the two interactional metadiscourse devices, hedges and boosters, I decided to investigate different taxonomies

used for the study of both of them. In order to choose the most suitable taxonomy for this paper, I considered Hyland's (2005), Salager-Meyer's (1994), Varttala's (2001) and Mur's (2007) taxonomies as guides to develop, improve and carry out the taxonomy of hedges and boosters applied to this analysis.

First, Hyland, (2005) in his book 'Metadiscourse', lists a total of 96 items as hedges resources. In the list, he includes different grammatical categories, such as verbs (e.g. *to suppose, to postulate*), adverbs (*plausibly, possibly*), adjectives (e.g. *typical, unclear*) and tentative expressions (*from my perspective or in most stances*). In two previous studies I carried out to analyze hedges devices and booster devices separately, I decided to follow Hyland's (2005) taxonomy, but as I carried out my research, I realized that it turned out to be too complicated to classify some of hedging devices and booster devices. Also, I had problems with the items because most of them had no occurrences in the BM RAs. As Mur (2007) states, the reason to use a different taxonomy is the broaden categories determined by Hyland (2005) that would give as a result, multiple counts since 'it would be difficult to determine what not to include in it' (2007:303). Also, I found it not suitable for the present study because it was necessary to develop a better classification for the analysis of this particular discipline, BM.

Second, Salager-Meyer (1994) establishes five groups when categorizing hedges in her research of medical papers. First, he groups semi-auxiliaries, modal verbs expressing possibility (i.e. *may, appear*), probability adverbs and their derivative adjectives (such as *broadly* or *likely*) and epistemic verbs (e.g. *to assume*) in the Shields category. In addition, she creates four more categories, approximators (i.e. *around*), expressions of the authors' personal doubt and

direct involvement (e.g. *in general*), emotionally-charged intensifiers (extremely important) and compound hedges, which are combinations of hedges in one proposition. Nevertheless, Salager-Meyer's (1994) taxonomy is not very well-defined due to the fact that some semantic categories are highly problematic and can be placed in different groups.

Finally, Varttala's (2001) division of hedges when analysing articles in Economics, Medicine and Technology seemed to be more suitable for this paper. In his analysis, he used eight lexico-grammatical categories to classify features that show tentativeness of the authors in the text. In his research, he decides to categorize hedges into five sub-groups: modal auxiliaries, full verbs, adverbs, adjectives, nouns, clausal elements, questions and others. Nonetheless, his classification includes hedges that are part of quotations or by other authoring scholars that are not analysed in this paper. In the same way, her classification includes a section called 'questions', which will not be taken into account in this study.

After analysing the previous taxonomies, I chose to follow Mur's (2007) classification of hedges and boosters, which comprised the three of them in one. Mur (2007) combines Varttala's (2001) categories with Salager-Meyer (1994) classification in order to upgrade both taxonomies, as well as includes Hyland's (2005) list of items to found out the frequency of use of both devices. She follows especially Varttala's (2001) taxonomy using grammatical categories rather than semantic ones. However, she uses Salager-Meyer's classification to complement her classification. She decides to add expressions of the authors' personal doubt and direct involvement in her taxonomy as phrases. Finally, I

decided to follow Mur's (2007) classification in the following research as the table shows:

HEDGES	BOOSTERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedging modal verbs • Hedging semi-auxiliary verbs and Semi-modals • Hedging lexical verbs • Hedging adverbs • Hedging adjectives • Hedging nouns • Hedging phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boosting modal verbs • Boosting lexical verbs • Boosting adverbs • Boosting adjectives • Boosting nouns • Boosting phrases

Table 3. Taxonomy of hedges and boosters (Mur, 2007)

In order to examine the three sub-corpora, I decided to carry out first, a corpus-driven analysis. My intention here was to find the hedges and boosters that were presented across the different RAs sections. This corpus-driven analysis was necessary, since many of the hedges or boosters were different from the previous studies. Also, in the case of RAs written in Spanish, only Mur's classification was available to use. However, several more hedges and boosters were extracted from the BM RAs. Searches were carried out manually in order to find a varied range of hedges and boosters. Once all the resources devices were identified, I carried out a new search electronically, using the Wordsmith Tool 4.0 (Scott, 1996) software, particularly its Concord package. I used this software to corroborate the final count and establish the frequencies that later on will be analysed statistically. After this quantitative analysis, the results were qualitatively analysed. As Lakoff (1973) argues that 'any adequate treatment [of hedges and, for that matter, boosters] will have to take context into account' (484). That is why, it was necessary to complement the quantitative

analysis with the qualitative one. So as to carry out the qualitative analysis, I took into account the fact that hedges and boosters should only be counted when they were explicitly used in a text, when they stated explicitly the writers' opinion on entire propositions and when they modify the illocutionary force of speech acts (Holmes, 1992; Guangwei and Feng, 2011).

Also, it is important to mention that in the frequency counts analysed in the present study, neither occurrences where the authors was not 'responsible' for the tentativeness or uncertainty of the proposition, such as quotation, were taken into consideration, nor examples that reproduced parts of questionnaires upon which the study was based.

For the present study, I normalised the average frequencies to 10,000 words. Moreover, Log-likelihood values were used in order to determine statistically significant patterns in the frequencies of the hedges and boosters devices across the two cultural contexts and the two languages under analysis. In the same way, log-likelihood values and average frequencies were normalised when comparing the different IMRaD sections.

4. RESULTS

5.1 Overall results and counts in the use of hedges and boosters

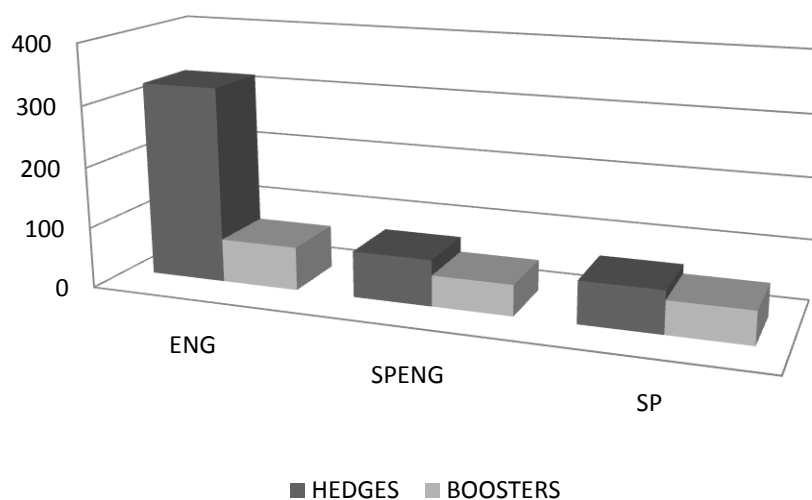
Considering the taxonomy described before and after analysing each of the lexico-grammatical categories, the corpus analysis yielded the following results. Table 1 presents the overall counts and average frequencies of the use of hedges and boosters and the distribution of them in the corpus presented.

	HEDGES		BOOSTERS	
	Occurrences	Average Frequency	Occurrences	Average Frequency
ENG	3,151	322.79	1,415	71.59
SPENG	1,475	75.97	886	45.79
SP	1,235	69.60	965	54.44

Table 4. Overall count and average frequency of hedges and boosters

The overall distribution of both categories is summarized in the next graphic according to the average frequency (per 10,000 words).

Table 5. Average Frequency of Hedges and Boosters



As can be seen in table 4 and 5, the number of hedges used by the L1 English researchers is the highest and the lowest is the SP sub-corpus, while SPENG writers come somewhere in between. It is obvious the huge difference between English writers and L2 English scholars. This implies that L1 English scholars have a tendency to be more cautious in putting forward claims. This confirms Brown and Levinson's opinion that ENG writers avoid having 'face-threatening acts' when writing their research articles. Also, the fact that SPENG occupies an intermediate position between L1 and L2 confirms transfer and interlanguage theories.

Table 6 below shows that there is an overuse in hedging devices when comparing the average frequency of hedges per 1,000 words between ENG and SPENG sub-corpus. This means that the ENG sub-set overuse of hedges is statistically highly significant at the level of $p < 0.0001$. In addition, the overuse of hedges in the L2 English sub-corpus was significant at the level of $p < 0.05$. As can be seen, the SPENG sub-corpus neither hedge their claims as much as their Anglophone-based counterparts nor they do it as little as Spanish writers writing in their L1 did. This may be due to cultural factors as Mur (2004: 380-381) noted in a corpus of Business Management RAs that Anglophone scholars used more hedges than Spanish writers, so here there is a small tendency to follow the English writing conventions.

Table 6. Average frequencies and log-likelihood value of hedges.

Average Frequency of Hedges		og- likelihood value	Average Frequency of Hedges		og- likelihood value
ENG	SPENG		SPENG	SP	
322.79	75.97	591.59*	75.97	69.60	5.17**

*Highly significant at the level $p < 0.0001$

**Significant at the level $p < 0.05$

On the other hand, as can be seen in table 7, the use of boosters when writing a BM RA is more common in ENG writers, and less used by SPENG writers, while the SP sub-set uses slightly more boosting devices than L2 English writers. These results suggest that English BM scholars tend to use more persuasive devices in order to interest and compete with international based journals. Also, the results expound the idea that Spanish writers are less interested in using metadiscourse devices to persuade their discourse because their publications are national based journals, a community a lot less competitive than the international one. However, when analyzing their log-likelihood value, table 7 presents a highly significant difference in the frequency of boosters in ENG and SPENG sub-corpus at the level of $p < 0.0001$. On the other hand, L2 English writers are not statistically significant to L1 Spanish writers when using boosters. This implies that, although SPENG writers are trying to fulfil their target language expectations they preserve unconsciously their cultural identity (Vassileva, 2001:88)

Table 7. Average frequency and log-likelihood value of boosters.

Average Frequency of Boosters		Log-likelihood value	Average Frequency of Boosters		Log-likelihood value
ENG	SPENG	113.42**	SPENG	SP	14.23*
71.59	45.79		45.79	54.44	

*Significant at the level of $p < 0.001$

**Highly significant at the level of $p < 0.0001$

On the whole, Spanish scholars writing in English used a lower amount of boosters than the L1 English writers and L1 Spanish scholars. This result is quite unforeseen and differs with transfer as well as with interlanguage theories. One explanation one could offer of this phenomenon could be that SPENG do not feel comfortable or are not familiar enough with the means

Anglophone writers use to express engagement to their claims. As Pérez-Llantada et al. (2011) claim in their paper, there are some difficulties that SPENG writers express they have related to the control of modality and some other linguistic disadvantages.

5.2 Overall results across rhetorical sections

To continue exploring and analysing the uses of boosters and hedges, I followed Mur's (2007) taxonomy classifying the overall occurrences of the two interactive categories of metadiscourse according to their lexico-grammatical nature and the contrastive analysis is carried out further. The following table indicates the overall frequency and distribution of hedges and boosters in the three sub-corpora.

Table 8. Average frequencies and log-likelihood value of hedges in rhetorical sections.

HEDGES	Average Frequencies (per 10,000 words)		Log-likelihood value	Average Frequencies (per 10,000 words)		Log-likelihood value
	ENG	SPENG		SPENG	SP	
Introductions	125.47	105.45	9.33*	105.45	55.98	84.10***
Methods	252.56	35.72	716.14***	35.72	58.85	12.72**
Results	159.16	90.65	82.91***	90.65	61.43	15.38***
Discussion	182.60	95.46	108.45***	95.46	142.09	47.38***

* Significant at the level of $p < 0.01$

** Significant at the level of $p < 0.001$

*** Highly significant at the level of $p < 0.0001$

The above table summarizes the distributions of hedges in the different rhetorical sections in the three subsets. Since the overall average frequencies in the use of hedges were highly significant in the ENG and SPENG sub-corpora,

we can detail the differences in both sub-corpora as regards the distribution of hedges across the four sections. Moreover, the distribution of hedges in the Methods, Results and Discussion sections was highly significant at the level of < 0.0001 , thus ENG scholars used more than double amount of hedges in the three previously named sections. However, the introduction section was the only section with a significant difference at the level of $p < 0.01$. It is important to mention that the Introduction section was the one with more hedges used by the SPENG writers, contrary to the ENG writers who used the lowest amount of hedges in this section.

On the other hand, the SPENG and SP sub-corpora differences in the Introduction, Results and Discussion section were also highly significant at the level of $p < 0.0001$, meaning that SPENG writers used more than twice the amount of hedges than SP scholars. A possible explanation for that might be given by Vazquez and Giner (2008) where they state the need that soft sciences, like Business Management, have to use hedges as a result of the fact that it is almost impossible to support and verify their claims mathematically speaking. As a result, these writers use more hedging elements when stating their results and claims. Moreover, the Methods sections presented a significant variation of $p < 0.001$, the lowest when compared to the other three sections. We can notice that in this section, SP writers used a larger amount of hedges in comparison with the SPENG writers.

Next, Table 9 below sums up the average frequencies and log likelihood differences of boosters in the four rhetorical sections. Results show that there were no statistically significant differences in the Introduction section between the ENG and the SPENG sub-corpora. Carry on, the table below, we can notice

that the Methods section is highly significant at the level of $p < 0.0001$. Moreover, whereas the Discussion section presents only a slight underuse of boosters by the SPENG writers compared to the ENG scholars, with a significant difference of $p < 0.05$, there is a slightly higher significant difference at the level of $p < 0.01$ between the ENG and SPENG results section.

Table 9. Average frequencies and log-likelihood value of boosters in rhetorical sections.

BOOSTERS	Average Frequencies (per 10,000 words)		Log-likelihood value	Average Frequencies (per 10,000 words)		Log-likelihood value
	ENG	SPENG		SPENG	SP	
Introduction	56.66	59.50	0.39	59.50	30.02	53.67****
Methods	96.62	24.93	169.53****	24.93	38.00	14.80***
Results	75.88	64.09	6.63**	64.09	64.71	0.44
Discussion	86.01	73.86	3.84*	73.86	209.33	142.92****

* Significant at the level of $p < 0.05$

** Significant at the level of $p < 0.01$

*** Significant at the level of $p < 0.001$

**** Highly significant at the level of $p < 0.0001$

On the contrary, when contrasting the SPENG and the SP sub-corpora there was no significant difference in the Results sections. Nevertheless, there is a significant difference at the level of $p < 0.001$ in the Methods section between SPENG and SP sub-set, whereas the Introduction and Discussion section presents a significant difference at the level of $p < 0.0001$. It is important to notice that, in general, scholars using Spanish as L1 employed a higher amount of boosters per 1,000 words than scholars using English as L2. This results imply that SP writers are more assertive when stating their claims than the SPENG scholars. For instance, Mur (2007: 360) states that Spanish BM RAs tend to be more assertive because of the uniform readership towards which the articles are published nationally as well as because it is valued the

use of assertive language, contrary to RAs written in English where there is a higher number of hedges because of the need to express claims in a tentative manner because they address an international community and confident statements can expose them to criticism and oppositions to their arguments (Vassileva, 2001; Mur, 2007; Mendiluce, 2004). However, the highest amount of boosters in the SP group is present in the Discussion section. These results agree with Mendiluce and Hernández (2005) observation that Spanish writers prefer to boost their discourse in the Discussion section, while English writers tend to hedge it to moderate their commitment to statements.

5.3 Results of the analysis across lexico-grammatical hedging and boosting features.

5.3.1 Lexico-grammatical hedging features

Moreover, it is important to analyse the differences in the use of hedging lexico-grammatical categories presented in each of the three sub-corpora. The next table summarises the average frequency (per 10,000 words) of lexico-grammatical categories used as hedging devices to express a lack of commitment by each of the three subsets of writers as well as the log-likelihood value:

Table10. Preferred lexico-grammatical categories of hedges.

HEDGES	ENG	SPENG	LOG- LIKELIHOOD VALUE	SPENG	SP	LOG- LIKELIHOOD VALUE
MODAL VERBS	41.54	18.18	183.56***	18.18	13.92	0.74
SEMI-AUXILIARY AND MODAL VERBS	2.58	3.04	0.73	3.04	4.68	10.50**
LEXICAL VERBS	56.97	24.67	256.92***	24.67	26.09	6.52*
ADVERBS	25.75	12.26	95.80***	12.26	5.13	55.50***
ADJECTIVES	9.16	3.81	44.42***	3.81	6.09	9.82**
NOUNS	15.48	9.89	24.33***	9.89	11.61	2.56
PHRASES	3.44	4.12	1.20	4.12	2.87	4.13*

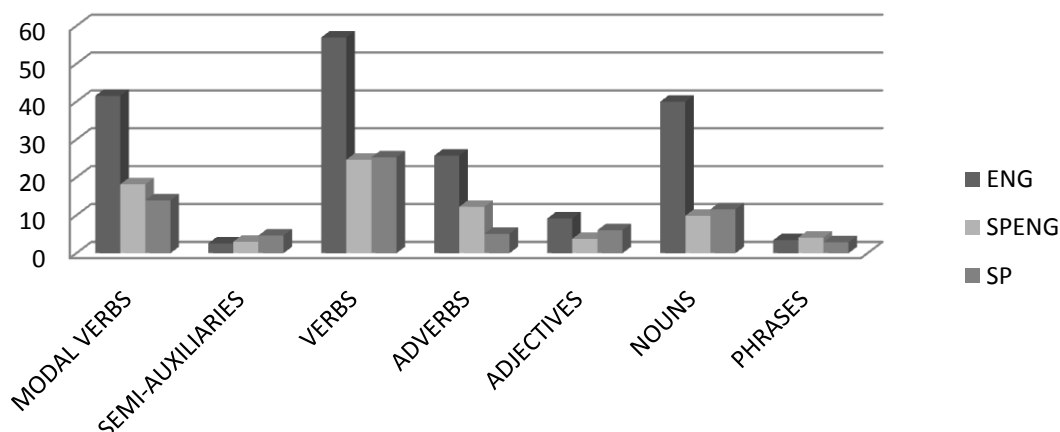
* Significant at the level of $p < 0.05$

** Significant at the level of $p < 0.01$

*** Highly significant at the level of $p < 0.0001$

The ENG sub-corpus presents a higher average frequency in almost every hedging sub-categories, except for the semi-auxiliary and modal-verbs as well as phrases, where the normalised figures show a slightly overuse of this category by the SPENG writers. However, when comparing the use of these sub-categories between the SPENG and SP sub-corpora, we can notice that scholars writing in English as L2 used more hedging devices in only three of the sub-categories, modal verbs, adverbs and phrases. Furthermore, when comparing ENG and SPENG sub-sets, the log-likelihood value presents no significant difference in the use of epistemic semi-auxiliary and modal verbs and phrases. However, a highly significant difference can be seen when analysing the rest of lexico-grammatical realizations at the level of $p < 0.0001$. On the other hand, no significant difference was found in hedging modal verbs and nouns between SPENG and SP. Moreover, a difference of $p < 0.05$ was found between epistemic lexical verbs and phrases, whereas semi auxiliary and modal verbs and adjectives presented a significant difference at the level of $p < 0.01$. SPENG and SP sub-corpora presented only a highly significant difference at the level of $p < 0.0001$ when using tentative adverbs.

Table 11. Frequency of Lexico-grammatical realization of hedging



When analysing the previous table, we can notice that the frequency of use of hedging sub-categories is very low in the SPENG sub-corpus compared to the ENG and SP sub-corpora. Moreover, the three sub-corpora present some similarities such as the most used lexico-grammatical hedges, verbs and modal verbs. However, the following categories are different from the ones scholars used when writing in English as L2. In order to show tentativeness to their claims, the SPENG writers used adverbs as their third option, followed by nouns, phrases, adjectives and the least used, semi-auxiliary and modal verbs. This ranking is very alike the ENG sub-corpus where they used nouns as their third options and then adverbs, adjectives, hedging phrases and semi-auxiliary and modal verbs. However, although the SP scholars employed nouns as their third option, they then used adjectives, followed by adverbs, semi-auxiliary and modal verbs and finally hedging phrases. Furthermore, I will analyse thoroughly the different sub-categories in order to find similarities and differences in the use of hedging devices between L2 English writers, L1 English scholars and L1 Spanish researchers in the next part.

First, the use of lexical verbs as tentative devices is broadly employed in the three sub-corpora. As previously stated, hedging lexical verbs are the lexico-grammatical feature most widely used.

	AVERAGE			AVERAGE			AVERAGE	
	ENG	FREQUENCY		SPENG	FREQUENCY		SP	FREQUENCY
SUGGEST	256	12.95	CONSIDER	102	5.25	CONSIDERAR	57	3.21
INDICATE	125	6.32	SUGGEST	69	3.55	OBSERVAR	49	2.76
PREDICT	115	5.82	EXPECT	46	2.37	TRATAR DE	45	2.54
CONSIDER	113	5.72	ESTIMATE	44	2.27	ESTIMAR	40	2.25
EXPECT	103	5.21	INDICATE	43	2.21	SUPONER	35	1.97
ESTIMATE	58	2.93	ASSUME	23	1.18	ASUMIR	30	1.69
THEORIZE	55	2.78	TEND TO	19	0.98	INDICAR	23	1.30
PROPOSE	51	2.58	PROPOSE	16	0.82	ENTENDER	21	1.18
ATTEMPT	43	2.18	IMPLY	16	0.82	INTENTAR	21	1.18
ARGUE	36	1.82	INTERPRET	15	0.77	PENSAR	19	1.07
SEE	30	1.52	SEE	14	0.72	PRETENDER	17	0.96
BELIEVE	26	1.32	THINK	14	0.72	SUGERIR	17	0.96
INTERPRET	21	1.06	ATTEMPT	12	0.62	IMPLICAR	16	0.90
HYPOTHESIZE	19	0.96	PREDICT	12	0.62	APRECIAR	14	0.79
ASSUME	16	0.81	ARGUE	10	0.52	PLANTEAR	12	0.68
POSIT	11	0.56	BELIEVE	6	0.31	TENDER A	8	0.45
IMPLY	10	0.51	POSIT	4	0.21	ESPERAR	8	0.45
ANTICIPATE	7	0.35	VIEW	4	0.21	APUNTAR	6	0.34
POINT TO	7	0.35	LIMIT	3	0.15	CREER	6	0.34
PRESUME	6	0.30	HYPOTHESIZE	3	0.15	INTERPRETAR	4	0.23
VIEW	6	0.30	CLAIM	1	0.05	POSIBILITAR	4	0.23
POSTULATE	5	0.25	POSTULATE	1	0.05	QUERER	4	0.23
THINK	3	0.15	UNDERESTIMATE	1	0.05	PREDECIR	3	0.17
FEEL	2	0.10	ANTICIPATE	1	0.05	DEDUCIR	2	0.11
CLAIM	1	0.05				SOSPECHAR	2	0.11
CONTEND	1	0.05						
TOTAL	1126	56.97	TOTAL	479	24.67	TOTAL	463	26.09

Table 12. Types and average frequency of boosting lexical verbs

Interestingly, the most common lexical verb used as an epistemic device in the SPENG and SP sub-set was the verb ‘to consider’ (*considerar* in Spanish). In addition, the second hedging lexical verb most used in the SPENG sub-corpus was *suggest*, which was the most frequent one used by the ENG sub-set. The previous results point towards some possible linguistic and cultural

influence in L2 English scholars. In table 12, we can notice that there is only a slight difference in the use of tentative lexical verbs per 10,000 words between the SP and SPENG sub-corpus. However, L1 English writers present more than double the amount of hedging lexical verbs per 10,000 words than L2 English writers.

Carrying on, modal verbs used as hedging devices were the second lexico-grammatical feature most common in the three sub-corpora. Moreover, we can see in the next table that ENG and SPENG sub-corpora preferred the use of ‘*may*’ to withhold commitment as well as ‘*would*’ as the second option to express tentativeness. On the other hand, the most current token used in the SP sub-corpus is ‘*podar*’ + *infinitive*. Here, we can notice there is a cultural influence in the L2 English scholars when using tentative devices.

	AVERAGE			AVERAGE			AVERAGE	
	ENG	FREQUENCY		SPENG	FREQUENCY		SP	FREQUENCY
MAY	469	23.73	MAY	112	3.45	PODER	155	8.74
WOULD	182	9.21	WOULD	103	5.77	CONDITIONAL	92	5.18
COULD	94	4.76	MIGHT	71	3.66	MORPHEME		
MIGHT	76	3.85	COULD	67	5.31			
TOTAL	821	41.54	TOTAL	353	18.18	TOTAL	247	13.92

Table 13. Types and average frequency of hedging modal verbs

Moreover, results regarding the lexico-grammatical realization of hedging semi-auxiliaries and semi-modals are very similar in the ENG and SPENG sub-corpora. Semi-auxiliary and modal verbs are the least used in the BM RAs written in English. The results show that this category is at the bottom of the list since they are the less frequently used hedging lexico-grammatical devices. Interestingly, the most used token, ‘*seem*’, was the same in the ENG and SPENG sub-corpora. Moreover, ‘*appear*’ was the most employed in the SP

sub-corpus. Also, ‘*caber*’ and ‘*soler*’ are analysed as Spanish semi-modals that indicate plausible and frequent correspondingly.

	AVERAGE			AVERAGE			AVERAGE	
	ENG	FREQUENCY		SPENG	FREQUENCY		SP	FREQUENCY
SEEM	33	1.67	SEEM	43	2.21	PARECER	36	2.03
APPEAR	18	0.91	APPEAR	16	0.82	CABER	23	1.30
						SOLER	24	1.35
TOTAL	51	2.58	TOTAL	59	3.04	TOTAL	83	4.68

Table 14. Types and average frequency of hedging semi-auxiliary and modal verbs

Next, as can be seen below in table 15, the most frequent hedging adverb used by the sub-corpora ENG and SPENG is ‘likely’. This is consistent with Hyland’s (1998a: 130) results of most commonly occurring epistemic adverbs in his corpus of bio-medical RAs. The table shows that results are dissimilar in the three sub-corpora. The ENG sub-set used these hedging devices more often than the SPENG group, and the SP sub-corpora used a lower amount of hedging adverbs when compared to the SPENG sub-set. First, L1 English writers used adverbs that express tentativeness as their fourth options, whereas L2 English scholars only preferred only lexical verbs and modal verbs over this lexico-grammatical category. On the other hand, L1 Spanish scholars used adverbs less frequently in their papers, ranking adverbs in the fifth position.

	AVERAGE			AVERAGE			AVERAGE	
	ENG	FREQUENCY	SPENG	FREQUENCY		SP	FREQUENCY	
LIKELY	155	7.84	LIKELY	24	1.24	APROXIMADAMENT	10	0.56
RELATIVELY	55	2.78	USUALLY	22	1.13	APENAS	8	0.45
GENERALLY	38	1.92	OFTEN	18	0.93	HABITUALMENTE	8	0.45
OFTEN	38	1.92	QUITE	15	0.77	NORMALMENTE	8	0.45
PERHAPS	17	0.86	GENERALLY	14	0.72	QUIZAS	8	0.45
FREQUENTLY	13	0.66	APPROXIMATELY	13	0.67	CASI	7	0.39
PARTIALLY	13	0.66	AROUND	13	0.67	ALREDEDOR	6	0.34
UNLIKELY	12	0.60	ABOUT	12	0.62	FRECUENTEMENTE	6	0.34
QUITE	12	0.60	ALMOST	11	0.57	LIGERAMENTE	5	0.28
POTENTIALLY	11	0.55	MOSTLY	10	0.52	POTENCIALMENTE	5	0.20
ALMOST	10	0.50	MAINLY	9	0.46	GENERALMENTE	4	0.23
APPROXIMATELY	10	0.50	RELATIVELY	7	0.36	PROBABLEMENTE	4	0.23
FAIRLY	10	0.50	COMMONLY	6	0.31	RELATIVAMENTE	4	0.23
ABOUT	9	0.46	FREQUENTLY	6	0.31	BASTANTE	3	0.17
NEARLY	9	0.47	SLIGHTLY	6	0.31	AMPLIAMENTE	2	0.11
THEORETICALLY	9	0.48	SOMEWHAT	6	0.31	POSIBLEMENTE	2	0.11
USUALLY	8	0.40	LARGELY	5	0.26	ESENCIALMENTE	1	0.06
ESSENTIALLY	7	0.35	PERHAPS	5	0.26			
LARGELY	7	0.36	POSSIBLY	4	0.21			
NOT NECESSARILY	7	0.37	PROBABLY	4	0.21			
SOMEWHAT	7	0.38	SOMETIMES	4	0.21			
VIRTUALLY	7	0.39	THEORETICALLY	4	0.21			
SOMETIMES	6	0.30	ESSENTIALLY	3	0.15			
TIPICALLY	6	0.30	NOT NECESSARILY	3	0.15			
COMMONLY	5	0.25	POTENCIALMENTE	3	0.15			
MOSTLY	5	0.25	ROUGHLY	3	0.15			
SLIGHTLY	5	0.25	FAIRLY	2	0.10			
PARTLY	4	0.20	PARTIALLY	2	0.10			
PROBABLY	4	0.20	APPARENTLY	1	0.05			
BROADLY	3	0.15	PARTLY	1	0.05			
ROUGHLY	3	0.15	NEARLY	1	0.05			
AROUND	2	0.10	TENTATIVELY	1	0.05			
APPARENTLY	1	0.05						
PRESUMABLY	1	0.05						
TOTAL	509	25.75	TOTAL	238	12.26	TOTAL	91	5.13

Table 15. Types and average frequency of boosting adverbs

Interestingly, the analysis of adjectives shows a similarity in the three sub-corpora. The analysis of the three sub-corpora reveals that '*possible*' (and '*posible*', its Spanish counterpart) was the major form of hedging adjective in the three groups of RAs. These tentative devices were rank fifth in the ENG and sixth in the SPENG sub-sets; but they are still a common way of expressing probability in the SP sub-corpus since they rank adjectives in the fourth place. Moreover, the ENG sub-corpus was the group with more adjectives frequently used whereas the SPENG sub-set used the least amount of these hedging devices.

	AVERAGE			AVERAGE			AVERAGE	
	ENG	FREQUENCY		SPENG	FREQUENCY		SP	FREQUENCY
POSSIBLE	65	3.29	POSSIBLE	43	2.21	POSIBLE	64	3.61
LIKELY	30	1.52	LIKELY	12	0.62	ALGUNOS	27	1.52
HYPOTHESIZED	29	1.47	TYPICAL	7	0.36	PROPUESTO	8	0.45
UNLIKELY	13	0.66	UNCERTAIN	4	0.21	BASTANTE	4	0.23
FEASIBLE	11	0.56	HYPOTHESIZED	3	0.15	PROBABLE	4	0.23
APPARENT	9	0.46	PLAUSIBLE	3	0.15	INCIERTO	1	0.06
UNCERTAIN	7	0.35	APPARENT	1	0.05			
PLAUSIBLE	5	0.25	FEASIBLE	1	0.05			
SUPPOSED	5	0.25						
UNCLEAR	4	0.20						
TYPICAL	2	0.10						
PRESUMED	1	0.05						
TOTAL	181	9.16	TOTAL	74	3.81	TOTAL	108	6.09

Table 16. Types and average frequency of boosting adjectives

The results of the analysis show that scholars writing in English as L1 preferred to use lexical verbs and modal verbs instead of hedging nouns. Moreover, the amount of nouns with a hedging function is lower than that of lexical verbs, modal verbs and adverbs in BM RAs written in English as L2. Moreover, Spanish scholars writing in Spanish rank hedging nouns as their fifth option.

	AVERAGE			AVERAGE			AVERAGE	
	ENG	FREQUENCY	SPENG	FREQUENCY	SP	FREQUENCY		
HYPOTHESIS	124	6.27	HYPOTHESIS	97	5.00	HIPÓTESIS	119	6.71
LIKELIHOOD	52	2.63	CONCLUSION	21	1.08	LIMITACIÓN	26	1.47
ESTIMATE	48	2.43	LIKELIHOOD	15	0.77	PROBABILIDAD	19	1.07
POSSIBILITY	17	0.86	LIMITATION	11	0.57	PROPUESTAS	10	0.56
ASSUMPTION	15	0.76	ASSUMPTION	7	0.36	TENDENCIA	10	0.56
ARGUMENT	13	0.66	IDEA	9	0.46	INTERPRETACIÓN	8	0.45
ATTEMPT	13	0.66	INTERPRETATION	9	0.46	PLANTEAMIENTO	4	0.23
VIEW	7	0.35	POSSIBILITY	9	0.46	PERCEPCIÓN	3	0.17
NOTION	6	0.30	VIEW	5	0.26	ARGUMENTOS	2	0.11
IDEA	5	0.25	ARGUMENT	4	0.21	IDEA	2	0.11
CONCLUSION	4	0.20	ATTEMPT	4	0.21	OBSERVACIONES	2	0.11
CONCEPTUALIZATION	2	0.10	ESTIMATE	1	0.05	CONCEPCIÓN	1	0.06
TOTAL	306	15.48	TOTAL	192	9.89	TOTAL	206	11.61

Table 17. Types and average frequency of boosting nouns

The most common noun in the three sub-corpora was ‘*hypothesis*’ (‘*hipótesis*’). However, there are differences in the use of hedging nouns. The ENG sub-corpus overused this lexico-grammatical feature in order to express tentativeness and speculation when writing BM RAs when compared to the SPENG sub-corpus. Furthermore, the ENG sub-corpus used almost three times more hedging nouns than the SPENG sub-corpus. As a matter of fact, the SPENG scholars used the least amount of tentative nouns compared to the ENG and SP sub-sets. However, there is only a slight difference in the use of these tentative features between the SPENG and the SP sub-corpus.

Finally, as can be seen in table 18, the hedging phrase most used by scholars writing in English as L1 and L2 is ‘*at least*’. The frequency of use of hedging phrases is very similar in the three sub-corpora. However, the SPENG sub-corpus used slightly more of these tentative devices than the ENG or SPENG sub-corpora. Although for the SP sub-corpus is the least used, the ENG and SPENG sub-sets chose to use it as their sixth option.

	AVERAGE			AVERAGE			AVERAGE	
	ENG	FREQUENCY		SPENG	FREQUENCY		SP	FREQUENCY
AT LEAST	33	11.67	AT LEAST	24	1.24	EN GENERAL	23	1.30
IN GENERAL	19	0.96	IN FACT	17	0.88	A MENUDO	6	0.34
FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE	4	0.20	IN GENERAL	14	0.72	EN PRINCIPIO	4	0.23
IN PART	3	0.15	CERTAIN LEVEL	12	0.62	CIERTO PUNTO	3	0.17
CERTAIN LEVEL	2	0.10	TO SOME EXTENT	5	0.26	EN TERMINOS GENERALES	3	0.17
TO OUR KNOWLEDGE	2	0.10	IN PART	2	0.10	EN GRAN PARTE	3	0.17
TO SOME EXTENT	2	0.10	A PRIORI	1	0.05	CIERTO NIVEL	2	0.11
A PRIORI	1	0.05	CERTAIN EXTENT	1	0.05	EN PARTE	2	0.11
IN BROAD TERMS	1	0.05	IN MOST CASES	1	0.05	EN ALGUNOS CASOS	2	0.11
IN THEORY	1	0.05	IN OUR OPINION	1	0.05	CIERTO NIVEL	1	0.06
			TO OUR KNOWLEDGE	1	0.05	ALGUNAS VECES	1	0.06
			FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE	1	0.05	CIERTA FORMA	1	0.06
TOTAL	68	3.44	TOTAL	80	4.12	TOTAL	51	2.87

Table 17. Types and average frequency of hedging phrases

5.3.2 Lexico-grammatical boosting features

In the analysis of lexico-grammatical boosting features in the three sub-corpora table 18 show some interesting results. First, the most common boosting category was lexical verbs for the three sub-corpora. Nonetheless, the different categories are used completely different in the SPENG sub-set from the ones scholars used when writing in English as L1 and Spanish as L1. In order to show commitment to their claims, the SPENG scholars used adverbs as the second most common lexico-grammatical booster, followed by modal verbs, adjectives, nouns, and the least used feature were phrases. In contrast, the SP writers used adjectives as their second option, followed by nouns, adverbs, modal verb, and finally boosting phrases. In addition, the analysis of Log-likelihood values between ENG and SPENG sub-corpora presents no significant difference in the use of modal verbs. Also, a difference at the level of $p < 0.05$ between engagement nouns used by the two groups show certain similarity, whereas commitment lexical verbs, adverbs, adjectives and phrases present a highly significant difference at the level of $p < 0.0001$. On the other hand, boosting adverbs and phrases present no significant differences between

the SP and SPENG groups. Moreover, certainty modal verbs do show a significant difference at the level of $p < 0.01$, contrary to boosting lexical verbs, adjectives and nouns which show a highly significant difference at the level of $p < 0.0001$

Table 18. Average frequency of lexico-grammatical realizations of boosters

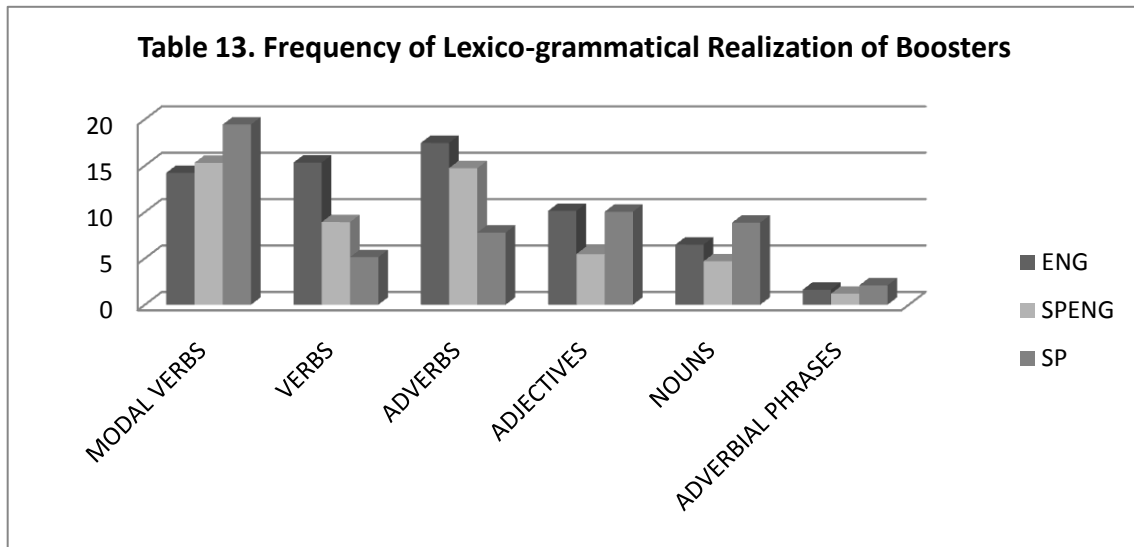
BOOSTERS	ENG	SPENG	LOG- LIKELIHOOD VALUE	SPENG	SP	LOG- LIKELIHOOD VALUE
MODAL VERBS	15.33	8.91	0.78	8.91	5.13	9.21**
VERBS	20.59	15.30	33.67***	15.30	19.44	19.05***
ADVERBS	17.45	14.32	55.67***	14.32	7.66	1.74
ADJECTIVES	10.12	5.46	27.69***	5.46	10.03	25.51***
NOUNS	6.48	4.69	5.64*	4.69	8.85	24.22***
PHRASES	1.62	1.18	19.76***	1.18	2.09	1.32

* Significant at the level of $p < 0.05$

** Significant at the level of $p < 0.01$

*** Highly significant at the level of $p < 0.0001$

Moreover, table 19 presents the amount of lexico-grammatical commitment devices used in the three sub-corpora. When comparing the ENG sub-corpus with the SPENG sub-corpus, we can pay attention to the fact that actually the ENG writers used more boosters than the SPENG writers in all lexico-grammatical categories. In the same way, the SP sub-corpus presents an outstanding number of average frequencies in the use of lexico-grammatical boosters. Moreover, the SP subset also demonstrates a higher use of lexico-grammatical boosters than the SPENG subset. Here, not only the SP writers used a larger amount of boosters than the SPENG writers, but also, they preferred to express commitment using a broader range of boosters than the SPENG ones. Nonetheless, the SPENG sub-corpus did use a higher amount of modal verbs as commitment devices than the SP sub-corpus, as the table shows.



As table 20 shows, there are also some similar uses of lexico-grammatical booster categories when analysing the frequency of use and distribution along the RAs in the three sub-corpora. First, it is worth to notice that the three sub-corpora used lexical verbs as the most common realized booster sub-category. However, if we examine the figure thoroughly, we can notice differences in the preferred lexico-grammatical boosting categories. The L1 English scholars employed adverbs, modal verbs, adjectives nouns and finally boosting phrases to express certainty. We can notice that these results are very alike with the ones from the SPENG sub-corpus since they ranked modal verbs as their second option, followed by adverbs, adjectives, nouns and boosting phrases.

Here, I decided to analyse thoroughly the use of lexico-grammatical boosting devices. The most frequent lexico-grammatical feature used in the three sub-corpora was lexical verbs. Apparently, not only writers preferred to use lexical verbs to withhold commitment, but also to express conviction.

	AVERAGE			AVERAGE			AVERAGE	
	ENG	FREQUENCY	SPENG	FREQUENCY	SP	FREQUENCY		FREQUENCY
SHOW	126	6.37	SHOW	128	6.59	MOSTRAR	53	2.99
DETERMINE	64	3.24	DETERMINE	32	1.65	DETERMINAR	46	2.59
DEMONSTRA	61	3.09	ESTABLISH	31	1.60	CONFIRMAR	36	2.03
REVEAL	48	2.43	CONFIRM	26	1.34	DESTACAR	33	1.86
ESTABLISH	20	1.01	REVEAL	24	1.24	COMPROBAR	23	1.30
CONFIRM	19	0.96	HIGHLIGHT	11	0.57	CORROBORAR	22	1.24
KNOW	15	0.76	KNOW	11	0.57	REVELAR	20	1.13
EMPHASIZE	12	0.61	CONCLUDE	10	0.52	DEMOSTRAR	19	1.07
HIGHLIGHT	12	0.61	DEMONSTRATE	10	0.52	EVIDENCIAR	19	1.07
HOLD	12	0.61	HOLD	6	0.31	CONCLUIR	18	1.01
CONCLUDE	7	0.35	PROVE	5	0.26	AFIRMAR	17	0.96
PROVE	5	0.25	ASSERT	2	0.10	PONER	8	0.45
ASSERT	4	0.20	EMPHASIZE	1	0.05	SABER	8	0.45
UNDERSCOR	2	0.10				RESALTAR	7	0.39
						ENFATIZAR	4	0.23
						VERIFICAR	4	0.23
						CONSTATAR	3	0.17
						ARROJAR	2	0.11
						PROBAR	2	0.11
						SUBRAYAR	1	0.06
TOTAL	281	14.22	TOTAL	297	15.30	TOTAL	345	19.44

Table 21. Types and average frequency of boosting lexical verbs

Moreover, SP sub-corpus presents more boosting occurrences than the SPENG sub-set. Further, this might occur because there are more types of boosting lexical verbs than in the SPENG sub-corpus. Table 20 shows that the lexical verb most used in the three sub-sets was 'show' ('mostrar' in Spanish). Furthermore, the lexical verb 'determine' (determinar) was the second most common boosting lexical verb used in the three groups.

Next, the use of modal verbs in SPENG sub-corpus is larger than ENG or SP sub-corpuses. SPENG writers used modal verbs as their second option whereas the ENG writers ranked modal verbs as their third option and the SP writers as their fourth.

	AVERAGE			AVERAGE			AVERAGE	
	ENG	FREQUENCY		SPENG	FREQUENCY		SP	FREQUENCY
WILL	177	8.95	WILL	97	5.00	DEBER	74	4.17
SHOULD	126	6.37	SHOULD	76	3.91	HABER QUE	10	0.56
						TENER QUE	7	0.39
TOTAL	303	15.33	TOTAL	173	8.91	TOTAL	91	5.13

Table 22. Types and average frequency of boosting modal verbs

Also, as table 22 shows, the most common boosting modal verb in the corpora is *'will'*. The ENG and SPENG writers preferred the use of this modal verb in order to express meaning with conviction. However, the ENG scholars used a larger amount of tokens per 10,000 words in their papers when compared to SPENG writers. Moreover, when comparing the SPENG and SP sub-sets, it is clear that L2 English writers used slightly less modal verbs than scholars writing in Spanish. In addition, boosting adverbs are used as the third option in the SPENG sub-corpus and the SP group, while it is ranked second in the ENG sub-set. The next table summarises adverbs that express high commitment to the proposition are slightly more common in the ENG sub-corpus than in the SPENG sub-set. On the other hand, there are more different types of boosting adverbs found in the SP sub-corpus than in the SPENG sub-group; however they are less frequent in the BM RAs written in Spanish. Moreover, when we compared the general use of boosting adverbs, the results go in line with Mur's (2007) results which show that adverbs are less frequently used in Spanish than in English (376).

	AVERAGE		AVERAGE			AVERAGE		
	ENG	FREQUENCY	SPENG	FREQUENCY		SP	FREQUENCY	
SIGNIFICANTLY	39	1.97	HIGHLY	31	5.82	SIGNIFICATIVAMENTE	18	1.01
HIGHLY	37	1.87	ESPECIALLY	30	1.55	PRINCIPALMENTE	16	0.90
PARTICULARLY	37	1.87	CLEARLY	18	0.93	SIEMPRE	11	0.62
INDEED	36	1.82	SIGNIFICANTLY	15	0.77	REALMENTE	9	0.51
STRONGLY	30	1.52	SUBSTANTIALLY	14	0.72	CLARAMENTE	8	0.45
CLEARLY	27	1.37	ACTUALLY	13	0.67	ESPECIALMENTE	8	0.45
CONSISTENTLY	18	0.91	PARTICULARLY	12	0.62	EXCLUSIVAMENTE	8	0.45
ESPECIALLY	18	0.91	MOSTLY	11	0.57	FUNDAMENTALMENTE	8	0.45
PRIMARILY	18	0.91	ALWAYS	9	0.46	NORMALMENTE	7	0.39
ACTUALLY	17	0.86	STRONGLY	8	0.41	EFFECTIVAMENTE	7	0.39
FULLY	15	0.76	LARGELY	8	0.41	GENERALMETE	6	0.34
LARGELY	10	0.51	WIDELY	6	0.31	SUSTANCIALMENTE	4	0.23
ESSENTIALLY	9	0.46	LARGELY	6	0.31	PARTICULARMENTE	4	0.23
WIDELY	9	0.46	NEVER	6	0.31	PREDOMINANTEMENTE	4	0.23
ALWAYS	6	0.30	FULLY	5	0.26	AMPLIAMENTE	3	0.17
MOSTLY	6	0.30	INDEED	5	0.26	PLENAMENTE	3	0.17
EXTENSIVELY	5	0.25	ESSENTIALLY	3	0.15	OBVIAMENTE	2	0.11
NEVER	3	0.15	CONSISTENTLY	2	0.10	TOTALMENTE	2	0.11
ENTIRELY	3	0.15	PRIMARILY	2	0.10	COMPLETAMENTE	2	0.11
SUBSTANTIALLY	2	0.10				DEFINITIVAMENTE	2	0.11
						ESENCIALMENTE	2	0.11
						NETAMENTE	1	0.06
						NUNCA	1	0.06
TOTAL	345	17.45	TOTAL	173	14.73	TOTAL	136	7.78

Table 23. Types and average frequency of boosting adverbs

The most common boosting adverb used by the SPENG sub-corpus was not alike the ENG or SP sub-sets. The most used tentative device was 'highly', which was used as the second most common option in the ENG sub-corpora. Nonetheless, there are no similarities in the use of adverbs applied to express uncertainty or lack of commitment in the BM RAs.

	AVERAGE		AVERAGE			AVERAGE		
	ENG	FREQUENCY	SPENG	FREQUENCY		SP	FREQUENCY	
IMPORTANT	105	5.3	IMPORTANT	74	3.81	SIGNIFICATIVA	78	4.40
NECESARY	22	1.11	NECESSARY	11	0.57	NECESARIO	36	2.03
CONSIDERABLE	21	1.06	CLEAR	8	0.41	IMPORTANTE	23	1.30
TRUE	18	0.91	SUBSTANTIAL	5	0.26	CLARO	7	0.39
SUBSTANTIAL	15	0.76	TRUE	3	0.15	CIERTO	7	0.39
CLEAR	8	0.40	CONSIDERABLE	2	0.10	DEFINITIVO	7	0.39
VAST	4	0.20	OBVIOUS	2	0.10	CONSIDERABLE	6	0.34
OBVIOUS	4	0.20	VAST	1	0.05	AMPLIO	4	0.23
EVIDENT	2	0.10				EVIDENTE	4	0.23
SURE	1	0.05				DEMOSTRADA	4	0.23
						PATENTE	2	0.11
TOTAL	200	10.12	TOTAL	106	5.46	TOTAL	178	10.03

Table 24. Types and average frequency of boosting adjectives

Table 24, on the other hand, shows the results of the analysis of boosting adjectives in the three sub-corpora. As can be seen, the ENG sub-corpora used commitment adjectives in a higher amount than the SPENG sub-set. The table shows similarities in the ENG and SPENG sub-corpora. Both groups ranked boosting adjectives as their fourth option to hesitate their claims. Although L2 English scholars used the least amount of adjectives, the SP sub-set did not find adjectives suitable to express engagement to their propositions placing adjectives as their penultimate option. In addition, the adjective with most occurrences in the ENG and SPENG sub-corpora was *'important'*. In the same way, both sub-corpora used *'necessary'* as the second boosting adjective most used in their texts. Furthermore, the SP sub-corpora used the adjective *'significativo(a)'* most commonly, but L1 Spanish writers also used *'necesario(a)'* (*'necessary'* in English) as the second adjective most employed in their BM RAs. Moreover, The ENG sub-corpora employed more adjectives as commitment devices with almost twice the number of adjectives per 1,000 words than the SPENG sub-corpora.

	AVERAGE			AVERAGE			AVERAGE	
	ENG	FREQUENCY		SPENG	FREQUENCY		SP	FREQUENCY
EVIDENCE	79	4.00	EVIDENCE	53	2.73	MUESTRA	76	4.28
MAJORITY	31	1.57	FACT	28	1.44	HECHO	30	1.69
FACT	12	0.61	CONCLUSION	7	0.36	MAYORÍA	25	1.41
ASSERTION	4	0.20	MAJORITY	3	0.15	EVIDENCIA	14	0.79
CONCLUSION	2	0.10				ARGUMENTOS	7	0.39
						DETERMINACIÓN	5	0.28
TOTAL	128	6.48	TOTAL	91	4.69	TOTAL	157	8.85

Table 25. Types and average frequency of boosting nouns

Likewise, as can be seen in table 25, there are more similarities in the use of nouns as engagement devices in ENG and SPENG sub-corpora per 10,000 than SPENG and SP sub-sets. Once and again the boosting noun most commonly used in both groups is the same, *'evidence'*. In this case the ENG

sub-set used a slight larger amount of tokens per 10,000 words than the SPENG sub-corpus. On the other hand, although the SP sub-corpora employed '*muestra*' as the most common boosting noun, it also used '*hecho*' ('*fact*', in English) as the second most used token such as the SPENG sub-corpus. However, the use of nouns to express engagement is less common in the BM RAs written in English. Both, SPENG and ENG sub-corpora used nouns as their fourth option, whereas the SP sub-set employed in the second place commitment nouns to boost their papers.

	AVERAGE			AVERAGE			AVERAGE	
	ENG	FREQUENCY	SPENG	FREQUENCY		SP	FREQUENCY	
IN FACT	20	1.01	IN FACT	17	0.88	EN GENERAL	20	1.13
FOR THE MOST PART	5	0.25	OF COURSE	5	0.26	EN * MAYORÍA	10	0.56
OF COURSE	4	0.20	IN EFFECT	1	0.05	DE HECHO	9	0.51
IN EFFECT	3	0.15				SIN DUDA	4	0.23
						EN GRAN MEDIDA	4	0.23
						EN GRAN PARTE	3	0.17
						DE MANERA SIGNIFICATIVA	3	0.17
						EN EFECTO	2	0.11
						SIN LUGAR A DUDAS	2	0.11
						EN BUENA MEDIDA	1	0.06
						POR LO GENERAL	1	0.06
TOTAL	32	1.62	TOTAL	23	1.18	TOTAL	59	3.33

Table 26. Types and average frequency of boosting phrases

Finally, when analysing table 26, we can notice that boosting phrases are more common in the SP sub-corpus than in the SPENG sub-set. Likewise, the ENG sub-corpus also used slightly more boosting phrases than L2 English writers. However, the ENG and SPENG sub-corpora used '*in fact*' as the most common phrase to commit to their sentences. The latter goes in line with Mur's (2007) results of the most common boosting phrases in her corpus written in English. Also they used '*in effect*' as the least common phrase to boost. There are no similarities in the use of boosting phrases between SPENG and SP sub-corpora as the table shows. Moreover, it is important to state that the three sub-sets listed last the phrases that express certainty.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 An overview of the differences in the use of hedges and boosters

The present Master Thesis has revealed important cross-cultural and cross-linguistic differences in the use of hedges and boosters. First, it is important to notice that hedges in the ENG sub-corpus and the SPENG sub-corpus occurred significantly more often than in SP sub-corpus. However, Spanish writers seem to be particularly as committed to their claims as their Spanish colleagues writing in English. In addition, native scholars writing in English used more boosting devices than L2 English writers when persuading their readership.

As explained in the previous section, the differences between scholars using English as L1 and L2 when using hedges and boosters are statistically highly significant. On the other hand, scholars writing in English as L2 used slightly less boosters than their matching Spanish version published in national journals, but no significant difference was found. Here, one may argue that 'culture' represents a significant variable in the transmission of new knowledge in this specific disciplinary community. Moreover, the language variable appears to barely affect the level of authorial stance. The Spanish scholars writing for national-based journals had a significant difference in the use of hedges when compared to the SPENG sub-corpus. Specifically, there is a significant difference at the level of $p < 0.05$ in the use of hedges. Interestingly enough, comparing ENG and SPENG sub-corpus differences were highly statistically significant at the level of $p < 0.0001$ in the use of hedges and boosters.

Here, we can notice that the differences might be due to the fact that English writers threatened and avoid the so-called 'Face Threatening Acts' (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Vassileva, 2001; Moreno, 2010) whereas Spanish community writes specifically to their peers in national-based journals. L2 English writers, then, might transfer their national-based writing norms when publishing their papers in international journals. On the other hand, the underuse of hedging and boosting devices in papers written by L2 English writers might be link to the purpose of publishing in international journals and get recognition internationally, which leads them to use less interpersonal devices because of the pressure they feel as non-native speakers. Also, they probably feel a lack of facility in English as a second language when writing their papers (Mauranen et al., 2010; Guangwei and Feng, 2011). The underuse of boosters by the non-native English writers is a strategy that would place this group of writers following the same conventions as native writers in Spanish, since it has been concluded that L1 Spanish writers do not use as many metadiscourse devices as their English peers, due to the difference in conventions and expectations which govern them and the kind of readership it is entitled to. As Mauranen (2010) claims it is important to analyze language in context-dependent settings which would explain the parameters that determine the writers' choices when using linguistic resources in the texts.

On the other hand, non-native writers in L2 English employed more hedges than their Spanish contra parts. However, Anglophone scholars used a higher amount of hedges than their non-native peers writing in English. The overuse of hedges devices by English native scholars might be caused by English culture, which is considered to be reader-oriented instead of writer-

oriented (Kaplan, 1989). In the same way, the BM RAs published in the English-medium by non-native scholars used hedges more frequently than those published by scholars writing in Spanish. In this case, the overuse of non-native English writers might have occurred because L2 writers try to follow English standards of writing varying their use of hedging devices. That is why they present a higher level of hedging interpersonal metadiscourse devices than Spanish language, deemed to be writer-oriented.

The cultural differences in the use of hedges might occur because of dissimilar conventions both languages have. On the one hand, English preference to employ more hedges and to be more tentative than Spanish is expected as a sign of respect to others' work as well as to show modesty. On the other hand, Spanish language tends to be more 'straightforward' and the authors do not need to use so many interpersonal devices to promote themselves. L1 Spanish scholars follow this convention because their intended readers are usually peers, since they only publish in national journals.

6.2 Hedges and boosters across rhetorical sections

6.2.1 Hedges and boosters in Introduction sections

When analyzing the use of hedges and boosters in Introduction sections in the three sub-corpora, it is interesting to notice that the three of them showed a preference for hedging resources. This trend may be explained by the rhetorical nature of the Introduction section. As Hyland (1998a) advocates the

use of this metadiscoursal device in the Introduction sections, it is in order to 'establish the significance and novelty of the research and its place in the area of shared knowledge to which the article contributes' (190). This rhetorical section introduces the research niche to the audiences by indicating the gap, raising questions or extending a new finding. In order to do the latter, writers have to evaluate prior research, to make prudent inferences from them. The use of hedges is to assist the writer in establishing that the field is lively and significant and that the statements to be made are meaningful and have important implications.

Example 1:

In this paper, we therefore attempt to address this important topic that has been largely neglected by past studies. We focus exclusively on a large sample of firms that can be clearly regarded as late entrants. We then attempt to examine and explain the differences among these late movers in their ability to grab a share of the market in spite of strong competition from firms that entered much earlier. (INTRODUCTION. ENGBM 19).

As it can be seen in the example above, from the L1 English sub-corpus, the expressions of tentativeness lies in the writer's concern to anticipate what might be advantageous to him. In this case, the writer is not only protecting himself in case he cannot cover all topics in his RA, but also he announces his research purpose using hedges to show modesty and humility.

On the other hand, when analyzing the use of boosters in the Introduction sections, it is important to mention that there were no significant differences in the use of this rhetorical device in sub-corpora written in English. However, this rhetorical section shows different trends in the two

languages under analysis. The SPENG and SP sub-corpus had differences in the use of boosters highly significant at the level of $p < 0.0001$. This clearly means that when writing in English, scholars use boosters in Introduction sections to address the international community where it is deemed to be highly dialogic and promotional. The example below shows the use of boosterism for self-promotion:

Example 2:

However, if the selection criteria are not well defined, many public programmes will fail to reach their targeted populations (Blanes and Busom, 2004; Heijs, 2005b). This highlights the importance of clearly setting out the public sector evaluation criteria and procedures for selecting and funding R&D projects. (INTRODUCTION SPENG 28)

Example 2 illustrates the use of commitment devices from the L2 English scholars. The emphasizees here are not the most common ones in the boosting lexical verbs or adverbs categories, but they are used to support the research in course based on earlier claims establishing common ground. In this case, there is a clear use of devices to express conviction and the confidence on the process to be done in the paper.

After analyzing this section, it could be concluded that in the Introduction, scholars tend to use more hedging devices. Authors tend to use several hedging devices along the three moves in the CARS model (Swales, 1990) in order to emphasise the importance of the area without neglecting others work and highlights the purpose of the paper. In order to do the previous, scholars make use of many hedging devices to respond to the rhetorical norms typical in this discipline. The previous takes researchers to increase authorial comments,

to persuade their readers and to defend the veracity of their claims. Also, it is important to notice that the highly significant difference between the SPENG and SP sub-corpus when using hedging and boosting elements may be due to the change of audience, international and national respectively.

6.2.2 Hedges and boosters in Methods sections.

Overall results after examining the average frequency of hedges and boosters in the Methods sections showed highly significant differences in the three subsets of texts. All in all, this rhetorical section presents different trends in the two cultural contexts and languages under analysis. First, results of the use of hedging devices show that ENG scholars present an overuse of hedging expressions whereas there is a lower use of hedges in the SPENG sub-corpus. As a matter of fact, while the L1 English scholars used more hedges in these sections, the L2 English scholars used the least amount of hedging devices in this rhetorical section. Specifically, scholars writing in English as L1 appear to model the Methods standards of proving that their procedures are highly routinised, with no room for variability using persuasive devices, in this case hedges. Below, there is an example of the previous:

Example 3:

Then, we could estimate the model with the full sample as if censoring had not taken place. (METHODS ENGBM 27)

On the other hand, when comparing the use of hedging devices between the SP and the SPENG sub-corpus, still there is an overuse in the use of tentative expression by the L1 Spanish writers. The difference in the average

frequency between the sub-sets written by Spanish scholars is significant at the level of $p < 0.001$. In this case, there is a lower use of expressions to withhold commitment to their propositions reliability perhaps because they need to use tentative devices to draw attention to the boundaries of the procedures in the Methods sections.

Additionally, there are also cultural differences in the use of emphasizees when comparing ENG and SPENG sub-corpora. Differences in the use of boosters between L1 English scholars and L2 English writers were highly significant at the level of $p < 0.0001$. The greater use of boosting devices by L1 English scholars could be explained by the presence of an international readership and the need of self-promotion in BM journals. Moreover, if we compare the use of boosters in SP and SPENG sub-corpora, differences in the use of boosters were highly significant as well at the level of $p < 0.0001$. In this case, scholars using Spanish as L1 may have chosen to boost their claims in order to highlight the accuracy of the methodology used to carry out the study whereas the SPENG writers preferred a lower amount of boosting devices when presenting their methods sections. Examples 4 and 5 present the boosting devices used by scholars to show assertion with the purpose of stressing the accuracy of the methods used when implementing the study.

Example 4:

Para ello fue necesario determinar el grado de utilización del enfoque estructural y el de los recursos y capacidades. (METHODS. SPBM 21)

Example 5:

For each case, I established a time period whose last year was the year before that of the lockout. (METHODS. SPENGBM 1)

As a conclusion, the Methods sections showed the higher amount of hedging and boosting elements in the ENG sub-corpus, whereas the SPENG sub-set used the least amount of interpersonal metadiscourse devices in this section. The overall results show that the present findings corroborate that Spanish writers prefer to use a lower amount of persuasive elements in order to focus on the idea of objectiveness and accuracy typical of this rhetoric section.

6.2.3 Hedges and boosters in the Results sections

The Results sections show different trends in the use of hedging devices, but only language variation when boosting. On the one hand, there are highly significant differences in the use of hedges between the three sub-sets at the level of $p < 0.0001$. On the other hand, the L1 Spanish scholars and L2 English writers seemed to have no significant difference in the use of boosters. When analyzing the use of hedges in the three sub-sets, the ENG sub-corpus had the highest amount of hedges occurrences, twice the amount of hedging devices in the SPENG sub-corpus. The underuse of hedges by Spanish scholars writing in English compared to the L1 English writers might be explained by the intercultural fact that Spanish authors show a preference for non-modalised discourse, that is, a lower use of metadiscourse devices (Vázquez, 2010).

Example 6:

El R2 ajustado es alrededor del 63%, lo que indica que el conjunto de variables independientes «explica» un porcentaje relevante de la varianza del output. (RESULTS SPBM 1)

As can be seen in the previous example, the Results sections simply describe the results obtained during the study. However, writers do use hedging devices as a way of avoiding misinterpretation of their findings as well as protecting their exposure to future criticism. Also, the sub-sets written in English present a higher amount of hedges to avoid 'Face-Threatening acts' by their international readers.

However, in the use of boosters in the Results section, there are cultural similarities in the sub-sets written by Spanish writers. Both sub-corpora underuse booster devices in this section. Spanish writers used fewer boosters perhaps because they do not have the need to boost their results to highlight the accuracy of the methods used due to the national based audience. Moreover, the boosters used in the sub-sets written in English are conveying objectivity and accuracy instead of promotionalism. The next example can illustrate the previous:

Example 7:

This result clearly supports Hypothesis 1a, which establishes that R&D intensity positively influences related diversification. (RESULTS SPENGBM 27)

The function of the previous booster is to express seriousness, accuracy and objectivity. As Swales (2004) advocates, the Results sections should present the information so there should be no need for explanations.

In sum, the Results section showed differences in the use of hedges elements in the three sub-corpora. However, the use of expressions to convey commitment seems to be more alike between SPENG and SP sub-sets. These

results show a cross-cultural variation, since L2 English writers seem to use a lower amount of hedges due to their preference for non-modalised dissertation, which can also be proved in the lower amount of boosting devices used by Spanish writers.

6.2.4 Hedges and boosters in the Discussion sections

The Discussion section presented was not homogeneous in the three subsets, reflecting significant differences in the use of hedges and partly in the use of boosters. Firstly, L1 English scholars preferred the use of hedges, as well as the L2 English researchers. On the other hand, scholars using Spanish as L1 used more boosters than the L2 English scholars in the Discussion sections. The average frequencies of hedges (table 5) showed a highly significant variation in the ENG and SPENG sub-sets as well as in the SPENG and SP sub-corpora. As the previous facts demonstrate, the L2 English scholars used fewer hedges, distancing themselves from the L1 English writers' standards, which show a cultural variation when using hedges in Discussion sections. Interestingly, the amount of hedges used by the L2 English scholars is lower compared to that of their L1 Spanish counterparts as well. However, L2 English writers did use more hedging than boosting devices in this section. Although they tried to avoid assertion here, still they did not use the corresponding amount of hedges L1 English writers employed, perhaps because of the difficulty in using these metadiscourse devices due to the fact that Spanish is a writer-oriented language.

Example 8:

Essentially, then, the scaling of the control measure had apparently shifted as a result of the intervention experiences. (DISCUSSION. ENGBM 13)

Example 9:

The econometric approach that we propose here may be a helpful benchmark for future research aimed at evaluating other implications of the resource-based view, such as the relationship between diversification decisions, resources, and corporate performance. (DISCUSSION. 27)

Moreover, when analyzing the use of assertive expressions, L1 English scholars only had a significant difference with L2 English writers at the level of $p < 0.05$. The underuse of commitment expressions by the L2 English writers might have occurred because they avoid assertion here to protect themselves and indicate their doubts being them extremely cautious (Hyland, 1998a).

Example 10:

Los resultados obtenidos corroboran las premisas señaladas por los teóricos de la Administración. (DISCUSSION. SPBM 2)

Moreover, there was a highly significant variation at the level of $p < 0.0001$ in the SPENG and SP sub-corpora. Here, the overuse of boosting devices by Spanish writers can have at least three explanations. First, Kaplan's (1988) theory of writer-oriented languages has a rhetorical implication in the use of interpersonal metadiscourse in Spanish as Mendiluce's (2004) dissertation shows, a higher use of commitment devices in Spanish papers were found when comparing them with papers written in English. Second, the results go in line with Mendiluce and Hernandez (2005), who advocates that, in the

Discussion section, Spanish writers favoured the use of assertive devices, whereas English language prefers to avoid commitment to the propositions. Finally, since the Spanish BM RAs are written for a smaller and homogenous readership, Spanish RAs, which are published nationally, tend to do less cautious statements.

6.3 Contrastive analysis of hedges in the corpora.

6.3.1. Hedging lexical verbs

As I have previously stated, when analyzing the distribution of hedges devices in the three sub-corpora, I decided to analyze them according to the lexico-grammatical feature they were used. Firstly, it is important to mention that lexical verbs were the most common realization of hedging in the three subsets, different from Mur (2007) results. As Hyland (1998a) asserts, lexical verbs are the most common means writers use to mitigate their claims. He also states that lexical verbs 'represent the most transparent means of coding the subjectivity of the epistemic source' (119). This lexical-grammatical realization can be used to fulfil a hedging function in specific contexts:

Example 11:

Results indicated that neither companies in Respondent Sample 1 nor companies in Respondent Sample 2 were significantly different from companies in the larger sample frame of Forbes companies on these characteristics (p-values range from 0.144 to 0.830). (METHODS. ENGBM 24).

Example 12:

First, throughout the paper it is assumed that the motivations of the questionnaire respondents are the prevailing motivations within the company. Correcting this problem would involve collecting (DISCUSSION. SPENGBM 3)

Example 13:

Estos resultados obtenidos sugieren una serie de implicaciones para la gestión de Marketing. (DISCUSSION. ENGBM 20)

The previous examples include reporting verbs (example 1, 3) as well as cognitive verbs (example 2). As Mur (2007) states, the first ones leave some open space for diverse results or arguments in future studies, whereas the latter are used as personal propositions and tend to be more general (322, 323). Examples 1 and 3 are a clear prove of the tentative nature of the verb '*suggest*' ('*sugerir*') by implying some uncertainty of human evaluation and judgment (Hyland, 1998a:120). They suggest some speculative intention in the conjecture of a truth proposition, in this case, the results of the analysis. In sum, lexical verbs are the most common category in the three sub-sets, this occurs perhaps because of the number of ways to express non-factual statements. However, there is a highly significant difference in the use of hedging lexical verbs between ENG and SPENG sub-corpuses whereas there is only a difference of $p < 0.05$ between SPENG and SP groups. This may simply reflect the cultural similarities both groups have and how they influence their writing, without compromising the disciplinary writing norms.

6.3.2. Hedging modal verbs

Modal verbs, which function as expressions that lack of commitment to a sentence or utterance, were the second most common lexico-grammatical feature used by the three groups after verbs in BM RAs. The prototypical use of modal verbs as hedging devices is usually larger in this classification as some studies have proven (Mur, 2007; Varttala, 2001, Hyland 1998b). However, Hyland (1998a) claims that some studies have also proved that the distribution of modal verbs is different according to the context (105) explaining the differences with previous studies of hedging devices.

Example 14:

As noted above, one might argue that CEOs naturally tend to reconstitute social ties to powerful exchange partners without necessarily having any strategic intent because those partners tend to constitute a larger portion of the focal firm's purchases or sales. (RESULTS ENGBM 24)

Example 15:

This evidence may help us to globally understand and bring to a common point the extant evidence on the relationship. (DISCUSSION SPENGBM 24)

Example 16:

Podemos afirmar que las adquisiciones simbióticas y de absorción tienen un mayor nivel de integración que las adquisiciones de preservación. (RESULTS SP 8)

Moreover, as it was expected, in most of the cases the modal verb employed was 'may' as example 14 shows. In both of the sub-sets written in English, the use of 'may' was high, perhaps because this modal verb is

considered to have a lower degree of possibility than the others. This is consistent with Hyland's (1998a) and Butler's (1990) results. As Hyland mentions in his book, the modal verb '*may*' is considered as the most prototypical hedge in RAs explaining the concurrency across the two sub-corpora. On the other hand, it is important to mention that the modal verbs '*could*' and '*can*' sometimes expressed an ability meaning, making it difficult to discernment in the analysis. However, statements where '*can*' was used in its ability function and '*could*' expressed past ability were not taken into account in the analysis.

It is important to notice that there are no hedging modal verbs as such in Spanish, there are only auxiliary verbs and verbal periphrases which can function as equivalents. Furthermore, in the Spanish texts, most of the modal hedging used by Spanish writers was *poder + infinitive*. As Mur (2007) states, this is the only periphrasis included in the Spanish corpus to carry out the hedging function. Moreover, this Spanish hedge, as well as '*can*', can express doubt or possibility, but also permission and ability. Although no occurrences expressing permission were found, some occurrences expressing ability appeared in the analysis, but they were not included in the counts.

When analyzing the use of modal verbs between ENG and SPENG subsets, results show a highly significant difference at the level of $p < 0.0001$. The underuse of modal verbs by L2 English scholars presents no difference with the tentative modal verbs used by L1 Spanish. This proves that L2 English writers and L1 Spanish scholars have no significant difference when using modal verbs. This cultural factor that affects SPENG scholars writing could be related with the cultural fact that Spanish writers tend to be less cautious when

expressing the implications or deductions of their study due to the readership they write for.

6.3.3. Hedging semi-auxiliary verbs and semi-modals

In hedging analyses such as Mur's (2007), Salager-Meyer's (1994) and Vassileva's (1998, 2001), the use of verbs like '*seem*' and '*appear*' were classified in a different category due to the different semantic and syntactic characteristics they have. Their semantic load is lower than the one a lexical verb have, but they cannot function as modal verbs.

Example 17:

Thus, social environmental factors do appear to have an effect on organizational hiring decisions. (DISCUSSION. ENGBM 6)

Example 18:

These savings banks were characterized as contradictory because, although they give an HR strategic vision a high score, the practices they implement do not seem appropriate for creating and developing a strategic HR base. (RESULTS. SPENGBM 11)

Example 19:

Los hechos parecen demostrar que la capacitación adecuada de los empleados no sólo forma par te del sistema de incentivación sino que se convierte en una pieza esencial de la eficiencia y eficacia en la gestión de las administraciones públicas. (RESULTS SPBM14)

The three previous examples refer to perception of the study. The three verbs try to justify their evidences using the verbs from this category. As Hyland (1998a) indicates, they are used to distinguish sensory evidence from categorical assertion using usually a visual sense (125). The overall results

from the analysis show also that ENG sub-corpus used the least amount of semi-auxiliary and modals. Moreover, this result goes in line with previous analyses of hedges in BM RAs, such as Mur's analysis. In addition, although the SPENG sub-corpus results showed more frequency in the use of this lexico-grammatical feature, there is only a slight difference in the results which seem to be more alike the ENG sub-set results. According to these, although BM scholars writing internationally in English need to cautiously and protectively indicate the probable difficulties and inaccuracies of their papers, they prefer to hedge their research by other lexico-grammatical features when writing.

6.3.4. Hedging adverbs

The results presented on table 15 show that hedging adverbs are a lot more frequently included in the SPENG sub-corpora in order to smooth an argument whereas the SP sub-corpus occurrences were significantly lower. As a matter of fact, hedging adverbs are quite unusual in the Spanish texts when compared to the English ones. This might be because L2 English writers used 31 different kinds of hedging adverbs, while the L1 Spanish scholars used only 14. In Mur's (2007) analysis of adverbial hedges, she classifies this section in two groups: approximators and doubt or possibility adverbs (329). First, approximators are devices employed not only to reference propositional content, but also to respond writers' needs to present information using a sort of imprecise or vague language (Varttala, 2001; Salager-Meyer, 1994; Mur, 2007). The previous can be better understood in the next examples:

Example 20:

Whereas the CEO is often the most influential and visible leader in a firm, many firms also have powerful board chairs who receive full-time compensation and participate in strategic decisions. (METHODS. ENGBM 3)

Example 21

Data from interviews suggest that before 1998 about 90 per cent of the managers received bonuses. (RESULTS. SPENGBM 25)

Example 22

De forma complementaria, si se comparan los coeficientes estandarizados de ambos modelos, se aprecia que la marca tiene un efecto aproximadamente similar sobre los atributos funcionales y simbólicos del producto. (INTRODUCTION. SPBM 17)

In the previous examples, writers include approximators when the information is not highly accurate or when they believe they do not have the necessary information to write assertive statements. They show a group of tentative adverbs that indicate a certain generalization of the statements in order to hedge the data. On the other hand, adverbs of doubt or possibility are used by writers, who intend to be more cautious expressing tentativeness with adverbs. The following are two examples of the use of adverbs expressing doubt or possibility in the corpora:

Example 23:

We tentatively ran the model and confirmed that, in effect, variables that were not significant either in negative binomial or linear models appeared as significant in the Poisson. (RESULTS. SPENGBM 29)

Example 24:

Debido probablemente al bajo número de categorías en las que ubicar las respuestas, se observó una marcada tendencia a la concentración de las respuestas afirmativas en la categoría intermedia 2 «rara vez, con poca frecuencia». (METHODS. SPBM 1)

The purpose of these epistemic adverbs is just to reduce the effect on the force of the modified verb. The three examples convey in which sense the propositions are true and express certain doubt from the writer. Example 23 presents an adverb that expresses certain ambivalence and tentativeness with the process to carry out. Example 24, on the other hand, expresses a certain doubt on the statement presented by speculating the reasons and probable influence on the results.

The similarities in the use of the most common hedging adverbs in the two sub-sets written in English and the overuse of these tentative devices, it shows a clear linguistic influence on the Spanish writers when writing in English as L2. L2 English scholars need to express their propositions in a rhetorically appropriate and persuasive manner so they can prevent future disapproval of their readership.

6.3.5. Hedging adjectives

Adjectives in this category are used to reduce the writer's level of commitment to a proposition. As Hyland (1998a) argues, hedging adjectives are more common in speech acts and they are less employed in RAs. The following

examples show the writers' tentativeness using this kind of lexico-grammatical features:

Example 26:

Quality of reemployment is also hypothesized to negatively impact problem-focused coping (path m), because satisfactorily reemployed individuals have no need to engage in the job search behaviours that comprise problem-focused coping. (INTRODUCTION. ENGBM 28)

Example 27:

The possible specifications were estimated and, taking as a basis the maximum likelihood reached as the criterion of choice, we opted for the version whose results are summarized in Table 1. (RESULTS. SPENGBM 9).

Example 28:

Aunque una posible explicación a este resultado pueda ser que las empresas de nuestra muestra disponen de Tecnologías de la Información más productivas que las empresas de otros estudios empíricos, nos decantamos más por explicar este resultado simplemente a la luz de distintas formas de medir la inversión en Tecnologías de la Información. (DISCUSSION. SPBM 1).

Also, the analysis of the three sub-corpora reveals that *possible* (and '*posible*', its Spanish counterpart) was the major form of hedging adjective in the three RAs. Hyland's (1998a) results also present '*possible*' ('*posible*') as a familiar hedge with a really high number of occurrences to express epistemic modality (131). '*Possible*' can have both, root and epistemic meanings (Hyland, 1998a; Mur, 2007), similar to that discussed previously in relation to some modal verbs ('*can*', '*may*', '*might*', '*could*'). However, I will only take into account the latter and cases like the next one were excluded from the counts:

Example 29:

Asimismo, es posible analizar si algunos factores que no se han asociado claramente con una actuación medioambiental concreta, tales como la incertidumbre sobre los temas ambientales, pueden influir de forma diferente sobre cada una de estas dimensiones. (DISCUSSION. SPBM 13)

Furthermore, the use of the epistemic adjective *hypothesized* may occurred only in this type of RAs due to the fact that, as Mur (2007) advocates, studies within BM are usually based on hypotheses established by the authors and the following confirmation or refutation of them. Moreover, it seems that the use of hedging adjectives is not the most used in English texts. These tentative devices were rank fifth in the ENG and SPENG sub-sets; but they are still a common way of expressing probability in the SP sub-corpus since they rank them third in the expression of tentativeness. However it is important to notice that the SP sub-corpora employed more hedging adjectives than the SPENG sub-corpus, although the latter had a wider variety of these tentative devices.

6.3.6 Hedging nouns

The next nouns found in the corpus can be viewed as expressions of meaning uncategorically as well as rhetorical strategies included to withhold commitment to the different findings or argumentations. The following examples illustrate writers' restrain from full commitment to a proposition using a noun:

Example 30:

In summary, our view is that the performance effects of business-level strategy (strategy content) and analytical comprehensiveness (strategy process) are moderated by environmental dynamism and organizational structure. (INTRODUCTION. ENGBM 10)

Example 31:

The assumption of exogeneity of the instruments is tested with Hansen's J statistic, which is consistent in the presence of heteroskedasticity. (RESULTS. SPENGBM 30)

Example 32:

Uno de los factores más importantes a la hora de determinar su éxito es la adecuada gestión del proceso de integración. En línea con este argumento, también resulta clave estimar con la mayor precisión posible el ajuste potencial que puede alcanzarse con la operación, con el fin de minimizar la diferencia en relación con el ajuste realmente obtenido. (DISCUSSION. SPBM 28)

Moreover, there are some nouns included in table 17 which are used as sentence-initial (e.g. *essentially, observation, argument, idea, hypothesis, etc* in English and *concepción, vision, etc* in Spanish) such as in example 32. These nouns sum up the preceding statement in order to show readers the way to interpret it, in other words it is necessary previous information to contextualize and understand the meaning of the noun. The proposition can be defined as an argument, an idea, an observation, etc (Mur, 2007). Also, it is important to mention that in the three sub-corpora the most common hedging noun is *hypothesis* (or *hipótesis* in Spanish). Mur (2007) explains the overuse of this epistemic noun claiming that the kind of empirical research that this discipline develops needs to determine variables and confirm the suppositions which are coded as hypotheses, which then are tested by researchers.

6.3.7 Hedging phrases

The use of phrases as rhetorical strategies that take part in the discourse are examined in this Master Thesis. These phrases hedge propositions in which they are included, that is why they appear in the analysis. Moreover, results show that the SPENG sub-set was the one with more occurrences. However, there is no significant difference in the use of these devices between ENG and SPENG sub-corpus whereas the SPENG and SP sub-sets show a significant difference at the level of $p < 0.05$. The next two examples analyze the use of this hedging lexico-grammatical category:

Example 33:

The results of our study indicated that firms to some extent use information from their external social environments to identify and evaluate prospective TMT members. (DISCUSSION. ENGBM 6)

Example 34:

In our opinion, all these differences will enable us to improve our knowledge and provide a new contribution on industry evolution much more realistic than past empirical studies. (INTRODUCTION. SPENGBM 1)

As can be seen in example 33, the author prefers to be cautious when exposing the results from the study. The results and final conclusions that indicate some uncertainties are to be hedged. This occurs perhaps because they need to protect themselves against the dangers of overstatement and preventing from generalizing the outcome of the study, setting limits on reliability. In the next example however, the writer seems to negotiate a position with the reader by establishing the claim as an opinion and leaving it open to ratification using personal attributions to do that (Hyland, 1998a: 182). Hyland

states that this personal alignment shifts the interpretive frame and signals that the claim is open to the reader's judgment.

The amount of hedging phrases used in the three sub-corpora was not remarkable; nonetheless, their hedging role is evident in all the examples found in the corpus.

6.4 Contrastive analysis of boosters in the corpora

6.4.1 Boosting lexical verbs

Different to the expressions of tentativeness previously studied, writers also use boosting devices in order to allow them to express meaning with conviction and commitment. Here, I focus in the use of boosting resources, specifically boosting lexical verbs. It is important to notice that as highlighted in the hedging section, lexical verbs also constitute the most common realization of boosting in the three subsets. The use of lexical verbs such as the ones in the examples below guide readers to see, that the purpose of the study has been or will be accomplished. They all express certainty or full commitment to the propositions they go with.

Example 35:

We conclude from this that retention of top management of the acquired firm should be higher when management reputation is strong. (INTRODUCTION. ENGBM 9)

Example 36:

This result confirms H1 and indicates that ethical motivations act as a trigger that initiates the certification process, whereas they are not so important when a company starts to think about the convenience of ISO14001 for the future. (RESULTS. SPENGBM 3)

Example 37:

Los resultados muestran que las prácticas de recursos humanos tienen una incidencia positiva en el desarrollo de la capacidad de aprendizaje en las empresas del sector químico español. (DISCUSSION. SPBM 7)

Moreover, as the examples above show, there are different levels of 'strength' in the lexical verbs found in the corpus and included in table 21. In Example 35, we can notice that the author expresses just a high degree of confidence in the reported statement, whereas example 36 expresses a total conviction in the proposition given.

All in all, table 21 shows that the three sub-corpora present a trend in the results. There is an overuse of commitment lexical verbs in the SP sub-set when compared to the SPENG sub-set. Here, there is a highly significant difference between both groups at the level of $p < 0.0001$. Additionally, the SPENG sub-corpus employed more boosting lexical verbs than the ENG sub-set. These two groups present a highly significant difference at the level of $p < 0.0001$ as well. However, the three of them preferred this lexico-grammatical category in order to commit and show conviction to their statements. Interestingly, the three sub corpora used the same two lexical verbs as the most frequent hedge in this particular lexico-grammatical category. This proves that, in this case, there are neither cultural nor linguistic differences in the two most

common verbs used. The previous might confirm the existence of well-established RA writing conventions in the business management disciplinary domain that influence the use of boosting devices. These conventions then, influence the decisions writers' make when using commitment devices to persuade readers, promote their papers and to show conviction to the new knowledge presented.

6.4.2 Boosting modal verbs

The modal verbs that help writers to express meaning with a certain level of confidence are studied in this section. There are only two modal verbs that fulfill this function in the sub-sets written in English, '*will*' and '*should*'. Both sub-corpora written in English preferred the use of '*will*' as the most boosting modal verb over '*should*'. In addition, there is no significant difference between these two groups when calculating their log-likelihood. On the other hand, there is a highly significant difference between SP and SPENG sub-sets. This might occur because of the need L2 English writers have to include more frequently conviction modal verbs in their hypothesis, whether the L1 Spanish scholars do not make a large use of them.

Moreover, it is important to explain that the use of '*will*' expressing futurity was not included in the counts. The next two examples show the difference previously stated, example 38 is considered as a boosting modal, whereas the second is not taken into account:

Example 38:

We expect, then, that reputation will have a positive effect on post-transaction outcomes including satisfaction. (INTRO ENGBM 9)

Example 39:

This other calibration procedure will be referred to as APPROACH B. (METHODS SPENG 8)

The use of '*will*' in the statements of hypothesis or the process is done usually to refer to the process that takes place in the methods sections (as in example 39) being very frequent in the RAs in English. On the other hand, the use of '*should*' to express extreme possibility or even a feasible conclusion (Mur, 2007) is also found in the BM RAs in English. As it has been previously mentioned, there are no modal verbs *per se* in Spanish. There are only some auxiliary verbs and periphrases which are analyzed in the present study. It was taken into the counts only instances with an epistemic meaning of logical necessity or deduction which are presented in the next example:

Example 40:

A demás, el output debe ser normalizado debido a la función de activación empleada. (INTRODUCTION. SPBM 5)

Example 41:

For low levels of multimarket contact, an increase in the degree of overlap should imply a reduction in profits, and the opposite should be found for high values of the variable. (DISCUSSION. SPENG 24)

In the previous examples, the use of '*should*' (41) and the Spanish equivalent '*deber*' (40) not only express duty and obligation but also a rational

conjecture (Mur, 2007). Moreover, it is important to mention that no personal obligation expressed by '*must*' was taken into account in the analysis of the corpora written in English.

6.4.3 Boosting adverbs

When analyzing the use of adverbs as devices that express commitment, we can notice that some of them express a high degree or frequency, as well as they denote a high probability.

Example 42:

Such a form of lag variable has been widely employed to assess the presence of early mover advantages in most of the studies of entry timing. (METHODS. ENG 19)

Example 43:

Estimated correlations of disturbances in both equations are always positive and significant in all industries, ranging from 0.48 to 0.73. (RESULTS. SPENG 15)

Example 44:

Si comparamos los resultados obtenidos con ambos modelos, se observa que en los dos casos se consigue explicar la variable dependiente en una proporción similar, nunca superior al 30% (DISCUSSION. SP 9)

The first example (42) presents the adverb '*widely*' as an adverb that denotes conviction and so, it functions as a booster. Just as the hedging adverbs used 'approximators' to express lack of precision in the data, they can also indicate a high degree, frequency or quantity as Mur (2007) advocates. Example 43 and 44, are clear examples of high frequency which provide the

author with the necessary confidence on what is being stated, so they do not feel threaten by future criticism of opposition to their claims.

All in all, papers written in English used more frequently boosting adverbs per 10,000 words in order to appraisal the factive status of the propositions given including commitment and certainty. Both groups employed adverbs as the second most common category. However, there is a highly significant difference between both groups, different from the use of boosting adverbs between L2 English scholars and L1 Spanish writers which do not show significant difference in this boosting category.

6.4.4 Boosting adjectives

Writers also use adjectives to denote certainty and the scholars' self-assurance. However, it is not one of the most common ways to express conviction in the SPENG sub-corpus. As previously mentioned, the SPENG sub-corpus used adjectives as their penultimate option, whereas the ENG sub-corpora used it only as their fifth option. However, the SP sub-set used a lot more adjectives than the SPENG sub-corpus ranking them in the fourth position.

Example 45

We found clear evidence of variation in perceived dynamism, even though all respondents were in the same industry. (DISCUSSION ENG 10)

Example 46

The first important thing to note is that once the rest of the variables are specified in the equation, the inbreeding status is not significant any longer. (RESULTS SPENG 29)

Example 47

En consecuencia, es necesario comparar el efecto fijo de cada caja antes y después de la operación. (RESULTS SP 28) ALMOST ALL OF THEM IN 28

The previous examples denote a high level of conviction in the statements and do not allow alternative views. Mur (2007) states that this is only possible thanks to the previous epistemological knowledge that writers and readers have, which then helps the author to persuade the reader using boosting adjectives. However, only in this disciplinary consensus statement it is possible to use expressions of commitment that re-assure previous shared knowledge. Furthermore, it is important to notice that there is no interlanguage or intercultural factor that affects L2 English scholars' writing. SPENG sub-corpus results show that ENG and SP sub-sets used almost twice the amount of boosting adjectives than this group resulting in a highly significant difference between SPENG and both other groups. The small amount of commitment devices used by the SPENG sub-set could be explained by the fewer options they used when compared to the ENG and SP groups.

6.4.5 Boosting nouns

Boosting nouns were not often used in order to express meaning convincingly. As a matter of fact, it was one of the least common options writers used to commit to their statements when writing in English. Although several hedging nouns were used to summarize previous statements, only '*fact*' was used as a booster noun to make reference to the previous extended argument that the noun makes reference to. Example 51 illustrates the previous statement:

Example 51:

Además, podemos observar como la evolución de la ponderación de la propiedad difusa sigue un comportamiento inverso a la importancia de los fondos y bancos de inversión como últimos propietarios. Este hecho se debe a que en la mayoría de las ocasiones, el traslado de una empresa de la propiedad atomizada a la concentrada o viceversa, viene determinado por los cambios en el nivel de participación de un fondo o banco de inversión. (RESULTS. SP 3)

Example 52:

Further analyses of the survey data also provided evidence that appears to bolster our theoretical interpretation of the results. (RESULTS ENG 24)

Example 53:

The choice of our interpretation over the others can only be justified on the basis of theoretical arguments, but cannot be empirically tested. (DISCUSSION SPENG 3)

On the other hand, writers prefer to use nominalizations when using boosting nouns, as can be seen in example 52 and 53. However, this lexico-grammatical category was more frequently used to express tentativeness than to express a high level of commitment. L1 Spanish writers prefer to use boosting nouns in

order to express determination and engagement to the arguments in their papers. However, L2 English scholars distance themselves from their L1 Spanish counterparts with a highly significant difference in the use of boosting nouns. This could be explained by an interlanguage factor due to the fact that SPENG and ENG results present a highly significant difference.

6.4.6 Boosting Phrases

Boosting phrases are some prepositional and adverbial phrases that writers use in order to express their confidence in their statements. As could be seen in table 26, boosting phrases are more frequent in the SP sub-corpus than in the SPENG sub-set, however, there is no significant difference between both groups. Moreover, the wide variety of phrases that denote scholars' self-assurance might be the reason for the overuse in the SP sub-set. The lower use of these phrases on the part of the L2 English scholars presents highly significant differences with the L1 English writers, nonetheless, ENG and SPENG results show similarities in the most and the least used boosting phrases in the table.

Example 48:

In fact, our findings did clearly indicate that the early success of late entrants is tied to the size and relevance of the resource base that they have already developed. (INTRODUCTION ENG 19)

Example 49:

Of course, the data requirements of this individualized approach are very demanding. (METHODS SPENG 9)

Example 50:

Todo esto nos hace pensar que para los compradores de lavadoras, la estrategia de distribución elegida por el fabricante condiciona en buena

medida la percepción de calidad de la marca, aspecto que fue recogido por el indicador ID2 del cuestionario utilizado y que presentaba el mayor cuidado que pone la marca adquirida a la hora de elegir a sus intermediarios. (DISCUSSION. SP 19)

Example 48 and 49 show the use of a phrase that clearly gives a forceful tone of self-assurance to the statement. Furthermore, the last example (50) expresses a different meaning which is that of high degree, such as 'approximators' in adverbs and adjectives.

Additionally, it is interesting to note that, as in example 48, papers written in English used auxiliary verbs 'do', 'does' or, like in the example, 'did' as emphasizees in order to boost their statements in the BM RAs. The ENG sub-corpus had 27 occurrences of 'do', 16 of 'does', and 24 of 'did', whereas in the SPENG sub-corpus only 3 tokens of 'do', 3 of 'does' and 4 of 'did' could be found. There is an overuse of auxiliary verbs by the L1 English scholars, which help them to express commitment and confidence in their statements; nevertheless, L2 English researchers do not make use of this option perhaps because it is not common in their native language or because they are not aware of the use of auxiliary verbs as emphasizees. However, these auxiliary verbs were not further studied in the present study, due to the fact that there are no Spanish equivalents, and to follow Moreno's (2008) conventions for comparable data.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this Master Thesis is to examine the use of boosting and hedging devices as metadiscourse markers in BM RAs written in two languages and from two different cultural contexts. First, as considered at the beginning of the paper, the first research question proposed is:

What is the amount of occurrences of use of hedges and boosters in RAs written by scholars from two cultural contexts using English as L1 and scholars writing in English as L2?

To answer this question, results show that scholars writing in English as L1 use more interpersonal metadiscourse devices (hedges and boosters) than scholars writing in English as L2.

Across rhetorical sections, there is also an overuse of tentative devices in the ENG sub-set when compared to the SPENG one. Nonetheless, there was a standardized use of hedging and boosting devices in the Introduction sections between the two groups. A possible explanation for these similarities is the huge rhetorical effort the authors make not only to state the phenomenon it is intended to analyze, but also to establish the importance of the contribution to a specific disciplinary field (Hyland, 1998a: 27). All this is done by employing a great amount of hedging devices to highlight the importance of other authors and to leave space for possible opposition to the authors' claims. Similarities in this section have shown to be related to language factors, ENG and SPENG being a more hedged discourse and less boosted in the Introduction section, possibly because of different intellectual styles and the change of target audience. However, when analysing the other three sections, the Methods,

Results and Discussion ones, there were significant differences in the use of interpersonal metadiscourse devices that could be attributed to culturally preferred rhetorical strategies or a lack of facility in English as a foreign language.

Moreover, the use of boosting elements in the Introduction sections in SPENG and ENG groups was lower when compared to the other three rhetorical sections. This might occur because authors tend to display attempts to promote their papers and show a good degree of self-assurance with the text without forgetting to mitigate their statements when establishing the novelty and significance of the RA (Hyland, 1998a). Furthermore, there were only slight differences in the use of commitment devices in the Results and Discussion sections. However, the overuse of boosting devices in the Method sections was not observed in the L2 English writers.

As regards the second question,

What is the difference between the use of hedges and boosters used by L1 Spanish RAs and the L2 English texts?

Here, results show that L1 Spanish writers used slightly more interpersonal metadiscourse devices than the L2 English scholars. Also, there are slight significant differences in the use of hedges and boosters between the two sets of writers. However, there were significant differences in the use of hedging devices in rhetorical sections, especially in the Introduction, Results and Discussion sections. On the other hand, the use of commitment devices in the two corpora was homogeneous in the Results sections. In both groups, SPENG and SP, the Results sections were ranked as the second section with

most frequently used boosting devices. This occurs because this section tends to be focused not on 'promotionalism', but on the concepts of earnest, preciseness and objectivity. In addition, both groups, SPENG and SP, employed more engagement devices in the Discussion section than in any other section. This result agrees with Mendiluce and Hernandez's (2005) statement that Spanish authors prefer to use commitment devices in the Discussion sections. The previous proves that SPENG writers reflect a cultural trend to distribute boosters in this section just as L1 Spanish writers do.

Furthermore, it is important to mention that hedges were overused in the three sub-sets. In this case, epistemic modality devices are essential tools used by writers to negotiate with readers the values of the writers' propositions. The use of hedges to 'tone-down' their commitment to the propositions in the soft-knowledge areas (Vázquez et al. 2005; Hyland, 1998b) it is studied in Vázquez et al.'s (2005) paper, which found out that BM used more hedges than any other discipline examined (202). In this paper, it was concluded that the high use of these detachment strategies in this discipline indicates the existence of norms in the BM genre, which expect writers 'to put forward tentative hypotheses to explain possible connections between a set of variables' (Vázquez et al. 2005: 203).

When taking into account another remarkable implication of the present study, the taxonomy of hedges and boosters has shown some interesting findings. For example, that the three sub-corpora shared not only the most common expressions of certainty, but also the two most common uncertainty devices. It seems that the results show a certain commonality in standard

academic writing when considering the use of hedges and boosters' most common lexico-grammatical categories. Here, Dahl's (2004) states that disciplinary culture affects the use of metatext in the RAs. However, the differences and similarities between the SPENG sub-corpus with the ENG and SP groups, also go in line with Dahl's (2004) assertion that the disciplinary culture in the humanities group is not as stable as in the science discipline, leading to an influence of national language and culture in the rhetorical practices (1822).

Furthermore, ENG and SPENG sub-corpora listed their preferred lexico-grammatical realizations of boosting devices exactly in the same way, whereas they listed their preferred categories of hedging devices in a very similar order, with only one variation. In the light of the previous statement, it can be concluded that the growing need of Spanish researchers in publishing a RA in international-based journals tend to raise their exposure to the influence of standard academic English, internationalizing the academic discourse norms of native English (Carciu, 2009; Ferguson, 2007; Mauranen, 2001; Mauranen et al. 2010).

On the other hand, in addition to adopt the Anglophone discursive practices in order to publish their papers in well-known international journals, non-native English scholars retain some kind of L1 rhetorical conventions when writing in their second language. Moreover, when focusing in the use of lexico-grammatical categories of hedging and boosting features, it is possible to notice the significant differences and similarities of the SPENG writers with L1 English scholars and L1 Spanish researchers. Although the L2 English writers present highly significant differences with one of the two groups, there are always

transcultural or linguistic factors that affect their log-likelihood value. The results show, then, that there is a mixing of discourses, which has been referred to as 'interdiscursive hybridity' in previous papers (see Mauranen et al. 2010, Carciu, 2009)

Results show that, first, while the L2 English writers had no significant difference with the SP sub-corpus when using tentative lexical verbs and commitment phrases, the results show that L1 English writers had no significant difference with SPENG sub-set when using lexical verbs that express certainty and tentative phrases. Second, L2 English scholars displayed highly significant differences with both ENG and SP groups in the use of tentative adverbs, certainty modal verbs and adjectives expressing conviction. Finally, L2 English writers present more highly significant differences in the use of lexico-grammatical realizations of hedges and boosters with L1 English researchers than L1 Spanish scholars. According to the previous, it is possible to conclude that the SPENG sub-corpus is influenced by cultural and language factors, possibly explaining the variation in the use of hedges and boosters.

In the same way, I must highlight the fact that although previous studies such as Pilar Mur's doctoral dissertation have studied RAs taken from SERAC in order to examine the use of interactional metadiscourse devices, my Master Thesis presents several differences. First, Mur's dissertation analysis only 12 American corpuses and 12 Spanish corpuses in order to determine the use of lexico-grammatical realizations giving space to many limitations to overcome. On the other hand, I decided to analyse not only 30 American corpora and 30 Spanish corpora, but also 30 corpora in English written by Spanish writers. The

further analysis of the SPENG sub-corpus brings to light not only the intercultural difference and similarities, but also the interlinguistic factors that affect the use of hedges and boosters, factors she did not take into account in her analysis. Moreover, the results of this Master Thesis can be of great help to continue the study of hedges and boosters in the BM discipline and how culture and language affect the use of them when writing for national and international audiences.

Finally, these interesting findings nonetheless, need to be addressed in future studies in order to be examined thoroughly and overcome certain limitations. This study has examined only a single discipline, BM, so as to tease apart only the influence of language and cultural effects on the use of hedges and boosters. However, I would recommend developing a more comprehensive understanding of the different influences on the use of tentative and engagement metadiscourse devices. It is necessary to examine comparable data from different disciplines to identify how variations in the disciplinary norms affect the use of interactional metadiscourse in interaction with the linguistic and cultural influences. Pedagogically, the present study suggests the need to raise awareness on the rhetorical effects of commitment and detachment devices when L2 English writers, especially amateur writers, present new disciplinary knowledge as well as persuade their readership of the validity of their research.

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