

Extent of Self-Mention Reference in Serbian Academic Discourse

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to investigate the use of authorial self-mention in the corpus of research articles written by the Serbian authors. Recent research of the academic texts published in English has shown that authors tend to represent themselves more explicitly than they used to, being aware that it may improve their communication with readers. Authorial presence can be realized through different linguistic markers such as the use of first person pronouns and metadiscourse. We wanted to see whether there were discrepancies in deployment of these rhetorical strategies in two disciplines, one belonging to hard and the other to soft sciences. The study showed significant underuse of authorial reference by Serbian authors in both fields. Obviously, they opt to avoid representing themselves, especially when making arguments or claims. The reason of this is quite complex. For decades, the authors in Slavic academic community were taught to use exclusively first person plural pronoun, even when they were the only authors of their papers, because “that was the appropriate way to declare themselves as the members of academic community as well as to demonstrate their academic modesty” (Blagojević, 2009). As many linguists have proven that academic prose is not completely impersonal, we think that such stance of the Serbian scholars may impede the impression they make when subsequently writing for the international professional and academic community. Therefore, when teaching academic writing, we, as EAP teachers, should point out the significance of appropriate writing conventions in English language. By introducing self-mention references in their piece of writing, our students, future experts in their disciplines, will gain credibility among the members of their respective discourse communities, displaying confidence in their own evaluations and commitment to their ideas.