On the representation of observations in business discourse vs. academic discourse

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In this paper, we will analyse the conceptualization of the linguistic tools used to represent results in Spanish economic discourse. More concretely, we compare a corpus of bank reports (various Spanish banks 2006-2011) with academic discourse on economic issues (*Revista Internacional del Trabajo*-RIT 2004-2011). We focus on how perception verbs (*ver* 'see', *observar* 'observe', *desprender* 'infer', *entender* 'understand', *apreciar* 'appreciate) are used to describe observations of respectively economic or research results. By analysing two types of discourse related to economic issues, we want to pin down the specificity of a formal written genre of business discourse (bank reports), as compared to a non-business related formal written genre (academic discourse).

In the first place, we will look at the frequency of these perception verbs in both genres. Since bank reports focus on describing operations and financial conditions yet academic discourse implies a more analytical approach, we expect different lexical choices to be made, which will be reflected in the frequency of these verbs.

Secondly, we also expect the specific constructions in which these verbs occur to be genre-specific. Concretely, previous research (De Cock & Hanegreefs 2012 ms.) has shown that the perception and interpretation of results in business discourse is expressed only through the depersonalizing *se*-construction (an agent-defocussing construction) (1). We expect academic discourse to use the same construction (2). However, in view of the authorial expression and the higher personal responsibility of the authors, our hypothesis is that there will be a greater presence of constructions expressing intersubjectivity, such as a wider variety of impersonal and personal constructions (including authorial *we*), and modal (3) and stance expressions.

(1) *En el gráfico inferior* ***se observa*** *…* (La Caixa 2010)
'In the lower graph you observe/see …'
(2) *Una "paradoja" similar* ***se observa*** *en la correlación (…).* (RIT 2011)
'A similar paradox is observed in the correlation (…).'
(3) *En esta bibliografía monográfica* ***cabe observar*** *algunos patrones generales(…)* (RIT 2011)
'In this monographic bibliography some general patterns are to be observed (…).'

We wish to show in this paper that, in general, bank reports, as corporate communication, erase the author's involvement in the text, as opposed to the expression of authorial responsibility in academic discourse. Thus, this will reflect both on the choice for specific perception verbs and on the construal in which they occur.

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