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Pronominal Choice in Academic Discourse

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Abstract: The paper presents an empirical analysis of the pragmatic role of the pronominal units in academic discourse of Russian researchers. The author argues that researchers use pronouns with different intentions - to position themselves as independent authors, to emphasize their personal contributions to the field, to construct solidarity with readers, or to speak on behalf of the academic community. Basing on empirical analysis of 10 research papers written in English and in Russian, the author looks at the ways in which pronominal choice creates pragmatic effects and serves pragmatic functions.

Key words: Pragmatic effect · Pronominal choice · First-person Pronouns · Academic Discourse · Discourse Roles.

INTRODUCTION

Academic discourse is representing the writer's self, expressing the writer's opinion, constructing solidarity with readers and the academic community, emphasizing the personal contributions to the field and organizing the discourse. Most of these functions are performed through the use of personal pronouns.

However uses of 'I' and 'we' are often believed to be contrary to the requirements of objectivity and formality in academic discourse. It has been the convention that academic writing should be impersonal, objective and distant. The use of impersonal constructions is proposed by textbooks as means of allowing writers to speak to readers in an unbiased way.

However, a number of researchers [4-5-12-16-18] have proved that personal pronouns help the writer state arguments and organize discourse. They indicate the importance of writer's textual voice and argue that writers should clearly state when they are reporting the voice of an author or stating their own expressions and personal point of views. Voice realized through the use of personal pronouns in academic writing is the sound of the individual on the page. Without these pronouns it is sometimes rather difficult to say the same thing more effectively, more forcefully [6, 16] even proposes that if the writer "depersonalizes ideas", this could cause trouble for both readers and the writer.

[5] argues that self-representation in writing is a subtle and complex multidimensional phenomenon that skilled writers control and manipulate to their rhetorical advantage and that decisions about self-portrayal vary according to the way in which writers characterize their audience and other factors in the rhetorical situation.

[18] points out that knowledge of the strategic use of personal pronouns is of great value to writers as it allows them to emphasize their personal contributions to their field or research and to seek cooperation and stress solidarity with expected readers and their disciplines.

[13] also argues that the usage of personal pronouns in scientific texts seems to be a valuable rhetorical strategy which allows writers to construct academic credibility and gain a certain degree of confidence and authority.

Despite the strength of the arguments put forward above, it is worth noting that the question of whether personal experience has a place in academic discourse depends on purposes the writer sets. In papers aimed to analyze data, personal experience would probably distract from the main purpose. In contrast, impersonal constructions downplay the writer's role in the research in order to highlight the phenomena under study, the replicability of research activities and the generality of the findings to produce a tenor of objectivity [14]. But if the writer needs to explicitly situate his/her position as a researcher in relation to his/her subject of study, or to

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offer examples of how a theory might apply to life, or to underscore that his/her way of seeing things is his/her personal experience, personal pronouns might have a legitimate role to play in his/her academic prose.

There have been proposed several taxonomies for the classification of first-person pronouns employed by writers [33-18-31-14-15-12]. Additionally, pronominal signals have been analyzed across languages [11-36]) and across sections of the research article [11-20].

The most elaborated taxonomy for the classification of writer's roles has been proposed by [31]. The authors developed their framework relating to the functionality of first-person pronouns based on the concept of "creating identities". Tang and John proposed a continuum of authorial 'I' and the degrees of power embedded in the use of first-person pronouns. The proposed roles are as follows:

- The "representative": "a generic first-person pronoun, usually realized as the plural 'we' or 'us', that writers use as a proxy for a larger group of people";
- The "guide": "the person who shows the reader through the essay, locates the reader and the writer together in the time and place of the essay, draws the reader's attention to points which are plainly visible or obvious within the essay";
- The "architect": a manifestation of the writer as a textual level, which "foregrounds the person who writes, organizes, structures and outlines the material in the essay";
- The "recounter of the research process": a writer "who describes or recounts the various steps of the research process";
- The "opinion holder": a "person who shares an opinion, view or attitude (for example, by expressing agreement, disagreement or interest) with regard to known information or established facts";
- The "originator": involving "the writer's conception of the ideas [20].

[34] has modified Tang and John's taxonomy and distinguished between four categories for first-person singular pronominal reference: 'I' as a researcher, 'I' indefinite, 'I' biographical and 'I' in acknowledgements. She has identified *'I' as a researcher* as "the expression of the author's role in the text as the person undertaking the study reported in the journal article, involving different degrees of agency. *'I' as a researcher* corresponds to four of [31] categories: the "guide", the "architect", the "opinion-holder" and the "originator". *'I' indefinite* has been defined as a generic reference to people. This category corresponds to [31] role of the "representative". *'I' biographical* has been defined as the expression of a writer's role as a person, not as a researcher. *'I' in acknowledgements* "bears a somehow unique status, standing between 'I' as a researcher and personal 'I'.

Similarly to Vladimirou's study, Tang and John's categories have been modified in other taxonomies, such as in [34] taxonomy.

The present study seeks to investigate pronoun use in Russian scholars' prose and the functional-pragmatic effects that they try to create through the use of first-person pronouns. It reveals a diverse range of functions the personal pronouns have in linguistic discourse. The paper is also aimed at exploring the rhetorical preferences of Russian scholars in the use of first-person pronouns in their English-language (EL) and Russian-language (RL) papers. Findings are illustrated with extracts from ten journal papers.

In general, the paper addresses the following five issues:

- The frequency of 'I'/'we' in EL and RL papers by five Russian linguists with different levels of research experience;
- The pragmatic functions of 'I'/'we' in their discourse;
- The rhetorical preferences of Russian scholars with different levels of research experience in the use of first-person pronouns in their EL and RL papers;
- The concordance of 'I'/'we' in their discourse;
- Differences in the use of 'I'/'we' depending on the writer's level of research experience.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method applied for this study is based on qualitative and quantitative analysis of personal pronoun use. The qualitative approach aims to investigate the pragmatics of personal pronouns in academic discourse to understand authors' pronominal choice. The quantitative method is applied to find out the frequency of 'I' and 'we' use in papers of five Russian scholars.

Firstly, a quantitative analysis of all occurrences of the pronouns 'I'/ 'ÿ' and 'we'/ 'ìû' in EL and RL papers by five Russian scholars has been conducted. The corpus used in this study consists of ten linguistics journal papers. The papers published for the last three years were selected at random from EL and RL journals. The length of the texts under investigation is about 3,000 - 4,000 words. No co-authored texts were included in the corpus.

The authors of the papers have been identified as L1, L2 and so on. L stands for "Linguist"

Secondly, the discourse functions performed by first-person pronouns have been analyzed based on the above mentioned [31-34] taxonomies of roles. I have distinguished between three categories for first-person pronominal reference: the representative, the researcher and the opinion holder. The representative is a generic reference to people. It corresponds to the role of the representative in Tang and John's and of "I indefinite" in Vladimirou's taxonomies. The role of the researcher corresponds to three of Tang and John's categories: the "guide", the "architect" and the "originator". The role of the opinion holder corresponds to the similarly-name role in Tang and John's taxonomy.

Particular attention was paid to the shifts between first-person singular plural pronouns and between inclusive and exclusive pronouns.

In addition, the present paper aims to examine the cultural conditions as well as the role of writer's research experience in pronoun preferences.

RESULTS

The frequency with which the Russian linguists used 'I' and 'we' is summarized in Table 1 which shows the profile of pronoun usage in the EL and RL corpus.

As can be inferred from Table 1, in the EL papers, the Russian scholars tend to make their personality more visible. The expression of a strong self can be explained by the wish to be seen in a text presenting the extent and importance of their contribution - for instance, "I examine", "I analyzed", "I consider" or, for example, it demonstrates they take full responsibility for their claims. Their reasons will be analyzed further.

Nevertheless, not all the writers in their EL papers used 'I'. As presented in Table 1 two of five authors avoided the "egocentric" pronoun in their writing. First-person reference scored a high frequency in the Introduction section where authors signal explicit commitment to their work. This may be justified by the fact that writers need to "create a research space" [30] through three main moves: establishing a research territory and occupying the niche.

'We'-pronoun is used in both EL and RL prose, but the EL papers feature rather more instances of the first-person plural.

Table 1: Frequency of 'I' and 'we' in EL and RL Papers

	Pronoun 'I' use		Pronoun 'we' use	
Writer	EL	RL	EL	RL
L1	15	0	3	6
L2	0	0	13	0
L3	2	0	3	2
L4	8	0	9	5
L5	0	0	3	0
Total	25	0	31	13

The results of the analysis show that in the RL papers, the use of first-person pronouns does not seem to be a predominant feature of writing, while EL papers feature a number of first-person singular and plural pronouns.

The total number of EL papers which show instances of first-person plural pronouns is five (100%). Three of them show instances of 'I'.

The total number of RL papers which show instances of first-person plural pronouns is four (80%). At the same time, none of them feature instances of first- person singular pronouns.

I will first analyze the papers by an expert Russian scholar identified in the present paper as L1. As seen from Table 1, the instances of personal reference in her EL paper are 18. 15 of them are the pronoun 'I'. There are altogether three instances of personal reference involving the pronoun 'we'.

It is clear that the 'I'-form is dominating her EL paper. The use of self-mention appears to be the writer's intention to mediate the relationship between her arguments and her discourse communities, in Hyland's [14] words.

L1 does not follow the convention of the academic community to write with minimal reference to the author in order to present the work 'objectively', as the work of a dispassionate and disinterested, unbiased researcher. In EL paper, L1 breaks the rule that prohibits 'I'-use and personal experience in academic writing.

L1 uses 'I' much in the Introduction and at the beginning of the sections when she is telling the reader what she is going to do:

- In the following two sections, I examine how these questions...
- I confine myself to the specific question of....
- I begin by setting out....
- I then examine....
- Next, I consider....

'I' performs the function of the researcher to describe various steps of her study. 'I' also appears to indicate that the research process is a decision made by L1 who assumes responsibility for the choices she made when conducting the study.

In examples (6) and (7), 'I' is used to perform the role of the researcher - the author writes, organizes, structures and outlines the material in the paper:

- In this article, I use the term "scenario" …
- I draw the conclusion that …..

L1 uses 'I' to produce her own arguments she is going to prove further.

In examples below, L1 uses 'I' as the opinion holder to express her personal views:

- By generalized structure of a deception scenario I understand the network of structural characteristics....
- As I see it, lying and deceiving represent two kinds of falsehood.
- I treat deception as a phenomenon belonging to the class of phenomena defined by the general notion of insincerity...

As seen from examples (8) and (9), the writer puts forth her reflections through the first-person singular pronoun combined with cognitive verbs such as 'understand' and 'see' in order to express her personal stance. The writer allows the reader become aware of her personal view on the argument. Personal attribution indicates that the statements are personal judgment and interpretation rather than facts and invite alternative views [34].

In example (10), L1 uses 'I' to position herself as a powerful and experienced member of the academic community having the ability to provide meaning and build knowledge by interpreting the results. This explicit presence of the writer is a textual indication that the researcher herself plays a prominent role in the research process.

L1 rarely uses 'we' in her paper. The paper shows only three instances of the first-person plural which is always used inclusively calling the readers to participate in the research, as "a proxy for a larger group of people." [31].

- If we return to the above-given definition of insincerity as a false belief which one agent induces in the other agent, then, as I claim, it is these three propositions that should be believed by the deceived.
- Here we can see the deceiver, Moll Flanders...

In example (11), we see that the author uses two pronouns - an inclusive 'we' to guide the audience to a certain point of the paper and 'I' to stress her own viewpoint. This category of personal reference is often found to collocate with verbs of perception. In example (12), 'we' also guides the reader to a subsequent point of the text.

In addition, L1's EL paper contains a number of agentless constructions which help the writer hide her authorial voice:

- A more formal classification of the goals of the deceiver's true "I" can be given.
- The three propositions are given in the form of sentences in the present tense.
- To sum up, deception scenarios are classified in accordance with the foregrounded aspect of the deceiver's false identity...

Thus, in her EL paper, L1 presents herself explicitly as the originator of ideas and contributions to the field performing the role of the researcher according to our classification. The frequent 'I' use means that the writer displays a high level of authority in the context, where authority has elements of both its common meaning of "a right to control or command others and knowledge or expertise in a particular field" [31]. When using 'I', she makes herself visible in order to assume responsibility for the claims advanced and to highlight her findings and specific observations.

The RL paper by L1 shows no instances of 'ÿ'(I)-pronoun, while the instances of 'ìû' (we) is twice the amount of 'we' in her EL prose. In example (16), 'we' performs the function of the representative - she speaks on behalf of all people:

- Åñëè ìû ñ÷èòàåì ðîä íåñóùåñòâåííûì, òî ðóññêèå ìîãóò óäèâëÿòüñÿ òîìó, ïî÷åìó ìû ïîëàãàåì íåîáõîäèìûì êàæäûé ðàç óêàçûâàòü … [If we consider the gender irrelevant, the Russians might be surprised why we think it is necessary to mark it each time …].

The example cited below shows that L1 uses 'ìû' (we) to refer to herself. It is an exclusive 'we' functioning as the opinion holder employed instead of 'I'.

- Ìû ïîëàãàåì, ÷òî ïîäîáíûé àíàëèç ñèòóàöèè ÿâëÿåòñÿ åäâà ëè íå åäèíñòâåííî âîçìîæíûì. [We believe that such case study is the only one possible].

In addition, he RL paper shows two instances of an inclusive 'ìû' (we) in the role of the researcher to draw the reader's attention to certain points of the paper:

- Ìû îïÿòü âèäèì, ÷òî … [We see again that …].
- Ìû âèäèì ôàêòè÷åñêîå ïîâòîðåíèå Óîðôîì èäåè Ñåïèðà… [We see that Whorf adopt Sepir's idea ….].

Thus, the analysis has indicated that in her EL paper L1 is prone to express a stronger "voice". A greater number of impersonal constructions in L1's RL paper prove of my guess:

- Àíàëèçèðóþòñÿ èñòîêè ðàçãðàíè÷åíèÿ ÿçûêîâîé è íàó÷íîé êàðòèí ìèðà. [The origins of differentiation between linguistic and scientific world-images are analyzed].
- Äîêàçûâàåòñÿ, ÷òî ãëàâíûì ñâîéñòâîì ÿçûêîâîé êàðòèíû ìèðà ÿâëÿåòñÿ åå õîëèñòè÷íîñòü. [Proposition that the main property of the linguistic world-image is its holisticity is proved].
- Ñòàíîâèòñÿ ïîíÿòíûì îòîæäåñòâëåíèå ÿçûêîâîé è êîíöåïòóàëüíîé êàðòèí ìèðà... [It has become obvious why linguistic and concept-based world-images are identified in a number of recent researches].
- Íåîáõîäèìî îáðàòèòü âíèìàíèå íà òî, ÷òî Ñåïèð ñîâåðøåííî íå ñ÷èòàåò ýòè ïîíÿòèÿ ýòíîñïåöèôè÷íûìè … [It should be noted that Sepir does not consider these concepts ethnospecific].

These constructions help the author obscure the position of the speaking subject, present her argument as rational and objective.

Thus, the RL paper by L1 is more impersonal as it shows no instances of 'ÿ' (I)-pronoun and the instances of 'ìû' (we) are twice the amount of 'we' instances in her EL paper.

In general, it has been found that L1 being an expert scholar is not afraid of using personal reference. She uses it 1) to signal her intentions, 2) to provide structure for the text, 3) to describe the research procedure, 4) to present her claims and arguments, 5) to describe her line of reasoning.

It is interesting to note that some authors explain the low frequency of first-person pronouns in RL papers by the morphological structure of Russian. Russian sentences often have zero subjects - their grammatical subject can be omitted:

- Íà÷íåì ñ îïðåäåëåíèÿ ñëîâà. (We) begin with the definition of the word.
- Ó÷òåì, ÷òî äàííîå èñêëþ÷åíèå äèêòóåòñÿ íå òîëüêî ñèñòåìíî-ôóíêöèîíàëüíûì êà÷åñòâîì ñëóæåáíîãî ñëîâà … (We) take into consideration that this exception results from not only system and functional feature of the function word …

This phenomenon implies that in Russian verb morphology is an indication of personal reference. It should be noted, however, that L1's paper showed no instances of personal reference hidden in verb morphology.

There exist another two rational explanations why Russian writers in RL prose use 'I' instead of 'we'. [17] argues that 'we' contains a status component. He refers to [1] who believes that the first-person singular is appropriate in discourse of expert scholars, while novice academics and PhD students should avoid such egocentric units.

[22] argues that the writer's tendency to use 'we' instead of 'I' referring to themselves is an indicator of their fear of self-presentation which is rooted in sociocentrism and totalitarism of the Soviet regime. No instances of 'I'-pronoun in papers of Russian scholars are political and ethic concerns (it is a well known fact that the Communist Party does not welcome selfdom) rather than stylistic requirements. Miroshnichenko suggests three reasons why Russian writers use 'we' instead of 'I':

- Unconscious fear of manifesting writer's individual contribution to science, wish to establish writer's reputation due to pseudo-collective personification;
- Tendency to collective and pseudo-collective modeling;
- Indicator of the mythological mindset when the writer identifies him/herself with a community.

In fact, the Russian mindset influences the style of writing. One of the core Russian values - collectivism - makes Russian scholars write on behalf of the academic or any other community hiding their authorial ego.

This reason of all others is at the root of the rule to avoid the first-person singular, especially in papers of novice scholars. Nevertheless, as it can be seen from the above EL extracts, expert Russian scholars successfully overcome this fear of becoming visible in their paper. As for RL papers, up to date Russian reviewers consider 'I'-pronoun inappropriate in academic prose.

Let us now turn to the papers by L2. It has been found no instances of 'I' in her EL paper. She appears to be one of those writers who believe that personal language is better avoided in academic writing because it is subjective and therefore may decrease the authority of the argument.

The occurrences of 'we' are not too frequent in her EL paper. However, there are some interesting examples of 'we' use - the shifts between exclusive and inclusive 'we'. According to [12], it helps the author achieve a number of effects. Let us consider two extracts from her paper:

- Further on, we would like to focus our attention on one more technology…
- So, as far as we can see the implicit assumption is becoming a necessary part of political discourse...

The first instance of 'we' is unambiguously exclusive. 'We' is used instead of 'I' to perform the role of the researcher. It expresses the writer's intention to draw readers' attention to a certain point. In example (27), 'we' is rather inclusive. The author includes readers in one tandem with her, uses 'we' to locate the reader and the writer together in the time and place of the paper. This inclusive pronoun makes readers feel involved. And this involvement will make them more receptive to the writer's claims for rhetorical effect. Thus, L2 creates an intended effect by moving between inclusive and exclusive functions.

Put one more example where L2 moves between inclusive and exclusive 'we':

- We consider political cartoons as one of the linguistic technologies as well.
- For example, if we take some cartoons about Putin … very often we will find the name of Putin written somewhere on the cartoon.

In example (28), L2 uses an exclusive 'we' instead of 'I' to share her opinion with readers. She expresses her personal view on political cartoons as one of the linguistic technologies. She might be reporting research carried out by a team and so she might be acknowledging the part played by her colleagues. But the fear of being visible in the paper appears to be weightier.

In example (29), L2 uses an inclusive 'we' to construct an 'intimate' tone, forming a bond between the writer and readers, to construct audience involvement by indicating that the argument of the text is being built up by a collaborative writer/reader effort, ensuring readers feel they are part of a 'joint enterprise'[27]. Assuming that her message is accepted by the audience, L2 speak on the audience's behalf. According to [12], by referring to the reader and by crediting them with (imaginary) intelligent questions or observations, the writer apparently transmits communality and positive politeness by acknowledging the audience as disciplinary equals.

In examples below, there is one more 'we' use in L2's paper:

- As a result of our critical discourse analysis, we came to the conclusion that linguistic technologies in political discourse might be of universal, national or even personal character.
- We analyzed some articles from Daily Telegraph and some other sources...

'We' functions as the researcher - the writer describes the various steps of the research process.

To achieve stylistic variation or to make the argument more objective, L2 uses agentless passive constructions:

- Political discourse might be considered as the site of political struggle...
- Thus, one of the main claims made in this article is that modern political rhetoric is becoming simpler and more accessible for ordinary people.
- More research needs to be conducted in a variety of ways …

These constructions help the writer obscure the position of the speaking subject, present her argument objectively and conceal the existence of a specifically located subject with opinions.

Thus, L2 avoids personal reference too much in her EL paper, varying personal constructions with impersonal ones. Those 13 'we' uses in her paper aim 1) to signal the writer's intentions, 2) to organize the discourse, 3) to present the writer's claims, 4) to describe the research procedure used, 5) to express what the writer has gained.

In the RL paper, there are no instances of personal reference at all. L2 hides her authorial voice using impersonal constructions throughout the whole text:

- Åñëè ïîäõîäèòü ôîðìàëüíî ê òðàêòîâêå çíà÷åíèÿ ñëîâà «äåìîêðàòèÿ», òî ìîæíî êîíñòàòèðîâàòü … [If one formalizes the concept “democracy”, one might state that …].

However, in one sentence the personal reference is concealed in verb morphology:

- Îáðàòèìñÿ äëÿ ïðèìåðà ê òåêñòó ïðîêëàìàöèè… [Let (us) examine the text of proclamation …].

As seen from the above example, there is no grammatical subject in the sentence. However, it can be deduced from the the verbal ending which performs the role of the researcher.

Let us now analyze the papers by L3. In her EL prose, there are two occurrences of ‘I’ in the Introduction. L3 uses it to describe her intentions concerning what she is going to do - to mark the steps of the research:

- In this article, I would like to describe several cyber events that can be considered as an evolutional line...
- I will introduce the following events …

‘We’ occurs thrice in L2’ prose:

- Can suggest that this cyberwar was a turning point in changing the mentality of Russian users.
- Now we can notice another tendency, the blogosphere becomes a tool for the fight to get a personal justice.

As seen from example (39), ‘we’ performs the role of the opinion holder - the writer shares her view on the cyberwar with the reader. In example (40), ‘we’ is employed in the role of the researcher. If the first use is exclusive as the writer employs the plural form instead of the singular one to refer to herself, the second occurrence of ‘we’ is inclusive - the author includes the audience in her argument.

It is interesting to note that in yet another sentence she addresses to readers using ‘you’-pronoun:

- As you can see, Russian users have become increasingly confident in their actions.

This occurrence makes us suggest that unconsciously L3 tries to exclude readers from her community. She seems to differentiate between herself and the audience.

Like L2, L3 rather often uses agentless constructions to achieve stylistic variation or to make the argument sound more objective:

- It seems that every user who has a story that may touch the hearts of bloggers can rely on their help.
- It is necessary to notice that ….
- It is interesting to note that …

The above example expresses modality yet personal language is not used to do this.

Thus, there are only five uses of personal reference in L3’s EL writing. It has been found that she uses ‘we’ and ‘I’ 1) to state her purpose, 2) to describe the research procedure and 3) to express what she has gained.

As for her RL paper, it shows no instances of the first-person singular pronoun - a typical feature of the Russian academic discourse. Personal reference is realized by the use of first-person plural which she uses twice:

- Â ïåðâóþ î÷åðåäü ìû ãîâîðèì î ïîëíîöåííûõ ñôîðìèðîâàâøèõñÿ îáùåñòâàõ… [First of all, we speak about healthy, developed societies].
- Ïîä âèðòóàëüíûìè ôàíîâñêèìè ïðàêòèêàìè ìû ïîíèìàåì ëþáóþ äåÿòåëüíîñòü, îñóùåñòâëÿåìóþ â îí-ëàéí ïðîñòðàíñòâå. [We define fan practices as any on-line activities].

As seen from examples (45) and (46), L3 uses ‘ìû’ (we) instead of ‘I’ in order to avoid direct reference atypical of the Russian academic discourse. The pronoun performs the function of the opinion holder - the writer shares her views with readers.

The remainder of her paper contains impersonal constructions to obscure the position of the speaking subject:

- Íà ïåðâîì ýòàïå áûëè âûáðàíû äâà ôàíîâñêèõ ñàéòà … [At the first stage we have selected two fan web-sites …].
- Âûáîð èìåííî ýòèõ ñàéòîâ äëÿ íàáëþäåíèÿ è àíàëèçà îáóñëîâëåí ñëåäóþùèìè ïðè÷èíàìè. [The web-sites have been selected for the following reasons …].

The above examples prove yet again that the Russian academic discourse is intolerant to the first-person singular pronoun. Even ‘ìû’ (we) is used half as much as ‘we’ in EL discourse.

Thus, L3 does use 'I'-pronoun despite being a novice scholar like L2. However, she uses it only to organize the discourse and mainly in the Introduction. In her RL paper, personal reference is used twice in the form of 'ìû' (we)-pronoun.

Let us now turn to the papers by L4. Her EL paper has 17 occurrences of personal pronouns, among which the instances of 'I' are eight.

The instances of 'I' performing the function of the researcher are self-references and all of them appear in conditional sentences "I should like to …" which are used to draw the reader's attention to certain points of the paper:

- There is one example of rendering the tenor of discourse I should like to present.
- I should like to note that in this scene …
- I should like to draw the reader's attention to the translation by V. Poplavsky.

'We' is mainly used by L4 in the role of the researcher. It has been observed eight instances of this pronoun performing the role of the researcher:

- We have to go back to the very first scene.
- time we shall consider familial relationships…
- Before we proceed, I should like to remind the reader that …

In extract (56), we can see two pronouns -'I' and 'we'. 'I' features the intention of the author to restrict it to herself, while 'we' means the writer and her audience and is used, as [28] put it, "to encourage the readers to maintain interest and belief in the integrity of the text and its arguments and by association, in the author herself".

The paper also features passive and impersonal constructions as alternative options to the use of 'we' and 'I' when indicating specific observations:

- Two points can be made about Radovan's attempt…
- In conclusion, it is important to stress that the tenor of discourse is a "monarchical point" of the discoursal space...

Thus, pursuing certain objectives, L4 switches between different syntactic constructions.

As seen from Table 1, the frequency of personal reference in her RL paper is rather lower compared to the EL one. There are only five instances of 'ìû' (we) and there are not any occurrences of 'ÿ' (I). So, L4 is, like other Russian scholars, prone to express a stronger "voice" in her EL papers, while in Russian writing she prefers being less visible.

'We' is employed to perform several functions. In example (57), it is used as the researcher:

- Â ðàìêàõ íàñòîÿùåé ñòàòüè ìû îãðàíè÷èìñÿ ðàññìîòðåíèåì íåêîòîðûõ äåòàëåé... [For the purpose of this article, we confine ourselves to studying some details…].

In the below example, 'we' is a generic first-person pronoun that the writer uses as a proxy for a larger group of people:

- Îäíàêî ãëàâíîå, ÷òî âûèãðàëè âñå ìû, ïîëó÷èâ âîçìîæíîñòü ÷èòàòü òàêèå ðàçíûå è òàêèå çàìå÷àòåëüíûå ïåðåâîäû «Ãàìëåòà». [However, it is important that all of us got a chance to read so different and so beautiful translations of "Hamlet"].

In addition, L4 uses 'we' instead of 'I' to refer exclusively to herself bearing in mind the conventions of the Russian academic community. 'Ìû' (we) functions as the opinion holder:

- … ìû íå èìååì â âèäó, ÷òî ïåðåâîä÷èê íå óâåðåí â òîæäåñòâåííîñòè ñâîåãî ïåðåâîäà... [… we do not mean that she is not sure of the identity of her translation …].
- Ìû èìååì â âèäó, ÷òî ïåðåâîä÷èê óâåðåí, ÷òî âîçìîæåí äðóãîé ïåðåâîä. [We mean that the translator is sure of the possibility of one more translation].

Let us now analyze extracts from the papers by L5. It is important to stress that they feature no occurrences of the pronoun 'I' and that self-reference is therefore always realized by the form 'we'. Thus, L5 appears to disapprove of any use of 'I' in academic writing. According to [10-29], the minimal occurrences of the first-person singular pronoun is a response to "the level of solidarity" the author wants to portray. As far as L5 is a novice scholar, she supposedly believes that 'I' is best avoided because the author is only one of many researchers pursuing knowledge. All the contributions she is making are a result of collective work of a team she is part of.

Table 2: Distribution of first person pronouns across EL and RL papers

	Repres entative		Researcher		Opinion Holder		Total	
Writer	EL	RL	EL	RL	EL	RL	EL	RL
L1	0	2	13	0	5	4	18	6
L2	2	0	8	0	3	0	13	0
L3	0	0	3	0	2	2	5	2
L4	0	1	17	2	0	2	17	5
L5	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0
Total	2	3	44	2	10	8	56	13

As for ‘we’, her paper features just three cases of this pronoun:

- If we assume the phrase …
- Accordingly, we can suggest that …
- … we can analyze the next sentence …

‘We’ as the researcher seems to suggest reasons of pragmatic politeness: the writer has to show awareness of potential readers that might reject their claims, she seeks readers’ acceptance of the new knowledge claims.

The majority of the EL paper is pronoun-free. It speaks well for the writer’s attempts to hide the personality of the author behind agentless constructions because of her fear of manifesting her individual contribution to science.

- It can be explained by …
- Thus, it is possible to tell with confidence that …
- Connectives are classified under three forms.
- The results of the above analysis can be summarized in Table 2.

L5 uses passive constructions to emphasize the events and processes the sentence is describing rather than her personal contributions. In general, impersonal constructions help L5 distance herself from personal involvement and responsibility for statements by leaving findings or evidence to speak for itself [23].

The RL paper features no instances of personal reference. The paper contains constructions where the writer attributes agency to an “abstract rhetor”. The impersonal constructions are expressed through agentless passives and sentences with impersonal subjects:

- Ñëåäóåò îòìåòèòü ðàáîòó Ëè Ãþ Áàíãà. [It is necessary to mention the work by Li Gyu Bang].
- Öåëåñîîáðàçíî îòìåòèòü, ÷òî êîðïóñ ÷àñòåð÷íîãî àïïàðàòà èìåë âî âñåõ åãî èíòåðïðåòàöèÿõ çðèìûå óíèâåðñàëüíûå õàðàêòåðèñòèêè. [It is worth noting that parts of speech have obvious universal features].

Thus, unlike an expert scholar L4, a novice academics L5 does not use the first-person singular in her EL prose strictly following the conventions of the Russian academic writing. She tends to signal intent to “de-personalize” herself in discourse. The same holds true for her RL writing containing no personal reference.

The findings of the present research concerning the distribution of first-person pronouns across papers of the Russian linguists under study are presented in Table 2.

Thus, we can see that all the Russian writers use first-person pronouns in a different way. However, the occurrences of personal pronouns in the role of the researcher exceed of those in other roles more than three-fold. As can be inferred from Table, in EL papers the writers mainly use personal reference as the researcher through the discourse (44 instances), while in RL ones first-person pronouns are mostly used in the role of the opinion holder (8 instances).

Our analysis has shown that ‘we’ in academic discourse can be used to reflect different choices such as:

- The author as a proxy of the academic community (exclusive ‘we’);
- The author as the representative of all people (non-referential ‘we’);
- The author and the readers (inclusive ‘we’);
- The author him/herself (ego-identical ‘we’).

The first person-singular pronoun ‘I’ in academic writing performs the functions as follows:

- To remind the audience that discourse comes from a necessarily subjective point of view; to invite readers into the individual world of the writer;

- To make a dry subject seem more engaging and a complicated argument seem less intimidating;
- To develop writer's voice or to claim his/her unique perspective or argument;
- To emphasize writer's agency (who is doing what) if she needs to point out how valuable his/her particular project is to an academic discipline;
- To claim some kind of authority on the topic;
- To describe a project the writer is working on.

CONCLUSION

The current study has explored the frequency of personal reference and different pragmatic functions first-person pronouns perform in EL and RL research papers by five Russian linguists. Findings have been illustrated with extracts from ten research papers. The frequency of personal pronouns has shown the degree of explicit author presence in the scientific discourse.

As can be observed from the data, the appearance of 'we' exceeds of 'I' in EL corpus as well as in RL one.

The analysis has shown that pronominal choice in academic discourse reflects differences in the way the authors present themselves. It has been found that in EL papers, novice scholars underuse or avoid 'I'-pronoun. They use it mainly to explain methodology, mark the steps of the research process rather than present and justify their claims or describe their line of reasoning. Expert scholars use 'I'-pronoun much in their EL papers. They use it not only to organize the discourse but to signal their intentions, give opinions and express what they have personally gained.

It has also been found that RL papers lack first-person singular pronouns. The occurrences of first-person plural in RL papers are more than half as much as those in their EL prose. The conventions of the Russian academic community enable writers to project a more "modest self-image", tend to impersonality, use strategies of depersonalization - agentless constructions which diminish the author's presence in the texts.

Hence, the pronominal choice depends heavily on the conventions of the academic community which, in turn, are culturally conditioned. The writer's level of experience in research field appears to be one more factor determining the pronominal choice.

The results of this analysis allow us to suggest that when writing papers for EL journals, expert Russian scholars tend to explicitly mark the source of the research in a competitive world of humanities. Personal reference helps them make explicit their authorial presence in the text by taking full responsibility for their claims. In RL papers, they use a fundamentally different strategy approved by the Russian academic community - to use the first-person plural or an impersonal style to show that they are "humble servants of the discipline" [14].

Thus, pronominal reference is one of the mechanisms through which writers express both their own presence in discourse, the presence of others and the relationships that they entertain with these others.

Based on the proposed method and procedure, one might analyze Russian academic discourse in other fields, including hard sciences (which have never been under study from that perspective), in order to establish pragmatic effects of the first-person pronouns.

The results imply the need to recognize that the issue is not simply whether or not the use of first-person pronouns should be encouraged in academic discourse. Rather, the issue is for what purposes writers should use personal reference. In this sense, postgraduate students, novice scholars have to be aware of different pragmatic functions of personal reference in academic discourse. Differences in the use of first-person pronouns across English and Russian might be helpful to Russian researchers who wish to publish their papers in international journals as they need to know the rhetorical conventions which are favored in EL academic writing.

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