

Socio-Cultural Differences in the Rhetorical Structure of Scientific Abstracts

Alla Münch, University of Tübingen
 alla.muench@student.uni-tuebingen.de

Research Questions:

- Are there differences in the rhetorical structure between abstracts written by scholars with different cultural backgrounds?
- Is it possible to adapt one's writing to foreign conventions when writing in a non-native language or do native rhetoric conventions still dominate in such discourse?

Data:

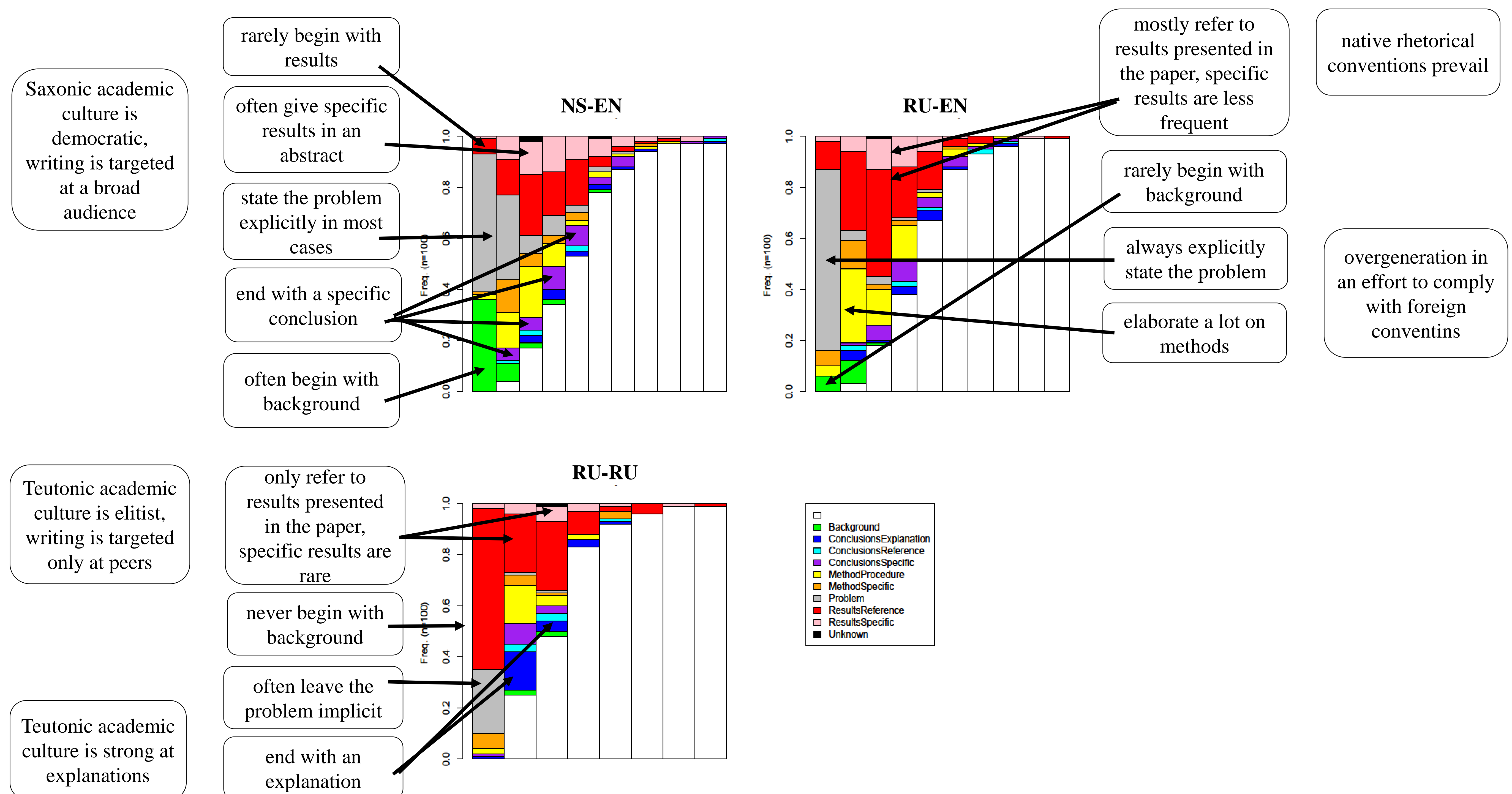
abstracts of research articles in Physics

Saxonic academic culture:
 native speakers of English (NS-EN)

Teutonic academic culture:
 native speakers of Russian

in English (RU-EN)
 in Russian (RU-RU)

Distribution of rhetorical moves in abstracts:



Conclusions:

- significant differences in the rhetorical structure of abstracts written by researchers belonging to different academic cultures (Saxonic and Teutonic)
- rhetoric of abstracts written in a foreign language follows native conventions in many respects
- writing in a foreign language researchers are prone to overgenerate some foreign patterns
- conformity to foreign rhetorical conventions is possible, but requires significant conscious efforts of the writer