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Translation of Scientific Texts into English as Intercultural Mediation

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Abstract

With English functioning as a lingua franca in the academic world, many non-Anglophone scholars wish to publish their articles in English-medium international journals and seek professional assistance with translating them into English. Translators facing this task may encounter several issues stemming from cross-cultural differences in the style and structure of academic texts. While linguistic errors alone rarely result in rejections, deviations from Anglo–American conventions in scientific writing may even lead to the reviewers questioning the author's competence as a scientist. For example, there are significant differences between two intellectual traditions: Teutonic, which has influenced the Polish style of academic communication, and Saxonic, which has shaped Anglo–American standards. As a result, introductions written by Polish scholars often do not meet the requirements of English-medium international journals. This may inadvertently place Polish authors in a disadvantaged position. It is therefore important that translators should know how to approach these differences when they encounter them. Drawing on existing literature, this paper calls for an inquiry into the role of the translator in these circumstances, including the scope of their responsibilities and strategies for dealing with potential problems.

Keywords: scientific translation, intercultural mediation, article introduction, Teutonic style, Saxonic style.

Streszczenie

Tłumaczenie tekstów naukowych na język angielski jako forma mediacji interkulturowej

Język angielski funkcjonuje obecnie jako lingua franca w świecie naukowym. W związku z tym naukowcy z całego świata starają się publikować swoje artykuły w międzynarodowych czasopismach i wielu z nich zleca ich przekład tłumaczom języka angielskiego. Tłumaczenie tekstu naukowego może przysporzyć trudności wynikających z międzykulturowych różnic w stylistyce i strukturze tekstów naukowych. O ile same błędy językowe niezmiernie rzadko stanowią jedyny powód odrzuceniem artykułu, odstępstwa od angloamerykańskich zasad pisania tekstów naukowych dotyczących struktury artykułu, spójności i klarowności narracji, a także głosu autorskiego oraz innych elementów metadyskursu, mogą stać się przyczyną nawet *do zakwestionowania przez recenzentów kompetencji autora jako naukowca. Istnieją na przykład znaczne różnice między stylem teutońskim, który ukształtował cechy polskiego piśmiennictwa naukowego, a saksońskim, w którym uformowały się standardy angloamerykańskie. Dlatego między innymi wstęp w artykułach polskich autorów często odbiega od wymagań stawianych przez anglojęzyczne czasopisma międzynarodowe, co może być nawet odebrane jako niekompetencja i zmniejszyć szansę na publikację. Dlatego ważne jest, aby ustalić w jaki sposób tłumacze mają podchodzić do tego typu różnic międzykulturowych w swojej pracy. W oparciu o dotychczasową literaturę, niniejszy artykuł apeluje o głębsze przeanalizowanie roli tłumacza naukowego, nakreślenie zakresu jego obowiązków oraz propozycje strategii radzenia sobie z potencjalnymi problemami.*

Słowa kluczowe: tłumaczenia naukowe, mediacja międzykulturowa, wstęp do artykułu naukowego, styl teutoński, styl saksoński.

1. Background

There is no doubt that English functions as a modern-day lingua franca within the global scientific community. The proportion of publications in English has increased dramatically in relation to other important academic languages (Figures 1 and 2), and although the exact figures are difficult to establish, roughly between 80% and 95% of all articles are written in English, depending on the field. Over 90% of the prestigious international journals are also printed in English (Englander 2014: 3-4; Hyland 2015: 49; Kijak 2014: 10-11; O'Neil 2018: 146).

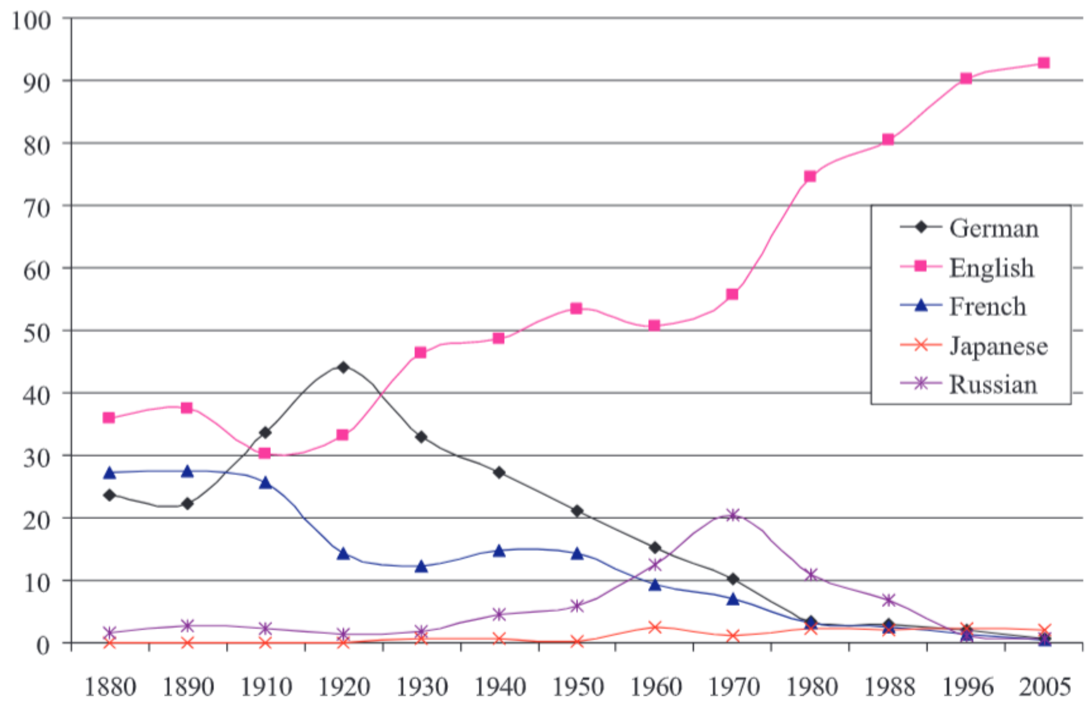

Figure 1. Increase in the proportion of publications in English in relation to other languages worldwide between 1880 and 2005: natural sciences (Ammon 2012: 338).

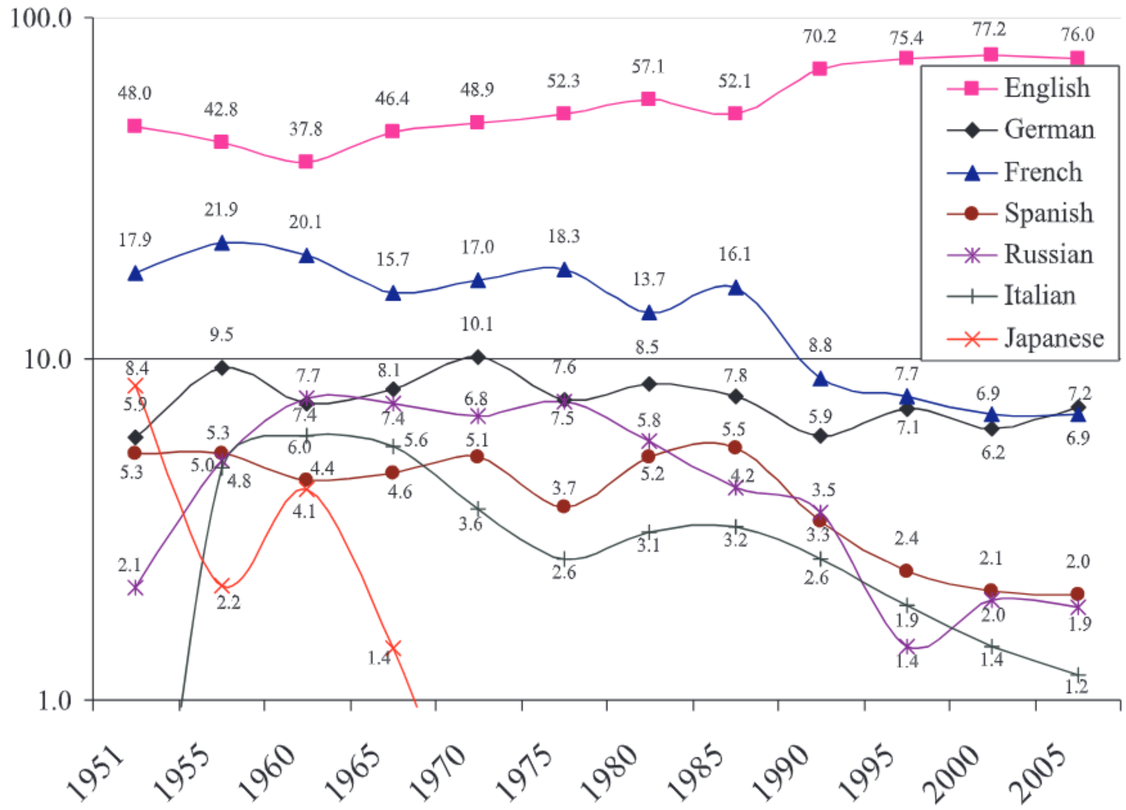

Figure 2. Increase in the proportion of publications in English in relation to other languages worldwide between 1951 and 2005: social sciences (Ammon 2012: 338).

As the number of non-Anglophone authors who choose to publish in English grows, this also increases the pressure to publish in English all over the world, both in order to participate in the global knowledge exchange and to develop one's own career (Bennett 2013: 95; Kijak 2014: 5-6). In Poland, publishing in English has become particularly important following the recent higher education and science reform in 2017–2019 (Hyland & Lehman 2020: 12).

Writing in English can be difficult for non-Anglophone authors, who might be disadvantaged as a result when trying to publish their papers internationally. While it may seem reasonable to assume that these difficulties arise from the language barrier, it turns out that the main obstacles consist of cross-cultural differences in writing conventions, even between seemingly close cultures that are nevertheless grounded in diverse intellectual traditions. These differences include the tone and register of the communication, elements of metadiscourse and the method of handling the literature, as well as the structure of the text. For example, many non-Anglophone authors find the introduction section particularly challenging due to its inflexible structure. Manuscripts displaying deviations from the expected standard may be perceived as a sign of the authors' incompetence and may therefore not be accepted for publication in international journals (Belcher 2007; Broido & Rubin 2020; Canagarajah 2002; Englander 2014: 63, 77-81; Flowerdew 2001; Golebiowski 1998: 69; Kijak 2014; Lillis & Curry 2015; Mur-Dueñas 2013; Tardy & Matsuda 2009; Uzuner 2008: 255-256).

These types of deviations from Anglo–American writing conventions are also at least partly accountable for low rates of international publications amongst Polish scholars, and explain why Polish universities occupy low positions in global rankings that are often "based on research output and a number of citations" (Kijak 2014: 2-4). Similarly to other non-Anglophone authors, "Polish scholars struggle more with mastering English academic writing structures than they do with English language proficiency in general" (Kijak 2014: ii).

A practical solution could be to use the services of language professionals, such as translators. The problem is that, while linguistic difficulties can more readily be remedied by these kinds of specialists, translators are typically not trained to address differences in writing conventions. What is more, the available literature also shows that it has not been established what exactly their role and responsibilities should be while working on academic texts (Burgess & Lillis 2013: 1-2). Although nowadays most professional translations are performed on scientific, technical and commercial texts, these kinds of texts have received little attention from translation studies, which traditionally prioritise literary translation. Additionally, a great proportion of the small number of studies dedicated to scientific translation is of historiographical character. Another thing is that, before the 2000s, works on scientific translation did not show awareness of the impact of culture on the conventions of academic writing and tended to focus on the accuracy of translation, especially terminology (Dejica 2020: 56; Olohan 2020: 511, 514; 2016; 2007).

Given the scarcity of literature on this topic within translation studies, the primary goal of this paper is to shed some light on the issues related to the cultural aspect of scientific translation. In particular, a clear demonstration is lacking as to which among the various cross-cultural differences in academic writing conventions are the most consequential in terms of the publishability of manuscripts, and how exactly their impact manifests itself. Furthermore, I have provided examples of those disparities that might specifically pertain to the Polish scientific community, warranting attention from Polish-to-English translators. To address these concerns, I will discuss the following questions:

- What is scientific translation and why should it be approached as intercultural mediation?
- Why are there different conventions in academic writing, and which differences require special attention?

- What is the standard research article typically expected to look like – especially its introduction section?
- What are the differences between introductions written by Polish and by Anglophone authors?
- How are manuscripts typically assessed in English-medium international journals?
- What takes on scientific translation can be found in the literature to date, and why are they insufficient?

The article concludes that more work is needed on this topic, both within the field of translation studies as well as in terms of practical guidance for translators.

Translators have played a major role in knowledge distribution throughout history. Now they have the potential, paraphrasing DiGiacomo (2013: 108), to give Polish authors a voice in English and a seat at the table of global academic community, i.e. an opportunity to take part in creating knowledge on an international level. This is why it is crucial that they should have the tools and competence to perform this task.

2. Scientific translation as intercultural mediation

Until recently, scientific and technical translations were treated as the same type of translation; in fact, according to Dejica (2020: 56), "the terms technical and scientific were used interchangeably when discussing communication, texts, terms, vocabulary or writing". However, scientific texts, as genre studies have demonstrated, display a number of specific characteristics that distinguish them from technical texts. Accordingly, technical and scientific translation are currently approached as separate types of translation and fields of expertise (Dejica 2020: 56-65).

Importantly for both translation studies and professional translators, scientific texts are not only different from other genres – their characteristics also vary between languages and cultures. Recent studies into scientific translation that are of sociological character tend to "recognize the contingency of knowledge, the complexities involved in its communication and circulation, and how it is shaped and reshaped in and through translation" (Olohan & Salama-Carr 2011: 180). This, of course, is not only true of scientific writing; it has been observed that, generally, misunderstandings in communication involving different cultures have often been caused by "hidden" or "unconscious" factors, such as values and behaviour patterns, rather than inaccuracies in translation or language errors. This is why, since the so-called "cultural turn" in translation studies that began in the 1980s, translation has been understood to constitute intercultural communication, recognising the importance non-linguistic factors (Katan 2009: 74; Liddicoat 2016: 354). In line with this approach, the text itself constitutes just one of the elements to consider during the translation process, because "silent" cultural aspects often affect how a text is received. The translator should be aware that they may be dealing with a text that is not meant to be an intercultural communication, as well as with a reader who may not see this specific act of communication as intercultural; the goal is to ensure that the reader recognises the translation as a familiar original text, which may involve applying some interventions to it (Katan 2013: 84-91; 2009: 82-83; Liddicoat 2016: 356-357). This is because, as Katan (2013: 84) explains, a reader who is unfamiliar with the culture of the original text is automatically going to map their own cultural concepts, or their "model of the world", onto it and may therefore "lose or distort the intended arrays of meaning".

The next section describes cross-cultural differences between scientific discourses to demonstrate that scientific translation should be approached as intercultural mediation. In the case of scientific translation for publication, the first target readers are the gatekeepers of the scholarly outlets: editors and reviewers. To facilitate intercultural communication with them would mean considering their expectations, values, beliefs, norms, assumptions, etc. regarding academic writing so that they recognise the translated work as legitimate, acceptable scientific texts worthy of being published as journal articles, book chapters, conference proceedings papers, and so on.

3. Intellectual styles and scientific communication

The idea that scientific discourse is culture-dependent has existed for several decades. For example, Galtung (1981) identified four major intellectual styles that gave rise to different conventions in constructing and conveying knowledge, centred in different countries and displaying different characteristics:

- **Saxonic** (UK and USA) – focused on data collection and organisation, as well as hypothesis generation rather than theory formation; democratic and cooperative.
- **Teutonic** (Germany) – focused on theory formation and deductive reasoning rather than data collection and analysis; elitist.
- **Gallic** (France) – focused on theory formation; emphasises clarity and elegance of expression.
- **Nipponic** (Japan) – focused on the production of hypotheses and propositions rather than theory formation; values collectivism and solidarity.

Polish academic discourse has developed under German influence (Duszak 1997a: 324; 1994: 295). This means that there might be significant discrepancies between the expectations of Anglophone gatekeepers about what a scientific text should look like and what Polish authors are likely to produce. Firstly, Saxonic writing is strongly audience-oriented: it assumes that the reader knows less than the author, who is expected to ensure that the reader understands their reasoning. To facilitate this, the text may contain explicit, detailed explanations as well as guidance in the form of metadiscourse, which unaccustomed readers may find somewhat patronising. The narrative should be coherent, predictable and conveyed in standard English, preferably in short sentences and using the active voice; generally, anything that causes distraction is undesirable. This gives an impression of clarity and promotes the comfort of reading. Secondly, everything that is said should be justified, i.e. documented or referenced, while sweeping statements should be avoided. Importantly, adherence to an appropriate structure is as important as the content. The Teutonic style, on the other hand, assumes the reader to be as knowledgeable as the writer, and therefore responsible for understanding the text. Hence, extensive explanations or guidance are considered unnecessary – especially as this style also assumes that "facts speak for themselves" and do not require additional commentary. Instead, the pursuit of general truths and a tendency to generalise can be observed. The structure is not as important as the content and variability is tolerated. There are often numerous digressions, requiring more effort to process, and an untrained reader may find such writing overly complex and incoherent. Also, linguistic expression tends to be more diverse, and long sentences and the passive voice are quite common (Clyne 1987; Duszak 1997b: 13, 18-19, 28-29; 1997a: 323-324, 329, 336; 1994: 293-295; Englander 2014: 58-60; Golebiowski 2018; Lehman 2020: 170; 175-180; Siepmann 2006: 132-134, 142-143; Smakman & Duda-Osiewacz 2014: 34-35) (Table 1).

Table 1. The Saxonic versus Teutonic style.

Saxonic texts	**Teutonic texts**
Author is responsible for the comprehensibility of the text	Reader is responsible for understanding the text
Focused on evidence; refrains from sweeping statements	Relates the topic to broader social or intellectual issues; generalises

Structure as important as content; linear	Structure secondary to content; digressive
References recent and directly related literature	Presents broad contextual background information
Metatext to guide the reader and for clarity and consistency	Monologic, impersonal, focused on creative thinking, contemplative
Standard English, active voice, short sentences	Long sentences and sophisticated vocabulary comparatively common

Studies on scientific texts, e.g. within genre analysis and linguistics, confirm Galtung's inferences. They show significant differences in writing patterns between languages and cultures, which might explain why many non-Anglophone authors struggle with structure and other writing conventions more than with the language itself (Clyne 1987; Duszak 1997b: 31; Englander 2014: 57-64; 2006: 130; Kijak 2014: 16, 47; Siepmann 2006: 135-143). In fact, Smakman and Duda-Osiewacz (2014: 29, 43) have demonstrated that, at the sentence level, native speakers are unable to distinguish between native and non-native writing and frequently confuse non-native sentences with native sentences and vice versa, while the actual differences can be observed at the section and paragraph level. It has also been shown that authors who apply their local writing conventions in papers meant for international journals are likely to have their papers misinterpreted and rejected (Donesch-Jeżo 2019: 14-15; Kijak 2014: 24-25; Uzuner 2008: 256).

Non-Anglophone authors have been particularly criticised for their poorly written introduction and discussion sections, incorrect structure, vague language, absence of authorial voice, parochialism and issues with references and citations, as well as accused of making claims without adequate evidence (Flowerdew 2001: 133-139; Kijak 2014: 17-18; Mišak, Marušić & Marušić 2005: 128; Uzuner 2008: 255-257). For example, the gatekeepers of international research outlets value "metatextual cuing and a linear, rigorously organised discoursal pattern" (Golebiowski 2018: 56). Polish texts, on the other hand, tend to be "characterised by lack of linearity, implicitness of style and a minimal use of metalinguistic cues" (Golebiowski 1999: 238) and are in general "far less structured than their English counterparts" (Kijak 2014: 24). A text that is high in implicitness and low in metalinguistic cues certainly does not meet Anglophone standards for reader friendliness (Golebiowski 1998: 85). Numerous digressions may also make it difficult for Polish papers to fit neatly into the prescribed structure. They can be perceived as redundant and irrelevant, creating an impression that the text is overly dense and unclear (Golebiowski 2018: 67; 1998: 73-74). Another issue is that Polish authors can be exceedingly scrupulous about semantics while, as observed by Duszak (1997b: 30), “attempts at precision can have the opposite effect of producing impenetrable complexities of meaning”. All these attributes can make a text seem to be lacking in cohesion and coherence to a reader unaccustomed to such a writing style. Similar tendencies can be observed when Polish scholars write in English: their style is “significantly more digressive”, and they assign more responsibility to their readers in terms of distinguishing “core information from additional information” and “keeping track of the section and paragraph structure” (Smakman & Duda-Osiewacz 2014: 44).

Polish scholars, in turn, often find that the Anglophone requirements regarding text organisation, paragraphing and referencing, which are significantly different from Polish requirements, constitute the main problems in preparing manuscripts for international journals. While international journals require “very structured” papers, Polish journals typically offer only “very general” instructions and tend to accept “any style” (Kijak 2014: 47).

The next section shows how cross-cultural differences manifest themselves in the article introduction section, which is often found to be the most difficult section to write by non-Anglophone scholars.

4. The introduction section in a research article

The research article has become the exemplary genre of scholarly texts. The Anglophone norms of writing for publication typically require that articles should follow the so-called IMRD model. This model is represented by as an hourglass shape and consists of the following sections: introduction, methodology, results and discussion (Figure 3). Each of these sections has its own organisation and purpose. The introduction section starts with a more general presentation of the topic and its importance, then gradually narrows its focus down to the specific gap in the knowledge that the paper sets out to address. The methods and results sections are dedicated to analysing the research material and reporting the findings of this specific study. The discussion starts with comments on the results of the study, then links them with the literature in the field and potentially explains its wider implications. Journal editors and reviewers normally anticipate adherence to this standard and do not tolerate deviations from it (Englander 2014: 39-55; Golebiowski 2018: 56; Olohan 2016: 149-150).

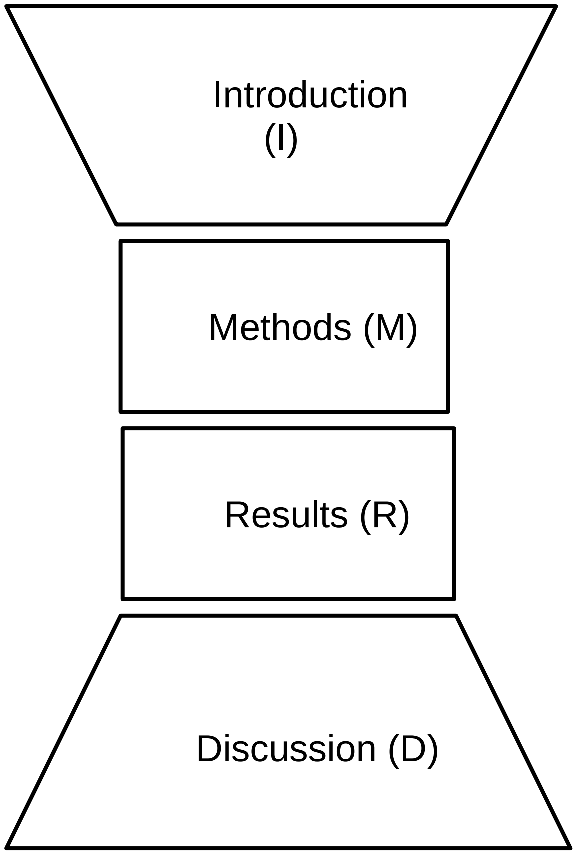

Figure 3. IMRD structure for research articles (Englander 2014: 40)

The literature shows that the introduction is the most challenging section to write for non-Anglophone authors; in fact, of all the sections in a research article, introductions written by Anglophone and non-Anglophone authors differ the most notably (Donesch-Jeżo 2019: 14; Englander 2014: 41; 2006: 132; Golebiowski 1998: 71; Mišak, Marušić & Marušić 2005: 123; Uzuner, 2008: 255).

English-medium journals typically expect introductions to follow the so-called CARS (Create a Research Space) model. According to this model, the purpose of an introduction is to show why the study presented in the submitted manuscript is important, explain how it relates to the current state of knowledge in the field, demonstrate that this knowledge is in some way incomplete, and specify the contribution made by the presented study. The introduction should also state the objectives or stance that the presented evidence supports. These actions are performed in three steps, or “moves” (Englander 2014: 60) (Table 2).

Table 2. Introduction: Create a Research Space (CARS) model (Englander 2014: 43-45)

Move 1	Establishing a research territory	A. By showing that the research area is important, central, interesting, problematic or relevant in some way *(optional)* B. By introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area *(obligatory)*
Move 2	Establishing a niche	A. By indicating a gap in the previous research or by extending previous knowledge in some way *(obligatory)*
Move 3	Occupying the niche	A. By explaining how the present study fills the gap, i.e. outlining purposes or stating the nature of the presented research *(obligatory)*

There have been recurrent complaints from the gatekeepers about the introductions written by non-Anglophone authors. One of these complaints relates to "incorrect structure", meaning that the authors do not follow the CARS model and therefore fail to create and occupy a research niche. A common "offence" is to omit the "gap statement". Some introductions include only a small number of references, which may come across as ignorance about recent developments within the field. Occasionally, the opposite is true: the introduction may be too broad, e.g. contain detailed descriptions of the historical background of the topic instead of focusing on the most relevant and recent literature. Another issue is not explaining the relevance of the literature. Rather than just listing the cited works, the introduction is expected to offer a coherent critical narrative that explains the place and importance of the presented study. According to Anglophone standards, any statement that is not the author's own must also be referenced – otherwise, an author can be accused of plagiarism. Another perceived deficiency is failing to make bold knowledge claims and other efforts to persuade the readers of the value of one's work. While making such assertions is accepted practice within the Anglophone scientific community, many international academics feel uncomfortable using tactics they may consider to be too confrontational or "boasting". It is also quite common for non-Anglophone academics to avoid being critical of their peers, sometimes to the extent of deliberately omitting relevant but "deficient" texts from the bibliography (Englander 2014: 60-61; Flowerdew 2001: 136; Mišak, Marušić & Marušić 2005: 125-128; Uzuner 2008: 256).

These kinds of "imperfections", which can be attributed to cross-cultural differences between writing practices, are likely to be more consequential for the perceived publishability of a manuscript than language fluency. While it is true that the opinions of individual editors and reviewers may vary – for example in Flowerdew's (2001: 137) study, some editors welcomed divergence from the established norms in introductions and discussions as representing desirable diversity – still, the majority of them saw these different approaches as problematic.

5. Introductions written by Polish authors

There have been a number of studies showing differences between the introductions written by Anglophone and Polish authors. To begin with, the articles of Polish authors are in general more diverse in terms of their structure (Duszak 1997b: 29). Many of them are not divided into sections at all, which makes it harder to identify the introduction section (Duszak 1994: 302; Warchał 2018: 332). Those that are organised into sections often do not follow the IMRD model. Additionally, sometimes the content that is normally expected in the introduction can be found in other sections. This includes texts written in English where authors are trying to follow the prescribed structural model (Golebiowski 1998: 73-74, 85).

The "shortcomings" of Polish introductions include "failing" to follow the CARS structure, to the extent that some researchers have deemed this model to be an unsuitable analytical tool for studying Polish introductions (Duszak 1994: 298-300; Golebiowski 1999: 234, 239; 1998: 69). For example, Golebiowski (1999: 234-237), who analysed introductions written by Polish authors in both Polish and English, observed in her Polish corpus an "almost total absence of rhetorical manoeuvres" equivalent to moves in the CARS model. In some English corpus works, she observed segments that "superficially resembled" the CARS moves but did not in fact serve the same function upon closer analysis, which she referred to as "quasi moves". "Quasi move 1" typically presents a broad perspective on the topic and an extensive review of cited works without necessarily explaining their relevance for the study. Most of the analysed texts lacked move 2 altogether. In some of them, a "quasi move 2" was present; again, however, upon analysis, it appeared not to aim at "establishing a niche", but rather, for example, at "facilitating further theoretical discussion and conceptual development of the text arguments". On the other hand, all analysed introductions included move 3 ("occupying the niche") or its "quasi" variant;

however, it often appeared at the beginning of the introduction, which rarely happens in introductions written by Anglophone authors. Additionally, in some of the analysed texts, substantial passages of text related to methodology could be found in the introduction. In conclusion, Golebiowski found that Polish scholars appeared to follow the basic Anglophone rules in writing research articles, such as adhering to the general structure by dividing the text into sections, while also displaying features of their local style, including "less rhetorical discipline and more departure from the main course of argumentation" (1999: 236-239).

Donesch-Jeżo (2019: 13, 23) has demonstrated that, even in medicine, where writing patterns are comparatively uniform internationally, the introductions written by Polish scientists differ significantly from those written by Anglophone scientists. For example, all Anglophone authors included all three CARS "moves" in their introduction, while Polish authors often omitted some of them or placed them in a different order. Moreover, most of the Anglophone authors cited a research gap as a rationale for their studies, while this was the least frequently offered motivation by Polish authors. In fact, Polish authors tended not to reveal their main goals or explicitly explain the contribution of their studies to the field at the beginning of their papers, leaving it up to the readers to work it out for themselves. In contrast, Anglophone authors revealed their intentions early, explicitly and in more detail (Duszak 1997b: 29; 1994: 303-305).

In Warchał's (2018: 335, 343-344) study, most (68%) of the Polish introductions contained a statement of purpose; however, considerably fewer Polish introductions did so than English ones (90%) and they took up less space on average. In the English texts, the purpose statement also typically referred to a specific research gap, which was used as a rationale for the study. In Polish introductions, on the other hand, the link between the research gap and the purpose of the study was communicated much less explicitly – again, "as if the task of finding the justification for the research rested with the reader" (Warchał 2018: 344). It may look like Polish authors are reluctant to point out research gaps in the works of other scholars or to challenge their views (Donesch-Jeżo 2019: 23; Duszak 1994: 308).

In contrast, the introductions written by Polish scholars analysed by Smakman & Duda-Osiewacz (2014: 43) were just as likely as those written by Anglophone scholars to comprise all the moves included in the CARS model. However, they were more digressive and less reader-friendly. Golebiowski (1998: 83-84) also observed that Polish introductions were not particularly reader-friendly. Their writing style sometimes seemed chaotic; for example, many contained multiple digressions, and on numerous occasions "topics, originally presented in a way signifying minor importance, unexpectedly become the main focus of attention".

Issues with literature reviews have also been observed – namely, that they were either too sparse or, on the contrary, described a very broad or historical context instead of concentrating on the most recent and relevant information. For example, in Donesch-Jeżo's (2019: 20) sample, the Anglophone authors included significantly more references in their introductions than the Polish authors, while the literature reviews analysed by Golebiowski (1998: 82) "often resemble abbreviated statements of all available knowledge on a topic" rather than focusing on the latest works. On the other hand, in the study conducted by Smakman & Duda-Osiewacz (2014: 43), both Polish and Anglophone authors included a similar number of references.

The next section presents examples of instructions that the gatekeepers, i.e. editors and reviewers, may be asked to follow while assessing submitted manuscripts. It will illustrate how the above tendencies in writing introductions may affect the perception of the article by the target audience.

6. The peer review process

Typically, a manuscript submitted to a scholarly journal can be rejected either during the initial screening or after the reviewers' evaluation. Elsevier, one of the top academic journal publishers, illustrates this assessment process as follows (Figure 4).

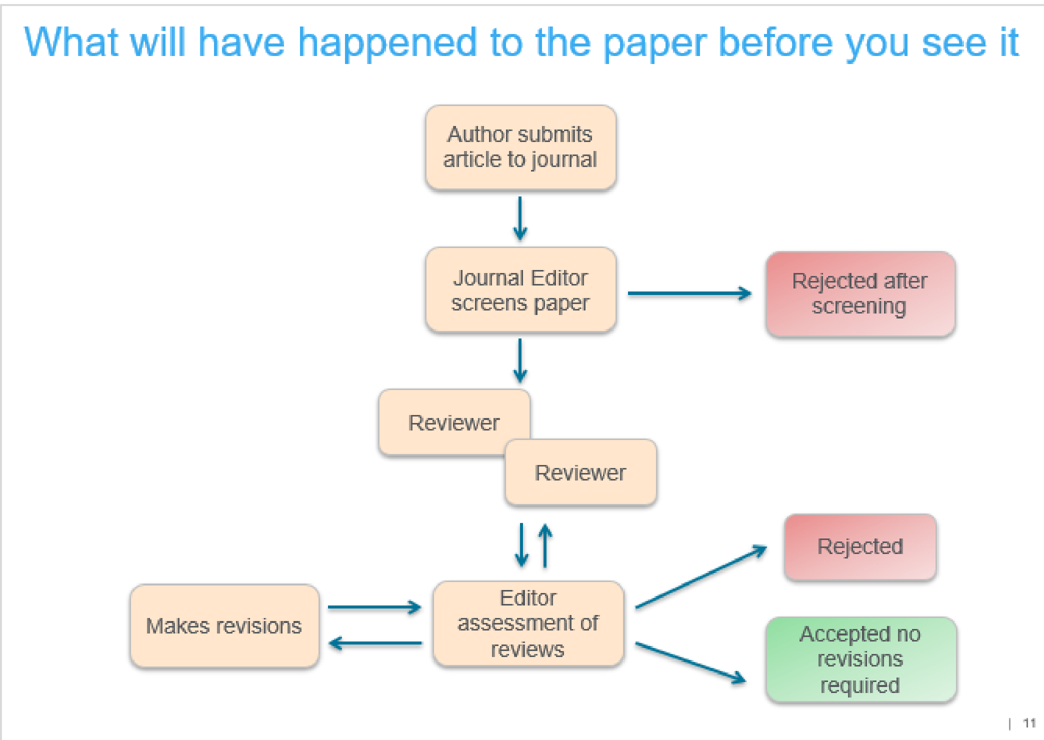

Figure 4. Peer review process (Elsevier 2019: 11)

According to Elsevier, the purpose of the peer review process is to establish whether the paper under review constitutes an original and significant contribution to the field, and to assess the author's engagement with current scientific discourse. This ensures that the published articles are of high quality (Figure 5).

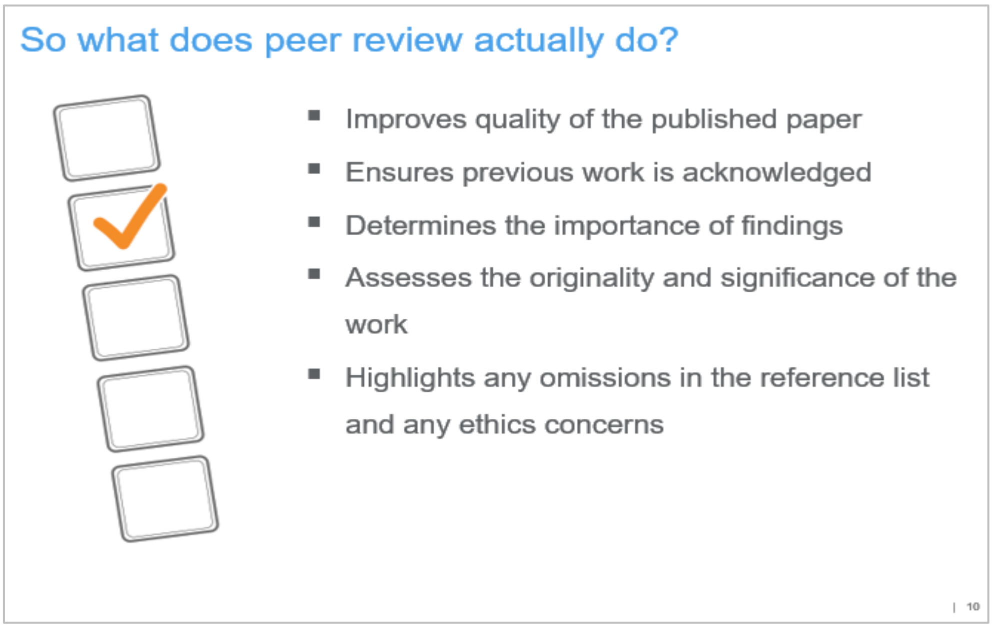

Figure 5. The purpose of the peer review process (Elsevier 2019: 10)

During this process, the reviewers receive instructions on how they should evaluate the submitted manuscripts. These instructions might be formulated in different ways, but typically their main points are concerned with the originality and significance of the contribution to the relevant field of study. These are assessed based on the author's own direct and specific explanations of why the study was undertaken and what new developments it brings to the existing literature in which it is grounded (Figures 6 and 7). These explanations, as well as the literature review itself, are normally expected to be found in the article introduction.

Full length research article

- Examine the importance of the research question addressed in the manuscript (e.g., are objectives and justification clearly stated?).
- Assess the originality (contribution, addition of knowledge to scientific literature or field) of the manuscript.
- Clearly identify the strengths and weaknesses of the method described in the manuscript.
- Make specific useful comments on the writing of the manuscript (e.g., writing, organization, figures, etc.).
- Offer specific comments on the author's interpretation of the results and conclusions drawn from the results.
- In case applicable, comment on the statistics (for example question if they are robust and fit-for-purpose and if the controls and sampling mechanisms are sufficient and well described).

Figure 6. Instructions for reviewers (Elsevier 2023b)

First read-through

- Is it clear what the authors want to communicate and the direction of the manuscript?
- Is it reporting original research or is it another type of article? How does this change your report?
- What contribution does the article make to the field of study?
- Is the manuscript original?
- Is the overall study design and approach appropriate?
- Are you concerned about the language? Are revisions needed to make it possible to review?

Figure 7. Instructions for reviewers: first read-through (Taylor & Francis 2023)

Some publishers issue more detailed directions on how papers should be evaluated. For example, Taylor & Francis, another major international publisher of academic journals, instructs its reviewers on how to assess each section of a manuscript. The introduction should summarise the current knowledge on the topic and address its limitations, explain why the study was necessary and present its aim and research questions (Figure 8). It is hard to miss that the word "clear/clearly" appears in almost each bullet point of this instruction, which indicates that ambiguity and implicitness do not constitute desirable characteristics of the text.

Introduction

- Does it clearly summarize the current state of the topic?
- Does it address the limitations of current knowledge in this field?
- Does it clearly explain why the study was necessary?
- Does it clearly define the aim of the study and is this consistent with the rest of the manuscript?
- Is the research question clear and appropriate?

Figure 8. Instructions for reviewers: introduction (Taylor & Francis 2023)

It might be useful to reiterate how important it is to pick a suitable selection of works for the literature review in order to convincingly justify a study and show its originality. How much attention is paid to this criterion can be illustrated by the example of instructions for the editors of the journal PLOS One regarding which articles are to be rejected straight away, i.e. before the peer review stage. PLOS One is a multidisciplinary journal that accepts various types of study – even those that may not be particularly innovative, provided that they are original in the sense that they have not been published before. According to these instructions, even papers designed to reproduce prior research require a meticulous review of recent literature in order to be presented in an appropriate context (Figure 9).

Reject without review when

- There are serious methodological or analytical flaws that cannot be addressed by peer review
- Conclusions are unsupported by the data (for example, insufficient sample sizes)
- Flawed, weak, or insufficiently detailed hypothesis, study rationale, methods, analyses, or results would prevent reviewers from properly evaluating the work
- Redundant work that doesn't clearly reference and discuss the existing literature (exceptions: purposeful replication studies or reanalyses that clearly discuss the existing literature. See publication criterion 2)
- Apparent revisions would take the authors more than a few months to complete. This could include additional experiments, extensive reframing or recontextualization of the work, or extensive reanalysis. An open reject (with invitation to resubmit) can be considered when extensive revisions are required that would exceed the usual 45-day major revision deadline.

Figure 9. Instructions for editors: initial evaluation (PLOS One n.d.: 4)

The bottom line is that any deviations from the preferred structure of the introduction will likely not be treated as simple errors in composition. They may be interpreted as omissions of important content, namely the moves that are supposed to attest to the paper's originality and significance of contribution. Anglophone readers will also rarely anticipate being expected to infer anything from implicit cues – rather, they will expect clear, direct explanations. For example, a comparatively small number of references may be interpreted as the author being unfamiliar with the relevant literature; the study may therefore be considered unfounded, which would undermine its results in the reader's eyes (Donesch-Jeżo 2019: 20). In addition, issues with the introduction may lead to issues with the discussion section as well: it might be difficult to convincingly demonstrate a study is filling a gap if that gap has not been clearly established in the first place (Flowerdew 2001: 137). In this case, if the author were to use translation services, even the most accurate and error-free translation would not help make the target audience recognise such a text as a publishable article.

It is worth pointing out that awareness and tolerance of diversity in linguistic expression is increasing among the gatekeepers for international journals. The assumption that all academics must write like native speakers seems to be fading slowly, and it is gradually becoming accepted that texts by non-Anglophone authors may retain features of their mother tongues. For example, it has been demonstrated that Spanish scholars tend to transfer certain features of Spanish style into their English texts (Englander 2014: 78). In fact, Elsevier explicitly instructs their reviewers not to evaluate the spelling, grammar and layout of the manuscripts (Figure 10). In some journals, particularly insensitive comments about language are censored by the editors. Additionally, some journal editors report going "out of their way" to provide extra help with "difficulties in expressing oneself adequately" to those non-Anglophone authors who present "a good argument" (Flowerdew 2001: 129-132).

DON'T

- Feel the need to comment on the spelling, grammar or layout of the article. If the research is sound, but let down by poor language; recommend to the editor that the author(s) have their paper language edited.
- Make ad-hominem comments.
- Dismiss alternative viewpoints or theories that might conflict with your own opinions on a topic; when reviewing, maintain an open perspective.
- Share the review or information about the review with anyone without the agreement of the editors and authors involved. According to COPE guidelines , reviewers must treat any manuscripts they are asked to review as confidential documents. This applies both during and after the publication process unless the journal employs open peer review.
- Suggest that the author includes citations to your (or your associates') work unless for genuine scientific reasons and not with the intention of increasing citation counts or enhancing the visibility of your work (or that of your associates).

Figure 10. Instructions for reviewers: the "don'ts" (Elsevier 2023a)

In reality, editors and reviewers often comment on the "language problems" and recommend corrections, but these are rarely the sole reason for rejection (Englander 2006: 130; Flowerdew 2001: 134; Lillis & Curry 2015: 148). Only occasionally are manuscripts rejected on this basis in journals with very low acceptance rates, or when writing is poor enough to render the text incomprehensible. Additionally, linguistic errors can also be found in manuscripts by Anglophone scholars, and on occasion Anglophone authors are even advised to have their paper "reviewed by a native speaker" (Englander 2014: 85-86). In fact, the notion of a "native speaker" itself has been challenged. Many non-native speakers receive education and work in Anglophone countries, as a result of which their writing is indistinguishable from the writing of a native speaker; therefore, it makes more sense to talk about "knowledge" and "expertise" (Flowerdew 2001: 128). Moreover, while linguistic norms definitely exist, the assessment of language use in the same manuscript may vary between evaluators within the same journal, as well as between journals. This indicates that it is potentially subject to opinion and negotiation (Lillis & Curry 2015: 148). Many editors and reviewers believe that they can distinguish between native and non-native writing (Englander 2006: 130; Lillis & Curry 2015: 148). However, it looks like they often cannot, as demonstrated by Smakman & Duda-Osiewacz (2014: 42), whose study also shows that the differences between native and non-native authors can be found at the section rather than sentence level – namely, "non-native Introduction sections are more reader-responsible (i.e. less reader-friendly) and less linear (i.e. more digressive) than their native equivalents" (2014: 43).

The same level of comparative flexibility cannot typically be expected regarding the content or structure of the papers. Authors who deviate from Anglophone norms in academic writing might even find their scholarly competence being questioned (Bennett 2013: 95; Canagarajah 2002). For example, some reviewers take such manuscripts to be seminar papers written by graduate students who have not yet learnt how to prepare research papers, or as written by someone trained in a different discipline and therefore new to the field (Tardy & Matsuda 2009: 40-44). It looks like the misconceptions of "universalism" and "linguistic realism", i.e. a belief that language directly reflects "external reality without any rhetorical manoeuvring or mediation", is still widespread among native English speakers, who are often unaware of the existence of different scientific discourses (Bennett 2013: 94). What is more, according to Flowerdew's (2001: 140-142) study, even editors and reviewers who are aware of cross-cultural differences in writing conventions seem intolerant of foreign characteristics. While a handful of them may allow for some diversity, they generally hold that it is the author's responsibility to adjust their style to the journal's requirements, and that they are primarily concerned about the reader's experience (only one of the interviewed editors stated that, if a journal was advertised as being international, it should be open to "international kinds of discourses").

It is also worth mentioning that both editors and reviewers may refer to all kinds of foreign-looking characteristics of a text as "problems with the language" because they do not have an awareness or terminology regarding the nature of the issues they are observing. For example, in Englander's (2006: 136-158) study, the non-Anglophone authors were instructed by the reviewers to have their manuscripts corrected by a native speaker. Although none of them actually consulted a native English speaker while revising their articles, they were all accepted following revision. Instead, they implemented significant changes in the area of "metafunctions of language" in order to present the originality and rationale for their work in a more acceptable way – namely, they eliminated value-laden expressions to achieve an impression of scientific objectivity; increased hedging and decreased emphatics in terms of how they conveyed the contribution of the study; increased the number of references to relate their work to the existing literature in the expected way; and adjusted (increased or reduced) the size of the introduction, as well as its structure, so that it more closely resembled what this section was anticipated to look like.

As for Polish scholarly writing, it has arguably undergone some changes under the influence of English writing. For example, within the last couple of decades, articles by Polish authors have become increasingly reader-friendly and their referencing has started to resemble the Anglophone style. On the other hand, its other stylistic and linguistic features seem to have remained unchanged (Smakman & Duda-Osiewacz 2014: 29, 43-44). This indicates that many Polish academics continue to apply the Polish writing style to their English texts, which may result in the rejection of their manuscript by Anglophone journals (Kijak 2014: 25).

7. Translating into English for publication

Due to cross-cultural differences, successful translation of academic texts might constitute a complex undertaking if its goal is to increase the chance of publication. For example, as Duszak (1997a: 324-325) noted, "(…) digressive texts do not translate easily into languages in which linearity is preferred". They may require numerous adjustments in order to be considered acceptable and publishable by Anglophone gatekeepers. Moreover, modifications to the structure and style of a text may entail misrepresentation of an author's intentions, especially as writing patterns and conventions often encode historically established intellectual values. On the other hand, commercial translators in particular focus predominantly on mastering the sentence level of the language, mainly grammar and vocabulary, since this is the common understanding of "writing like a native speaker", and may not have sufficient knowledge of scientific genres, let alone cross-cultural differences between them (Mišak, Marušić & Marušić 2005: 128-129; Smakman & Duda-Osiewacz 2014: 43).

Some argue that translators ought to be familiar with the "basic concepts of scientific research and reporting" (Mišak, Marušić & Marušić 2005: 129) or "discursive moves" in a research article (Olohan 2016: 141). But even if they are, there is still a decision to be made on how to approach the structural differences in scientific genres between two languages or cultures. The literature dedicated to scientific translation does not seem to offer much help, as it is typically limited to addressing the following issues that translators may experience or create (e.g. Bennett 2013; DiGiacomo 2010; Siepmann 2006):

- Lack of familiarity with basic concepts and terminology, as well as with an appropriate lexis in general.
- Inappropriate tone/register (e.g. texts in English may sound less formal than in some other languages).
- Awkward syntax/grammar (e.g. long sentences should be avoided in English, but might be common in other languages).
- Inappropriate use of authorial voice and other aspects of metadiscourse (e.g. hedgers and

boosters, attitude markers, relational markers and person markers).

- Lack of awareness of ideological and identity issues, as well as of power dynamics.

Sometimes researchers act as translators, and they may be better equipped to play the role of intercultural mediator. They tend to acquire awareness of cross-cultural differences in writing conventions and may develop their own strategies for dealing with them. For example, DiGiacomo (2010: 75-77), an anthropologist who acted as a translator of Catalan, noticed that the texts of Catalan authors tended to diverge from the Anglophone model "rhetorically and structurally", but decided to "preserve difference on this level of the text" whenever possible. She spoke against "forcible" adjustment of the original text to suit the target language reader's expectations, describing it as "an act of violence and cultural imperialism". She compared translation to ethnographic activity; as she explained: "An anthropological text does not eliminate cultural difference by assimilating Others to ourselves, but instead makes their otherness accessible" (DiGiacomo 2010: 77). It might be that this field is exceptionally tolerant in this regard because, as she noticed, both national and individual variation is largely acknowledged and accepted within it. However, this approach might not be helpful in fields with lower awareness and tolerance of differences, or when a publisher prescribes very specific instructions in terms of article structure and content. DiGiacomo (2013: 118; 2010: 75) also points out that translating texts in her own field means that she can "blur the boundaries" between translation, editing, peer review and rewriting, while being careful not to substitute her own voice for those of her clients. According to her, the best results can be achieved based on long-term cooperation and a shared field of study, when the translator is familiar with both the author's discipline and their individual style (DiGiacomo 2013: 115-117).

Bennett (2013: 99-104), on the other hand, argues that translators should be able to convey the author's identity in such a way that they convincingly construct the persona of a credible researcher. To do this, they are advised to "heavily domesticate the source text in order to ensure acceptance by the international academic community", while "remaining as faithful as possible to the intentions of the original author". Although she offers some suggestions regarding differences in the structure of the text – e.g. translation may involve "the restructuring of paragraphs to ensure that the main theme is stated clearly at the outset" – she does not recommend any specific solutions to deal with some of the most important issues, such as the structure of the introduction. Instead, she advises that the translator should use their cultural knowledge to "negotiate some kind of a compromise between the author and the journal's editors and referees", and in cases where the differences are too great for a mainstream Anglophone journal, the translator may suggest the author submit their manuscript somewhere else. Bennett (2013: 96) recognises that scientific translators may find themselves “stuck between a rock and a hard place”. On the one hand, the authors, especially those with an established position in their country, may complain about their words being altered. On the other, unaltered texts may seem “hopelessly inadequate” to Anglophone gatekeepers and be rejected as a result. This is why Bennett postulates that translators should be prepared to engage in “extensive negotiations” with both authors and editors even “long after the translation has been ostensibly completed”.

Siepmann (2006: 144-147), for his part, rejects “the compromise between preservation and adaptation” and advocates for “optimum adherence to the stylistic norms of the target language”. This approach, as he points out, is likely to require both “syntactic and text-structural” changes to be applied to most academic texts during the translation process. He gives a few examples of these types of modifications but none of them illustrates making adjustments to the structure of a scientific text.

Matarese (2013: 262) maintains that no particular approach to translation is suitable for every situation. Rather than seek out standard procedures, language professionals should personalise their offer to meet the needs of individual clients, providing “integrated services that combine elements of education, translation and editing (or writing) as required by the particular situation”. However, for translators to be able to offer individualised services requires effective communication and close cooperation between them and their clients in order to come to an agreement on what work specifically is to be done. The problem is that commercial language services typically do not allow direct communication between language professionals and their clients. Additionally, translators may not always be skilled in liaising with clients and may be reluctant to criticise their work. Matarese (2013: 263-264) proposes that, as an alternative, universities might organise local language support communities and writing centres in cooperation with “reputable freelance translators, editors and trainers”. But this kind of solution is often not available or even possible, and in reality many researchers use commercial translation agencies.

Finally, according to Burgess and Lillis (2013: 3-4), relevant professional associations should be able to articulate what services can be expected from language professionals, which would help individual translators agree with their clients on the most suitable service for them, as well as assist them in explaining its limitations. This could also prevent disagreement on what outcome is to be expected and protect translators from being blamed when their clients are dissatisfied. The problem is that, although intercultural mediation is not explicitly prohibited by any of the Polish professional institutions, translators working in Anglophone countries may in fact be banned by their associations from interfering with the text in any way that entails "distortion of the original message through additions, omissions, or explanation" or from engaging in "cultural brokering". Additionally, most translators themselves consider intercultural mediation to be unprofessional (Katan 2013: 84).

Taking into account all the aforementioned complexities, a question arises as to whether it might be more pragmatic to equip the academic community with the ability to apply the IMRD text structure and the three-step CARS model when composing works for publication in international English-medium journals. This would undoubtedly make life easier for both authors and translators. Another conceivable scenario, contingent upon authors producing the expected content, is the potential elimination of the necessity for translators altogether, achieved by making use of increasingly effective machine translation. However, there are several aspects to be considered.

Firstly, given that, at least in Poland, there is currently no established systematic strategy in place to educate the academic community on this topic, devising, funding and disseminating an appropriate programme could prove challenging and time-intensive. Even presuming that the Polish community will naturally adopt Anglophone writing conventions in the future (a possibility but not a certainty), projecting a definitive timeframe for the culmination of this transition remains difficult. Moreover, concerns persist regarding the dominance of English at the expense of other languages and the implications of rhetorical uniformisation, such as the potential stifling of innovative and creative thinking (e.g. Swales 1997: 374-381).

The prospect of confidently relying on machine translation for scholarly texts necessitates not only authors producing the expected content but also the availability of sufficiently advanced tools capable of managing this degree of complexity. While machine translation has made significant advancements, particularly with the emergence of Neural Machine Translation (NMT) demonstrating impressive capabilities in translating general content and everyday language, scholarly texts present unique challenges that machines might struggle to fully overcome. The level of accuracy in NMT varies depending on factors such as stylistic intricacies, grammatical complexities, the prevalence of the employed vocabulary and the languages involved, which rely on the availability of computational space and relevant training data. Additionally, at present, NMT works at the sentence level and does not recognise relationships between sentences or paragraphs, or the broader context of the document. Furthermore, it lacks sensitivity to cultural nuances. This implies that while some languages and disciplines may yield relatively accurate translations, in a broader sense, the technology may struggle to preserve the coherence and structure of complex arguments, accurately capture cultural references, domain-specific terminology, and other elements integral to the highly-specialised character of academic discourse. Additionally, any intricate nuances as well as the originality and unique perspective of a specific author are likely to be flattened out or lost in translation (e.g. Minyun 2023: 46-49; Wu et al. 2023: 448).

Machine translation could conceivably offer a general understanding of scholarly texts, thereby facilitating access to papers published in various languages. One could even speculate that it may eventually eliminate the need for writing in English which, in turn, could bring about a resurgence in less-published languages. However, a number of factors require consideration. For example, unequal access to technology yielding disparities in knowledge dissemination coupled with a bias towards English-language scholarship perpetuating the perception that the most impactful works are written in English may further reproduce their heightened visibility and accessibility.

In contrast, the inclusion of genre-specific differences between relevant language pairs within current translation courses could prove less daunting and indeed constitute a logical augmentation to their existing programmes. Translators, who are already trained in language skills and arguably accustomed to tailoring texts to fit specific contexts and styles, could conceivably integrate genre awareness into their skillset more readily. Hence, compared to orchestrating the delivery of extensive training to a substantial number of authors, given that not all of them may be capable or inclined to acquire the expertise that is not a core aspect of their work – this alternative might offer a more pragmatic avenue.

8. Conclusions

As we have seen, there are significant cross-cultural differences even between seemingly close cultures in terms of how scientific knowledge is constructed and presented. Anglophone editors and reviewers may not realise it and, as a result, they may misjudge and reject papers displaying unfamiliar characteristics. Of particular importance seem to be those structural discrepancies that may in turn affect the content of the text, such as certain "moves" missing from the introduction section.

Polish scientific writing practices, which stem from the Teutonic intellectual tradition, differ significantly from the Anglophone conventions embedded in the Saxonic intellectual style. For example, the literature shows that typical introductions by Polish authors tend to deviate from the CARS model typically expected in international English-medium journals

(Section 7: Polish Introductions). This means that the papers of Polish scholars may not meet the requirements of these journals.

This also means that it may not be enough to produce a translation that is accurate for a manuscript to be accepted for publication. This puts translators in a position where they may be expected to play the role of intercultural mediators, and to recognise and correct various types of deviation from Anglophone writing conventions. Yet there is little guidance for them on how to approach this issue, and the few works that can be found on the subject carry mixed messages. While some express concern about distorting the voices of individual authors as well as regarding cultural uniformisation and recommend caution when applying interventions (DiGiacomo 2013; 2010), others encourage complete domestication of the texts for the most favourable outcome (Siepmann 2006). Still others endorse "some kind of compromise" in order to adjust the text to Anglophone standards, while minding the author's intentions (Bennett 2013). It has also been suggested that translators should offer individualised services, combining translation with editing, peer review, language tutoring and liaising with third parties, as well as striving to establish long-term relationships with their clients (Bennett 2013: 96-104; DiGiacomo 2013: 115-118; 2010: 75; Matarese 2013: 262).

The problem is that translators might be trained and pressed to focus on the fidelity of translation by their professional institutions. As a result, they may not be interested in, or find it important to familiarise themselves with, intercultural mediation. According to Katan (2013: 87), the majority of translators "do not consider IM [intercultural mediation] an essential subject of study for the profession, and, apart from community interpreters themselves, few believe in intercultural intervention". Moreover, translators cooperating with commercial translation agencies do not communicate with their clients directly, which makes it virtually impossible for them to offer integrated, personalised services.

As there is currently only a small body of work directed towards scientific translators, further work is undoubtedly needed. First, it should be clearly articulated which cross-cultural differences in writing conventions are most consequential in terms of a manuscript's publishability, and why. Awareness of such cross-cultural differences would help translators recognise the merit and potential benefits of intercultural mediation to their clients, as well as allowing them to make informed choices "whether they are aiming to propagate or subvert genre conventions" (Olohan 2016: 167). It would also help if specific strategies for dealing with these differences were put forward. These differences may vary between languages, or they may overlap. For example, speakers of several languages tend to structure their introductions differently than the way dictated by the CARS model expected in English-medium journals

(Section 5: The Introduction of the Research Article). It would therefore be useful for translators of these languages to find guidance on, for example, what to do when they encounter a text that is missing a move in its introduction.

Last but not least, future work should also look into what strategies for distributing this kind of knowledge would be feasible and practical considering the education, professional institutions and working circumstances of translators specialising in scientific translations.

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