

Randomised controlled trials are considered the gold standard for assessing the effectiveness of treatments.

Since the 1990s, there have been growing concerns about the objectivity of RCT reporting, leading to the creation of The Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT) Statement. Although this document provides a medical perspective on the reporting requirements, it does not provide explicit guidelines on language use.

This paper focuses on Introductions of clinical psychology research articles (RAs) classified as RCT reports.

Within the ESP tradition, RA Introductions have been identified as the most rhetorically complex RA sections. Consequently,

a remarkable volume of ESP research on the RA genre has focused on the linguistic means of persuasion in the introductory section.

However, the primary focus on lexical and grammatical features has been found to have significant limitations in exploring genre-sensitive language use.

This study uses the appraisal system developed in systemic functional linguistics to investigate the use of evaluative language for demonstrating topic significance in RCT Introductions.

The results indicate the existence of three strands of evaluation targeting the disorder under investigation with reference to its:

(i) symptoms/effects; (ii) affected population, and (iii) treatment.

The findings of this study carry important pedagogical implications for teaching novice medical researchers.