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## **AUTHORIAL PRESENCE IN SERBIAN AND ENGLISH CO-AUTHORED SOCIAL SCIENCE ARTICLES\*\***

This paper examines the means by which authors' presence in co-authored articles is signaled directly in Serbian and international research articles belonging to social sciences and written in English by Serbian and native English speakers respectively. By comparing 15 Serbian and 11 international articles, the study tested the hypothesis that Serbian authors avoid the use of first-person pronouns in order to demonstrate authorial modesty, compared to English-speaking authors, whose direct usage of the first-person plural was expected to occur regularly. Additional research questions asked were about the discourse functions performed by first-person plural pronouns referring to the co-authors of the texts, as well as the use of the inclusive/exclusive *we* by the two examined groups. The results showed that Anglo-American authors use considerably more first-person pronouns in their research articles, although their placement in separate article sections had a similar pattern in both groups. According to Dontcheva-Navratilova's (2013) taxonomy, the two dominant discourse functions performed by the authorial *we* were those of the recounter of the research process and the opinion-holder, although with their order switched between the groups. Finally, neither group used the inclusive *we* to a great extent, except for the Intro+Lit section of the papers, where its inclusion in the text grew up to 52.5% in the Sr group, but only 23% in the AnAm group. These results suggest that cultural practices in establishing authorial presence between Serbian and Anglo-American writers may be closer than previously thought.

*Key words:* authorial presence, social science, Serbian, English, discourse analysis

### 1. Introduction

Academic writing constantly brings the writer and the reader together in a communicative situation in which the writers seeks to present their ideas in the most convincing way possible, and construct their authorial identity (IVANIČ 1998). However, the means by which the writer chooses to relate the ideas and findings to their source has been subject to the way a particular discourse community sees the author's role within that community and his relationship to his message and readers. Self-mention in a text that is meant to present one's ideas and potential contributions to the academic community

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has received plenty of interest from researchers in the past half-century, as the issue of putting one's authorship into the foreground of an academic text has been linked to a long history of academic writing and the principles associated with it. These principles are not unwritten – according to Breivega et al. (2002: 219), “scientific writing has traditionally been looked upon as objective, matter-of-fact-oriented and only marginally characterised by authorial presence” but, as research has shown – with noticeable culture-specific differences. For instance, as Blagojević (2012: 80) states, it was a long-standing attitude of Slavic academics and the theory of functional styles that the author of an academic text should not stand out from his community, whereas the Anglo-American tradition of writing in a “writer-responsible“ language (HINDS 1987) has put the author in the position where his presence in the text signifies willingness to take personal rather than collective responsibility and to assume a more active and direct role in the author-reader interaction.

One specific means of establishing authorial presence in an academic text is through the use of first-person pronouns. Although first-person pronouns are traditionally avoided in academic writing and substituted with less personal constructions since they are “associated with the traditional belief that intellectual work is an impersonal activity” (IVANIČ 1998: 272), pronouns “[...] are not just stylistic optional extras but significant ingredients for promoting a competent scholarly identity and gaining accreditation for research claims” (HYLAND 2001: 223). In other words, in an academic article that serves as a vehicle for the author's personal views and claims, using first-person pronouns, whether singular or plural, helps authors to “argue clearly and vigorously for their positions, project appropriate conviction and display a command of their material” (HYLAND 2002: 215). This seems especially relevant in the times of increased academic competition where “the use of subjective elements can also be seen as a way of promoting and selling their own results at the expense of other researchers' work” (BREIVEGA et al. 2002: 220).

However, as studies in contrastive rhetoric have shown, such self-promotion in academic writing has not been its universal trait. Studies that compared the use of authorial ‘I/we’ in English and languages such as French and German (BREIVEGA et al. 2002), Czech (ČMEJRKOVA 1996), Bulgarian (VASSILEVA 1998; 2000), Finnish (MAURANEN 1993), Turkish (IŞIK-TAŞ 2018), Serbian (BLAGOJEVIĆ 2010) and others have shown that, even though the author does construct his or her own authorial identity through writing, the way it is represented through self-mention is still affected by differences in cultural and disciplinary conventions, which dictate the singular/plural distinction.

The main hypothesis of this paper is based on the findings of Tošović (2002), Blagojević (2011), Novaković & Sudimac (2017) and Đorđević & Vesić Pavlović (2020) that authorial presence in Serbian academic writing is mostly marked either by passive and impersonal constructions on the one hand or the collective ‘we’ on the other, as a result of the principle of authorial modesty. However, whereas these previous studies either included only single-authored papers or did not specify the type of authorship, the present research will explore the subject by comparing co-authored academic texts specifically, written by Anglo-American and Serbian authors in English. The underlying hypothesis is that the same principle of authorial modesty will be found in co-authored articles as well, with the plural ‘we’ being more frequent in the texts written by native English speakers, as Serbian authors continue to take a more impersonal approach. Moreover, as the men-

tioned articles have also pointed out that authorial presence in academic texts performs a variety of discourse functions, referring to the works by Vassileva (1998), Tang & John (1999), Čmejrková (2007) and Flottum et al. (2007) among others, this paper will also examine the use of the authorial 'we' in relation to the discourse functions it performs. More specifically, it will try to confirm the second hypothesis of the paper, which is that the same discourse functions that promoted the use of the singular 'I' in single-author papers will be applied to the plural 'we' in co-authored papers. To this end, the taxonomy used in this paper will be the one adopted by Dontcheva-Navratilova (2013) as it summarizes three previous taxonomies by different authors, with additional attention given to the use of *exclusive* and *inclusive* 'we' (VASSILEVA 1998).

## 2. Previous research

As academic research is an integral part of academic life, and "essentially a *social enterprise*" (HYLAND 2004: 3), the way the author communicates with his audience is embedded in the linguistic means by which the author chooses to present his or her ideas. Therefore, as Vassileva (1998: 164) states, the 'I/we' perspective, as one means of self-reference, is more than just a linguistic exponent of the author-knowledge relationship, but instead "functions along the author-audience interpersonal axis." This places the use of personal pronouns for authorial self-reference in the realm of *metadiscourse*, or "discourse about discourse" (VANDE KOPPLE 1985) which the author uses to "help [ ] readers organize, classify, interpret, evaluate, and react" to the propositional content of the text. (VANDE KOPPLE 1985: 83). Through metadiscourse, and authorial self-mention as one manifestation of *interpersonal metadiscourse* (VANDE KOPPLE 1985; CRISMORE et al. 1993; HYLAND 2005), writers can signal their communicative intentions, and influence the way their readers will interpret them (HYLAND, 1998). However, as author-reader communication occurs within an academic community with culture-specific patterns that affect even academic writing, it is not difficult to conclude that the same patterns that apply to academic discourse will apply to its metadiscourse as well.

Given that the writer's choices in his communication with his readers will inevitably carry some culture-specific patterns, and with the academic discourse community surpassing national and language borders, the question that contrastive rhetoric has been trying to answer is in what ways different cultural patterns permeate academic writing and whether the rhetorical patterns adopted by writers from one language community affect their writing in a non-native language (BLAGOJEVIĆ 2012). To that end, a number of studies have been undertaken to examine the issue of authorial presence in contemporary academic discourse from various perspectives, including cross-cultural influences. On the one hand, the use of the 'I/we' perspective has been the subject of studies in authorial presence in academic writing in different languages. For example, influential works have compared authorial presence in English, and German, French, Russian and Bulgarian academic writing (VASSILEVA 1998; 2000), academic articles in English and Polish (DUSZAK 1998), Czech (ČMEJRKOVÁ 1996) Spanish (CHÁVEZ MUÑOZ 2013), Turkish (IŞIK -TAŞ 2018), Serbian (BLAGOJEVIĆ 2010) and others. On the other hand, cross-cultural influences have been studied by investigating English research articles written by native and non-native English scholars and these studies have shown cultural differences between English

and other academic practices, in which non-native writers have exhibited a lower level of interactiveness and authoritativeness in Czech articles written in English (DONTCHEVA-NAVRATILOVA 2013), fewer self-references to recount research procedures but more when structuring articles (JANUARTO & HARDJANTO 2020) or that American students use significantly more first-person singular pronouns than Turkish students in their English essays (CANDARLI et al. 2015). Because of this, increased interest in such comparisons emerged among Serbian scholars as well.

Among Serbian studies of authorial presence, we should mention the works by Blagojević (2008; 2010; 2011; 2012), who has brought the issues of academic writing and intercultural differences in academic discourse from the previously held theories of functional styles into contemporary theories and research methodologies. Blagojević (2012: 81-83) does acknowledge some of the previous approaches and findings (TOŠOVIĆ 2002; VASIĆ 2000), which confirmed the preference of Serbian authors for the use the *pluralis modestiae/pluralis auctoris*, but also relates this preference to its possible roots – the Aristotelian and Latin rhetorical traditions of favoring the contents and objectivity of academic texts by reducing direct authorial presence (ČMEJRKOVA 2007). However, as the author's review of previous studies does help explain the traditional academic preferences in Serbian academic writing, it is her own research that showed the current tendencies in managing authorial presence in Serbian academic discourse. The results of her studies showed that Serbian authors use the Serbian plural pronoun *mi* almost three times more frequently than *we* is used in texts written by Anglo-American authors (BLAGOJEVIĆ 2012: 49-50), which she attributes to the western conventions of taking courage and responsibility for their statements, whereas Slavic traditions favor argumentation and the propositional content and advise authorial modesty and impersonal expression, especially when introducing their research goals or personal standpoints (BLAGOJEVIĆ 2012: 114). These findings were mostly supported by a later study of Serbian academic texts by Serbian and English linguists (NOVAKOVIĆ & SUDIMAC 2017), which also showed many similarities with the findings of Vassileva (2000). The study showed that both Serbian and English linguists used the plural Serbian pronoun much more often than the singular and that authorial presence was most frequent in the Research part of the articles, for both groups (over 80%), whereas the Serbian linguists were more prepared to use it even in the other parts of their papers. Another study, by Đorđević & Vesić Pavlović (2020: 311), dealt with metadiscourse in research abstracts in the field of agriculture, and revealed merely occasional usage of personal pronouns as markers of authorial presence (0,52 in 1000 words).

Even though there have been other studies of Serbian metadiscourse, the use of the first-person plural as a marker of authorial presence has only been researched in a handful of previous studies (BLAGOJEVIĆ 2008, 2010; NOVAKOVIĆ & SUDIMAC 2017), but even these studies either only dealt with the use of the plural 'we' in the works by single authors or the inclusion of multi-authored papers in the research was not specified. In either case, the use of the plural 'we' to mark the authorial presence of multiple authors is still an open topic, especially with regard to Serbian academic discourse written in English.

Helpful in establishing the methodological framework for this paper are the stud-

ies by Flottum et al (2007), Vassileva (2000) and Blagojević (2011), for their classification of the first-person pronouns into the *exclusive* and *inclusive* ‘we’, based on their referential possibilities. According to Flottum et al. (2006: 96-100) both possibilities can be used metonymically or not, depending on whether the plural ‘we’ is used by co-authors or a single author. When used by co-authors, as will be the case in this study, the *non-metonymic exclusive we* could be used in three types of situations in which the reference does not include the readers:

- (1) When ‘we’ is referring to several authors and nobody else, and only the authors perform the emphasising and the arguing:  
‘*We want to emphasise again that we are not arguing against regulations*’
- (2) When there is an inclusion of third (but not second) persons:  
‘*...the quality of the services that we have offered...*’
- (3) Where the interviewers and examiners include the authors, but it is possible that more people have been involved in the research process:  
‘*We made use of interviews/an interview and a physical examination of the patients.*’  
(Flottum et al. 2006: 96-97)

The use of the *non-metonymic inclusive we*, which refers to the authors and the readers, exists in situations where:

1. there is data that the author and the reader share:  
‘*In (7b) and (7c) [linguistic examples], on the other hand, we have an argument that expresses who is singing...*’
2. the referent includes the authors and many others, but where the reference of ‘we’ is not fully determined by the author, but depends also on the reader’s identity and his or her text interpretation:  
‘*Some claim that we should avoid a higher level of Norwegian duties*’
3. it involves at least the society of economists and approaches a generic reference where alternatively ‘one’ could have been used:  
‘*My main point is ... to indicate how we can use this literature...*’ (Flottum et al. 2006: 97-98)

To this Blagojević (2011: 212) adds that it is the semantics of the verbs used with these pronouns, as well as the sentential context that determine whether the discourse activity refers only to the authors or their readers as well.

Another very important aspect of pronoun use when signaling authorial presence is their discourse functions. As Dontcheva-Navratilova (2013: 14-15) claims, these author roles “are not identified only in accordance with the author-reference pronouns used; [but]...by the structures in which the pronouns occur, i.e. the semantics of the verb phrase and the larger co-text.” Based on the earlier taxonomies proposed by Kuo, (1999), Tang and John (1999), Hyland (2001, 2002a and 2002b) and Harwood (2005), she proposes her own taxonomy that will be used in this paper as well, since it was used in one of the rare studies dealing with co-authored papers as such. Her taxonomy includes the following discourse functions:

- 1) Representative — positions the author as a member of a larger community; this is the least authoritative role, typically expressed by the plural first-person pronoun
  - a) Describing disciplinary knowledge/practices — *nowadays we consider English as the lingua franca of the academic world;*
  - b) Seeking reader involvement — *here we have a perfect example of;*
- 2) Discourse-organiser — guides the reader through the text;
  - a) at the macro-level of the whole text outlines the structure of the discourse — *in this article I briefly explore;*
  - b) at the micro-level of rhetorical moves and thematic segments indicates intratextual connections and transition points in the discourse — *let us now turn to the issue of;*
- 3) Recounter of the research process — comments on the collection of data and research procedures used — *we have collected the data;*
- 4) Opinion-holder — assumes a higher degree of authority associated with expressing attitudes and elaborating arguments — *I think that the best way of conceptualizing coherence is;*
- 5) Originator — this is the most authoritative and face-threatening role as it is related to putting forward claims, commenting on findings and highlighting the author's contribution to the field — *I have provided evidence for* (DONTCHEVA-NAVRATILOVA 2013: 14).

As these classifications and taxonomies have shown, even though the topic of the plural 'we' as a marker of authorial presence in co-authored articles has not been researched yet with regards to Serbian, a research framework that can be used in this research does exist, and its use in this study will be explained in greater detail in the following chapter.

### 3. Methods

As previous studies on the subject of authorial presence have already shown some culture-specific properties of Serbian use of authorial presence in academic writing, this research will try to shed light on an aspect of this topic that still remains unresearched – signalling authorial presence in co-authored papers of Serbian and English authors respectively, by comparing texts written in English by both groups of authors so as to examine the influence of Serbian cultural patterns on their writing in a non-native language.

The results of previous studies on Serbian metadiscourse have shown the tendency of Serbian writers to avoid the use of first-person singular in single-author papers and their reliance on the plural counterpart and impersonal constructions, whereas English writers have been known to show authorial presence much more directly. Therefore, the first research hypothesis that will be tested in this paper is:

- In accordance with the principles of authorial modesty, Serbian authors will have fewer uses of the plural 'we' in co-authored papers than their English counterparts.

Additionally, as previous research (BLAGOJEVIĆ 2011) has shown that the plural ‘we’ performs six out of eleven possible discourse functions (VASSILEVA 1998) in both English and Serbian, but without a special consideration for co-authored papers, additional goals of this paper will be:

- to determine which discourse functions will be performed by the plural pronoun referring to multiple authors;
- what differences (if any) exist between the two groups;
- to examine the uses of the *inclusive and exclusive ‘we’* in the two groups, with comparisons to the earlier findings by Blagojević (2011) where possible.

To perform the study, 15 papers were selected from one of the leading Serbian social science journals with international significance, *Teme*, including two or more Serbian authors and written in English in 2019 and 2020. For the Anglo-American part of the corpus, 11 papers were selected from *Journal of Sociology* and *Social Psychology*, published in 2020 and 2019 by co-authors with at least one native English speaker, determined on the basis of author affiliation. The Serbian part of the corpus (*Sr*) contained 75165 words and the Anglo-American (*AnAm*) 77089, with the average number of words per paper being 5011 and 7008 respectively. The largest difference in the word count between two Serbian papers was 6034 words, whereas the Anglo-American papers were more standardized in length, as this gap was only 3264 words. Although there was an obvious difference in the impact of the two international journals and the Serbian journal, this particular Serbian journal was selected for its high national standing and the fact that the majority of its papers were written by Serbian authors in English, which was not the case with other Serbian journals of the same or higher category. In addition to this, the editorial board of the Serbian journal consists mostly of Serbian or other Slavic academics, which should limit the influence of western writing practices.

**Table 1.** *English first-person plural pronouns (BIBER et al. 1999)*

Person			Case		
Nominative	Accusative		Possessive		Reflexive
			Determiner	Pronoun	
<b>Plural</b>	we	us	our	ours	ourselves

To determine the lexical representatives of authorial presence, I used Biber et al’s (1999) categorization. The quantitative analysis of the data included the frequency of personal pronouns in each group of texts, normalized to 100.000 words. The following qualitative analyses considered the semantics of the verbs associated with pronoun use to determine their classification into inclusive and exclusive plurals, while Dontcheva-Navratilova’s (2013: 14) taxonomy of authorial roles was used to classify the pronouns into their discursive roles, while noting any differences between the two groups.

#### 4. Research results

The first part of the research was aimed at confirming the hypothesis that Serbian authors will have fewer uses of the plural ‘we’ in co-authored papers than Anglo-Ameri-

can writers, as a result of cultural principles of authorial modesty that have been already found in Serbian single-authored papers, in which the singular *I* is also often substituted with more impersonal choices, or the plural *we*. To check the hypothesis, the total number of plural pronouns found in the selected articles, including the determiner *our* and the reflexive pronoun *ourselves*, was normalized to 100.000 words and the results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2.** *Frequency Distribution in the Sr and AnAm samples (per 100,000 words)*

Lexical representatives	Sr	AnAm	Sr	AnAm
	Raw data		Normalized to 100.000	
<i>we</i>	118	544	156.99	705.68
<i>us</i>	10	27	13.30	35.02
<i>our</i>	35	216	46.56	280.19
<i>ourselves</i>	1	0	1.33	0
<i>total</i>	164	787	218.19	1020.9

The table shows differences in the use of pronouns for authorial self-reference in the two samples (*Sr* and *AnAm*), with the *AnAm* authors using significantly more personal pronouns to refer to themselves in the text, with the exclusion of the reflexive *ourselves*, which only appeared once in both samples. These findings confirm the research hypothesis that the use of the plural *we* in Serbian multi-authored papers will follow the Serbian cultural practices of authorial modesty and collectivism in academic articles already confirmed in previous studies, whereas western writing practices would promote authorial presence as a way of taking personal responsibility in the form of personal pronouns. Although the exact discourse functions of these pronouns are yet to be examined later in this section, substantial differences in the initial numbers suggest that this difference may be independent of any particular discourse function.

The analysis of the use of pronouns in separate sections of academic papers included the typical *AIMRAD* (Abstract, Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion) pattern, but with the Conclusion also added to the Discussion section as a single entry and the possible (but not always present) section dedicated to previous research and literature overview added to the Introduction data. This approach showed that the forthcoming analysis of discourse functions was likely to produce results similar to my initial quantitative analyses (Tables 2 and 3), as analyses of genre (Swales 1990) have already shown that specific research article sections serve specific communicative purposes. Hence, the use of personal pronouns to signal the presence of the author should be somewhat dependent on the nature of authorial involvement in the text and the author's position in relation to the discourse community.

**Table 3.** *Frequency Distribution in the Sr and AnAm samples (per 100,000 words)*

Lexical reps	Sr	AnAm	Sr	AnAm	Sr	AnAm	Sr	AnAm	Sr	AnAm
	Normalized to 100.000									
	<b>Abstract</b>		<b>.Intro. + Lit</b>		<b>Method</b>		<b>Results</b>		<b>.Disc.+ Con</b>	
<i>we</i>	210	1094	105.7	312.1	175.5	1254.5	203.3	536.5	84.4	750.4



<i>us</i>	0	136.4	3.8	62.4	0	51.8	6.8	0	28.1	16
<i>our</i>	0	68.2	37.8	119.2	94.5	299.2	44.1	212.5	42.2	614.7
<i>ourselves</i>	0	0	3.8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>total</i>	210	1298.6	151.1	493.7	270	1605.5	254.2	749	154.7	1381.1

This is what the normalized data in Table 3 confirmed, since AnAm writers used significantly more personal pronouns than Sr writers in all sections of their papers. This is especially evident in abstracts, methods and discussions, as these are the sections in which authors talk most about their own research, whereas the *Results* section is mostly centered on data. On the other hand, the *Intro+Lit* section is where previous findings take precedence, as authors try to place their own research within the discourse community they are communicating with and the focus is not so much on their own views, or such views are presented with greater care so as not to disrespect the members of that community and their contributions to the topic.

Table 3 also shows us that Serbian writers are more direct about their authorship in their abstracts and *Results* sections, whereas the possessive *our* occurs more frequently than usual in *Methods* and *Discussion* sections, as the writers tend to focus more on their research and not their claims. On the other hand, with AnAm writers, the *we* perspective seems to be more dominant than usual in abstracts and *Methods* sections of their papers. This was not so much the case with the *Results* section as it was with the Sr group. The reason why some of the authorial presence was missing from this section may lie in the fact that the sectioning of the AnAm articles was different and included a separate *Discussion* section much more often than Serbian articles did, which drew away some of the opportunities to express authorial involvement. However, it is also interesting to point out that in all the abstracts in both groups, the *we* perspective was exclusive, showing us that this is the section in which, due to a limited number of words allowed, authorial presence needed to be expressed more clearly, and the focus put on the authors rather than the scientific community, as the following chart will illustrate.

What Figure 1 shows us is what the percentage of the use of exclusive and inclusive *we* (as well as the other forms) occurred in the two groups, and it is clear from the data presented that the abstracts and the *Methods* section in both groups were an opportunity for the authors to refer to their work and themselves without the inclusion of their audience, as the focus was on the tasks performed by the authors and the significance of the research process and the steps taken in its preparation.

As for the AnAm group, the use of the exclusive *we* and the other plural pronominal forms surpassed 94% of the total number in almost all sections apart from the *Intro+Lit* section, where it was 77%. On the other hand, the Sr group's mean percentage of exclusive forms was held to 79.4% (96.2 in AnAm), ranging from 68.2% to 100%, but again with the exception of the *Intro+Lit* section, in which the inclusive uses were predominant, with 52.5%. The *Methods* section was the only section in both groups that did not have a single inclusive use. If we look at the examples (1) and (2) from the Sr group, the most common types of situations in which the inclusive use of *we* and the other forms occurred were the reference to people or the discourse community in general (1), and the reference to the authors and their readers specifically (2):

- (1) “The effect of our beliefs on what we are able, and what we are not able to do, is very important. Especially so if we bear in mind that cognitive processes lie at the basis of a greater part of the motivation, and it increases, if we are convinced of the success of the realisation of our goals (Ashford & LeCroy, 2010; Earley, Gibson, & Chen, 1999; Pajares & Schunk, 2001).”
- (2) “In Table 8, we can see that significant predictors of positive affectivity of females are masculinity and communication, and in the negative direction, the number of children.”

These examples bring us to the final research question of this paper, in which we will look more closely at the functions that authorial reference plays in the selected research articles, which should also reveal more about the obvious tendency of both groups of writers to use the exclusive ‘we’ in the greater portion of their texts. To do so, I used Dontcheva-Navratilova’s (2013) taxonomy with five discourse functions and two subtypes and applied it only to the nominative form ‘we’ in order to compare my results to earlier studies. The results, presented in Figure 2, reveal that both groups used the ‘we’ perspective predominantly to recount the research process and to express opinions, albeit in a more tentative way, without making any strong, face-threatening claims.

**Table 4.** Percentage of discourse functions performed by the authorial ‘we’ in the two groups

	(%) AnAm	(%) Sr
Representative a) describing disciplinary knowledge/practices	1.34	10.53
Representative b) seeking reader involvement	3.45	0.88
Discourse-organiser a) at the macro-level of the whole text	1.92	1.75
Discourse-organiser b) at the micro-level of rhetorical moves and thematic segments	0.77	2.63
Recounters of the research process	64.87	27.19
Opinion-holder	24.18	56.14
Originator	3.45	0.88

Some differences can be seen in the first function, as Serbian authors were more likely to place themselves within the discourse community than their counterparts, whereas AnAm authors were more likely to engage their readers. Neither group used authorial presence to signal discourse organization to a great extent, but to recount the steps and methods used in the research as well as to present their findings. Neither group made many strong claims about said findings, but it seems that Serbian authors were more inclined to self-mention in cases where their opinions were more tentative (e.g. *we hypothesized; we can note that*, etc.), whereas AnAm writers found it more important to involve themselves in directing the reader through the sometimes complex methodological procedures used in their comprehensive research.

## 5. Discussion

The results of this study confirmed the initial hypothesis that the principle of authorial modesty would lead Serbian authors to use the plural 'we' in co-authored papers less often than their English counterparts. These results support even some earlier studies (Blagojević 2012; Novaković & Sudimac 2017) that found Serbian authors more willing to use the plural pronoun form than English authors, even though these studies were based on single-author papers. Naturally, this does not translate directly to my findings, as English authors used far more plural pronouns than Serbian authors in multi-authored papers, but it does confirm the principle of authorial modesty found in Serbian academic writing that limits the use of direct authorial involvement in the text, which is in this case signalled by the plural form. The additional analysis of authorial presence in separate article sections further supported another finding by Novaković & Sudimac (2017) that authorial presence was most frequent in the *Research* part of the articles for both Serbian and AnAm authors. However, the present study provided some additional insight, as I also distinguished between different forms and found that Serbian writers had a more direct authorial presence in their abstracts and *Results* sections, whereas the possessive *our* appeared more frequently than usual in *Methods* and *Discussion* sections, as the writers chose to focus more on their research and not their claims.

Regarding the additional goals of this paper, to examine the uses of the inclusive and exclusive 'we' in the two groups and to determine which discourse functions were performed by the plural pronoun, the analyses included in this study provided mostly expected results. It was to be expected from western writers to be more concerned with maintaining the writer-reader interaction in the reader-centered academic culture, but it was surprising to see the Serbian writers' authorial presence more prominent in a more face-threatening role than in the more impersonal roles that could have more easily placed the authors within the discourse community, such as the *Representative A* function. However, if we look at the results of the previous analysis, in which both groups showed an obvious preference for the use of the exclusive 'we', it does not surprise as much that authors in both groups did not use the plural pronoun to a great extent in functions that would involve their readers more directly or include them in their discourse community. Another point that explains this finding are the results in Table 3, which showed that authorial presence was mostly signaled in the Results and Methods sections, as well as abstracts, in which focus is usually put on the contents of the research and the authors take the role of a facilitator for the reader. On the other hand, the results also showed that the AnAm writers did not exhibit much greater readiness to take responsibility in face-threatening claims than Serbian writers but rather, as the final analysis showed, their desire to take an active role in directing the writer through the complex research process by means of phrases like *we tested*, *we analysed*, and others, even though this was an important section for authorial presence in Sr articles as well.

Both groups also preferred the use of the exclusive 'we' in their articles, especially in abstracts, with the exception of the *Intro+Lit* section, in which both groups had increased its inclusive use. This was especially the case with the Sr group, which suggests

that, while there is awareness on both sides of what discourse functions this article section performs, the Serbian group expressed the *auctoris modestiae* principle mentioned earlier to a greater extent. This result shows some lingering cultural differences despite the general agreement between the groups in terms of article structure and its functions. It also supports some earlier findings by Vassileva (2000) and Blagojević (2011) which suggested that Slavic and Serbian authors will seek reader involvement with the more abstract theoretical notions and areas, by using constructions marked for person and number.

## 6. Conclusion

Considering the results produced by this research, we can note that, while the differences in the frequency of authorial presence manifested through personal pronouns are still considerable between Anglo-American and Serbian academic writers (which supported the research hypothesis), subsequent analyses have also shown important similarities between the two groups. This was especially the case regarding the functions of different article sections, as heauthorial ‘we’ showed some surprising results even in the realm of abstracts, especially considering some earlier findings by Đorđević & Vesić Pavlović (2020) regarding Serbian research articles. The inclusivity/exclusivity issue of the ‘we’ perspective in these two groups also showed some notable similarities, suggesting that, while Serbian writers still retain some cultural characteristics of Slavic collectivism, they are aware of dominant current trends and requirements in international academic writing and are applying some reader-centered principles with respect to the functions performed by different sections of their texts. This was also seen in the last analysis of the article, where the *Recounter* and *Opinion-Holder* functions were the most frequent ones in both groups, although with quantitative differences. All these results show that, when the I/we issue is no longer an issue in comparisons between multi-authored research articles written by Serbian and Anglo-American authors, the differences between the two cultural practices become much less visible in qualitative terms. This suggests that when the work is already done collectively by more than one author, Serbian authors have fewer reasons to resort to collectivism when establishing their authorial presence in the text, which was also supported by their use of the exclusive ‘we’ and the frequency of opinion-holding statements and hypotheses.

On the other hand, the data regarding the functions performed by the authorial ‘we’ in this article was mostly quantitative, and a more detailed approach in further studies could reveal differences not covered by the current approach, as well as the choice of impersonal constructions used by the two groups as a substitute for the more direct presence expressed through personal pronouns.

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