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# Academic writing conventions in English-medium linguistics journals in Italy: Continuity and change over the last 30 years

Marina Bondi and Jessica Jane Nocella

*University of Modena and Reggio Emilia*

ABSTRACT

Against the background of studies on "academic Englishes", this paper is a study parallel to Dontcheva-Navratilova (this issue). Focusing on the use of English in Italian academic publishing and on English linguistics in particular, we look at the development of academic writing conventions in research articles written by Italian scholars over the last 30 years. The study is based on a small corpus of 20 single-authored English-medium research articles – ten representing the period from 1990 to1995 and ten from between 2014 and 2019 – published in the official journal of the Italian association of Anglicists (*Textus*) and in the applied linguistics journal *Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Italiana* (*RILA*). The study draws on genre analysis to explore possible changes in rhetorical structure and on corpus analysis to study forms of self-mention. Special attention is paid to introductions, methodology, and conclusions. At a macrolevel, results show diachronic changes in rhetorical structure with a clearer IMRAD structure and a more empirical methodology in the second phase, while at a microlevel forms of self-mention show a marked increase in non-personal and implicit (locational) self-mention. This seems to respond to the tension between personal and impersonal forms that has largely characterized the development of the genre in English as well as to the contact between different academic cultures.

Keywords: academic English, research articles, corpus linguistics, genre analysis.

## 1. Introduction

Studying academic discourse means looking at ways of thinking and using language within the context of academia. The research article (RA) certainly takes pride of place within this broad realm, as it represents the key communicative practice of research communication, the primary genre

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used by scholars to share the results of their research. Rhetorical structures and linguistic patterns of RAs have been widely examined in discourse and genre studies from both a diachronic and a synchronic perspective.

Following groundbreaking work in rhetoric by Bazerman (1988) and Gross et al. (2002), diachronic perspectives have often focused on changes from an author-centred perspective in the 17th century to a rather more impersonal and object-centred perspective in the 20th century. Indeed, the development of generic structures has been increasingly oriented to the structure of the scientific experimental paper, often identified by the acronym IMRAD (Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion) (see Bondi 2022 for a diachronic overview). Academic discourse studies have confirmed these trends while also drawing attention to elements of variation. Rhetorical structures and features of author involvement are arguably influenced by disciplinary variation (e.g. Hyland 2000; Hyland – Bondi 2006), methodological choices (e.g. Gray 2015 on theoretical, quantitative and qualitative research), and types of interdisciplinary research (Thompson – Hunston 2019). In a diachronic perspective, Hyland and Jiang (2016, 2019) have explored language changes at the turn of the century, highlighting opposing trends in the hard sciences vs the social sciences: the social sciences seem to be moving towards greater informational focus and a preference for empirical, experimental and data-informed investigations, while the hard sciences are increasing their use of involvement features such as first- and second-person pronouns or modality, interpersonal and evaluative meanings, self-mention and engagement markers.

The recent dramatic expansion of English as the language of the global scholarly exchange has added another dimension of variation, by giving prominence to cross-cultural and intercultural issues. If cross-cultural studies have a long tradition, the perspective adopted more recently is often one of looking at English-medium writing as an interesting part of English in academic publishing (Hyland 2016). While drawing attention to issues of communicative inequality and potential discrimination between native and non-native speakers (Ferguson et al. 2011; Lillis – Curry 2010; Flowerdew 2019), the present-day role of English in scholarly communicative practices has also highlighted the role of non-native speakers as contributing a greater richness of perspectives and elements of variation to the language (Flowerdew 2001; Pérez-Llantada 2013, 2014; Heng Hartse – Kubota 2014). Scholarly attention has been increasingly paid to the tension between Anglophone norms and the rhetorical traditions of the original academic discourse communities of non-Anglophone writers, a tension which can be seen in fact to stimulate attention to forms of 'alternative academic written English*es*' (Mauranen et al. 2010: 647). Within this framework, it becomes interesting to look at both elements of variation and hybridity in the English that gets published (e.g. Pérez-Llantada 2013; Martinez 2018) and at the features of English-medium discourse of different non-Anglophone scholars (e.g. Lillis – Curry 2006; Mur-Dueñas 2007, 2011; Bondi 2009; Shaw – Vassileva 2009; Hewings et al. 2010; Lorés-Sanz 2011; Dontcheva-Navratilova 2012, 2014, 2016, 2020; Luzón 2018; Moreno 2021), in a perspective that often weaves together the fields of Intercultural Rhetoric, English for Academic Purposes and English as a Lingua Franca (Mur-Dueñas – Šinkūnienė 2018).

The combination of a diachronic approach with a focus on English-medium publications is understandably less explored, as the phenomenon is relatively recent. It is our contention, however, that it is important to look at micro-diachronic changes that may help us trace the way local forms of the global language have developed, to see where they diverge or converge. That is why our work concentrates on the specific context of English-medium publications in Italy, with a view to changes in rhetorical structure and authorial involvement that have been observed by others on a global scale.

The aim of this paper is thus to explore how academic language has changed in the context of Italian academia over the time span of thirty years. We do this through a case study of a single discipline, i.e. English linguistics, using a small corpus of twenty RAs in the field. Drawing upon Dontcheva-Navratilova's parallel diachronic study (this issue), we aim to explore elements of continuity and change in the generic structure of RAs (looking at titles, abstracts, introductions, methodology and conclusions) and in involvement features (looking at authorial self-mention).

The rest of the article is structured as follows. Section 2 provides the reader with a methodological background on RAs and self-mention, followed by a description of corpus design and collection, analytical tools, and methods (Section 3). The outcomes from the macro-analysis (Section 4) are divided into four sub-sections: the first one (4.1) focuses on the general structure of RAs, looking at changes in their IMRAD structure and headings' patterns, the other sections focus on rhetorical changes in introductions (4.2), methods (4.3) and conclusions (4.4). Results from the microanalysis (Section 5) focus on personal pronouns dealing with their frequency and distribution (5.1), their collocates and the types of identity they construct (5.2), and the different forms of self-mention attested (5.3). The study then closes with conclusions (6), which sum up the main results of our analysis and take into account discussions on language and cultural variation.

## 2. Methodological background: Rhetorical structure and self-mention in RAs

### 2.1 Move analysis

Academic discourse studies have long investigated the rhetorical structures and linguistic patterns of RAs as a genre, largely on the basis of seminal work on genre by Swales (1990, 2004; Swales – Feak 2012) and Bhatia (1993). The genre analytical approach has led to a vast literature focusing on the major sections of the RA (see Samraj 2016 for an overview).

Studies on Introductions, for example, have been greatly influenced by Swales's Create-a-Research-Space model (CARS) (see Swales 1990 and 2004), identifying the moves and steps that characterize them:

- Move 1, 'Establishing a territory' (via 'Topic generalizations of increasing specificity');
- Move 2, 'Establishing a niche' (via Step 1A 'Indicating a gap' or Step 1B 'Adding to what is known', with Step 2, optional, 'Presenting positive justification');
- Move 3, 'Presenting the present work' (via Step 1 'Announcing present research descriptively and/or purposively', and a range of other options like Step 2 'Presenting RQs or hypotheses', Step 3 (optional) 'Definitional clarifications', Step 4 'Summarizing methods', Step 5 'Announcing principal outcomes', Step 6 'Stating the value of the present research', Step 7 'Outlining the structure of the paper' (Swales 2004: 230-232).

Successive models have introduced terminological variations, such as 'Claiming relevance of field', 'Establishing the gap present research is meant to fill', and 'Previewing authors' new accomplishment' (Lewin et al. 2001). The basic organizational structure, however, has been widely accepted and the three main moves occupy pride of place in many successive adaptations or studies working at the interface of rhetorical structure and linguistic features (e.g. Cortes 2013; Gray et al. 2020).

The rhetorical composition of other sections has only attracted attention more recently (Swales – Feak 2012 [1994]: 291). Methods sections, in particular, have undergone various classifications. The most recent models, combining move analysis with multidimensional study of linguistic features (Cotos et al. 2015; Gray et al. 2020), have centred on three basic moves which would be applicable to a range of disciplines:

- Move 1, 'Contextualizing methods' (with the following steps: 'Referencing previous works', 'Providing general background', 'Identifying the methodological approach', 'Describing the setting', 'Introducing the subjects/participants' and 'Rationalizing pre-experiment decisions');

- Move 2, 'Describing the study' ('Acquiring the data', 'Describing the data', 'Identifying variables', 'Delineating experimental/ study procedure', 'Describing tools/ instruments/ materials/ equipment', 'Rationalising experiment decisions', 'Reporting incrementals');
- Move 3, 'Establishing credibility' ('Preparing the data', 'Describing the data analysis', 'Rationalising data processing/ analysis') (Gray et al. 2020: 144)

As clearly shown by Gray et al. (2020: 143), the process of move analysis usually involves developing a framework and validating it for the corpus under examination. Models such as these offer an interesting complex of categories validated on a large multidisciplinary corpus, which can then be adapted to the corpus under investigation. In the case of our small corpus, for example, as there was no experimental research, the range of steps to be considered could be limited to a shorter list that excluded the steps typically referred to as experimental research.

Similarly, when it comes to discussion/conclusions, the models available are numerous (e.g., Swales 1990, 2004; Holmes 1997). Corpus-based work has produced both more complex and comprehensive multidisciplinary models (Gray et al. 2020) and more specific models, such as the very influential Yang and Allison's (2003) model, based on applied linguistics RAs. Gray et al.'s model (2020) has the advantage of adopting the CARS metaphors of the territory and the niche, thus reflecting the close relationship between conclusions and introductions, with its four moves:

- Move 1, 'Re-establishing territory' ('Drawing on theoretical/general background', 'Drawing on study-specific background', 'Highlighting principal findings', 'Previewing the discussion roadmap');
- Move 2, 'Framing the new knowledge' ('Explicating and accounting for results', 'Clarifying expectations' and 'Addressing limitations');
- Move 3, 'Reshaping the territory' ('Supporting' or 'Countering with evidence')
- Move 4, 'Expanding the niche' ('Generalizing results', 'Claiming the value', 'Noting implications' and 'Proposing directions') (Gray et al. 2020: 145).

Yang and Allison's (2003) model, on the other hand, reflects the reality of applied linguistics RAs: Move 1, 'Summarizing the study', corresponds to 'Re-establishing the territory', whereas Move 2, 'Evaluating the study' ('Indicating significance/advantage', 'Indicating limitations', 'Evaluating methodology') and Move 3, 'Deductions from the research' ('Recommending further study' and 'Drawing pedagogic implications') (Yang – Allison 2003: 379) combine freely elements belonging to Gray et al.'s Moves 2, 3 and 4.

The context of our study (English linguistics in Italy) somehow accompanies English linguistics from its first stages of recognition as a discipline in Italian academia to the present: at the end of the '80s English linguistics was acknowledged in the Italian University system as a separate discipline, independent from both English literature and language teaching per se. Because of this contextual change, we were particularly interested in the distinction between recommending further research and drawing pedagogic implications, which is only present in Yang and Allison's (2003) model, and thus decided to focus on those particular moves and steps.

### 2.2 Authorial voice: Self-mention

Involvement features analysed in multidimensional studies of language change (e.g. Hyland – Jiang 2019) obviously encompass a wide range of elements that contribute to the creation of authorial voice (Thompson 2001; Matsuda – Tardy 2007; Hyland – Guinda 2012; Bondi 2014). These elements include evaluative language, modality, markers of positioning in general. While acknowledging that a specific focus on authorial voice would require consideration of all these features, we limited our focus to markers of self-mention in RAs because these have repeatedly been highlighted as distinctive of different academic cultures (Mur-Dueñas 2007; Lorés-Sanz 2011; Dontcheva-Navratilova 2012, 2016; Mur-Dueñas – Sinkuniene 2018; Ädel 2022). Cross-cultural analysis of personal and impersonal constructions, in particular, has shown that Italian writers of linguistics RAs tend to use personal forms less frequently than native speakers of English (Molino 2010).

Studies of self-mention often consider both tools of self-reference and semantic elements of writer identity. Writer identity is commonly investigated by looking at first-person pronouns. Tang and John's (1999) influential study established a typology of these identities in students' essays, rating authorial presence from the least to the most powerful. The semantic taxonomy they propose identifies different roles: "the representative", when a generic first-person pronoun is used (e. *as we know today*); "the guide through the essay" (e.g. *let us look*), accompanying the reader through the various parts of the writing; "the architect" (e.g. *I will outline*), where the first person *I* highlights the person who writes, structures, and outlines the essay; the "recounter of the research process", describing the various steps of research (e.g. *I have worked, read…*); "the opinion-holder", usually co-occurring with mental-process verbs, and "*I* the originator", signalling what is new in an essay (Tang – John 1999: 26-29). Building on this work, Vladimirou (2007) classifies personal pronouns according to their pragmatic functions in a corpus of linguistics RAs. The main categories are reduced to four: "*I* as researcher", which includes Tang and John's categories of "*I* as guide/architect/opinion-holder/originator"; "*I* indefinite", which expands the use of the "indefinite *we*" to the first person singular; "*I* biographical", where the researcher presents him/herself as a person in the body of the article, while "acknowledgements" where writers express their gratefulness to people that have supported them during their research are considered separately (Vladimirou 2007: 143-145).

When looking at forms of self-mention, however, first-person pronouns are not the only markers that should be considered. Self-mention can also be realized by nominal forms. These may identify writers with a generic "author(s)" or metonymically through their own research activity, i.e. referring to the research design, the actual research publication or even elements of the publication. Self-mention can thus be realized by forms such as *the study shows, the paper argues* or *the table illustrates*. Building upon Dahl's "locational metatext" (2004: 1811), these could be referred to as forms of "locational self-mention" (Bondi 2014), where self-mention is realized by reference to discourse units of different levels (e.g. *article, results, table*) and by cognitive constructs (e.g. *approach, analysis*), acting as textual substitutes for the self. Writers are not as fully visible as in first-person reference, but they are adequately represented by the text itself as Actor, especially in organizing and framing discourse.

## 3. Materials and methods

In order to carry out our study, we created a small diachronic corpus which consists of twenty single-authored RAs, for a total of 122,964 tokens. This is divided into two small sub-corpora, each corresponding to a different period. The first, which we will call Phase A, consists of ten English-medium RAs published in the time span of 5 years between 1990 to 1995, while the second, which we will call Phase B, contains ten RAs published between 2014 to 2019.

Texts were collected from the official journal of the Italian association of Anglicists *Textus*, founded in 1988, and from *RILA* (*Rassegna Italiana di Linguistica Applicata*) which is an Italian applied linguistics journal founded in 1969, publishing articles in a number of different languages. Both journals are edited and published in Italy and were chosen because of the high number of English-medium articles on English Linguistics by Italian scholars. They are indexed in international databases and are largely available outside Italy, but they clearly have a national audience in mind as a primary target.

Articles were selected on the basis of two criteria: first, they had to be written by a single author who is a native speaker of Italian working abroad or in Italy, second, their area of investigation and topic had to be English Linguistics.

Our initial aim was to collect one article per year from each journal, each one of them written by a different author. However, concerning Phase A, only a few authors were publishing in English at the time. Given such obstacles in Phase A, we selected all RAs that met the two main criteria of collection, even if that meant having no materials for certain years (1993-1994 – see Table 1) or two articles written by the same author.

Table 1. Details of Phase A sub-corpus

| Samples | *RILA* | | | *Textus* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | Number of Texts | Tokens | Affiliation | Number of Texts | Tokens | Affiliation |
| 1990 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| 1991 | 3 | 11,994 | • University of Southern California<br>• Lancaster University (2) | – | – | – |
| 1992 | – | – | – | 2 | 12,468 | University of Bologna |
| 1993 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| 1994 | – | – | – | – | – | – |
| 1995 | 1 | 2,318 | Lancaster University | 4 | 34,446 | University of Bologna (1); University of Milan (3) |
| Total | 4 | 14,312 | | 6 | 46,914 | |
| Total number of tokens Phase A: 63988 | | | | | | |

Similarly, in Phase B, not all *RILA* articles met the criteria of selection, which is why the corpus includes a higher number of texts from *Textus* (Table 2). However, whenever it was possible, articles were selected according to the chronological order in which the first article that met the two criteria of selection appeared in the Table of Contents of each year's journal.

Table 2. Details of Phase B sub-corpus

| Samples | *RILA* | | | *Textus* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year | Number of Texts | Tokens | Affiliation | Number of Texts | Tokens | Affiliation |
| 2014 | 1 | 4,954 | University of Bergamo | 1 | 4,492 | University of Modena e Reggio Emilia |
| 2015 | – | – | – | 1 | 7,277 | University of Campania |
| 2016 | 1 | 6,472 | University of Bolzano | 1 | 7,011 | University of Catania |
| 2017 | 1 | 6,472 | Ca' Foscari | 1 | 4,624 | University di Genova |
| 2018 | – | – | – | 1 | 6,243 | University of Bologna |
| 2019 | 1 | 5,147 | University of Rome | 1 | 6,644 | University of Turin |
| Total | 4 | 22,583 | | 6 | 36,393 | |
| Total number of tokens Phase B: 58976 | | | | | | |

In order to analyse our data, we carried out a corpus-based study in combination with a genre analysis of the main sections. First, we looked at the general IMRAD structure of the papers and how this has changed diachronically.

The analysis of abstracts was limited to their presence/absence as elements of the RA, since the presence of this section was too limited to allow for an analysis of change in the structure or language. Italian academic publishing seems to have been slow in understanding the key role of abstracts in providing readers with access to the text as well as to the rationale behind the research (Bondi 2014).

The study of titles, headings and subheading patterns was oriented to understanding whether they reflected more the themes or the research structure of the article. Titles were analysed according to the taxonomy presented by Cheng et al. (2012) and Xiang and Li (2020), looking first at changes in their syntactic structure (nominal constructions; prepositional phrases; V-*ing* phrases, full sentences, and compound constructions – divided by a punctuation mark) and then at the type of information presented. Information types were divided according to five categories: topic only, method/design, dataset, result and conclusion (Sahragard – Mejhami 2016; Li – Xu 2019; Xiang – Li 2020). Lastly, adapting Busch-Lauer (2000) and following Dontcheva-Navratilova (this issue), we classified title functions into the designating function, which shows the content of the text, and the advertising function, which attracts and appeals to readers.

Particular attention was then paid to introductions, methods sections, and conclusions, exploring possible changes in rhetorical structures. We decided to focus on these sections not only because of word-limit constraints, but also to carry out a specular analysis to Dontcheva-Navratilova's work (this issue), which focuses on the same research sections.

Moves and specific steps were manually tagged using *UAM Corpus Tool* (see O'Donnell 2014 for an overview), which allowed us to semantically annotate sentences of our corpus according to each annotation scheme. More specifically, our analysis of introductions centred on Swales's CARS model, also known as 'Establishing Territory' (Move 1), 'Identifying a Niche' (Move 2), and 'Addressing a Niche' (Move 3) (See Section 2 for more detail). Similarly, rhetorical methodological moves and conclusions were analysed and tagged according to their respective move model. Methods were analyzed according to the model provided by Cotos et al. (2015) and Gray et al. (2020), while conclusions were tagged according to Yang and Allison's (2003) taxonomy (see Section 2).

At the microlevel of analysis, we looked first at personal structures for writer and reader references availing ourselves of *WordSmith Tools* 8.0 (Scott 2020) for the quantitative part. We focused on the use of personal pronouns in the texts – excluding references, footnotes and acknowledgments – and checked their frequency and collocations, with special attention to their semantic and pragmatic features. When looking at writer identity in self-mentions, the simplified model we adopted (adapted from Tang – John [1999] and Vladimirou [2007]) was meant to identify how often writer identity coincided with the Writer as Researcher/Writer/Interpreter and how often it rather referred to the Biographical self of the author, or to an Indefinite self. Finally, we looked at diachronic trends in nominal and pronominal forms of self-reference; in particular we studied personal and depersonalized "locational" forms of self-mention (Bondi 2014) involving different types of verbs that represent argumentative procedures across the two sub-corpora.

## 4. Results: Macro-analysis of RAs

This section looks at the general structure of the RAs (abstracts, titles and paragraph headings, IMRAD structure) and at the rhetorical moves adopted in their introduction, methods sections, and conclusion.

### 4.1 Structure

Before going into further detail, it is worth mentioning that the total wordcount of the articles in Phase A is 66,134 (an average of 6,613 tokens per article), while there are 61,945 tokens in Phase B (an average of 6,194). However, due to the presence of an appendix, one RA in Phase A is an outlier, with a wordcount of 18,173 tokens, which is almost three times the general average. Excluding this outlier from our data, the average wordcount per article becomes 4,796 tokens, leading to a significant difference with the second phase. This change in length over the years might be due not only to editorial reasons of the journals (i.e. requiring a minimum length in words), but also to a rise in the informativeness of RAs (see Dontcheva-Navratilova, this issue).

**Abstract**
From a close examination of the ten RAs of Phase A it emerged that papers are never introduced by abstracts, and that their general IMRAD structure is not always consistent. In three of the RAs, for example, the methodology is not clearly stated. In articles belonging to the Phase B sub-corpus, abstracts are consistently present in all RAs, with a difference in language choice, probably depending on each journal's editorial line: in *Textus* these are always in English, whereas in *RILA*, until 2018 they are in Italian and start to appear in English from 2019.

**Titles**
The general length of titles increases from Phase A (11.9) to Phase B (12.7). Again, this could be due to the need of authors to be more informative, but also to the rise in the use of acronyms (e.g. EMI, CLIL, EU), which have been counted as separate words.

Table 3. Titles' syntactic structure in Phase A and Phase B

| Titles | Title Length | Surface form | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Nominal | Prep. phrase | V-*ing* phrase | Com-pound | Sentence |
| Phase A | 11.9 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| Phase B | 12.7 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 |

Table 4. Titles' information type and function in Phase A and Phase B

| Titles | Information type | | | | | Function | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Topic | Topic + dataset | Topic + Method | Topic + Results | Topic + Conclu-sion | Desig-nate | Adver-tise |
| Phase A | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 10 | 0 |
| Phase B | 1 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 5 |

Phase A shows a predominance in nominal structures, which represent 60% of the small sub-corpus (Table 3), while the remaining 40% consists of compound titles. As also found in Dontcheva-Navratilova's case study (this issue), Phase B sees an increase in compound titles, which have doubled since Phase A (80%), while the remaining 20% is made up of nominal structures. Once more, this might be related to the need of providing more information and detail about the article.

With regards to the information type of the titles (Table 4), in Phase A 40% of cases are topic-oriented (Example 1), while the remaining 60% are divided between mentioning dataset (10%), methods (10%), results (20%) and conclusions (20%; see Example 2). In Phase B, strictly topic-oriented titles decrease to 10%, and most of them hint at their dataset (Example 3), methods, and results (Example 4).[1] Titles in Phase B of our small corpus do not hint at information on conclusions.

(1) "Need" As Modal Auxiliary and As Lexical Verb in Present-Day English (PA-MB)

(2) Italian and the English s-genitive: a contrastive analysis and its pedagogical implications for the teaching of Italian as a foreign language. (PA-ES)

1 Examples are identified by phase and author initials (see Table 1, 2 and 8).

(3) On the phraseological dimension of legal discourse: the case of English and Italian contracts (PB-GD)

(4) Invested effort for learning in CLIL and student motivation: How much are they related? Answers from the Italian context. (PB-AB)

The function of titles has also seen a significant change over the years (Table 4). In Phase A, all titles focus on the content of a piece of work, making the designating function predominant (Example 5). In Phase B, 50% of the titles show a designating function, while 50% have an advertising one (Example 6).

(5) Semantic Syntax. English Phrasal Verbs. (PA-GA)

(6) Tastes We've Lived By. Taste Metaphors in English. (PB-MB)

The increase in the advertising function might be linked to higher competitiveness in research, leading authors to find strategies that might encourage readers to read their work (i.e., puns, question marks, evaluative language, etc.). Therefore, the advertising function of titles is a shop window, whose purpose is to attract and appeal to editors, reviewers, and readers.

**Paragraph headings**

Paragraph heading patterns belonging to Phase A are irregular: three of the selected articles have no headings at all; in other words, there were no numbers or spaces dividing the different sections of the paper. Four papers present their work in a so-called research or hybrid structure, which means that some sections, for example background, would be introduced by more thematic nomenclatures, focusing on the nature of its content, while other parts, such as results, follow the IMRAD denomination (e.g. *Introduction – Newspaper Language – The Corpus – Results,* etc.). The remaining three articles instead are thematic in that they were structured with a content nomenclature for each heading rather than a research one (e.g. *I. Introduction – II. The Data – III. Theoretical approaches to the S-Genitive – IV. Genitive of measure – V. Genitives referring to geographical entities – V.I Names of countries and continent.*, etc.).

With regards to Phase B, while articles have a regular IMRAD structure, headings do not show fixed patterns in their nomenclature: as a matter of fact, most of them (7/10) present a hybrid structure, with some sections introduced by more thematic headings (e.g. 1. *Theoretical background: Ideology, groupness and security discourse, 3. Dissemination and ideology in Europol's Annual Reports*) and other ones by those resembling the IMRAD structure of the paper (e.g. *2. Materials and Methods*). However, even when following the IMRAD research structure, headings can present variation in their nomenclature (Swales 2004: 219), such as *Quantitative analysis*, or *Qualitative analysis* to refer to the results' section. The remaining three articles, instead, are more thematic (e.g. 1. *Introduction – 2. Comparing newspaper data – 3. Labelling pronunciation in The Times*, etc.).

### 4.2 Introductions

A close examination of introductions shows minor but interesting diachronic changes in moves and steps at a quantitative level of analysis.

Table 5. Introductions' Rhetorical Moves present in Phase A and Phase B RAs

| FEATURE | Phase A | | | | Phase B | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | NT | %M | NS | %(S) | NT | %M | NS | %(S) |
| **Move 1: Establishing territory** | **10** | **50** | | | **10** | **43** | | |
| Step 1: Providing general background | 9 | | 9 | 52.94 | 9 | | 10 | 37.04 |
| Step 2: Claiming centrality | 2 | | 3 | 17.65 | 4 | | 5 | 18.52 |
| Step 3: Reviewing previous research | 5 | | 5 | 29.41 | 7 | | 12 | 44.44 |
| **Move 2: Identifying a niche** | **3** | **15** | | | **4** | **17** | | |
| Step 1: Raising general questions | 2 | | 2 | 28.57 | 0 | | 0 | |
| Step 2: Highlighting a problem | 1 | | 1 | 14.29 | 2 | | 2 | 33.33 |
| Step 3: Indicating a gap | 2 | | 4 | 57.14 | 4 | | 4 | 66.67 |
| **Move 3: Addressing the niche** | **7** | **35** | | | **9** | **39** | | |
| Step 1: Introducing present research descriptively | 5 | | 5 | 31.25 | 6 | | 7 | 26.92 |
| Step 2: Announcing research aims/ purposes | 2 | | 4 | 25 | 6 | | 10 | 38.46 |
| Step 3: Presenting research questions | 2 | | 2 | 12.5 | 3 | | 3 | 11.54 |
| Step 4: Presenting research hypotheses | 1 | | 1 | 6.25 | 1 | | 1 | 3.85 |
| Step 5: Clarifying definitions | 2 | | 2 | 12.5 | 1 | | 1 | 3.85 |
| Step 6: Outlining the structure of the paper | 2 | | 2 | 12.5 | 4 | | 4 | 15.38 |

Table 5 shows the number of texts in which each move type is found (NT), the ratio of each move type to the total number of moves (%M), the number of sentences involved in the realization of each step (NS) and the percentage of all steps that each step represents (%S).

The data shows that, while the number of texts containing Move 1 remains the same, there is a slight increase in Move 2 and a more marked increase for Move 3. The stability of Move 1 in terms of number of texts involved, however, means that its role has proportionately reduced in Phase B, as the importance of Move 2 and especially 3 grows accordingly.

The data on steps shows a general tendency to produce slightly more elaborate texts in Phase B (with more sentences or occurrences for the same step), especially for 'Reviewing previous research' in Move 1 and 'Announcing purposes' in Move 3. When looking at percentage values for each step, we may see that Move 1, dominated by 'General background' in Phase A is rather dominated by 'Reviewing previous research' in Phase B. Move 2 shows a constant centrality of 'Indicating a gap', while Move 3 sees a shift from 'Introducing present research descriptively' to 'Announcing research purposes'.

Overall then, not only does 'Addressing the niche' gain ground over 'Establishing territory', but also the territory and the niche provide increasing attention to placing the study within the context of the scientific debate, by reviewing previous research, indicating a gap and announcing purpose.

It is also interesting to notice that 'Indicating a gap' shows a slightly wider distribution and variable position. While in Phase A such step appears in the first paragraph following the aims, in Phase B it also appears either in the following paragraphs (3rd, 4th or 5th) or preceding the aims. Similarly, the statement of purpose ('Announcing research purposes') appears in the first two paragraphs of the introduction in Phase A, while in Phase B not only does it tend to appear in the following paragraphs (3rd or 4th), but is also repeated in other sections of the paper, such as in the methodology. Qualitatively, on the other hand, the two phases show very similar patterns (Examples 7-8), as in both of them the statement of purpose achieves its realization by highlighting elements of novelty and linking them to the existing literature and the gap identified (Samraj 2002).

(7) The present paper *aims at complementing these studies by* (….). (PA-GI)

(8) *This article*, therefore, *complements the wide and constantly growing range of studies* centred on the Frog Stories, *and adds novel information on* using English (…) (PB-MI).

The lexico-grammatical patterns are the same in both phases: *the present paper; in this paper/study; the aim of this project is to…; the aim is to…; the article is aimed at…; in order to have some evidence…; this article deals with…*; etc.).

### 4.3 Methods section

As already noticed, not all RAs in Phase A present a clear regular IMRAD structure; in other words, for some papers the methods section is not clearly outlined, whereas it is much more obvious in Phase B. This is most likely due to the influence of publications in international peer reviewed journals, where authors had adhered to the IMRAD structure for some time; Italian academics were thus beginning to follow suit. By the time we enter Phase B, there appears to have been a general increase in the explicit signalling of rhetorical moves and steps, again probably due to the fact that research has become more competitive, and it has become necessary to provide details on both the data and the methods applied to one's work in order to establish credibility and significance to one's work.

Table 6 illustrates that Phase B is characterized by greater attention to the rhetorical moves of 'Contextualizing methods' (especially focusing on participants) and 'Establishing credibility', which are found in a higher number of texts, represent a higher percentage of the moves, and are characterized by more complex steps. The data also shows that the increase in complexity of the steps represented by a higher number of sentences also characterizes the descriptive move which decreases in relative importance.

Table 6. Diachronic changes in Methodology's Moves and Steps

| FEATURE | Phase A | | | | Phase B | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | NT | %M | NS | %(S) | NT | %M | NS | %(S) |
| **M1 Contextualizing methods** | **5** | **35.71** | | | **8** | **38.07** | | |
| S1 Providing general background | 4 | | 4 | 18.18 | 6 | | 6 | 16.22 |
| S2 Identifying the methodological approach | 3 | | 3 | 13.64 | 5 | | 6 | 16.22 |
| *S3 Introducing participants* | 1 | | 1 | 4.55 | 2 | | 4 | 10.81 |
| **M2 Describing the study** | **8** | **57.14** | | | **9** | **42.87** | | |
| S1 Describing data | 7 | | 7 | 31.82 | 6 | | 8 | 21.62 |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S2 Delineating study procedures | 5 | | 5 | 22.71 | 6 | | 6 | 16.22 |
| *S3 Identifying variables* | 1 | | 1 | 4.55 | 3 | | 3 | 8.10 |
| **M3 Establishing credibility** | **1** | **7.15** | | | **4** | **19.06** | **4** | **10.81** |
| S1 *Describing the data analysis* | 1 | | 1 | 4.55 | 4 | | 4 | 10.81 |

In general, throughout Phase A, there is no clear order in the way moves and steps appear, while in Phase B, authors seem to follow a distinct rhetorical pattern.

## 4.4 Conclusions section

With regards to Yang and Allison's (2003) rhetorical moves for conclusions, Phase A shows no clear order in which they appear, hence leading to more variety in style (e.g. Move 1 → Move 2 → Move 1 → Move 3). However, despite not appearing in the expected order, moves are quantitatively more balanced throughout conclusions (Table 7). In Phase B instead, not all moves are equally present even though they appear in the expected order (e.g. Move 1 → Move 2 → Move 3 – Step 1 – Step 2).

Table 7. Diachronic changes in Conclusions' Moves and Steps

| FEATURE | Phase A | | | | Phase B | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | NT | %M | NS | %(S) | NT | %M | NS | %(S) |
| **Move 1: Summarizing** | **9** | **40.9** | **10** | **31.26** | **10** | **45.45** | **13** | **38.24** |
| **Move 2: Evaluating study** | **7** | **31.8** | | | **8** | **36.36** | | |
| Step 1: Indicating significance | 3 | | 3 | 9.37 | 5 | | 6 | 17.65 |
| Step 2: Indicating limitations | 4 | | 6 | 18.75 | 3 | | 4 | 11.76 |
| Step 3: Evaluating methodology | 2 | | 2 | 6.25 | 5 | | 5 | 14.71 |
| **Move 3: Deduction from the research** | 6 | **27.3** | | | **4** | **18.19** | | |
| Step 1: Pedagogical implications | 4 | | 5 | 15.62 | 4 | | 4 | 11.76 |
| Step 2: Recommendations | 5 | | 6 | 18.75 | 2 | | 2 | 5.88 |

In particular, Move 1 has remained diachronically stable, while Move 3 sees a significant drop, which is mainly determined by a decrease in the writing of recommendations for further studies (Step 2), which fell from 18% to 6%, accompanied by a less marked reduction in the pedagogical implications. This decrease – in line with a generalized growing attention to methodology – might reflect the national context, where English linguistics was establishing itself as an academic discipline, with an interest in implications but not necessarily in direct professional applications. Table 7 also shows an increase in the use of Move 2, which is the one used to evaluate the research study. Specifically, Step 1, used to indicate the significance of a study, and Step 3, adopted to evaluate its methodology, have significantly increased since Phase A, while there has been a decrease in the description of one study's limitations (Step 2). Such decrease might indicate a hybridization between the Anglo-Saxon model and the Italian one, which tends to avoid highlighting limitations, as these might be seen as a weakness. In general, however, the respective increase and decrease in the use of such steps clearly indicate a rise in the self-promotion of authors' research, in line with international trends (Hyland – Jiang 2019).

## 5. Self-mention: Personal and locational references

This section looks at forms of self-reference. We first deal with the presence of personal pronouns and adjectives manifesting forms of self-mention, looking at their frequency and distribution (5.1), as well as their collocates and the types of identity they construct (5.2). We then contrast personal (*we argue*) and depersonalized ("locational") (*the article argues*) forms of self-mention attested (5.3).

### 5.1 Personal pronouns: Frequency and distribution

A closer look at first-person pronouns and adjectives in our corpus shows a sharp decrease in the use of personal references (*I, my, me, mine, we, us, our, ours*) from Phase A with a normalized frequency of 5.52 occurrences per thousand words (ptw) to one of 2.59 ptw in Phase B. Neither of the two sub-sub-corpora shows traces of the second-person pronoun *you*.

Starting from Phase A, we can see that the use of pronouns mainly varies according to the individual style of each author (Table 8). For example, two of the authors (GI and VP) use few personal references. This preference might be related to sub-disciplinary trends, as they both carry out research in lexicography, but it may also be influenced by the impersonality of Italian academic culture noted for example by Molino (2010).

Table 8. Personal pronouns and possessive adjectives per author in Phase A and B

| Phase A | | | | | Phase B | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| author | singular | plural | total | standard deviation | author | singular | plural | total | standard deviation |
| MB* | 25 | – | 25 | | AM | 6 | 2 | 8 | |
| LL* | 14 | – | 14 | | CB | 6 | 4 | 10 | |
| ES* (1) | 13 | 12 | 25 | | AB | 3 | 51 | 54 | |
| ES* (2)[1] | 16 | 1 | 17 | | MS | 7 | 2 | 9 | |
| GA | 12 | 45 | 57 | | GT | 7 | 11 | 18 | |
| MBP | 8 | 24 | 32 | | MG | 1 | 1 | 2 | |
| GI | 2 | 1 | 3 | | GD | – | 18 | 18 | |
| VP | 1 | 1 | 2 | | MI | – | 2 | 2 | |
| GM | – | 56 | 56 | | CPP | – | – | – | |
| ETB*[2] | 26 | 96 | 122 | | MB | 24 | 8 | 32 | |
| Total | 117 | 236 | 353 | 34.02 | Total | 54 | 99 | 153 | 15.81 |
| Normalized frequency (ptw) | 1.83 | 3.69 | 5.52 | | Normalized frequency (ptw) | 0.91 | 1.68 | 2.59 | |

1 ES is the author for whom we collected two research articles.
2 Authors marked with an asterisk were carrying out their research in Anglophone Universities at the time of publication.

Another important observation is that the use of the first-person singular pronoun *I* is reduced in authors developing their research in Italy, while higher in those carrying out their research abroad (marked with an asterisk in Table 8). This might reflect the impact of closer contact with different writing norms. Italian academic writing tends to avoid personalization, while Anglophone writing norms seem to be more open: Hyland (2002), for example, shows that personal pronouns followed by lexical verb phrases represent 60% of his four-word bundles of academic English in the British National Corpus Baby edition.

However, we should also notice high individual variation in the use of plural personal references (*we/us/our/ours*), which vary from 0 (LL and MB – See Table 8) to 96 (ETB – See Table 8). This may be related to the fact that plural pronouns can carry different meanings, such as the use of the *inclusive we* (Example 9), adopted to include the reader in the writing, and *exclusive we* (Example 10), which is mainly used to describe the author's meta-discursive or research process.

(9) (…) is acquisition of ideological meaning which *we all take for granted* but is usually difficult. (PA-ETB)

(10) The other type of movement *we are concerned with* here in extraposition (…). (PA-GA)

The choice of plural personal references over singular ones might also depend on the different argumentative logic adopted by each single author. For example, those using a higher number of plural personal references (e.g. ETB, ES, GA, GM, MBP) carry out a more empirical kind of study (e.g. corpus linguistics, use of prepositions, syntax, etc.), often hinting at a research group even with single-author texts, while most of the authors using predominantly singular personal references (GI, LL, VP) adopt a more analytical and philosophical approach to research, hence with less reference to data (i.e. macro observations on approaches adopted on second language acquisition or contemporary receptions of authors' addenda and corrigenda to Johnson's Dictionary).

In Phase B, there is less individual variation in the use personal references, with a preference for impersonality, and a sharp decrease in the use of singular personal pronouns and adjectives which drop from 1.83 occurrences ptw in Phase A to 0.91 ptw in Phase B. Individual variation is at its highest in the use of plural personal references (*we/us/our/ours*), which vary from 0 (CPP) to 51 (AB) and which remain dominant over the use of singular ones in three quarters of the RAs.

### 5.2 Self-mentions and self-representation

A closer qualitative analysis of the use of singular personal references shows a reduction in the range of collocates in favour of a more consolidated phraseology which confirms that authors are increasingly paying more attention to methodological statements rather than to meta-discursive frames. Singular person pronoun *I*, which is the most frequent pronoun adopted in RAs, generally collocates with verbs expressing verbal and cognitive processes (e.g. *I deal with, analyze, think, concentrate on, give examples, reconsider,* etc.), which frame the discursive presentation of the research (Table 9). This is also visible and confirmed in collocates of the personal adjective *my*, which is again followed by items related to research methodology and results (e.g. *corpus, example, data,* etc.)

Table 9. Collocates of singular personal references in Phase A and Phase B

| Form | Phase A | | Phase B | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Collocates | Frequency (ptw) | Collocates | Frequency (ptw) |
| I | ask, analyze, answer, compare, consider, describe, discuss, evaluate, find, have the space, introduce, list, look at, mention, proceed, report, point out, quote, regard, say, show, think, trace, | 88 (1.37) | argue, classify, consider, don't know, elaborate, further extend, identify, include, report, think, will focus/ argue/ compare | 41 (0.69) |
| Me | Seems to me, let me, available to me | 5 (0.08) | – | – |
| My | analysis, book, data, dictionary, discussions, example, investigation, knowledge, only hope/ possibility, own, opinion, study, theory, view, work | 21 (0.33) | corpus, contention, disposition, months, research | 13 (0.22) |
| Mine | publication, work, analysis | 3 (0.05) | – | – |

By taking a step further and looking at the semantic referents of the first-person singular pronouns of both phases, we notice that the notion of "biographical self" is present only in Phase A with 17 cases (Example 11). The author as researcher, writer, and interpreter, predominant in Phase A (88 hits), is the only type of referent attested in Phase B, though much more limited in number (41 hits).

(11) (…) by exploring its possible applications in an environment *I am familiar with* (…). (PA-ES2)

When looking more specifically at the representation of the writer, in Phase A the representation of *I* as a researcher is that of a writer acting as guide, leading the reader through the RA, framing once more the structure of the paper (e.g. *shall/will report, introduce…, I have found, drawn examples…, I would like to discuss/consider*, etc.). In Phase B instead, the writer as a researcher takes up mostly the role of a recounter reporting the steps of his or her research, as it is mainly followed by material process verbs (e.g. *I compiled, I identified, I included,* etc.).

With regard to plural person referents in both Phases (Table 10), despite the quantitative decrease over the years, collocations remain similar. The pronoun *we* is the most frequent one (136 hits in PA and 54 in PB) and, similarly to *I*, it collocates with discourse and cognitive process verbs (i.e. *investigate, question, generalize,* etc.). This also happens with the pronoun *us* which is preceded by verbs of permission (*let, allow, bring, help*) and followed meta-discursive and research verbs (i.e. *compare, examine, sum up,* etc.). Possessive adjectives and pronouns (*our, ours*) are followed or anticipated by research process nouns (i.e. *our analysis, our study*, etc.) and their object and focus of analysis (i.e. *our corpus*, *our language*).

Table 10. Collocates of plural personal references in Phase A and Phase B

| Form | Phase A | | Phase B | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Collocates | Frequency (ptw) | Collocates | Frequency (ptw) |
| We | accept, adopt, analyze*, apply, are concerned/ created/ faced with/ going to/ dealing, assume, can think/ assume/ apply/ turn…, cannot label/ take up…, decide, do, examine, found, have, identify, include, may find/ wonder…, need, notice, see, will consider/ deal/ notice… | 136 (2.12) | conclude, decide, describe, find, hypothesize, we would like to comment/ highlight | 54 (0.91) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Our | analysis, volume, bread and butter, choice, corpus, culture, discussion, endeavor, knowledge, language, sample, students, undertaking, worse fear | 65 (1.01) | analysis, corpora/ corpus, findings, hypothesis, knowledge, perception… | 29 (0.49) |
| Ours | (course) | 1 (0.02) | – | – |
| Us | let/ bring/ allow/ help+ compare, examine, sum up, claim, affirm, explain, understand, consider, question, query, assume | 34 (0.53) | tell, provide + results, evidence, let/ allow + affirm, claim, consider | 16 (0.27) |

Looking at the collocates of *we* and *our,* we can notice that the emphasis is on the research process (*our analysis*) and its object (*our corpus/our language*). The focus is mostly on the ongoing research process (e.g. *we studied clusters…*, *our analysis has confirmed…*, *we would like to highlight*, etc.) and therefore on the writer as researcher. However, *we* can be more inclusive and refer to both the writer and reader (*If we now turn…, our students…*), thus representing the author as writer. There are also a few occurrences of references to an indefinite self or more generally to humankind (*we* as humans, e.g. *our perception*).

### 5.3 Personal and locational self-mention

Together with forms of personal self-mention, in both sub-corpora we find traces of "locational self-mentions" (Bondi 2014), where authors indirectly mention themselves through references to their article (Example 12), study (Example 13), sections (Example 14), and cognitive components of the article (Example 15).

(12) The article is divided into four parts: (…) (PA-GA)

(13) The findings of this study show (PB-AM)

(14) Data Analysis (PB-GT – Section heading)

(15) This paper reports the analysis of the lexical overlap (…) (PA-ETB)

Locational self-mentions are mostly used in Phase B (76% of all cases), with a reverse proportion of the general trend of the use of personal pronouns, which were more frequent in Phase A.

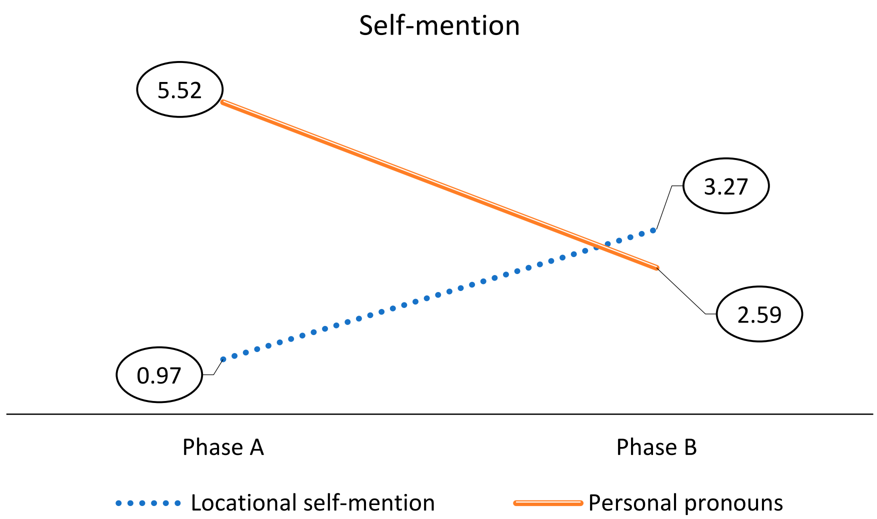


Figure 1. General diachronic trend in self-mentions (normalized frequency ptw)

Overall, as is also visible from Fig. 1, our corpus of RAs shows a slight diachronic decrease in the use of self-references and a marked increase in the use locational self-mentions (with normalized frequency going from 0.97 ptw to 3.27 ptw), along with a general decrease in personal references (from 5.52 ptw to 2.59 ptw) in Phase B. The increasing preference for locational forms of self-mention is in line with the general trend observed in the study of abstracts (Bondi 2014), leading towards what may be seen as a process of depersonalization, but also as a form of self-presentation which lies somewhere between the traditional scientific poles of subjectivity and objectivity.

## 6. Conclusions

This small case study has shown diachronic changes and patterns in RAs written in English by Italian scholars (in English Linguistics) over the last thirty years. A first analysis of our material revealed how English has become a well-established medium of publication in Phase B, while in the early nineties most authors of such a subfield of research published in Italian. As a matter of fact, in Phase A almost half of the authors publishing in English were living in English-speaking countries, so they were probably used to English as their main professional language.

Delving into our corpus, we noticed that over the years the IMRAD structure of empirical research papers has become clearer, with more precise sections, titles, and headings, which, as previously seen, may also depend on the sampled sub-disciplines and their respective approach to their work. Moreover, the theoretical and methodological background have continued to occupy a conspicuous section of articles over the years, with a slight increase in the mentioning of research gaps and in the description of elements of novelty in the introductions. Phase B conclusions have also shown an increase in the use of Yang and Allison's (2003) Move 2, adopted to evaluate a study, with, however, a decrease in the description of the limitations of a study. Titles and headings show a parallel path towards a clearer structure and more complex attempts to reflect both the content and the structure of the article, while also adding an "advertising" element in titles.

Such trends – which seem to match those by Czech authors noticed by Dontcheva-Navratilova in the parallel study (this volume) – might be related to a number of factors that characterize current international publishing. The current proliferation and competition of academic publications seem to favour formats that make reading more efficient (such as the IMRAD structure of RAs or more informative titles and more structured abstracts) and at the same time determine the increasing need of authors to self-promote their work and their research in a competitive job sector.

Microanalysis has also revealed a marked diachronic increase of "locational self-mention" (Bondi 2014) together with a steady decrease in personal self-mention. This reversed trend might be due to the increase of a more empirical methodology in linguistic subfields, which may partly explain the decline in first person singular pronouns. The general decrease in first person personal pronouns seems to be in line with the paradigm of objectivity set by the hard sciences and recently adopted by the humanities, and with the need for increased credibility. The choice of depersonalized locational forms of self-mention, however, also seems to reflect the need for a "third way" between direct involvement and full impersonality. The combination of personal, impersonal and depersonalized forms of reference goes along with the growing awareness of the nature of research in the humanities, which, despite its empirical features, remains interpretative.

It is a choice that emphasizes the role played by interpretation in the act of writing, while at the same time presenting the text as Actor in academic communication.

The changes seen in the frequency of use and functions of personal structures for self-reference do not seem to match the results in the parallel study by Dontcheva-Navratilova, notwithstanding the great convergence observed in the standardization of the format of the empirical RA. The visibility and credibility of the Italian researcher is enhanced in this corpus rather more by the emphasis on the author as researcher than on the actual manifestation of personal presence. Whether this is a matter of stylistic preference of the individual authors or a truly generalizable trend in English-medium RAs remains to be checked against a larger corpus.

Admittedly, it is difficult to generalize on the basis of such a small corpus. It might be necessary to study all these aspects individually and more thoroughly on a much wider corpus. The limits of the corpus, moreover, are not only quantitative; they are also qualitative, as it is limited to papers by Italian English linguists publishing in Italian journals with some international distribution and any substantial hypothesis should be checked against other disciplines and lingua cultural backgrounds. It might even be useful to compare different publication contexts by following the same authors when publishing in English in contexts ranging from international to local or "glocalized", much in the same way as it would be interesting to compare their writing in Italian and in English, or to explore how change is taking place in writing styles of authors from different countries. Combining the focus on Italian authors and Italian publishing may also be a limitation, as it may be worth investigating the two perspectives separately. The use of English as the publishing language in non-Anglophone countries is a relatively recent phenomenon that certainly deserves to be explored further in its diachronic dimension, but it should be seen in the context of the general expansion and development of English-medium publications.

More generally, in fact, we hope to have contributed to showing how diachronic comparative analysis can help trace change in academic discourse by mapping an area – however small – of the general radical change at work in the publishing industry. Technological, economic and distributional factors have greatly influenced academic publishing over the past thirty years, while the global dimension of discourse communities and knowledge communication seems to be able to embrace both elements of standardization and elements of variation that are worth studying.

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Address: Marina Bondi, Department of Studies on Language and Culture, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Largo S. Eufemia 19, 41121 Modena, Italy. marina.bondi@unimore.it.
ORCID code: https://orcid.org//0000-0002-3462-8387.

Address: Jessica Jane Nocella, Department of Studies on Language and Culture, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Largo S. Eufemia 19, 41121 Modena, Italy.
ORCID code: https://orcid.org//0000-0001-8614-2664.