LEXICAL BUNDLES INDICATING AUTHORIAL PRESENCE: A CROSS-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF NOVICE CZECH AND GERMAN WRITERS’ ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

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Abstract
With the widespread use of English as the lingua franca of academia, there is a growing need of research into how non-native speakers striving to be socialized in target academic discourse communities deal with variation in meaning and organization of academic texts across fields, languages and cultures. An important indicator of competent linguistic production is the mastering of the register- and genre-specific formulaic expressions termed lexical bundles, which are defined as sequences of three or more words with frequent co-occurrence in a particular context (Biber et al. 1999). While recent studies have addressed disciplinary and novice-expert differences in the use of lexical bundles, cross-cultural variation in bundle use remains underexplored. This paper investigates lexical bundles indicating authorial presence in a specialized corpus of Master’s degree theses from the fields of linguistics and methodology written by German and Czech university students. The aim of the study is to compare how novice Czech and German authors use lexical bundles indicating authorial presence, to consider whether and to what extent the novice writers have adapted their writing style to the conventions of Anglo-American academic writing, and to discuss the role of the L1 academic literacy tradition and instructions received in writing courses for the modelling of novice writers’ academic discourse. The analysis shows that the variety and frequency of interpersonal bundles in Czech and German novice writers’ discourse do not approximate to the standard of published academic texts in English. The findings also indicate that while the considerable similarities in the way Czech and German novice writers use the target structures for constructing authorial presence reflect their common roots in the Central European tradition of academic discourse, the divergences may be attributed to a difference in the degree of adaptation to Anglo-American writing conventions.

Keywords
authorial presence, cross-cultural variation, lexical bundles, novice academic discourse

1 Introduction
It is now a universally acknowledged truth that English has become the lingua franca of the global academic world. One of the consequences of this widespread use of English in academia is that the majority of its users are non-native speakers. Yet until recently most descriptive and pedagogical studies of academic English have taken the educated native speaker as the model of good and fluent language performance and the Anglo-American tradition of academic writing as the prevailing discourse convention, thus creating a centre-periphery