

Use of First Person Pronouns: A Corpus Based Study between Experts and Non-Experts

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Abstract

This contrastive study is based on an investigation of the use of first person pronouns of 242 linguistics Research Articles (RAs) in expert and non-expert corpora in terms of 1) the use of first-person pronouns in expert and non-expert linguistics RAs, and 2) the passive form of first person in both corpora. The analysis reveals that there are quantitative and qualitative differences in the use of the first pronouns. The aim is to determine whether expert or non-expert writers use more first person pronouns. This study shows that first person pronoun is an important aspect of expert and non-expert texts as included 94 % of all texts of both corpora. In addition, the results indicate differences in the frequency of use of first person pronoun. Furthermore, findings suggested that the frequencies of first person pronoun in expert corpus used more frequently than non-expert corpus in both active and passive forms. Among first person pronoun "we" is the most common pronoun in the expert texts and non-expert texts.

Key words: First person pronouns, expert and non-expert corpora.

1. Introduction

Discourse plays a pivotal part within the preparing of information development. Present ways deal with the importance of first person nature of academic communication. Consequently, in English for Scholarly Purposes,

researchers have centered their interest on the interpersonal nature of scholastic communication, portraying how scholars utilize dialect to contend in support of their view and search consensus. (Molino, 2010)

In the present paper, I use the first person pronoun to account for the way the expression by expert and non- expert in RAs in the field of Linguistics, I argue that how the expert and non-expert writers use first person pronouns in academic writings by taking contrastive texts of both types of writers.

In particular, I focus on how experts and non- expert use first person pronoun and on other hand we will first discuss passive constructions in experts and non- expert, on the basis of which similarities and differences between the two languages will be explored. Also how they use first pronoun in the passive voice term. For this reason, I use the term

“personal and impersonal ” to refer to exclusive first-person subject pronouns in English and also to indicate passive, passive-like and impersonal constructions as used to refer to the actions carried out by expert and non- expert writers.

One of the most self-evident ways writers insert themselves into writings is through first person pronouns. This kind of pronoun has functions that serve in academic writing range from low risk purposes, as announcing topics or describing research strategies, to high risk purposes, as making unique claims.

Many students, having been instructed by instructors or reading material that academic writing should be impersonal, are hesitant to insert themselves into their academic writing within the way specialists do. Some were raised in societies that value collective instead of individual expressions of identity. Others may use first person but not within the ways a specialist would. (Thonney, 2017)

From the interactional viewpoint, the use of personal pronouns in written text,

especially the second person (you) and the first person (we), has been viewed as a vital way of building the two members within the interaction. Thompson and Thetela (1995) argue that personal pronouns are employed as “projected roles” which function as the textual personae of the intended writer and reader; they maintain that potential readers are encouraged to “converge” with their textual personae. Kuo (1999) suggests that personal pronouns play an important role in revealing how to use personal pronouns effectively is of great importance as giving them the opportunity to highlight their own contributions to their field and strengthen the unity with their readers. Therefore, the use of personal pronouns is ‘...a powerful way of strong writer identity’ Hyland (2002) and ‘central to face-to-face interaction’ Kuo (1999).

The paper is organized in five parts. The first part is the introductory part which discusses first person pronoun use in the expert and non-expert writers that was prompted by two main considerations. Firstly, first person pronouns and secondly, passive voice and also there is a literature review about the studies that studied about the field in part 2. Part 3 provides a description of the data, and the methods of data processing results of the study on the basis of a data collection compiled from two groups of corpora in order to provide a more complete picture of first person pronoun in article introductions in both fields (expert and non-expert) (part 4). The conclusion is to illustrate, in the final part (part 5).

Among the personal pronouns, “I” and “we” have often drawn attention from researchers in academic writing (Ivanic 1998; Kuo 1999; Tang and John 1999; Hyland 2001; Harwood 2005, for example).

The goals of this paper are the following: 1) to compare whether expert or non-expert academics prefer using first person pronouns in their scientific articles to show their presence in their articles in the published Linguistics RAs; 2) to investigate the use of passive form of first person pronoun to

establish whether they are susceptible to cross-cultural variation.

2. First Person Pronouns in Research Articles: Previous Studies

Recently, the use of first person pronoun in academic writing in English has progressively attracted the attention to researchers as they have been appeared to be a critical explanatory gadget which permits journalists to stress their contribution to the academic debate and construct an authoritative discursal self through the acknowledge of different discourse capacities (Hyland, 2002; Kuo, 1999; Tang & John, 1999). First-person pronouns have been studied across different disciplinary fields (Harwood, 2005; Hyland, 2001) and in texts written by native and non-native speakers of English (Hyland, 2002; Martínez, 2005). These studies have examined aspects such as singular versus plural forms, and inclusive versus exclusive meaning, and have established taxonomies and associated functions.

Kuo (1999) performed a research on first person pronouns in a corpus of 36 scientific journal articles from the disciplines of Computer Science, Physics and Electronic Engineering. The results showed that among first person plural pronouns, exclusive “we” occurred 65.5% mainly with the function of “explaining what was done”. Inclusive “we” occurred 29.1% mainly with the function of “assuming shared knowledge, goals and beliefs”.

Hyland (2001) carried out a research on self-reference and the use of first person pronouns in a corpus of 240 RAs in eight disciplines: Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Marketing, Philosophy, Sociology, Applied Linguistics, Physics and Microbiology. The results showed that among all the self-mentions occurred in RAs, 81% of them were pronouns, 16% were self-reference, and 2% were other ways of mentioning to the authors of the RAs.

Besides, first person pronouns showed up more habitually in soft fields. Hyland (2002) made a comparison on the use of first

person pronouns between 64 project reports written by Hong Kong undergraduates from the disciplines of Biology, Mechanical Engineering and 240 RAs from the disciplines of Biology and Physics written by experts. His results showed that the authors in RAs had a higher awareness to present themselves than students. Besides, the first person pronouns occurred more frequently in soft fields, which was in accordance with Hyland's research findings in 2001.

Harwood (2005) found numerous of the same purposes for first person when he analyzed published articles from four disciplines (Business and Management, Computing Science, Economics, and Physics). Writers used (I) and (we) to help them pass the value of their work, specific ideas, to describe research procedures, to announce the structure of the content, and to establish their relationship with readers.

Other than, distinctive language proficiencies are basic components that can influence the use of English first person pronouns in academic writings. A few abroad writers have differentiated the use of first person pronouns in the articles written by both native English speakers (NES) with those by non-native English speakers (NNES). For example, Martinez (2005) made a comparison of the use of first person pronouns in biology articles written by NES and NNES writers, which focuses on the distributions and discourse functions of first person pronouns in different sections: Introduction, Methodology, Results and Discussion. The results showed that the overall frequencies of first person pronouns in the NES articles was over two times higher than that in the NNES articles. In addition, there were significant differences of the use of first person pronouns in four sections of RAs.

Ji (2010) made a comparison on the number, distribution, and function of first person pronouns in 21 RAs in both social science and natural science. The results showed that in the RAs of social science, the percentages of "I" and "we" were 37.24% and 33.3% respectively, which was approximately

the same; while in the RAs of natural science, the percentage of "we" was 83.33%, which further proved that there were significant differences of the use of first person pronouns in RAs between soft fields and hard fields.

Okamura (2009) in his study aims to investigate how the speaker employs personal pronouns (we, you, I) in academic speech through the analysis of the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE). In the MICASE, two speech events (undergraduate lectures and public lectures) were chosen within which two linguistic environments were examined (words before and after the pronoun). The results show that "you" was the most common personal pronoun in both undergraduate and public lectures. The analysis of words before the pronouns shows that "if" goes with "you" much more than "we" and "I" in both lectures, making "if you were/are" the most frequent pattern in undergraduate lectures. "you" seems to be a useful tool for engaging students in the narrative of the lecture.

Apart from disciplinary contrasts, many researchers abroad and at home have paid their considerations to the use of first person pronouns in academic papers from various social foundations with various languages and committed to relative studies primarily from the perspective of distinctive disciplines, which have showed that the disciplinary variations can have effect on the use of first person pronouns.

Vassileva (2000) compared the use of first person subject pronouns "I" and "we" in academic writings from five languages: English, German, French, Russian, and Bulgarian. The result showed that the frequencies of first person pronouns in English articles were two times higher than that in the articles from other four languages. Zhang (2012) performed a research on "we", "us", and "I" in the introduction section of the theses by Chinese and Canadian graduates and found that the frequency of "I" used by Canadian writers was much higher than that by Chinese writers, but there was no

significant difference in the use of “we” between them.

While the use of English for academic purposes has been widely studied, there are numbers of comparative researches by different researchers that have been studied first person pronouns between English and some other languages for academic purposes.

Molino (2010) in his article a contrastive study of English and Italian Linguistics research articles A cross-cultural approach is taken to analyse Linguistics research articles in English and Italian in terms of 1) the use of exclusive first-person subject pronouns in English and first-person inflected verbs in Italian, and 2) the passive voice in both languages and *si* constructions in Italian. The results indicate differences in the frequency of use of personal and impersonal authorial references across discourse functions. This variation seems to be due to the adoption of differing interpersonal strategies, subjectivity or objectivity, within the two academic discourse communities, and the dissimilar incidence of particular discourse functions and sub-functions, which ultimately influence the rate of occurrence of personal and impersonal authorial references.

Two researchers studied on the comparative studies between English and Spanish. The first one is Ian A. Williams's. His corpus-based study examines first-person verbs in Methods sections in English and Spanish. His quantitative analysis was based on rhetorical Move categories and qualitative analysis on linguistic profiles (collocation, colligation, semantic preference and semantic prosody). Both the English and Spanish sub-corpora had more texts without first-person verbs than with this verb form. However, in the texts with this feature, the frequency was significantly higher in Spanish and the distribution of the rhetorical Moves associated with the first-person forms was also significantly different. The qualitative analysis revealed that in the English texts, the first-person signals the reasoned choice of a non-standard procedure (32 tokens) compared to only seven standard procedures, whereas in

the Spanish texts the distribution was even (25 and 26 tokens, respectively). The results support cross-cultural differences in discourse functions that have implications for both translation and academic writing in cross-cultural contexts.

The second one is Mónica Chávez (2013). In his paper he explored the discourse functions of personal pronouns and verb forms referring to writer and reader interaction in a corpus of 60 research articles in the fields of linguistics, psychology and educational research in English and Spanish. Drawing on Tang and John's (1999) taxonomy "I" elaborate and refine their categories, and propose "I" as the Interpreter as a new role in the continuum of writers' authorial presence. The analysis reveals that both English and Spanish writers make extensive use of pronominal discourse functions. However, Spanish writers use them more sparingly and prefer different functions when signaling their presence such as pointing to their role as interpreters of data rather than reencounters of the research process or originators of an original contribution to the field.

Kim (2009) presents a corpus based cross-cultural text analysis of the use of second person and first person plural pronouns in English and Korean newspaper science popularizations. The research compares how the writers of the two cultures manipulate the two pronouns. The analysis reveals that there are quantitative and qualitative differences in the use of the two pronouns. In addition, the results seem to be affected by the socio-cultural context such as, on the one hand the preference for indirectness in text as a means of building a harmonious relation with the reader and the collectivistic tendency in the Korean society, and on the other the writer's attitude towards the reader and scientific phenomena in the British culture. Furthermore, the different degrees of contribution of science to the economy of each country seem in particular to be reflected in the different emphases on the referential scopes of the first person.

No comparative research on the rhetorical practices of academic writing in English and Croatian has been carried out so far. Therefore, Ivana Bašić and Snježana Veselica-Majhu (2016) shed light on the differences between the rhetorical practices of RA writing in the field of linguistics in the two disciplinary communities: the Croatian and the international English linguistics community.

Some other researchers searched of the first person pronouns in others languages. Başal and Bada (2012) investigate the tendency of the Turkish academics in the use of first person pronouns in scientific journal articles. Zobel (2016) used first person singular pronouns as found in German. In conclusion he found that German provides a richer paradigm of impersonally used singular pronouns than is usually found.

As scholars have increasingly understood knowledge as the product of social construction, the initial attention to language structures such as the passive has gradually shifted to other linguistic phenomena, such as hedges (Hyland, 1998) and reporting verbs (Thompson & Ye, 1991), which more clearly indicated the highly rhetorical nature of academic writing. However, it may be argued that the use of the passive voice is no less rhetorical than the adoption of an overt stance by means of a personal pronoun. Rundbald suggests that impersonal forms of authorial reference, such as passive verbs and metonymic expressions, enable writers to “signal credibility, reliability, objectivity, and ultimately authority to their readers and the research community” (2007, p. 251).

In the present paper I focus in the using first person pronoun and discuss its passive forms by expert and non-expert writers. The paper based on 208 expert and 38 non-expert texts. The goals of this paper are the following: 1) to compare whether expert or non-expert academics prefer using first person pronouns in their scientific articles to show their presence in their articles in the published Linguistics RAs; 2) to investigate the use of passive to establish whether they are susceptible to cross-cultural variation.

3. Corpus and methodology

3.1 Information on the corpora

In order to meet the aims of the research I conducted a textual analysis of two corpora. The corpora for analysis consist of two groups of texts of RAs, one of them by expert writers and the other one by non-expert writers. The expert writer texts are about (1220835 words) and the texts which are by the non-expert writers are about (1066628 words). The two corpora were published (between 2001 and 2006) in the field of Linguistics (See Table 1).

The data were collected under time control. I have collected the texts. Having selected the articles to be included in the corpora of the study, all the articles were converted to text format. All the abstracts, footnotes, end notes, reference lists and titles were deleted. The number of expert texts is more than non-expert texts but it doesn't make any differences because the number of words is close to each others.

3.2 Procedure

All first-person verbs in the Methods section were located with the concordance program of AntConc developed by Anthony (2007) and the sentences in which they appeared were classified according to the same program. Frequency analysis was conducted to provide quantitative data for the analysis of the first person pronouns in scientific journal articles. In addition, first person pronouns used in these articles were analyzed qualitatively. All the occurrences were studied in context to ensure that they belong to the writers.

3.3 Research questions

In the present research, the main focus will be placed on comparison of the first person pronoun used by expert and non-expert writers as RIE acts in the two corpora. The following are the research questions:

1. Between the two corpora, which contains more cases of the first personal pronouns?

2. Which one of the two texts also has been used more first person plural in the passive forms?

Table 1 Criteria for the selection of papers

Criteria	Dataset
Language	English
Context of production	International context
Genre	Research Articles (RA)
Number of texts	208 by experts and 34 by non-experts
Discipline	Linguistics
Year of publication	2001-2006
Authorship	Single-authored. English-speaking (native)
Total number of words	Expert corpus 1220835 words & 1066628 words Non-expert corpus

4. Research result and Discussion

4.1 Frequency of first person pronouns

The number of texts with and without first-person forms showed a similar distribution in the expert and non-expert corpora, with more texts with these forms than those not containing this feature (Table 2). Overall the expert corpus included 208 texts and the non-expert corpus includes 34 texts. In the non-expert texts, a first person form appeared in each text, while in expert corpus a first person form doesn't appeared in 15 texts which are texts number (21-32-33-48-109-130-145-162-164-165-166-168-169-188-189).

Table 2 Texts with and without first-person forms in the expert and non-expert corpora

Texts	Expert corpus	Non-expert corpus
<i>Texts with 1st person</i>	193	15
<i>Texts without 1st person</i>	34	none

With the help of three functions (Concordance Tool, File View Tool and Cluster) in software AntConc, the similar and different frequencies of first person pronoun in the two corpora (expert and non-expert) are compared as presented in table 3.

Table 3 Frequency of First Person Pronouns in expert and non-expert corpora

First person pronouns	Expert corpus	%	Non-expert corpus	%
<i>Singular subject pronoun (I)</i>	1175	18.6	307	8.3
<i>Plural object pronoun (me)</i>	473	7.5	206	5.6
<i>Possessive singular pronouns (my/mine)</i>	737+20	12	361+ 16	10.2
<i>Reflexive singular pronoun (myself)</i>	31	0.4	29	0.7
<i>Plural subject pronoun (we)</i>	2562	41	1751	47
<i>Plural object pronoun (us)</i>	400	6.4	320	8.7
<i>Possessive plural pronouns (our/ours)</i>	806+ 4	13	675+ 1	18.4
<i>Reflexive plural pronoun (ourselves)</i>	22	0.3	26	0.7
Total	6230	63%	3664	37%
	9894			

The analysis of the corpora showed that writers of both corpora used first person pronouns in their texts. The results of the analysis of both corpora includes 9894 first person pronouns, and it showed that the numbers of first person pronouns in expert corpus are higher than that of first person pronouns in non-expert corpus, the number of first person pronouns in expert corpus is 6230 and

3664 in non-expert corpus. Differences in frequency of first person pronouns (2566) shows expert researchers use first person pronouns much more frequently than non-expert researchers. The reason for the less use of first person pronouns by non-expert writers compared to the expert writers might stem from the fact that expert writers because historically their attitude unified to choose this policy of using first person pronoun in their articles.

In expert and non-expert corpora the most commonly used pronoun is "we"; in expert 2562 instances, representing 41 % and in non-expert 1751 instances, representing 47 %. The second most common pronoun in expert corpus is "I" (1175 instances, or 18.6 %) while in non-expert corpus is the "Possessive plural pronouns (our/ours)" is (676 instances, or 18.4 %).

Also, many previous studies have often found that "I" and "we" displays higher frequencies than other types of first person pronouns as (Kuo, 1999 for first person pronouns in a corpus of 36 scientific journal articles of Computer Science, Physics and Electronic Engineering.; Harwood, 2005 for First-person pronouns across different disciplinary fields; Ji, 2010 for comparison on the number, distribution, and function of first person pronouns in 21 RAs in both social science and natural science).

4. 2 The collocate of first person subject pronouns

4.2.1 Combination of a word (conjunct or relative pronoun) + first person subject pronoun

As shown in Tables 4, first person subject pronouns "we" and "I" do not seem to be combined randomly with conjuncts and a relative pronoun "that". The table show one contrasting and one common feature of the two corpora. First, as shown in bold letters below, "that" seems to be combined with the most frequently used first person subject pronoun in each corpus, thus producing "that we" in expert texts and "that I" in non-expert texts. Second, the common feature is that in both corpora "if" goes with "we" much more frequently than "I".

Table 4 Occurrence of words preceding personal pronouns in both corpora

Collocate words	Expert		Non-expert	
	<i>I</i>	<i>We</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>we</i>
that	124	166	40	136
if	52	101	46	76
and	138	69	36	26
but	64	34	42	19
what	79	57	16	52
here	12	16	2	8
now	14	4	5	2
so	35	21	20	22
because	36	20	10	11

Table 4 shows examples of collocate "if we" which appeared more than five times in each corpus, and the actual number of occurrences. The interesting aspect in expert corpus is that (if we) was often combined with "are".

Table 4-b "if we" collocates

Words after <i>if we</i> and its number of occurrences			
Expert corpus "46"		Non-expert corpus "76"	
<i>look/take/accept/could</i>	6	<i>are</i>	10
<i>are</i>	14	<i>do</i>	7
<i>can</i>	9	<i>want</i>	9

Examples such as "if we are dealing..." or "If we are familiar with..." below indicate that the speaker is talking about a hypothetical condition, and making the audience part of a story he/she is creating in class. Also we can see the same collocate in non-expert corpus.

Figure 1 Examples of "if we are" in the expert corpus

Concordance Hits 14	
Hit	KWIC
1	the L2 in a Boolean network if we are dealing with L1 English
2	eous sentences produced by learners, particularly if we are familiar with them and
3	with reading or listening tasks, but if we are genuinely interested in giving
4	were found to function as NfM. If we are guided by interlocutor response,
5	impressive collection of essays, has written: If we are interested in language in
6	of speakers' socio-economic interests. But if we are interested in the socio-
7	discussed here in some detail. First, if we are talking about retention, we
8	is an interesting illustration of this: If we are tempted to choose conventionalism
9	must be taken forward and resolved if we are to ensure that applied
10	with the commonest words in English. If we are to provide learners with
11	ovi-Hadig 2000). We need acquisition criteria if we are to be able to

Concordance Hits 10	
Hit	KWIC
1	e effectively taught in the classroom setting if we are able to integrate appropriate materials
2	ms of underlying conceptual metaphor, and if we are prepared to seek for what
3	e in defining our everyday realities. If we are right in suggesting that our
4	ntly highlighted a certain feature of humor. If we are to develop a complete theory
5	relief theory of humor. The main problem, if we are to develop a detailed theory
6	are more useful. He puts this as: If we are to use our past experience
7	afarpur (1991), for example, points out that if we are to increase the responsibility of
8	of proficiency: \x91It seems obvious that if we are to study the phenomenon of
9	of many paths that could be followed if we are to understand fully how discourse
10	etaphorical mode in interpretation. It is only if we are told that the so-called \

Tables 5 and 6 show the verbs and modals after first person subject pronouns occurring at least twenty times with one personal pronoun. A total of the occurrences of the personal pronouns with all the verbs are shown at the end of the tables.

Table 5 Occurrences of verbs after first personal subject pronouns in both corpora

verbs	Expert		Non-expert	
	<i>I</i>	<i>We</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>We</i>
<i>know</i>	51	41	73	20
<i>need</i>	22	91	12	37
<i>think</i>	155	15	56	14
<i>say</i>	25	4	10	25
<i>decide</i>	11	23	4	6
<i>suggest</i>	23	13	2	2
<i>see</i>	31	55	19	24
<i>look</i>	10	22	1	11
<i>want</i>	42	20	20	16
<i>mean</i>	65	3	18	6

<i>argue</i>	22	20	-	-
<i>conclude</i>	5	49	-	-
<i>collect</i>	49	58	-	-
<i>record</i>	25	16	-	-
<i>find</i>	51	57	10	36
<i>use</i>	28	30	3	32
<i>ask</i>	26	5	9	4
<i>take</i>	25	20	5	7
Total	666	542	242	190
	1208		432	

Table 6 Occurrences of auxiliary verbs after first personal subject pronouns in both corpora

verbs	Expert		Non-expert	
	<i>I</i>	<i>We</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>We</i>
<i>am</i>	142	-	53	-
<i>was</i>	113	-	-	44
<i>are</i>	-	162	124	124
<i>were</i>	7	45	6	17
<i>have</i>	226	207	57	142
<i>had</i>	57	21	23	17
<i>do</i>	73	56	28	48
<i>did</i>	28	24	10	10
<i>will</i>	96	81	27	44
<i>would</i>	123	58	30	32
<i>shall</i>	19	27	2	11
<i>should</i>	20	51	26	44
<i>can</i>	56	173	54	172
Total	960	905	440	705
	1865		1145	

The analysis of words appearing after first subject pronouns in Tables 5 and 6 shows that some verbs and auxiliary verbs tended to accompany either "I" or "we". In expert corpus, the most frequently verb used with "I" pronoun is the verb (think) while "we" tended to go with the verb (need). According to the auxiliary verbs the most frequently verb collocate with "I" and "we" is the auxiliary (have). On the other hand, in non-expert corpus, pronoun "I" tended to go with the verb (aim) and with the auxiliary (are). Also the same verbs as in expert corpus which is the verb (need) and auxiliary (can) are the most

frequently verbs collocated with the pronoun "we".

The above two tables show that the verbs in corpus are more frequently collocated with the first subject pronouns than the verbs in corpus. And also according to the verbs that collocate with the first person subject pronoun, in expert corpus verbs and auxiliaries collocate with the pronoun "I" more than "we", while in non-expert corpus verbs collocate with the pronoun "I" more than "we", but auxiliaries collocate with the pronoun "we" more than "I"

4.3 Passive form of first person pronouns

The passive in English is grammatically marked by a copular verb followed by a past participle. The structure *be + past participle* can be considered as the norm for English passives. However, *be* in the structure can also be replaced by other copular verbs such as *get, become, feel, look, remain* and *seem* because the passive meaning is essentially expressed by past participles. There are numbers of passive sentences in expert and non-expert texts written by writers (*examples 1 and 2*).

Table 7 the frequencies of first person pronouns in active and passive forms in both corpora.

corpora	Active form				Passive form			
	I	we	Total	%	me	us	Total	%
Expert corpus	1175	2562	3737	64	473	400	873	62
Non-expert corpus	307	1751	2085	36	206	320	526	38
	5822				1399			

The frequencies of first person active and passives are given in Table 7. A structure conveying a causative rather than passive meaning as the table shows that writers used first person pronouns more than five times than passive forms in their texts. Although, passive forms in expert corpus used more frequently than non-expert corpus. In expert corpus there are 873 instances which represents 62 % of first person passive forms (473 for first person singular pronoun and 400 first person plural) while in non-expert corpus there are 526 occurrences which represents 38 %, (206 for *me* and 320 for *us*).

4.4 Use of personal and impersonal authorial references

4.4.1 Personal authorial references

In both expert and non-expert, personal authorial references are mainly used to announce goals or purposes, that is, statements whereby writers inform readers about their research or discourse objectives (example 2); their methods, principal findings and claims (example 3); and the structure of the paper (example 4).
(2)

(1)

a- Each phenomenon **is explained** within associative learning theory and exemplified in [71]

b- These results **will be discussed** further with respect to their theoretical and practical {1}

Table 7 shows the frequencies of first person pronouns in active and passive forms in both expert and non-expert corpora.

a- Rather, **I aim** to highlight unique possibilities open to researchers working with bi- and multilinguals, to expose the implications of the choices they make.....[T34]

b- In the end, **I hope** the present study contributes to the status of the present-day literature on conceptual fluency and metaphorical competence in L2. {3}

(3)

a- As a theoretical framework, **I employ** CA integrated with the view developed from various studies of social interaction that define identity as a social, dialogic, [50]

b- ...in the field of literature was [**I**] **employed** in 47 percent of the abstracts. An interesting finding was that [IMRC] was kept in lowest profile by this group. {5}

(4)

a- In our initial communication, **we described** our programme in detail, including the roles and responsibilities of the students [154]

b- In previous parts **we explained** seven key issues which White (1988) felt a product

syllabus designer will need to bear in mind when {18}

Table 8 Frequencies of personal authorial references according to discourse function.

Discourse function	Expert corpus	Non-expert corpus
<i>Announcing goals or purposes</i>	30	18
<i>Stating assumption</i>	355	147
<i>Providing definitional clarifications</i>	17	5
<i>Explaining procedures</i>	22	3
<i>Making claims and elaborating an argument</i>	80	11
<i>Referring back to the text</i>	14	1
Tot	518	185

The data in Table 8 indicate that although *Stating assumption* is the most frequent use of personal authorial references, the difference between expert and non-expert is considerable. One reason may be that non-expert writers are less inclined to emphasise their authorial role in Introductions to anticipate what direction their argument will take in the rest of the paper (see example 2b, which is taken from the body of the text; example 2a is taken from the Introduction).

When *making claims and elaborating an argument*, writers encompasses knowledge claims they collected in their research. (example 5).

(5)

a- We **conclude** that, ultimately, a surprisingly large amount of metaphorical language is used with various types..... [75]

b- We **conclude** that the same assumption holds true about the correlation between the scores of proficiency test and pre-test {14}

This function is the second most frequent use in the expert corpus (80 hits). The same cannot be said for the non-expert corpus (11 occurrences) where scholars emphasize their role as researchers less than half the times expert writers do.

The discourse functions of *explaining procedures* (example 6) and *announcing goals or purposes* of opinion on the part of writers (example 7).

(6)

a-In my companion paper, I **explained** the phenomenon of NICK C. ELLIS 177. [71]

b- In previous parts we **explained** seven key issues which {18}

(7)

a- I **aim** to highlight unique possibilities open to researchers working with multilingual, [34]

b- Also, I **hope** this research opens new avenues of further research in this crucial aspect of proficiency {10}

This function represents the second most frequent use of personal authorial references in the non-expert corpus (18 occurrences), and it is attested at approximately the same frequency as in expert corpus (30 instances). This finding is rather surprising, considering that in all the other uses, non-expert linguists tend to be considerably less visible than their expert colleagues.

The remaining discourse functions are *referring back to the text* (example 8), *providing definitional clarifications* (example 8) and stating assumptions (example 9). These uses of personal authorial references are rather infrequent in non-expert texts.

(8)

a- I **collected** other information which would cast light on the context in which the essays were produced and evaluated,...[127]

b- Using survey and archival data **I** have **collected** on the academic background \x85, I conduct logistic regression analyses {5} (9)

a- Thus, here **we observed** a specific moment in which participants' engagement in real-life interaction can occasion [7]

b- Examining the doctorless and jigsaw tasks against table 3.1 **we observe** that these tasks are more of two-way tasks and the free discussion task is basically one-way. {15}

The functional analysis of personal authorial references suggests that the tendency of non-expert writers to use fewer personal references than expert writers concern all major discourse functions, albeit to a different extent. This situation is particularly evident for the functions of ***Making claims and elaborating an argument and stating assumption.***

4.4.2 Impersonal authorial references

The discourse functions which are most often realised by means of passive constructions are listed in Table 9 (Table 9 frequencies of impersonal authorial references according to discourse function). This taxonomy is based on the findings from the corpus. In both expert and non-expert, the highest number of occurrences of impersonal authorial references is attested for the function **stating assumption** (example 10). Despite the relatively high incidence of use of impersonal forms in the non-expert corpus for this function (323 occurrences per 1099 words), the expert corpus displays higher frequencies (247 occurrences).

(10)

a- At this level, it **is assumed** that learners have to perform 'minimal morphographic analysis' in recognizing most inflections. [37]

b- It **is assumed** that Japanese learners of English analyze English either as a CP-absorption language or as an IP-absorption language.{12}

Table 9 Frequencies of impersonal authorial references according to discourse function.

Discourse function	Expert corpus	Non-expert corpus
<i>Announcing goals or purposes</i>	20	6
<i>Stating assumption</i>	247	323
<i>Providing definitional clarifications</i>	104	326
<i>Explaining procedures</i>	84	150
<i>Making claims and elaborating an argument</i>	145	222
<i>Referring back to the text</i>	64	72
Tot	664	1099

Another function of impersonal authorial references which is more frequent in non-expert than in expert is that of ***providing definitional clarifications.*** The passives found in non-expert to fulfil this function may generally be explained in textual terms, the passive being used either to topicalise the object (example 11) or to guarantee a linear textual development (example 12).

11. Evaluation, testing and measurement are the limestones of language testing that **will be distinguished** in the first part of the chapter. {4}

12. This chapter will be presented in the following way. First the data for the study **will be discussed** and then the method adopted for the analysis of the data will be introduced. {11}

The functional analysis of impersonal authorial references indicates that despite

similar overall frequencies, impersonal resources may be more or less frequent in one or the other corpus depending on the discourse function. In addition, passives are most commonly used in both corpora. Impersonal authorial references are more frequent in expert for the functions of *stating assumption* and *announcing goals or purpose*, while they are more frequent in non-expert for the functions of *stating results*, explaining procedure, *making claims* and *elaborating an argument* and referring back to the text.

The quantitative investigation in table 8 and 9 of personal and impersonal authorial references suggests that impersonal authorial references show greater variation in frequency across the two corpora than personal authorial references.

5. Conclusion and Implications

This paper has presented an analysis of first person pronoun as contributing to the dimension of academic writing. In particular, this paper compared expert and non-expert Linguistics RAs in terms of 1) the use of first-person pronouns in expert and non-expert, and 2) the passive voice in both corpora.

In this paper, two different corpora (expert and non-expert) analyzed by focusing on the use of first person pronouns in texts by writers who are experts and non-experts. As the purpose of this study was to investigate whether writers who are expert and non-expert use first person pronouns in their texts, the corpora constituted including texts written by them. The data obtained from the corpora helps us to determine whether experts and non-expert use first person pronouns and whether there is a difference between them.

The results of the analysis of the corpora including 242 linguistic texts from two corpora (expert and non-expert) showed that writers of both corpora use first person pronouns in their texts. The number of first person pronouns in expert corpus is 6230 and 3664 in non-expert corpus. The difference in frequency of first person pronoun (2566) shows that researchers who are expert are

different from those who are non-expert according to the use of first person pronoun.

This study has shown that "*we*" was the most common pronoun in the expert texts and non-expert texts. Also it showed that expert writers use all kinds of first person pronouns separately more than non-expert writers in their texts except the reflexive plural pronoun "*ourselves*", only non-expert writers used reflexive plural pronoun "*ourselves*" more than expert writers in their texts, this is the only kind of first pronouns that preferred by non-experts more than expert.

In this study, the use of *I* and *we* were used a lot under investigation as personal pronouns. However, object, adjective and possessive pronouns related to *I* and *we* can also be investigated in terms of function and frequency to reflect the author's intention and purpose.

Among the number of occurrence of first person pronouns (9894), writers of expert chose to use *I* 1175 times (18.6 %) and *we* 2562 times (41 %). The difference between the uses of first person pronouns *I* and *we* (1387 times) shows that scientific writers of expert preferred to use first person pronoun *we* substantially more than first person pronoun *I*. This might suggest that general tendency in the use of first person pronouns by writers of expert is towards *we*.

Among the number of occurrence of first person pronouns (9894), writers of non-expert chose to use *I* 307 times (8.3 %) and *we* 1751 times (47 %). Also the difference between the uses of first person pronouns *I* and *we* (1444 times) shows that writers of non-expert preferred to use first person pronoun *we* substantially more than first person pronoun *I*. This also might suggest that writers of non-expert favor to use first person pronouns *we* in their articles than pronoun *I*.

To understand the functions of this personal pronoun in two types of academic speech, it seems that we need to examine not only the choice of personal pronouns in academic speech, but also the preceding conjuncts and proceeding verbs of pronouns.

The study shows that the first person subject pronoun collocate with conjunct or relative pronoun, among the conjunct or relative pronoun, "that" seems to be combined with the most frequently used first person subject pronoun in each corpus, thus producing "that we" in expert and in non-expert texts. Another common feature is that in both corpora "if" goes with "we" much more frequently than "I". "if we" which appeared more than five times in each corpus, and the actual number of occurrences. This indicates that the speaker is talking about a hypothetical condition, and making the audience part of a story he/she is creating in class. The same collocate also can be seen in non-expert corpus.

Another collocation form is that first person subject pronoun accompanies verbs and auxiliary verbs. The analysis with this fields shows that the verbs in expert corpus are more frequently collocated with the first subject pronouns than the verbs in non-expert corpus. And also according to the verbs that collocate with the first person subject pronoun, in expert corpus *verbs* and *auxiliaries* collocate with the pronoun "I" more than "we", while in non-expert corpus verbs collocate with the pronoun "I" more than "we", but *auxiliaries* collocate with the pronoun "we" more than "I".

In addition, the results in this paper has presented an analysis of passive forms of first person pronouns and personal and impersonal authorial references, writers used first person pronouns more than five times than passive forms in their texts. Although, passive forms in expert corpus used more frequently than non-expert corpus. In expert corpus there are 873 instances which represents 62 % of first person passive forms (473 for first person singular pronoun and 400 first person plural) while in non-expert corpus there are 526 occurrences which represents 38 %, (206 for me and 320 for us).

Personal forms are found to be less frequent in non-expert Linguistics RAs than expert. While impersonal forms in non-expert Linguistics RAs used more frequently than

expert Linguistics RAs. In general, a personal and impersonal authorial reference in the study suggests that impersonal authorial references show greater variation in frequency across the two corpora than personal authorial references.

From the present study academic writers like researchers might get benefit to compare using of first person pronouns in expert and non-expert texts and also to investigate the use of passive to establish whether they are susceptible to cross-cultural variation.

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