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THESIS

TITLES IN RESEARCH AND REVIEW ARTICLES IN VETERINARY MEDICINE: A CORPUS-BASED STUDY

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GANDUR, ANALÍA MARIELA

DIRECTORA: ILIANA MARTÍNEZ (UNRC)
CO-DIRECTORA: GRACIELA PLACCI (UNRC)
ABSTRACT

Titles of research and review articles that satisfy the features of precision, information and easy-indexation require the mastering of certain linguistic and pragmatic skills from the researcher-writer. The mastering of this communicative competence exerts a demand especially on junior researchers at two important activities of their daily efforts: decoding and encoding titles when doing bibliographic searches and getting their own findings published.

The purpose of this thesis work is to identify features, both linguistic and pragmatic, of research article (RA) and review article (RVA) titles in the field of Animal Production. The underlying hypothesis is that the titles of both genres will present structures with distinctive features. I expect that their identification will reveal particular features of the language of titles from these two scientific genres and the pragmatic functions that accord to the purposes of scientists in Animal Production, as well as how these features and functions may realize a well-written title. The study was based on a corpus of 480 titles, out of which 300 were RAs and 180 were RVAs, from prestigious international journals in electronic form from the period 2008-2011. Title length and lexical density were analyzed in the titles of the structures considered, namely noun phrase, compound construction, statements and questions. Heads in all structures, and pre and post modification in one-head noun phrase titles were analyzed, as well as the structures and pragmatic functions at both sides of the colonic titles. The results evidence some genre and discipline peculiarities worth considering for pedagogical purposes.
I dedicate this work to my patient mother and in loving memory of my father.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1
  1.1. Context and issue 2
  1.2. Hypothesis and objectives 5
    1.2.1. General objective 5
    1.2.2. Specific objectives 5

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND STATE OF THE ART 7
  2.1. Theoretical background 7
    2.1.1. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) 7
    2.1.2. Genre Analysis 8
      2.1.2.1. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL): nominalization and gerunds 11
    2.1.3. Corpus-based studies 14
    2.1.4. Reference Grammars 16
    2.1.5. The research article (RA) and the review article (RVA) 17
  2.2. State of the art 19
    2.2.1. Studies on RA and RVA 19
    2.2.2. Studies on titles 21
      2.2.2.1. Heterogeneity in studies on titles 21
      2.2.2.2. Title typology: structure and pragmatic function 23
      2.2.2.3. Title colonicity and titles with question marks 26
      2.2.2.4. Features of a well-written title 27
  2.3. Identifying the gap 29

CHAPTER 3: METHODS 32
  3.1. Materials 32
    3.1.1. Collection and description of the corpus 33
    3.1.2. Title categories for the analysis 34
    3.1.3. Statistical programs 41
  3.2. Methodology 42

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION 43
  4.1. Title length, lexical density, and word frequency of RAs and RVAs 43
4.1.1. Title length of RAs and RVAs
4.1.2. Lexical density of RAs and RVAs
4.1.3. Word frequency of RAs and RVAs

4.2. The RA titles
4.2.1. The RA title structures
4.2.1.1. The Noun Phrase titles of RAs
4.2.1.2. The Compound Construction title of RAs
4.2.1.2.1. Structures at one side and the other of the colon
4.2.1.2.2. Relationship between parts
4.2.1.2.3. Correlation between structures and relationship between parts
4.2.1.3. The Sentence title of RAs

4.2.2. Heads in RA titles
4.2.2.1. Number of heads in Noun Phrase titles of RAs
4.2.2.2. Types of heads in all title structures of RAs
4.2.2.3. Correlation between types of head and title structures of RAs

4.2.3. Modification in uni head Noun Phrase RA titles
4.2.3.1. Number of pre and post modifiers in RA titles
4.2.3.2. Post modification structures in RA titles

4.3. The RVA titles
4.3.1. The RVA title structures
4.3.1.1. The Compound Construction title of RVAs
4.3.1.2.1. Structures at one side and the other of the colon
4.3.1.2.2. Relationship between parts
4.3.1.2.3. Correlation between structures and relationship between parts
4.3.1.2. The Noun Phrase title of RVAs

4.3.2. Heads in RVA titles
4.3.2.1. Number of heads in Noun Phrase titles of RVAs
4.3.2.2. Types of heads in all title structures of RVAs
4.3.2.3. Correlation between types of head and title structures of RVAs

4.3.3. Modification in uni head Noun Phrase RVA titles
4.3.3.1. Number of pre and post modifiers in Noun Phrase RVA titles
4.3.3.2. Post modification structures in Noun Phrase RVA titles
APPENDIX


Categories for analysis

RA: Basic quantitative data on title length per journal and total: mean, range, mode.

RVA: Basic quantitative data on title length per journal and total: mean, range, mode.

Examples of 14-word titles, the most frequent length of RA

Examples of 9-word titles, the most frequent length of RVA

Lexical Density expressed in terms of lexical/structure word content per title expressed in number of words and percentage

Examples of highly dense Noun Phrase titles

R.A.: Title structures per journal. Raw numbers and percentages

RVA: Title structures per journal. Raw numbers and percentages

REFERENCES
INDEX OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Table 4.1. Length of research article titles and review article titles
Table 4.2. Length of research article titles according to structure
Table 4.3. Length of review article according to structure
Figure 4.1. Length of research article titles according to structure
Figure 4.2. Length of review article according to structure
Table 4.4. Lexical density expressed in terms of structure and lexical and content word ratio
Table 4.5. The 50 most frequent words in RA and RVA titles and number of occurrences
Table 4.6. Research article structures. Raw number and percentages.
Table 4.7. Compound Construction of research article titles. Structures. Raw numbers and percentages.
Table 4.8. Compound Construction titles of research articles. Relationship between parts. Raw numbers and percentages.
Table 4.9. Compound Construction titles of research articles. Relationship between structures and parts. Raw numbers and percentages.
Table 4.10. Sentence titles of research articles. Raw numbers and percentages.
Table 4.11. Number of heads in Noun Phrase titles of research articles. Raw numbers and percentages.
Table 4.12. Types of headwords in research article titles. Raw numbers and percentages.
Table 4.13. Relationship between types of heads and structures of titles of research articles. Raw numbers and percentages.
Table 4.14. Modification in uni head Noun Phrase titles of research articles. Raw numbers and percentages.
Table 4.15. Modification in uni head Noun Phrase titles of research articles. Number of post modifiers. Raw numbers and percentages.
Table 4.16. Review article structures. Raw numbers and percentages.
Table 4.17. Compound Construction of review article titles. Structures. Raw numbers and percentages.
Table 4.18. Compound Construction titles of review articles. Relationship between parts. Raw numbers and percentages.
Table 4.19. Compound Construction titles of review articles. Relationship between structures and parts. Raw numbers and percentages.

Table 4.20. Number of heads in Noun Phrase titles of research articles. Raw numbers and percentages.

Table 4.21. Types of headwords in research article titles. Raw numbers and percentages.

Table 4.22. Relationship between types of heads and structures of titles of review articles. Raw numbers and percentages.

Table 4.23. Modification in uni head Noun Phrase titles of review articles. Raw numbers and percentages.

Table 4.24. Modification in uni head Noun Phrase titles of review articles. Number of post modifiers. Raw numbers and percentages.