English for Academic Purposes I

Expression of authority in academic writing: a comparative study of the usage of first-person pronouns between genders

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Abstract

The expression of authority by means of first-person pronouns in Academic Discourse has long been a controversial issue. Traditionally, impersonality was said to be one of the core characteristics of expert writing; However, recent approaches towards the discipline refute that idea and consider the presence of the author in a text a key point in the gaining of academic recognition. Different factors such as the discipline the writer belongs to or the sociocultural context they have been raised in or are currently writing in have proven to be crucial in determining how a writer expresses their authority in a text. This, together with emerging studies that show significant differences in writing between genders, suggest that men and women scholars may express their authority differently. Nevertheless, there is not, to my knowledge, any study examining whether there is any significant difference in the expression of authority by first-person pronouns between the two genders. The specific goal of this dissertation is to analyse the possible divergence in the frequency of use, rhetorical functions and distribution of the first-person pronouns in scholarly writing by the two genders. For doing so, I have compiled a corpus of 24 research articles (12 per gender) and have then analysed all the instances of first-person pronouns found in them from a qualitative and quantitative point of view. The results obtained show that even though there is not much difference in the frequency of use of first-person pronouns between genders, there is significant difference in the functions/roles that those pronouns display. Women seem to use first-person pronouns to accompany the reader through the text, this way guiding them towards their same conclusions. In other words, the expression of authority by women does not seem to display a high degree of authoritativeness. On the contrary, men seem to use first-person pronouns to express their ideas and conclusions in a more direct way, that is to say, their expression of authority displays a higher degree of authoritativeness.

Keywords: *Academic Discourse, expression of authority, first-person pronouns, male and female scholars, research article*

1. Introduction

Traditionally, and especially since Genre Studies emerged in the 1980's, Academic Discourse[1] has been considered a monolithic discipline characterized, among others, by formality, impersonality and precision. Such view focused on the intention of assembling all the characteristic features of academic literature to teach students some writing patterns that would be interchangeable across different disciplines. However, later research done by leading linguists such as Hyland (1999; 2001) or Swales (1990) suggested that AcaD is not the systematic unity that it was thought or said to be.

One of the ideas refuted by more recent approaches towards AcaD is the one that recommends that academic writing should be impersonal. Nowadays, many experts agree that the expression of authority is a key point in AcaD, as with the representation of the self, writers make themselves visible in their work, they demonstrate commitment to their ideas and they display confidence in their judgements. This leads to the writers gaining credibility among their peers (Hyland, 2002).

There are different ways in which writers can represent themselves in a text, the use of first-person pronouns being one of those. However, the use of first-person pronouns in academic writing has long been controversial (Mur Dueñas, 2007), and today still remains so. Having already mentioned the disagreement between the traditional and new approaches towards the expression of authority in AcaD, I would like to draw attention to some circumstances that may have an impact not only on the quantity of first-person pronouns that writers use in their texts, but on the manner writers use them.

The discipline the writer belongs to may be crucial to determine the way in which they use first-person pronouns, as various studies (see Hyland, 1999; Mur Dueñas, 2007) show that soft sciences and humanity scholars are much more prone to use them than hard science scholars are. These last ones tend to maintain their writing rather impersonal (Hyland, 1999).

The sociocultural context in which the academic has been raised also plays an important role in determining how they may express authority. "Culture shapes our communicative practices in significant ways, influencing our preferences for structuring information, the relationship we establish with our readers, and how far we want to

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[1] For my convenience, the abbreviation of the term Academic Discourse (AcaD) will be used throughout the dissertation.

personally appear in our texts" (Hyland, 2002, p. 1110). This is the reason why, as the more individualistic cultures accept and even encourage writers to make their opinions clear, cultures that give more importance to the collective identity rather than to the individual may perceive the representation of the self in academic writing unacceptable (Hyland & Bondi, 2006).

The idea that the expression of authority is closely related to the specific sociocultural context of the writer suggests that there may be some differences in the way that men and women use personal pronouns in AcaD. This is a consequence of the different upbringing related to power that society unconsciously imposes on men and women. In fact, there are some studies that show that women express their authority in a less direct way, using the expression of the self mostly to accompany the reader through the text and to gain their confidence to make them understand their ideas. In the meanwhile, the same studies show that men tend to be more authoritative and opinionated (see Coates, 2016; Talbot, 2010; Weatherall, 2002).

As mentioned above, the use of first-person pronouns is one of the ways that writers have to express authority. As stated, previous research has attested to genre-related differences in the expression of authority in AcaD. However, to my knowledge, no study has examined the actual use of first-person pronouns as authority markers in the scholarly writing of men and women. It is precisely here where my study is framed.

The aim of this dissertation is to analyse the possible difference in the frequency of use, rhetorical functions and distribution of the first-person pronouns in research articles[2] written by men and by women. For doing so, I have analysed the quantity and quality of all the first-person pronouns found in a corpus of 24 single-authored RAs (12 per gender).

The structure of this dissertation will be the following: first I will discuss the general use of authority in AcaD. Secondly, I will analyse how specific sociocultural contexts and more importantly, gender, may have an impact on the different use of first person pronouns among scholarly writers. Afterwards, I will explain the steps that led me to the compilation of my corpus. Then, I will discuss the results I have obtained after analysing all the instances of first-person pronouns found in said corpus, and I will present my conclusions of the study. This dissertation will follow the APA[3] citation style (6th edition).

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[2] The abbreviation of the term 'research article' (RA) will be used throughout the dissertation.
[3] APA stands for 'American Psychological Association'.

2. Expression of authority in Academic Discourse

When addressing expression of authority in AcaD we refer to "the extent to which a writer intrudes into a text and claims responsibility for its content" (Tang & John, 1999, p. 26). Although there are others (e.g. self-citation), the most obvious way a writer has to express authority in a text is by using first-person pronouns (Hyland, 2001). Nevertheless, it is important to understand that "the first-person pronoun in academic writing is not a homogeneous entity, and that there is a range of roles or identities that may be fronted by a first-person pronoun" (Tang & John, 1999, p.26). This idea developed from a comment made by Ivanic (1998), who suggested that there was a continuum of 'I's[4] "showing the degree of power wielded by the authorial presence through a particular instance of use of the first-person pronoun" (Tang & John, 1999, p.27).

Departing from Ivanic's (1998) suggestion, different scholars have set up a categorization of the first-person pronouns according to their degree of authoritativeness, two of them being Tang and John (1999). They introduced six different roles that first-person pronouns could have, and then ordered those roles from the least authoritative to the most. The roles Tang and Johns observed are the following: 'I' as the representative, 'I' as the guide through the essay, 'I' as the architect of the essay, 'I' as the recounter of the research process, 'I' as the opinion-holder and 'I' as the originator. This categorization will be used later on in the dissertation in order to make a qualitative study of the first-person pronouns found in my corpus.

Once understood that personal pronouns may display a higher or lower degree of power depending on the role they carry, we need to focus on how expert writers use first-person pronouns, and more importantly, on why they decide to use or not to use them. This will be crucial to determine if there is any significant difference between the way male and female writers express their authority in scholarly writing.

There are many factors that determine how scholarly writers decide to express authority in their writings. There is no rule that determines how authority should be conveyed in AcaD. However, the way in which writers decide to show, or not to show, themselves in a work is far from being just a personal choice (Hyland, 2002). The way in which an experienced academic writer perceives AcaD, the field to which said writer

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[4] Here, and throughout the dissertation 'I' will represent all the first-person pronouns (I, me, my, mine, we, us, our, ours).

belongs and the sociocultural context in which the writer has been raised or is currently writing may significantly modify their way of expressing authority in a text (Hyland, 2001).

In the following lines I will discuss how the aforementioned factors may affect the way a writer expresses authority in academic writing, and more specifically, through the use of personal pronouns.

2.1 Different approaches towards the expression of authority in Academic Discourse: traditional vs. new approach

As Flowerdew explains in his 2013 book *Academic Discourse*, academic writing had not been a proper subject of study until the 1950's, when scholars realized they needed to teach their students the writing patterns of scholarly writing. Not until then did university studies become accessible for regular citizens, for in those days, studying in university was only a possibility for a privileged little part of the society. However, that decade saw an important growth and profile change in the student population due to the booming economy. As a consequence, and seeing that new career paths and degrees were being created, scholars saw the need of gathering together all the characteristic features of academic writing in order to teach students some patterns that would be interchangeable across different disciplines. That is how the discipline of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) was born, although Genre Studies did not properly emerge until the 1980's.

Flowerdew (2013) also explained how genres were described when they were first analysed as a unified act of discourse:

> Genres are essentially defined in terms of the use of language in conventionalised communicative settings, which give expression to a specific set of communicative goals of specialised disciplinary and social groups, which in turn establish relatively stable structural forms and, to some extent, even constrain the lexico-grammatical resources" (Flowerdew, 2013, p. 23).

The just mentioned definition of genre has its roots in Bloor and Bloor's 'Common Core Hypothesis' (1986), which explains that "many of the features of English are found in all, or nearly all varieties of English" (Hyland & Bondi, 2006, p. 7). This suggests that all the contents belonging to a specific genre should have, at least, some characteristics in common. Traditionally, in the discipline of AcaD, those characteristics had been formality, impersonality and precision (Hyland & Bondi, 2006). Thus, in order to belong

to the academic community, university students and scholars alike were in the beginning advised to be formal, impersonal and precise in their writings.

However, later comparative studies started to show that AcaD may not be the monolithic text it was thought to be (Hyland, 1999; Hyland, 2002; Swales, 1990). Even though at first scholarly writing was seen as a monolithic entity that only varied in the specialist topic and vocabulary of the area of study, it has now been regarded as:

> An outcome of multitude of practices and strategies, where argument and engagement are crafted within communities that have different ideas about what is worth communicating, how it can be communicated, what the readers are likely to know, how they might be persuaded… (Hyland & Bondi, 2006, p. 10).

This more recent approach towards AcaD breaks completely with some of the core characteristics of the traditional definition of scholarly writing. One of them, the one I am going to focus on in this dissertation, states that AcaD is, or should be, impersonal.

The current approach towards AcaD emphasizes the importance of the writers making themselves visible in their works; By doing so, they are showing commitment to their own ideas and displaying confidence in whatever judgements they are making. This will be crucial to firstly, engage in a conversation with the readers, and secondly, to try to convince them that the ideas, proposals and conclusions of the authors are worth of consideration (Hyland, 2001). The most obvious way of achieving these purposes is by using first-person pronouns, although there are other ways in which writers can express authority, for example, self-citation (Hyland, 2002).

However, knowing to what extent a writer can intrude in the text they are writing remains a problem for novices and expert writers alike, as the role of first-person pronouns in academic writing has taken long to be studied (Harwood, 2007).

Furthermore, it is also important to understand that even though the new approach towards AcaD encourages us to show ourselves in our writings, the way in which we do so is also influenced by factors other than personal choice. For example, depending on what discipline we belong to we may make the conscious decision of expressing authority in a higher or lower degree. What is more, depending on the sociocultural context we have been raised in or we are currently writing in may also influence our expression of authority, although this comes as an unconscious decision to us (Mur Dueñas, 2007). I will address these issues in the following lines.

2.2 Expression of authority across disciplines: hard sciences vs. soft sciences and humanities

The degree to which a writer consciously decides to show themselves in a text is directly influenced by the conventions of their area of study (Hyland & Bondi, 2006). Many studies have shown that the way in which authority is expressed varies considerably across disciplines; The general assumption is that while hard sciences scholars prefer to maintain their writings rather impersonal, social sciences and humanities academics are more prone to express authority in their texts, specially to use first-person pronouns (see Hyland, 2002; Mur Dueñas, 2007). This happens as a direct consequence of the nature of the disciplines belonging to the two different groups.

As mentioned above, hard sciences scholars are more reluctant to express authority, at least in what the presence of first-person pronouns is concerned (Mur Dueñas, 2007). Generally speaking, this is so because they want to emphasize the objectivity of their studies while giving importance to the final results rather than to the person or people conducting the investigations. In other words, in the AcaD of the hard sciences, the author's role is downplayed so that the results obtained by empirical investigation are highlighted (Hyland, 2002).

However, it is not accurate to say that hard sciences are completely impersonal. Alternatively, purely scientific researchers find different ways to show themselves in their investigations, which may feel less authoritative than directly talking about their impressions and ideas. For example, various studies show that there is a high usage of the first person plural pronoun 'We' in single authored hard sciences RA's, a less threatening alternative to the usage of the first-person singular pronoun 'I'. This happens because:

> The distancing which attends the plural meaning also seems to create a temporary dominance by giving the writer the right to speak with authority […] writers can simultaneously reduce their personal intrusion and yet emphasize the importance that should be given to their unique procedural choices or views (Hyland, 2001, p. 217).

On the other hand, soft sciences and humanities scholars may need to show themselves more in their texts (use more first-person pronouns) because their investigations are not as clear-cut as purely scientific investigation (Hyland, 2002). In these areas of study "variables are often more heterogeneous and casual connections more tenuous" (Hyland, 2001, p. 216). Therefore, the scholars belonging to these disciplines need to construct a credible and alluring persona that will guide the reader towards

agreement with the same conclusions the writer has obtained. Expressing themselves firmly and confidently will help the writers with that (Hyland, 2002).

Once understood how belonging to one discipline or another may influence the way a writer expresses authority, I will now explain how the sociocultural context may also have a huge impact on the way writers show themselves in their investigations.

2.3 The influence of the sociocultural context in the expression of authority

Every act of communication is shaped by the social practices and networks of the person performing it, and writing is not an exception:

> As people write, they draw on the repertoire of voices they have encountered in their experience of participating in genres and discourses, and they uniquely recombine a selection of the resources at their disposal for the purposes of the writing task in hand (Ivanic & Camps, 2001, p. 6).

After extensive reading about this topic, I have reached the conclusion that the sociocultural context may shape our writing both consciously and unconsciously. Let me now dwell on this idea.

When I assert that our writing is partly constructed consciously by our sociocultural context, I mean that depending on the conscious linguistic choices we make, writers end up sounding like one or another social group (Hyland, 2002). There is a very good example to understand this in Ivanic and Camps (2001):

> A precedent for using "he" for generic reference existed in English usage prior to the current level of awareness of potential gender bias. There is a precedent for the use of "she" in more militant feminist language use. And there is a precedent for the use of "they" in the language use of those who want to tread a path between these positions and at the same time are prepared to challenge grammatical conventions of subject-verb agreement. When writers use one of these three options, they are aligning themselves with one or another of these social positions (p. 5).

Moreover, when we perform an act of communication, our expressions may change depending on the person or group of people we are addressing to. This simply happens because by making our discourse more suitable to our audience, we are more likely to build rapport with them, which is the first step towards gaining their recognition and acceptance (Hyland, 2002). These modifications of our discourses are consciously made.

The aforementioned adaptation of our discourse is something that frequently happens when we perform English academic writing as, when doing so, we have to create a persona that needs to adapt to the conventions of their area of study and on those of the

academic community (Hyland, 2001). This could pose a challenge to novice and expert writers alike, as it could mean that writers would have to express themselves in a way that may feel unnatural or even wrong if their sociocultural context were very different from the English one.

One of the aspects a writer may have to change or adapt when writing in academic English is their expression of authority as "authorship in academic writing in English both carries a culturally constructed individualistic ideology and places the burden of responsibility for the truth of an assertion heavily on the shoulders of the writer" (Hyland, 2002, p. 1093).

This may become a challenge for certain cultures that associate with the collective identity rather than with the individual identity. For example, some of the Asian cultures see the usage of first-person pronouns unacceptable, as they are taught since they are born that they have to think and act for the good of the community, they have to be abnegate (Hyland, 2001).

This last part is the perfect example to understand how the sociocultural context also shapes our writing unconsciously. A person raised in a society that rejects individual thinking would not use first-person pronouns in their writings, but that would not be a conscious choice, that would be the value imbedded in who they are as people (Ivanic & Camps, 2001).

Taking all of this into account, I conclude that a writer's expression of authority in AcaD comes, in part, unintentionally and in part, by choice. That is to say, the conventions dictated by our sociocultural context are unconsciously mingled with the conscious decisions we make to match the conventions of academic English in general and our area of study in particular.

3. Is the expression of authority in Academic Discourse conditioned by gender?

I have already stated above that the sociocultural context the writer is raised in or is currently writing in (or directing to) may modify, both consciously and unconsciously, the way a writer expresses themselves in a written text. This may imply that women and men's writing styles might be differently influenced by their disparate experiences in life.

The possibility of there being linguistic differences between men and women has been researched for decades now, especially since Gender Studies emerged in the 1950's

(Argamon, Shimoni & Fine, 2003). Until now, most research done about the topic has centred mainly on the potential existence of differences between male and female spoken discourse, as well as informal writing such as messaging and other kinds of correspondence (letters, emails…). The results of said researches identified several dissimilarities between the discourses of men and women across a variety of contexts (see Coates, 2016; Jule, 2008; Weatherall, 2002). For example, they concluded that "females are more attentive to the affective function of conversation and more prone to use linguistic devices that solidify relationships" (Argamon et al., 2003, p. 408). As a consequence, females are thought to use more compliments and apologies than men do. They are believed to talk more about personal relationships as well (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992).

Nevertheless, the studies that conclude that linguistic differences exist between male and female practices are controversial, as some experts assure that those differences are only detected because the discourses explored are too informal, and therefore too dependent on the receiver (see Berryman-Fink & Wilcox, 1983; Simkins-Bullock and Wildman, 1991). These same experts state that in more formal contexts, as in AcaD, we should not expect to encounter any significant difference between the discourses of the two genders. According to them, this is related to the previously mentioned persona that an author creates in order to write in formal contexts (Argamon et al., 2003).

In the last few years, however, several studies have successfully demonstrated that gender does in fact influence the writing style of an author in formal contexts (see Coates, 2016; Talbot, 2010; Jule, 2008). A particularly revealing one is Argamon, Shimoni and Fine's 2003 study, as they prove that there are in fact notorious differences between the writing of men and women. In this study, the investigators compiled a corpus of 604 documents of a variety of genres from the British National Corpus (BNC). Half of them were single-authored by women, and the other half by men. Afterwards, they created an algorithm that would identify the distinctive characteristic features in male and female written texts and this same algorithm would then be able to specify with an 80-percent accurate rate if a text of said corpus was written by a man or by a woman.

With such a high percentage, that study shows that there are in fact writing features that correspond more to one gender than to the other. In other words, the study shows that women and men do write differently in formal contexts.

Various studies have concluded that one of the features that changes notoriously between male and female formal writing is the expression of authority (Talbot, 2010). Coates (2016) explains that women are thought to express their authority in a less direct way than men do, mostly using their expression of the self to accompany the reader through the text, as well as to gain their confidence and make them reach their same conclusions. In the meanwhile, men are thought to be more authoritative, exposing their conclusions directly to the reader rather than guiding them towards them.

The use of first-person pronouns is one of the resources writers have to express their authority (Hyland, 2002). However, and even though I have found studies that superficially investigate the previously mentioned ideas on the differences between the expression of authority between genders in AcaD, there is not, to my knowledge, any study analysing the possible use of first-person pronouns in the academic writing of men and women. Consequently, that is where my study belongs. In the following sections I will investigate if there is any significant difference in the usage of first-person pronouns between male and female expert writers.

4. Methodology

As previously mentioned, the aim of this dissertation is to investigate whether there is any difference between the usage of first-person pronouns between male and female writers within the discipline of AcaD. For doing so, I have compiled a corpus of 24 research articles (c.f. Appendix 1), 12 per gender, and I have analysed all the instances of first person pronouns appearing in them. The extension of my corpus is of 196,064 words. In this part of the paper I intend to explain what corpus linguistics is and why I have considered it as the appropriate methodology to conduct my investigation. I will also explain the criteria I have followed to compile the corpus and how the software I have used for analysing the first-person pronouns works.

4.1 Corpus Linguistics

Linguistic Functionalism understands language as an instrument for social communication, an instrument full of meaning whose main objective is to serve a concrete purpose in a concrete context. This way of understanding language recognises communication as both the reason and result of a negotiation process between the different users of a given language. Therefore, comprehending a language implies

describing the usage that the speakers make of it, describing the linguistic behaviour that can be observed in a context of communication.

For that purpose, it is of utmost necessity to obtain information that would exemplify such acts of communication, as could be oral and/or written texts with a specific purpose produced by real users of the target language. The observation of such discourses, RAs in my case, could then show us co-textual and contextual relationships or the tendency of a group of speakers to express something through favourite or typical forms, for example. This is what Corpus Linguistics, today's principal methodology to carry (inter)linguistic investigation from a functional approach, does (Izquierdo, 2008).

In Corpus Linguistics we can differentiate between two types of studies: corpus-based studies and corpus driven-studies (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001). Roughly speaking, corpus-based studies understand corpora as a tool to prove the hypothesis of an investigation. On the other hand, corpus-driven studies understand corpora as material to analyse without any hypothesis in mind. Taking this into account, my study belongs to the first current, as I aim to see, by analysing my corpus, whether there is any difference between the usage of first-person pronouns between male and female expert writers.

The main tools that Corpus Linguistics uses in order to analyse discourses in context are concordance generators. A concordance represents each appearance of a word that is being studied in context, what is known as KWIC (Key Word In Context). Usually, the person or people who turn to corpora for their investigations analyse a list of concordances of the linguistic unity of their interest. Such analysis provides qualitative and quantitative information about the word or linguistic unity under study.

The concordance generator I have used to analyse the pronouns is one called AntConc. However, before explaining how AntConc works, I will explain the criteria I have followed to compile my corpus.

4.2 Corpus compilation

On the assumption that male and female writers convey authority to a different degree in their academic writing, the ultimate goal of this dissertation is threefold: (1) to prove it true or false whether women use more first-person pronouns than men do in AcaD; (2) to verify the functions that the analysed pronouns perform in order to compare how male and female scholars express authority; and (3) to determine in which sections of the RA authors are more likely to express their authority and observe whether the two genders do so differently. To this end, I compiled a corpus of 24 RAs (c.f. Appendix 1) consisting of two sub-corpora, one featuring 12 articles written by females (c.f. Appendix 1.1) and one featuring other 12 articles, this time written by men (c.f. Appendix 1.2). The corpus is 196,064-words long: 100,348 words belong to the female sub-corpora. The remaining 95,716 words belong to the male sub-corpora.

For the convenience of my investigation, all the articles included in my corpus are single-authored, belong to the so-called soft-sciences, and are written by authors from English-speaking countries or western-Europe. The reasoning under this selection is briefly explained in the following lines.

On the one hand, all the RAs that build my corpus are single authored to enable the presence of first-person singular pronouns and inclusive first-person plural pronouns. On the other hand, all the articles in the corpus were retrieved from *The Journal of English for Academic Purposes* and belong to the soft sciences because as previously explained, the usage of personal pronouns may vary consistently between different disciplines (cf. 2.2). Moreover, all the RAs in the corpus are written by authors from English-speaking countries or western-European countries as I have considered that cultures belonging to these geographical areas have similar conceptions of the expression of authority (see Hyland, 2002; Harwood, 2005; Ivanic & Camps, 2001).

4.3 AntConc

AntConc is the program I have used to browse my corpus, a freeware concordance generator developed by Laurence Anthony (Anthony, 2018). As stated above, concordance generators show us each appearance of the input word (in my case first-person pronouns), and AntConc is not an exception.

There are some steps you need to follow before browsing your corpus in AntConc. The very first thing you need to do is to save all the texts that form your corpus as .txt UTF-8 encoded files, as if they are not so, AntConc will not be able to read them. Then, after naming the files to your convenience, you need to save the target texts in a folder in your computer. If your study is a contrastive one like mine, you may want to create different folders for easy access to the two different sub-corpora. After doing all of this, you are ready to browse the corpus.

You do not need to install the program in your computer, as you can just download an .exe file in Anthony's website and click on it to use the program. However, and for the sake of commodity, I saved AntConc in my desktop. This way I did not have to go to Anthony's webpage every time I needed to use the concordance generator.

Once the browser is open, you need to upload your corpus. For doing so, you click on File (top left corner of the browser), then you click on the second option, Open Dir, and you select the folder in which you have saved your corpus. As my corpus is composed of two sub-corpora, male RAs and female RAs, I uploaded each sub-corpus at a time. Otherwise all the data would have been mixed and it would have been more difficult and time-consuming to analyse and classify it.
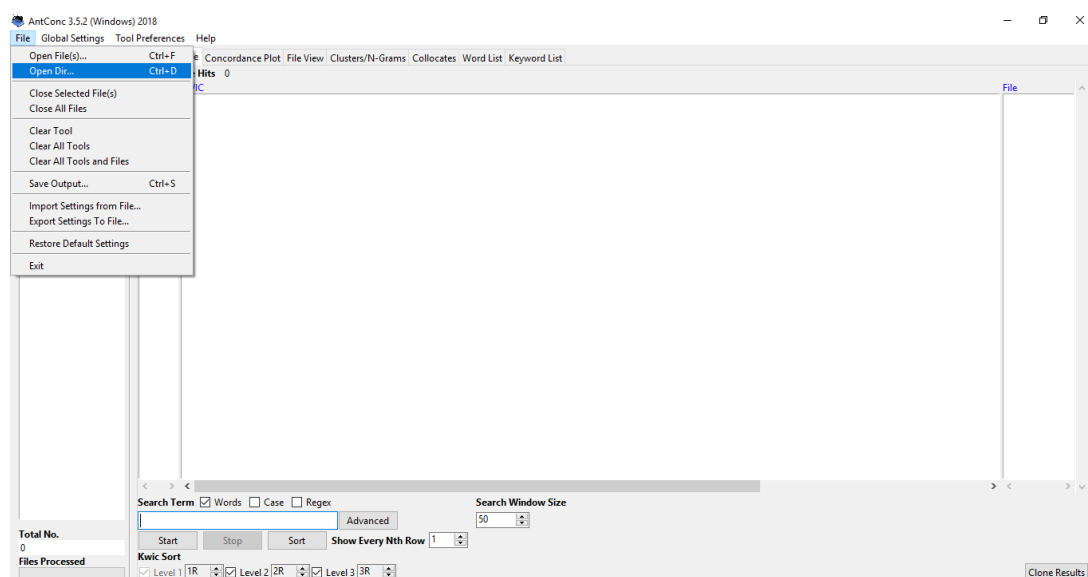
Fig 1. First step to browse your corpus.
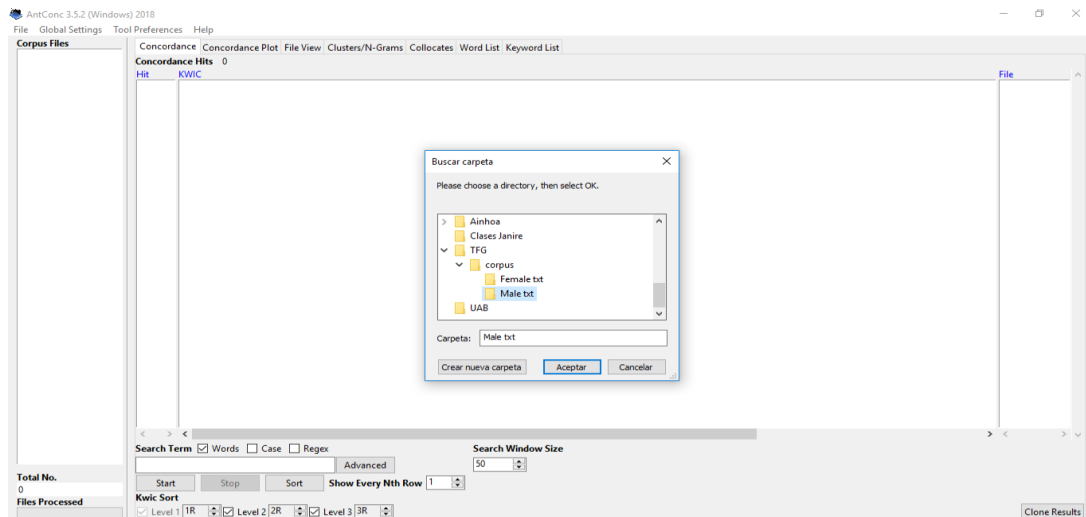
Fig 2. Selecting the folder in which your corpus is saved.
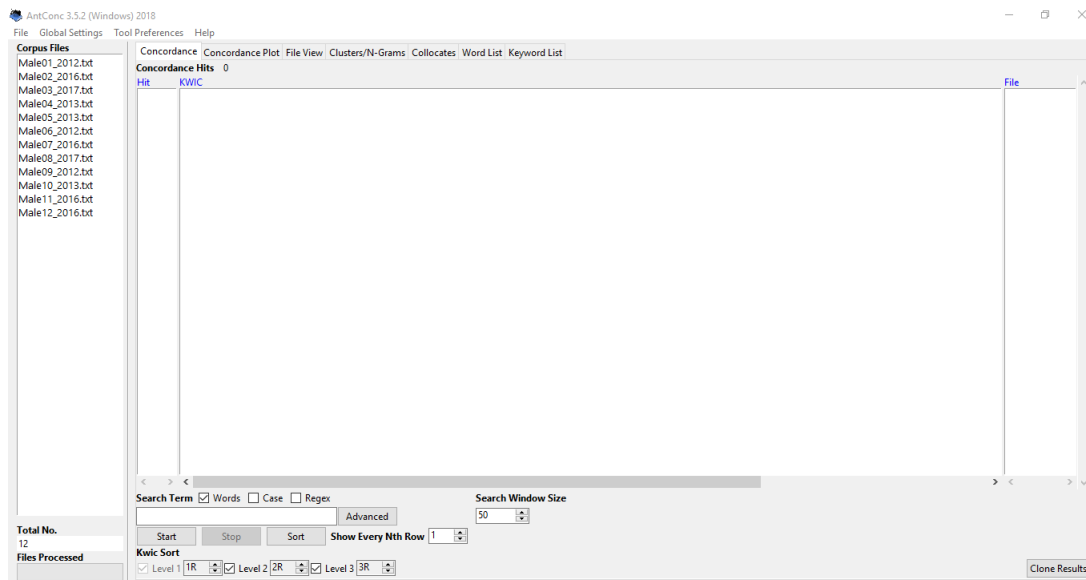
Fig 3. Selection of texts for browsing.

After uploading the corpus, all you have to do is to enter your KWIC in the program, and it will retrieve all the occurrences of that word in co(n)text. This was key to my investigation, as in order to do a qualitative study of the first-person pronouns of my corpus, I needed to classify them according to their function in the text. This was only possible by carefully examining the co(n)text in which the target personal pronouns were used.
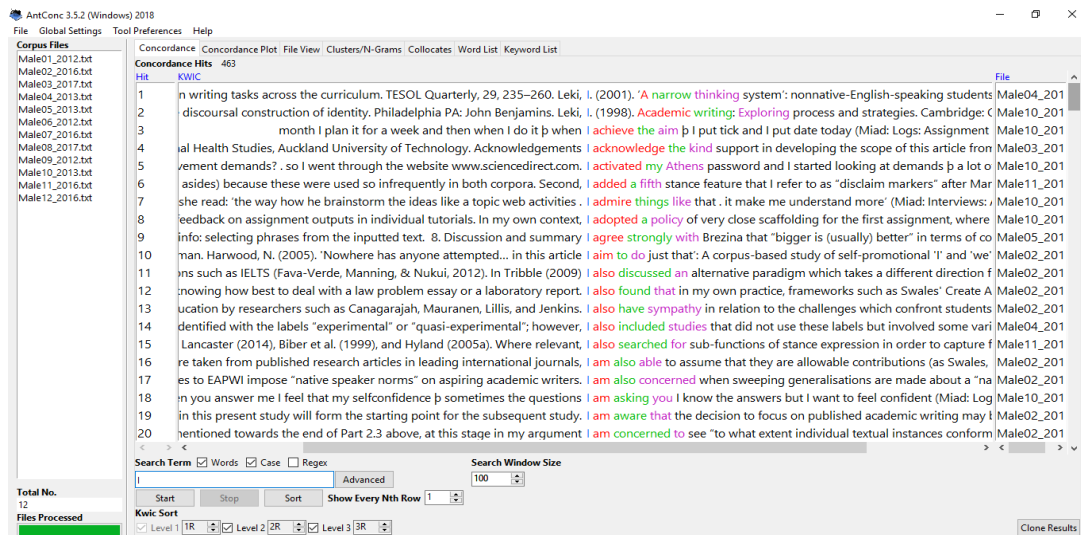
Fig 4. The results obtained when entering your KWIC in AntConc.

If you click on one of the occurrences, the program will automatically send you to the article in which it has appeared. Therefore, you will not only know what article the occurrence comes from, but you will also be able to get extra information, as the section of the RA (e.g. introduction or discussion among others) the pronoun belongs to.
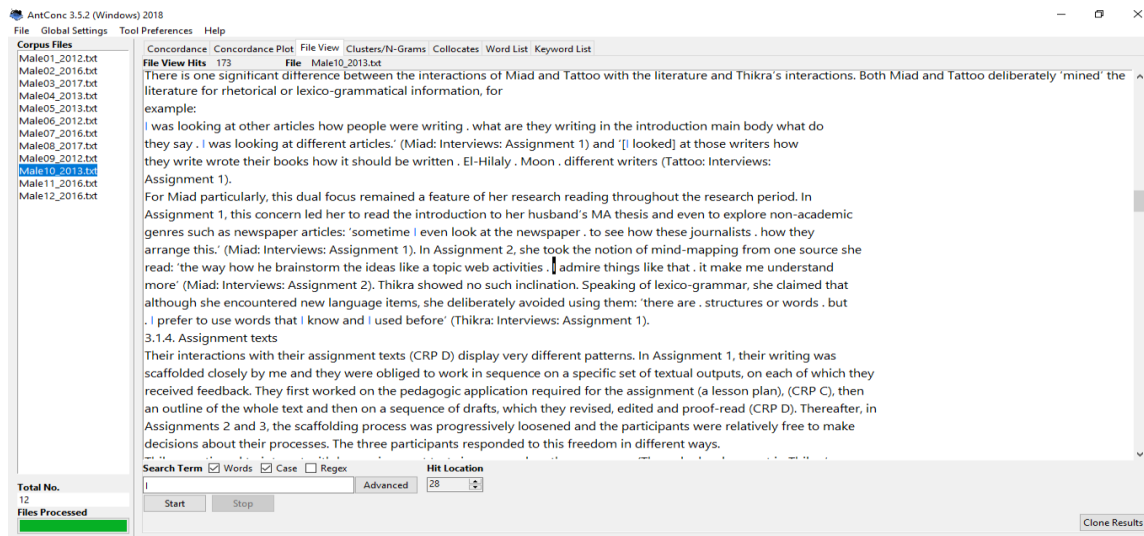
Fig 5. What AntConc shows you when you click on a specific KWIC.

5. Results and discussion

In this part of my dissertation I aim to show you the results I have obtained after conducting the analysis of the first-person pronouns found in my corpus, as well as to explain what such results mean or suggest.

5.1 Quantitative study

The quantitative part of my study aims to show any significant difference in the number of first-person pronouns used by male and by female expert writers in their RAs. In Table 1 I show, in the first column, the number of pronouns found in each sub-corpus. However, we cannot draw any valid conclusion with only this information, as the total number of words of each sub-corpus is slightly different (100,348 words in the female RAs and 95,716 in the male RAs). That is the reason why in the second column I show the number of pronouns found in each sub-corpus per 1000 words.

| Pronoun	Pronoun N		N/1000wd	
	Female sub-corpus	*Male sub-corpus*	*Female sub-corpus*	*Male sub-corpus*
I	156	196	1.55	2.05
Me	13	11	0.13	0.11
My	50	30	0.5	0.31
Mine	1	1	0.0099	0.01
We	73	72	0.73	0.75
Us	9	10	0.089	0.1
Our	26	21	0.025	0.22
Ours	-	-	-	-
Total	342	383	3.42	3.91

Table 1. Number of first-person pronouns found in the corpus.

The results of this part of the study reveal that there is no great difference between the quantity of personal pronouns found in female-written RAs (342) and male-written RAs (383). The total number of first-person pronouns found in each sub-corpus indicates that male expert writers use, on a small scale, more first-person pronouns than female expert writers. The interesting part of these results is that while previous studies (see Argamon et al., 2003; Coates, 2016) have concluded that female writers use, in general, more pronouns than male writers do, my study indicates that that statement does not apply to first-person pronouns.

Nevertheless, this does not imply that men are more authoritative than women when writing, as being more or less authoritative does not have to do with how many times a writer uses first-person pronouns, but with the different functions such pronouns mostly

resort to (Tang & John, 1999). This is the reason why I carry out a qualitative study of the first-person pronouns found.

5.2 Qualitative study

This second stage in the analysis of first-person pronouns is intended to show whether there is any telling difference between the functions/roles displayed by the first-person pronouns used by male and female expert writers. For the sake of clarity and easy understanding, I have divided this section in six different parts, one for each possible function of first-person pronouns, as suggested by Tang and John (1999).

5.2.1 'I' as the representative[5]

First-person pronouns carrying the function of representative refer to people in general and are consequently usually realized as 'we' or 'us'. Here, the writer is reduced to a non-entity, therefore barely displaying any authorial presence or power (Tang & John, 1999). Here is an example of a first-person pronoun displaying this role:

(1) <u>We</u> grew up interacting with the physical objects around us, and there are an enormous number of them that <u>we</u> use every day.[6]

As Table 2 shows below, very few of the first-person pronouns found in the two sub-corpora display this function.

Pronoun	Pronoun N	N/1000wd	Pronoun N	N/1000wd
	Female sub-corpus		*Male sub-corpus*	
I	-	-	-	-
Me	-	-	-	-
My	-	-	-	-
Mine	-	-	-	-
We	6	0.58	-	-
Us	-	-	2	0.02
Our	1	0.0099	1	0.01
Ours	-	-	-	-
Total	7	0.069	3	0.031

Table 2. Instances of 'I' as the representative.

Female expert writers seem to use 'I' as the representative somewhat more often than male writers do. This would be significant if the number of pronouns displaying this function was larger, as it could suggest that female writers put themselves at the same

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[5] Examples of first-person pronouns displaying the 6 different roles can be found in Appendix 4.
[6] All the examples found in section 5.2 have been retrieved from the corpus.

level of the reader in order to make them feel as if they were the same. That strategy has been noted by various studies that suggest that female writers tend to use first-person pronouns to accompany the reader through the text rather than to just impose their opinions (see Coates, 2016; Talbot, 2010; Weatherall, 2002). A larger corpus could probably shed some light on the topic, as we would have more instances of 'I' as the representative to analyse and could therefore conclude if the difference is real or just a coincidence.

All the instances of 'I' as the representative in my corpus were found in the introduction and discussion parts of both male and female-written RAs. There is nothing significant to comment upon this.[7]

5.2.2 'I' as the guide through the essay

This function of 'I' is usually realised in the forms of 'we' and 'us', since with the usage of them the writer is guiding the reader through the essay, that is to say, pointing out important aspects of the RA and guiding the receiver towards their reasoning and conclusions. Here is an example of a first-person pronoun displaying this role:

(1) As <u>we</u> have seen, even those searches that should be relatively basic in Google scholar are seriously limited.

Taking this into account, we could expect women to use more personal pronouns of this type than men do, as previous research has shown female writers are more prone to use pronouns to accompany the reader through the text (see Coates, 2016; Talbot, 2010; Weatherall, 2002). This way, they ensure to connect psychologically with the reader, making it easier to later convince them that their conclusions are valid (see Coates, 2016; Talbot, 2010; Weatherall, 2002). On the contrary, male writers are thought to use first-person pronouns more authoritatively, more directly exposing their opinions and ideas (Coates, 2016; Jule, 2008).

However, the results I have obtained say otherwise. As Table 3 shows below, in my corpus, male writers use first-person pronouns as the guide through the essay more often than women do. The difference is not huge, but I find it quite significant, as this phenomenon deviates from the accepted difference in the expression of authority between

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[7] Not all the tables showing the distribution of the pronouns in the RAs can be found in section 5.2; only the most relevant data for my results discussion. The rest can be found in Appendix 3.

genders mentioned. As stated above (c.f. 3) women are thought to take an accompanying role, that is to say, they guide the readers through the text so that they can understand the thinking that leads to their conclusions. In the meanwhile, men tend to express their ideas more straightforwardly. The results of this section show the contrary.

Pronoun	Pronoun N	N/1000wd	Pronoun N	N/1000wd
	Female sub-corpus		*Male sub-corpus*	
I	-	-	-	-
Me	-	-	-	-
My	-	-	-	-
Mine	-	-	-	-
We	2	0.02	17	0.18
Us	-	-	2	0.02
Our	-	-	-	-
Ours	-	-	-	-
Total	2	0.02	19	0.2

Table 3. Instances of 'I' as the guide through the essay.

The distribution of the first-person pronouns in my corpus does not show anything significant. Most of the instances of 'I' as the guide through the essay were found in the results and discussion section of the RAs, which makes sense if we take into account that it is in that section where results are shown, and new ideas introduced. The writer needs to guide the reader through what the study has revealed.

5.2.3 'I' as the architect of the essay

This function displayed by some first-person pronouns aims to "organize, structure and outline the material on the essay" (Tang & John, 1999, p.27), and it is therefore similar to the previous function. However, this one shows a higher degree of authoritativeness. This is so because in this function, the reader is barely present, having the author all the responsibility on the structuring of the text. Consequently, this function is usually realized as the first person singular 'I'. Here is an example of a first-person pronoun displaying this role:

(1) I will then present findings from the first stage of a larger analysis of recent instances of expert writings.

Pronoun	Pronoun N	N/1000wd	Pronoun N	N/1000wd
	Female sub-corpus		*Male sub-corpus*	
I	18	0.18	19	0.2
Me	-	-	1	0.01
My	1	0.01	4	0.04
Mine	-	-	-	-
We	-	-	13	0.14
Us	-	-	-	-
Our	-	-	-	-
Ours	-	-	-	-
Total	**19**	**0.19**	**37**	**0.39**

Table 4. Instances of 'I' as the architect of the essay.

As the Table 4 above shows, there is quite a big difference in the way male and female writers use first-person pronouns as the architect. To start with, in my corpus, men use significantly more pronouns displaying this function than women do. This is meaningful in two different ways. On the one hand, we would expect women to use more pronouns displaying the function of architect in the same way we expected them to use more pronouns displaying the function of guide. However, with regard to both functions, my study has shown the contrary.

On the other hand, it could be logical to find more usages of first-person pronouns by male writers as we go higher on the scale of authoritativeness according to the different roles pronouns can have. This is so because there is a preconceived belief that men are, in general, more prone to express authority in a more direct or powerful way than women are (Coates, 2016).

To continue, I would like to draw some attention to the way male expert writers use pronouns displaying the function of architect. I have already stated that this function is usually realized as the first person singular pronoun 'I'. As we can see, this coincides in the case of the female writers. However, from all the pronouns found in the male sub-corpus displaying this function (a total of 37), 35.13 percent are realized as the first-person plural 'we'. In the meanwhile, no instances of 'we' as the architect have been found in the female sub-corpora. My understanding of this fact is twofold: (1) that male writers could in fact use more first-person pronouns than female writers do. This idea would be supported by the results obtained in the previous quantitative study (c.f. 5.1). And (2), that even though men seem to be more authoritative than women are when writing, they are also prudent in how they express their authority. Being too authoritative in a text could be counter-productive, as the author could be perceived as somewhat

threatening and arrogant (Coates, 2016). Here is where the use of the plural as a strategy of reducing personal intrusion comes to play.

Once again, the distribution of the first-person pronouns in the RAs does not show anything relevant (c.f. Appendix 4).

5.2.4 'I' as the recounter of the research process

When we state that a first-person pronoun displays the function of recounter of the research process we mean that the author of the RA shows themselves in a given text to explain the different steps they have taken prior to doing the writing. This could include such things as reading the proper literature or collecting the data needed to carry the investigation, as well as -even most importantly- describing how the actual analysis has been conducted. Consequently, we expect to encounter first-person pronouns as the recounter of the research process mostly in the methodology part of RAs. Here is an example of a first-person pronoun displaying this role:

(1) Wherever possible, <u>I</u> based decisions on explicit, unambiguous, information about their research designs.

As the degree of authoritativeness displayed by the first-person pronouns analysed increases, the difference in usage between the two genders also seems to increment. This phenomenon is shown in Tables 5 and 6 below, where we can clearly see that women expert writers and men expert writers use 'I' as the recounter of the research process very differently.

Pronoun	Pronoun N	N/1000wd	Pronoun N	Number/1000wd
	Female sub-corpus		*Male sub-corpus*	
I	103	1.02	126	1.32
Me	13	0.13	9	0.09
My	42	0.42	16	0.17
Mine	1	0.01	1	0.01
We	93	0.93	33	0.34
Us	5	0.049	4	0.04
Our	24	0.24	10	0.1
Ours	-	-	-	-
Total	281	2.8	199	2.07

Table 5. Instances of 'I' as the recounter of the research process.

Part of the RA	Female sub-corpus	Male sub-corpus
Abstract	5	3
Introduction	14	10
Literature review	13	11
Methodology	73	137
Results and discussion	155	33
Conclusion	21	5
Total	281	199

Table 6. Distribution of first-person pronouns by section in the RAs.

The overall results indicate that when expressing their authority in a text, women use significantly more first-person pronouns as the recounter of the research process than men do. In addition, while women use them most in the discussion and results part of the RAs, men seem to do so in the methodology part. This coincides with the previously mentioned notion that women use personal pronouns to accompany the reader through the text to make them reach their same conclusions, whereas men are more prone to expose their ideas in a more direct way (see Coates, 2016; Talbot, 2010; Weatherall, 2002). This will be corroborated in the next two sections as well, when we will see that men use 'I' as the opinion-holder and 'I' as the originator notably more frequently.

The difference in usage not only lies in the amount of pronouns used and in the parts of the RAs they have been used, but in which person-pronoun each of the genders uses more. In the female sub-corpora, 'I' as the recounter of the research process was realised mainly as 'I' and 'We', having these two forms a very similar presence in the texts. However, in the male sub-corpora the function was realised predominantly as 'I'.

All of this suggests that as previous studies have indicated (see Coates, 2016; Talbot, 2010; Weatherall, 2002), women writers take on a more accompanying role, that being the reason why the majority of their pronouns as recounter of the research process can be found in the results and discussion part of the RAs. It also suggests that there is a tendency for women expert writers to use the first-person plural in single-authored texts to downplay their authoritative role, consequently seeming less pretentious and more likable to the reader.

5.2.5 'I' as the opinion-holder

First-person pronouns with the role of opinion-holder "share an opinion, view or attitude (for example, by expressing agreement, disagreement or interest) with regard to known information or established facts" (Tang and John, 1999, p. 28). Therefore, this kind of pronouns show a high degree of authoritativeness and are usually mostly found

in the literature review and results and discussion parts, something that my results also attest. Here is an example of a first-person pronoun displaying this role:

(1) <u>We</u> cannot consider this concept/idea as a variable phrase.

As Table 7 shows, there is a significant difference in the usage of 'I' with an opinion-holder function between genders. We can see that the women in my sub-corpus barely use pronouns with this function, while men use them quite often. This phenomenon goes hand in hand with the phenomenon appreciated in the previous section. As observed, women use 'I' as the recounter of the research process significantly more than men but considering that the total amount of pronouns used by male and by female writers is similar, we could expect men to use 'I' with (an)other role(s) significantly more often than women; 'I' as the opinion-holder and 'I' as the originator will be those roles.

Pronoun	Pronoun N	N/1000wd	Pronoun N	N/1000wd
	Female sub-corpus		*Male sub-corpus*	
I	8	0.08	41	0.43
Me	1	0.01	1	0.01
My	-	-	10	0.1
Mine	-	-	-	-
We	4	0.04	21	0.22
Us	3	0.03	6	0.06
Our	2	0.02	15	0.16
Ours	-	-	-	-
Total	18	0.18	94	0.98

Table 7. Instances of 'I' as the opinion-holder.

These results support the aforementioned premises whereby female scholars take on a more accompanying role. Men, by contrast, prefer a directing attitude (see Coates, 2016; Talbot, 2010; Weatherall, 2002).

5.2.6 'I' as the originator

The role of the first-person pronoun as the originator is the most powerful role regarding authority in Tang and John's 1999 classification, as writers using this type of pronoun claim ownership of a new idea presented in a given text. Consequently, I expect to encounter this role of the pronouns mostly in the results and discussion section of the RAs (Tang & John, 1999). Here is an example of a first-person pronoun displaying this role:

(1) Therefore, I would argue that the concept of a native writer is chimerical, unhelpful and irrelevant.

As Table 8 below shows, men writers use twice as much first-person pronouns with the role of originator than women writers do. These results, together with the results obtained in the previous sections (c.f. 5.2.4, 5.2.5), build up on the belief that male expert writers express authority in a more direct way than women expert writers.

The distribution of the first-person pronouns with this role does not show any significant differences between its usage by men and women, as both genders use them mostly in the results and discussion part of the RAs, as expected.

Pronoun	Pronoun N	N/1000wd	Pronoun N	N/1000wd
	Female sub-corpus		*Male sub-corpus*	
I	10	0.11	21	0.21
Me	-	-	-	-
My	1	0.01	2	0.02
Mine	-	-	-	-
We	4	0.04	5	0.05
Us	-	-	2	0.02
Our	-	-	1	0.01
Ours	-	-	-	-
Total	15	0.15	31	0.32

Table 8. Instances of 'I' as the originator.

6. Conclusions

As formerly mentioned (c.f. 4.2), the goal of my study was threefold: (1) to prove it true or false whether women use more first-personal pronouns than men do in AcaD; (2) to verify the functions that the analysed pronouns perform in order to compare how male and female scholars express authority; and (3) to determine in which sections of the RA authors are more likely to express their authority with the use of first-person pronouns and observe whether the two genders do so differently.

As previously explained, different studies on the topic (see Argamon et al., 2003; Coates, 2016) have shown that women tend to use, in general, more pronouns than men do when writing. However, my study has shown that that statement does not apply to first-person pronouns in particular, as the quantitative part of my study has proven the contrary to be true.

In my corpus, male expert writers use slightly more first-person pronouns than women do. Nevertheless, this does not mean that men are more authoritative than women when writing, as the degree of authoritativeness is determined more by the quality of the pronouns rather than by their quantity. By any means, I have found this piece of information interesting, as if further study on the topic verifies what I have observed, we would be setting contrastive characteristic features of male and female writing.

The qualitative analysis sheds light on differing writing practices across genders. The results show little difference in how men and women use pronouns displaying the roles with the lowest degree of authority, namely 'I as the representative; 'I' as the guide through the essay; 'I' as the architect of the essay. Nevertheless, this observation does not match their usage of roles displaying the highest degree of authority, i.e. 'I' as the recounter of the research process; 'I' as the opinion-holder; 'I' as the originator.

While women use 'I' as the recounter of the research process substantially more than men do, men use 'I' as the opinion holder and 'I' as the originator much more than women. My results, therefore, reinforce the idea that women tend to express their authority to guide the reader through the text in order to lead them towards their conclusions. In the meanwhile, men tend to express their authority more directly, showing the reader straightforwardly what their thoughts and ideas are (see Coates, 2016; Talbot, 2010; Weatherall, 2002).

Regarding the first-person pronoun distribution in the RAs, the results I obtained were mainly as I expected. Only the distribution of 'I' as the recounter of the research process turned out to be significant. As explained earlier, the pronouns displaying this function are expected to appear mostly in the methodology section of RAs, and that is exactly what I have found in the male sub-corpus. However, in the female sub-corpus, most of the pronouns displaying this role appear in the results and discussion section. This phenomenon proves right, once again, that women signpost their writing considerably more than men do.

I am aware that the extension of my study is small enough to prevent the results being representative of a universal truth. However, I believe they are sufficiently significant as to consider that further investigation on the topic should be worthwhile doing.

A larger corpus with RAs on the same exact topic and written by authors belonging to the same sociocultural context (nation) is in need for further research. This is so

because discipline and sociocultural context have proved to be the conditions that most affect the usage of personal pronouns (Hyland, 2002). Therefore, if we were able to nullify the possible variations these factors may pose to the expression of authority, we would see how gender may or may not affect the expression of authority in scholars more clearly. Additionally, interviews with the authors asking if their usage of first-person pronouns is consciously made and if so, asking what criteria they follow to express their authority could shed further light on the topic.

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Tognini-Bonelli, E. (2001). *Corpus Linguistics at work*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. RAs included in my corpus

1.1 Female RAs

Baffy, M. (2017). Shifting frames to construct a Legal English class. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 25, 58-70.*

Barnes, M. (2017). Washback: Exploring what constitutes "good" teaching practices. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 30, 1-12.*

Basturkmen, H. (2012). A genre-based investigation of discussion sections of research articles in Dentistry and disciplinary variations. *Journal of English for Academic Discourses, 11, 134-144.*

Flowerdew, L. (2015). Using corpus-based research and online academic corpora to inform writing of the discussion section of a thesis. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 20, 58-68.*

Gardner, S. (2012). Genres and registers of student report writing: An SFL perspective on texts and practices. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 11, 52-63.*

Kaufhold, K. (2015). Conventions in postgraduate academic writing: European students' negotiations of prior writing experience at an English-speaking university. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 20, 125-134.*

Kuzborska, I. (2015). Perspective taking in second language academic reading: A longitudinal study of international students' reading practices. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 20, 149-161.*

Luzón, M. J. (2018). Constructing academic identities online: Identity performance in research group blogs written by multilingual scholars. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 33, 24-39.*

Parkinson, J. (2015). Noun-noun collocations in learner writing. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 20, 103-113.*

Schluer, J. (2014). Writing for publication in linguistics: Exploring niches of multilingual publishing among German linguistics. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 16, 1-13.*

Sheldon, E. (2011). Rhetorical differences in RA introductions written by English L1 and L2 and Castilian Spanish L1 writers. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 10, 238-251.*

Wingate, U. (2012). 'Argument!' helping students understand what essay writing is about. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 11, 145-154.*

1.2 Male RAs

Crosthwaite, P. (2016). A longitudinal multidimensional analysis of EAP writing: Determining EAP course effectiveness. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 22, 166-178.*

Davies, M. (2013). Google Scholar and COCA-Academic: Two very different approaches to examining academic English. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 12, 155-165.*

Green, S. (2013). Novice ESL writers: A longitudinal case-study of the situated academic writing processes of three undergraduates in a TESOL context. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 12, 180-191.*

Hammond, K. (2017). 'I need it now!' Developing a formulaic frame phrasebank for a specific writing assessment: Student perceptions and recommendations. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, XXX, 1-8.*

James, M. A. (2014). Learning transfer in English-for-academic-purposes contexts: A systematic review of research. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 14, 1-13.*

Lancaster, Z. (2016). Expressing stance in undergraduate writing: Discipline-specific and general qualities. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 23, 16-30.*

Nathan, P. (2013). Academic writing in the business school: The genre of the business case report. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 12, 57-68.*

Poole, R. (2016). A corpus-aided approach for the teaching and learning of rhetoric in an undergraduate composition course for L2 writers. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 21, 99-109.*

Stapleton, P. (2012). Gauging the effectiveness of anti-plagiarism software: An empirical study of second language graduate students. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 11, 125-133.*

Tribble, C. (2017). ELFA vs. Genre: A new paradigm war in EAP writing instruction? *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 25, 30-44.*

Vincent, B. (2013). Investigating academic phraseology through combinations of very frequent words: A methodological exploration. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 12, 44-56.*

Wingrove, P. (2017). How suitable are TED talks for academic listening? *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 30, 79-95.*

Appendix 2. Tables showing the distribution of the first-person pronouns in the RAs

Part of the RA	Female sub-corpus	Male sub-corpus
Abstract	-	-
Introduction	3	1
Literature review	1	-
Methodology	-	-
Results and discussion	3	2
Conclusion	-	-
Total	7	3

Table 9. Distribution of 'I's as the representative.

Part of the RA	Female sub-corpus	Male sub-corpus
Abstract	1	-
Introduction	-	1
Literature review	-	-
Methodology	1	-
Results and discussion	-	14
Conclusion	-	4
Total	2	19

Table 10. Distribution of 'I's as the guide through the essay.

Part of the RA	Female sub-corpus	Male sub-corpus
Abstract	1	1
Introduction	5	5
Literature review	1	3
Methodology	3	10
Results and discussion	7	17
Conclusion	2	1
Total	19	37

Table 11. Distribution of 'I's as the architect of the essay.

Part of the RA	Female sub-corpus	Male sub-corpus
Abstract	1	-
Introduction	-	1
Literature review	8	20
Methodology	1	-
Results and discussion	8	61
Conclusion	-	12
Total	18	94

Table 12. Distribution of 'I's as the opinion-holder.

Part of the RA	Female sub-corpus	Male sub-corpus
Abstract	1	-
Introduction	-	3
Literature review	-	-
Methodology	1	-
Results and discussion	13	21
Conclusion	-	7
Total	15	31

Table 13. Distribution of 'I's as the originator.

Appendix 3. Examples of 'I' occurrences per function

3.1 'I' as the representative

(1) Guilt, shame and embarrassment are emotions of similar origin and type, in that they are moments of unpleasant self-consciousness that <u>we</u> all experience.

(2) Digital technologies, and the immediacy, visibility and connectedness they imply, have changed the way <u>we</u> communicate and present ourselves.

(3) I think unless the violent crime rate is so high that we cannot put up with anymore, say, everyday <u>our</u> lives are threatened, death penalty should not be restored for the sake of a more controversy topic secondary consequences.

3.2 'I' as the guide through the essay

(1) Only six sentences are devoted to other sources in the introduction and only one in the discussion, as <u>we</u> can see in the following extract.

(2) Their well learnt habits of summarisation and recitation can, therefore, be seen as their literate heritage, which, <u>we</u> will see, exerted effects on their interaction in their new academic community.

(3) As <u>we</u> can see, budge nearly always occurs in a context in which it is preceded by a negative word, or at least negative emotions.

3.3 'I' as the architect of the essay

(1) <u>I</u> will consider the grammatical problems first.

(2) <u>I</u> would like to conclude this paper by reiterating my view that there is not a fixed definition of reading, but there are emerging definitions of reading depending on the reading situation and the people involved in that situation.

(3) More importantly, in the remainder of the paper, <u>we</u> will discuss the many ways in which a full-featured corpus like COCA-A can provide useful data to teachers and learners of academic English.

3.4 'I' as the recounter of the research process

(1) In this category <u>I</u> included all noun-noun phrases with MI < 3, no matter how frequent they were.

(2) Here they always mention critical study, but <u>we</u> haven't.

(3) Wherever possible, <u>I</u> based decisions on explicit, unambiguous information about their research designs.

3.5 'I' as the opinion-holder

(1) The two together were, <u>we</u> believe, essential for the robust identification of distinct genres with distinct educational purposes.

(2) This is perhaps the most disappointing result in <u>our</u> study.

(3) This can be quite important if <u>we</u> are interested primarily in academic English.

3.6 'I' as the originator

(1) Therefore, <u>we</u> may conclude that English indeed often functions as a lingua franca among linguists.

(2) <u>I</u> argue that texts allow writers to persuade readers and meet the expectations of their discipline.

(3) These three stance qualities, <u>I</u> suggest, are a part of a general novice academic stance that may be implicitly expected in students' coursework.