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*Authorial and Professional Identities
in Sports Law Journal Articles*

Scopo di questo studio è il confronto di alcune caratteristiche del discorso in articoli scritti in inglese da autori/autrici singoli/e e multipli/e, pubblicati in riviste internazionali di ambito legale-sportivo, al fine di esaminare i diversi tipi di identità che si istituiscono nei testi. L'ipotesi di partenza è che gli articoli scritti da un/a autore/autrice singolo/a manifestino un'identità più coerente ma al tempo stesso più incerta, mentre, da contro, che gli articoli scritti a più mani manifestino un'identità eterogenea e più assertiva. L'analisi linguistica del corpus è stata focalizzata in particolare sul confronto nell'uso dei pronomi di prima persona e delle parole chiave nei due gruppi di articoli accademici selezionati. Si è tentato così di fare luce sul modo in cui viene costruita l'identità sotto due diversi punti di vista, in base alla definizione data da Wenger (1998) e adattata per questa ricerca: i due processi convergenti della negoziazione e dell'identificazione, che, a loro volta, manifestano rispettivamente l'identità autoriale e quella professionale. I risultati ottenuti dall'analisi dei dati evidenziano all'interno del corpus tendenze comuni più che differenze, ed una prevalenza di caratteristiche di interazione e interdisciplinarietà nelle identità manifestate dagli autori/autrici. Il numero degli autori sembra quindi influenzare solo marginalmente l'espressione della persona autoriale nei testi e l'uso del linguaggio professionale, mentre la costruzione dell'identità si attua principalmente attraverso l'interrelazione con i/le lettori/lettrici e con le comunità professionali degli autori.

1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to compare selected discourse features in single- vs multi-authored articles from English-language sports law journals in order to examine the different kinds of identity they establish. Based on a dynamic, social view of identity, the working hypothesis is that articles written by a single author manifest a more coherent but at the same time a more tentative identity, while in contrast

multi-author articles manifest a mixed, more confident identity. The different level of confidence could be due to the interaction of the different experiences, professions and skills of their authors.

The investigation was carried out through corpus analysis, particularly focusing on the comparison of use of first-person pronouns and keywords in single and multi-authored research articles. It is hoped this will shed light on how identity is built from two different perspectives, as defined by Wenger (1998) and adapted to the present study: the converging processes of negotiability and identification which in turn are respectively a manifestation of authorial and professional identity.

1.1. Identity as a dual process

The multi-faceted concept of identity is approached here from a social perspective and is viewed as a dynamic, composite element, following a tradition that dates back to Berger and Luckmann's view of identity as a "phenomenon that emerges from the dialectic between the individual and society" (1966: 174). Individuals as well as communities establish and manifest their identities through interpersonal exchanges in an ever-developing process of communication and construction of the self. The most interesting evidence to focus on when studying such a process is discourse, since, in Stuart Hall's words, "identities are construed within, not outside discourse" (1996: 4). In line with this approach, the definition of identity adopted here reflects Wenger's (1998: 145) argument that

Building an identity consists of negotiating the meanings of our experience of membership in social communities. The concept of identity serves as a pivot between the social and the individual, so that each can be talked about in terms of the other.

Identity formation can therefore be seen as a dual process consisting of: identification, which defines which meanings matter to a specific community and "gives us material to define our identities" (Wenger 1998: 208); and negotiability, which "refers to the ability, facility, and legitimacy to contribute to, take responsibility for, and shape the meanings that matter within a social configuration" (Wenger 1998: 197).

The process of negotiability, which will be examined first, is determined by what Wenger calls “ownership of meaning”, that is the kind of control and assertiveness applied to meaning by those who produce it (the authors, in the case of academic discourse). This process can reveal how authorial identity is built into the articles, how the authors position themselves and negotiate meaning through their discourse, manifesting themselves more or less explicitly and engaging readers in a relationship. It will be investigated through the examination of frequencies and collocates of first-person pronouns.

Identification establishes forms of membership by providing ‘material’ (i.e. elements of identity) which, through similarities and differences, creates relations between individuals and communities. By studying this process within the context of academic discourse it should be possible to describe the relations authors establish with their professional communities and the kind of professional identity that emerges in their articles. An analysis of the most relevant keywords in the corpus was carried out for this purpose.

2. *The corpus*

The corpus assembled for this study comprises articles from three English-language journals: the *Entertainment and Sports Lawyer* (ESL from now on), published in the USA by the Forum on the Entertainment and Sports Industries of the American Bar Association, the *Entertainment and Sports Law Journal* (ESLJ), published in the UK by the University of Warwick, and *The International Sports Law Journal* (ISLJ), published in the Netherlands by the ASSER International Sports Law Centre. They were chosen because of their prominence among sports law publications and easy availability online. All these journals have an international readership and accept contributions from scholars and practitioners from all over the world. Contributors, therefore, may be either native or non-native English speakers. It is also worth noting that the native speakers are based in different countries and tend to use different varieties of English: the consequent multinational/multicultural nature of the corpus makes this analysis even more relevant. As for text

structure, only ESLJ provides specific guidelines for abstracts, keywords and tables of contents, so that its articles show a partially coherent layout. Generally, however, no single I-M-R-D sequence is used consistently in the corpus.

Only sports-related articles were analysed. Their date of publication spans the period between 2002 and 2006, with the exception of ESLJ (since the 2004 volume was unavailable, the 2007 volume was included instead). Also the 2004 issues of ESL were missing but no further issues or volumes were available to compensate for this lack of material.

The distribution between single- and multi-authored articles turned out to be quite unbalanced, with nearly 85 per cent (i.e. 116 texts, see Table 1) in the former category, while the latter accounted for only 21 texts. The proportion is approximately the same for each journal, thus showing a common trend that should be kept in mind when looking at the corpus analysis. Sports law experts contributing to these journals tend to write articles individually and are usually men (only 14 per cent are women). Most of the articles are taken from ISLJ, which is in fact the only journal devoted entirely to sports law.

| Journals | Sports-related articles | | | |
|--|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| | Single authored | Multi-authored | Total | Tokens |
| <i>Entertainment and Sports Lawyer</i> (USA) (2002-2006) | 10 (4.2%) | 2 (3.9%) | 12 (9%) | 44,331 (4.4%) |
| <i>Entertainment and Sports Law Journal</i> (UK) (2002-2007) | 24 (27.5%) | 6 (48.5%) | 30 (22%) | 276,383 (27.3%) |
| <i>The International Sports Law Journal</i> (Netherlands) (2002-2006) | 82 (68.3%) | 13 (47.6%) | 95 (69%) | 690,162 (68.3%) |
| Total | 116 (897,707 tokens) | 21 (162,339 tokens) | 137 | 1,010,876 |

Table 1. Corpus composition (percentage values read vertically).

3. Authorial identity

In the process of the negotiation of meaning authors can choose from a number of discourse strategies and rhetorical options to position themselves and to establish their own authorial identity vis-à-vis their readers. The interrelations developed through this process contribute to the organisation of the article, thus forming a “polyphonic drama”, insofar as

different voices and roles are dramatised by the author, interacting with readers and other researchers. [...] In Bakhtinian terms, this drama corresponds to a dialogical conception of discourse. Even if the text is formally monological (like the research article), it may be dialogical in that the author gives the floor, explicitly or implicitly, to other voices. (Fløttum *et al.* 2006: 29)

Authors can therefore choose to take an explicitly active role within their articles or to signal their presence in a more implicit way. When manifesting themselves, they can interact with or even include readers in the construction of meaning, or else take a more detached, self-centred role. When investigating this aspect of authorial identity, one of the most significant features is the use of first-person pronouns, which are widely recognised as the most explicit marker of an author’s presence. Hyland (2001: 223) underlines that “first person pronouns [...] are not just stylistic optional extras but significant ingredients for promoting a competent scholarly identity and gaining accreditation for research claims”.

For the purpose of this study, first-person pronouns, whether singular or plural, were first analysed by comparing frequencies and averages across the two subcorpora (as computed with WordSmith Tools) to ascertain the statistical weight of authors’ explicit manifestations. Secondly, the collocates and clusters of *I* and *we* were analysed, drawing particular attention to:

- hedged performatives (mostly mental and research verbs, and hedging formulae)
- textual metadiscourse elements
- references to shared knowledge.

Given the corpus-driven approach chosen here, these three features were selected first and foremost because of the relevance and frequency

of their occurrence in the texts. At the same time, their significance in connection with first-person pronouns, and within academic discourse in general, is widely acknowledged in the literature. For Fløttum *et al.*, “depending on the verb combined with the pronoun, the author may present different ‘self-performances’ or assign different roles to him- or herself” (2006: 72). Particularly, since “the verb meaning contributes to the nature of the author’s presence in the context” (2006: 82), the *mental* and *research* nature of the most relevant collocating verbs will shed light on the ways authors build their identity.

As an element of politeness, hedged performatives are an important hedging resource, commonly used in academic discourse “to mitigate the strength of claims, statements and utterances while tending to face-save to achieve broader acceptance from the recipient as well as to evade possible criticism” (Clemen 1997: 239). As such they play a crucial role in the exploration of author-reader relationships. A special case is that of “hedging formulae [...] that question the completeness of the knowledge reported” (Meyer 1997: 39) and therefore indicate a weaker stance in authors’ positioning. The recurring clusters indicating knowledge shared by authors and readers are typical of the inclusive use of first-person plural pronouns, which aims at “an author-reader togetherness [...] a kind of solidarity between the two” (Fløttum *et al.* 2006: 178) that facilitate the negotiation of meaning.

The metadiscourse elements, frequently found in combination with first-person pronouns, are of the textual metadiscourse kind, that “refers to devices which primarily play the role of organising the text for the reader” (Fløttum *et al.* 2006: 160). Their occurrences and clusters in both subcorpora are primarily meant to help readers navigate the articles, as textual metadiscourse tends to be “inversely related to whether the disciplinary field has an established IMRD-like sectional arrangement” (Swales 2004: 232).

3.1 Frequency graphs

Figure 1 shows the frequencies of first person pronouns, normed per one thousand, in single-authored articles¹. Several peaks can be noted

¹ The frequency counts in the graphs include subject and object pronouns as well as possessive adjectives, both singular and plural.

for a few articles, both in singular and plural pronouns, but generally they are not very frequent. The average values (0.53 for singular and 0.46 for plural pronouns) are in fact quite low, especially compared to the average frequencies for the same pronouns in the British National Corpus² (2007) (10.26 and 4.79 respectively). They are also much lower than the mean frequencies for Fløttum *et al.*'s academic articles corpus, which add up to 2.39 for singular and 2.87 for plural pronouns, when normed per one thousand (Fløttum 2006).

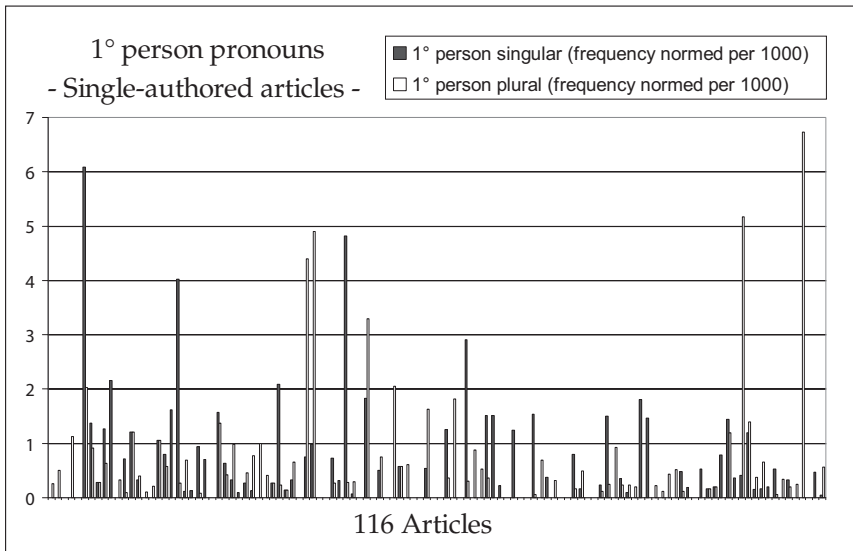


Figure 1. Frequency of first-person pronouns in single-authored articles.

Figure 2 shows first-person pronoun frequencies in multi-authored articles. The average value for plural pronouns (1.13) is quite low, especially compared to Fløttum *et al.*'s (2006) figure (5.44), and is of course lower than in single-authored articles. Surprisingly, first-person *singular* pronouns are found in several articles (average 0.46).

² At first sight, the BNC may not seem to be the ideal reference corpus for this analysis, since it comprises exclusively British texts and includes oral speech. Nonetheless, because of its wide coverage, it is quite useful for identifying the most significant features at this stage of investigation.

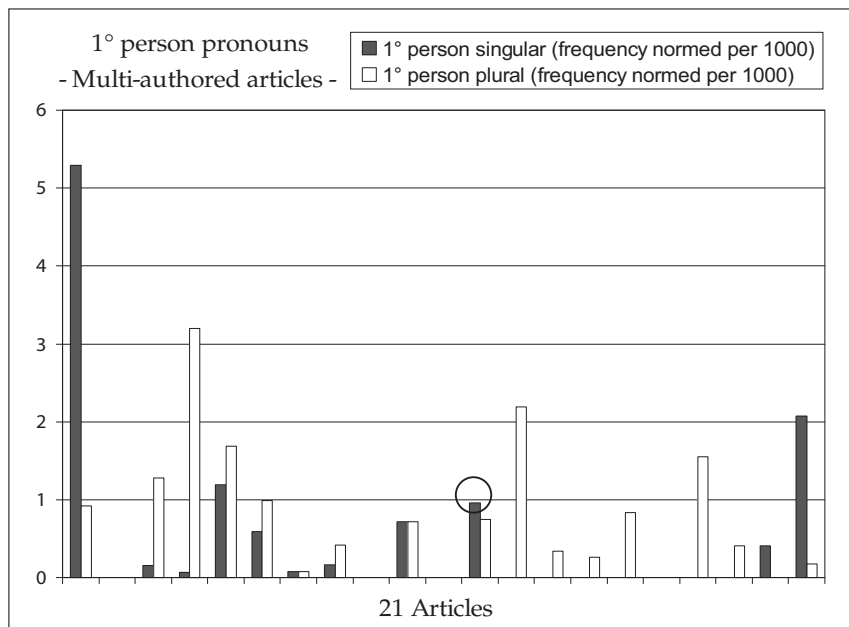


Figure 2. Frequency of first-person pronouns in multi-authored articles.

Such a comparatively frequent use of *I* in the multi-authored articles of this corpus is connected to the intertextuality of the texts: *I* appears in quotations from letters, interviews, declarations, cases, etc. There is, however, one exception (see the circled value in Figure 2) which suggests that one of the three authors writes in the first-person singular when reporting or anticipating elements of his/her research, as in the following example (emphasis added, here and below):

- (1) In this paper *I* examine the evolution of Olympic TV rights by first considering the problems which surrounded the ‘birth of television in Australia’ during the Melbourne Games. (ISLJ14)

Even a cursory exploration of first-person pronoun occurrences indicates that intertextuality (and particularly the use of quotations) is massively present in this corpus, and, since it is also a characterising

feature of legal discourse (cf. Bhatia 1998; Ondelli 2007), it suggests a close relationship between sports law articles and general law texts.

3.2. *Collocates and clusters*

In analysing the main items co-occurring with first-person pronouns the focus was on collocates of *subject* pronouns, so as to ascertain how strongly/actively authors position themselves and therefore, how strong/active their authorial identity is. As Fløttum *et al.* point out, “by using the pronouns in [...] other functions, the authors typically take on a semantically less prominent role than when referring to themselves by subject pronouns” (2006: 73). Since object pronouns and possessive adjectives make weaker stances in authors’ positioning, and, moreover, they are much less frequent in this corpus, they were mostly disregarded in this part of the analysis.

3.2.1. *Single-authored articles*

Among the collocates of *I* in single-authored articles (see Table 2), mental verbs such as *think* and *believe* rank highest, along with hedging devices as *will* and *would like to* (the most frequent 3-word cluster in this subcorpus).

| No. | Collocate | No. | Collocate | No. | Cluster |
|-----|-------------|-----|--------------|-----|-----------------------|
| 1 | I | 17 | <i>would</i> | 1 | <i>I would like</i> |
| 2 | am | 18 | here | 2 | would like to |
| 3 | think | 19 | said | 3 | I do not |
| 4 | believe | 20 | lex | 4 | as I have |
| 5 | discuss | 21 | what | 5 | I believe that |
| 6 | examine | 22 | him | 6 | <i>I will examine</i> |
| 7 | <i>will</i> | 23 | them | 7 | this article I |
| 8 | <i>like</i> | 24 | above | 8 | <i>I will first</i> |
| 9 | describe | 25 | did | 9 | <i>below I will</i> |
| 10 | my | 26 | take | 10 | I am not |
| 11 | say | 27 | first | 11 | <i>I will only</i> |
| 12 | argue | 28 | when | 12 | in this article |

| | | | | | |
|----|-----------|----|-------|----|-------------------|
| 13 | indicated | 29 | use | 13 | I want to |
| 14 | find | 30 | have | 14 | I have already |
| 15 | do | 31 | into | 15 | <i>I will use</i> |
| 16 | below | 32 | there | 16 | <i>I will not</i> |
| | | | | 17 | I think it |

Table 2. Main collocates and clusters of *I* in single-authored articles.

Constructions with *will* are mostly used to anticipate what the author wants to do next, and are often found with deictics and metatextual elements, such as *below*, *here* and *above*, which also rank high, along with performative verbs (e.g. *discuss*, *examine* and *argue*). Authors thus seem to prefer the ‘researcher’ and ‘arguer’ role, often choosing, in Fløttum *et al.*’s (2006) words, the blurred ‘writer-researcher role’ as well. In fact, many of these elements tend to be combined in the same sentence, as can be seen from the following co-occurrences:

- (2) This issue is too broad to deal with in the context of this article, but *I would like to suggest* that the case law of the Court of First Instance and the ECJ concerning the standing of non-privileged applicants according to Article 230 should be made the subject of an amendment. (ISLJ55)
- (3) Below, *I will first describe* the basis for initiatives to promote the concept of social dialogue. (ISLJ48)
- (4) *I believe* that a number of the questions and concerns raised in this piece should be addressed, sooner rather than later. (ISLJ80)

Though switching between roles and strategies, the authors establish a fairly assertive identity not only in positive but also in negative forms, as illustrated in the concordance below:

- (5) *I do not believe* that outright exclusion of individuals can ever be justified under the banner of affirmative action. (ISLJ7)

In cases such as (4-5), authors manifest themselves and express opinions explicitly, while at other times they prefer to use hedges

(examples 2-3) or hedging formulae such as *as far as I know* or *as far as I could establish*, thus blunting their assertiveness and allowing more room for alternative views.

Turning to collocates and clusters of *we* in single-authored articles (see Table 3), the strategy of authors who choose a plural pronoun clearly appears more tentative than that of those who choose *I*. The metonymic use of *we* for *I* creates a shortcut between writer and reader, stimulating solidarity rather than criticism. This acts, albeit blandly, as a shield that reflects authorial tentativeness. Research and mental verbs rank high among collocates, though for example *believe* ranks very low in both lists (*we believe that* is cluster 29). Besides, modal constructions such as *we can*, *we will*, *we have to* (plus research verbs) are more frequent.

| No. | Collocate | No. | Collocate | No. | Cluster |
|-----|--------------|-----|---------------|-----|--------------------|
| 1 | we | 17 | are | 1 | <i>as we have</i> |
| 2 | discriminate | 18 | do | 2 | <i>we have to</i> |
| 3 | analyse | 19 | <i>seen</i> | 3 | we are not |
| 4 | find | 20 | <i>cannot</i> | 4 | we have a |
| 5 | select | 21 | take | 5 | we have seen |
| 6 | our | 22 | here | 6 | <i>we need to</i> |
| 7 | look | 23 | need | 7 | that we are |
| 8 | <i>will</i> | 24 | how | 8 | <i>we will now</i> |
| 9 | <i>have</i> | 25 | point | 9 | we have had |
| 10 | believe | 26 | this | 10 | we have an |
| 11 | <i>can</i> | 27 | above | 11 | we are talking |
| 12 | know | 28 | as | 12 | <i>as we know</i> |
| 13 | consider | 29 | <i>should</i> | 13 | <i>as we will</i> |
| 14 | now | 30 | <i>shall</i> | 14 | are not here |
| 15 | if | 31 | therefore | 15 | are talking about |
| 16 | say | 32 | what | 16 | we analyse the |

Table 3. Main collocates and clusters of *we* in single-authored articles.

Some of the co-occurrences are reader inclusive, e.g. *we can see* or *as we will see* or clusters like *as we have seen* or *as we know*:

- (6) *We should therefore do all we can* to simplify and better coordinate the mechanism for avoiding and resolving disputes among athletes and athletic organizations. (ISLJ8)
- (7) All the Yacht Clubs that have held the Cup, *as we will see*, have contributed to the progressive amendment of the documents and rules that govern the Cup and the setup of the dispute resolution bodies for the event. (ISLJ78)
- (8) In order to pursue the common interests and to fulfil its social objective, the League *as we have seen above* also acts in among others the following capacities: [...]. (ISLJ95)

As for constructions with *will*, these are again predominantly used with adverbs of position to explain how the article develops, in a way that gives authors a prominent ‘writer role’ that is basically reader-exclusive:

- (9) *We will later discuss* this interesting jurisprudence, but *here we stress* that all decisions move from the premise that the hosting club is the holder of the rights to the economic exploitation of the game. (ISLJ23)
- (10) *We will now analyse* the situation in which the manager is dishonest or is not acting in the player’s best interests. (ISLJ91)

Taking into consideration clusters with *my* and *our*, the singular form is used above all to express the author’s stance – *in my view* and *in my opinion* being the top-ranking options (Table 4, left column).

| No. | Clusters of MY | No. | Clusters of OUR |
|-----|-----------------|-----|--------------------------------|
| 1 | in my view | 1 | and in our |
| 2 | in my opinion | 2 | <i>our nations</i> |
| 3 | it is my | 3 | <i>our cultural experience</i> |
| 4 | is in my | 4 | <i>our courts have</i> |
| 5 | my argument is | 5 | <i>our beliefs inevitably</i> |
| 6 | my opinion that | 6 | part of our |
| 7 | is my opinion | 7 | <i>our culture and</i> |
| | | 8 | our analysis of |

Table 4. Main clusters of *my* and *our* in single-authored articles.

On the contrary, the plural form points to a seemingly reader-inclusive community, since the main clusters refer to shared institutions and concepts, such as *nation*, *cultural experience* and *courts* (Table 4, right column) rather than to the author's viewpoint or research activity, which emerges only in cluster 8.

3.2.2. Multi-authored articles

Table 5 shows the most relevant collocates and clusters of *we* in multi-author articles³. Given the limited number of articles in this subcorpus, the computation of collocates could be biased or unbalanced by one or more specific articles, rather than register a general tendency. However, the examples reported below are carefully chosen to represent this group of texts.

The verb *believe* ranks highest in the collocate list, and *want* is not far behind, thus conveying the impression of a widespread assertive strategy in multi-authored articles. This impression is confirmed by *in our view*, the only relevant cluster for the possessive *our*, which expresses the author's position as with *my* (but not *our*) in single-authored texts. At the top of the collocate list are modals like *will* and *can*, as in the other subcorpus, and deictics and connectors including *here*, *again*, *instead*, *however*. The word *article* is itself among collocates and in most-frequent clusters. On the other hand, research verbs are not as frequent as in the other subcorpus.

| No. | Collocate | No. | Collocate | No. | Cluster |
|-----|-----------|-----|-------------|-----|------------------------|
| 1 | we | 12 | what | 1 | <i>as we have</i> |
| 2 | believe | 13 | fact | 2 | we are not |
| 3 | know | 14 | do | 3 | in this article |
| 4 | here | 15 | <i>will</i> | 4 | this article we |
| 5 | again | 16 | however | 5 | again we are |
| 6 | want | 17 | when | 6 | instead we are |
| 7 | are | 18 | article | 7 | <i>we have already</i> |

³ Concordances and collocates of *I* were not analysed in this subcorpus, since the singular pronoun's presence cannot be attributed to authorial manifestations (as explained in subsection 3.1).

| | | | | | |
|----|------------|----|------|----|-----------------|
| 8 | instead | 19 | this | 8 | we are left |
| 9 | have | 20 | that | 9 | are not arguing |
| 10 | <i>can</i> | 21 | as | 10 | we believe that |
| 11 | point | 22 | one | | |

Table 5. Main collocates and clusters of *we* in multi-authored articles.

The authors' desire to express their convictions and to guide readers through the text seems to prevail, in reader-exclusive ways:

- (11) In this article *we will try to answer* the questions raised above. Although *we will take* Dutch law as a starting point, foreign (case) law will also be discussed since *we believe that* the outcome should be more or less the same in the entire (Western) world. (ISLJ15)
- (12) As mentioned above, *in our view* this was the correct decision, as the obligation to organize oneself as a company could be considered unconstitutional (under Article 217 of the Constitution) and could result in serious losses for smaller clubs. (ISLJ38)

Similarly, as in the other subcorpus, *will* constructions are used to anticipate the authors' moves, while other frequent expressions – e.g. *as we have* (plus past participle) – refer readers to previous parts of the article:

- (13) However, *as we have sought to demonstrate*, unless players are given an absolute right to terminate their contracts unilaterally, any legal mechanism to secure some degree of contract stability will result in some form of transfer system [...]. (ESLJ27)
- (14) In the sections which follow *we will briefly highlight* the unarticulated and unproblematised assumptions which inform current legislative, regulatory, cultural and commercial practices. (ESLJ3)

Concordances with *can* and clusters like *as we know*, in contrast, tend to be reader inclusive.

- (15) It will in any case be a fascinating discussion in which in accordance with our freedom of information *we can all participate*. (ISLJ15)
- (16) With the introduction of the ADC the concept of “intentional doping” was introduced as well. It remains however unclear in what manner “intentional doping” is different from the concept of “doping” itself *as we know it*. (ISLJ2)

As mentioned, the limited number of multi-authored articles could partly bias results and considerations concerning this corpus. In the concordances of *we are*, for instance, most occurrences are from the same article, and eight out of ten examples of the *we believe* cluster all occur in the same article. Therefore, although the use of first-person pronouns in multi-authored articles seems to be an assertive strategy, the conclusions for this subcorpus cannot be generalised until further evidence is gained from a larger number of texts.

4. *Professional identity*

The process of identification, which is not separate from the process of negotiability but is constantly being interwoven with it, is shaped by forms of membership to communities of practice (Wenger 1998). It offers clues as to how professional identity is built within texts, that is how authors manifest their belonging to a professional community. In this corpus of sports law articles, it is first of all necessary to identify the professional profile of the authors. As gathered from their short biographical notes (when available), they are mainly from a legal or academic background – working as attorneys, lawyers or members of disciplinary courts on the one hand, and as professors of law and sports law researchers or experts on the other hand. In some cases they bridge these two fields and work, for example, both as attorneys and lecturers. Less frequently, they work in the media or as marketing consultants. In general, these authors seem to bridge different roles and professions, and are often members and practitioners in a plurality of communities. More often than not they claim membership of three or more

professional communities and/or organizations in their biographical note, which shows a marked tendency to multi-disciplinary membership.

In order to investigate differences in the manifestation of professional identity through language across the two subcorpora, the most relevant keywords were analysed, compared and classified by semantic area. The reference corpus used to compute them was, again, the British National Corpus (2007) and the study focused on the first hundred keywords with semantic content. They constitute the set of words specific to each subcorpus, bringing into focus their professional and technical lexis. The top entries in the two keyword lists were very similar: as expected, *sport* and *law* were among the top ten of both lists. There is a slightly higher concentration of legal keywords in single-authored articles, while multi-authored articles converge more on sports terms. The balance is restored midway down and towards the bottom of each list, where the opposite takes place. Remaining differences for keywords were studied and compared in terms of semantic area, as elaborated from data observation and the authors' professional backgrounds.

Figure 3 shows the semantic areas to which the most relevant keywords belong. Predictably, Sport and Law are the most significant semantic areas for keywords in both subcorpora. The keywords listed in the central area are shared by both subcorpora. They include the main terms specific to sports law discourse, such as *Olympic(s)*, *athlete(s)*, *player(s)* and *court(s)*, *regulation(s)*, *contract(s)*, *case(s)*; among these a seminal case for sports law, the *Bosman* case, is itself a keyword. There are also acronyms for leading international sports law organisations, such as *CAS* (the International Court of Arbitration for Sports) and *IOC* (the International Olympic Committee).

Interestingly, very few keywords are exclusively present in one subcorpus, and in every case they seem to be related across the corpus. *Nandrolone*, for instance, is of course a *prohibited substance* according to the rules of *WADA* (the World Anti-Doping Agency); though it only occurs as a keyword in single-authored articles, the multi-authored articles feature general terms connected to it (e.g. *prohibited substance*). This confirms the importance of substance abuse in both subcorpora, with *doping* actually ranking among the top three keywords in both lists.

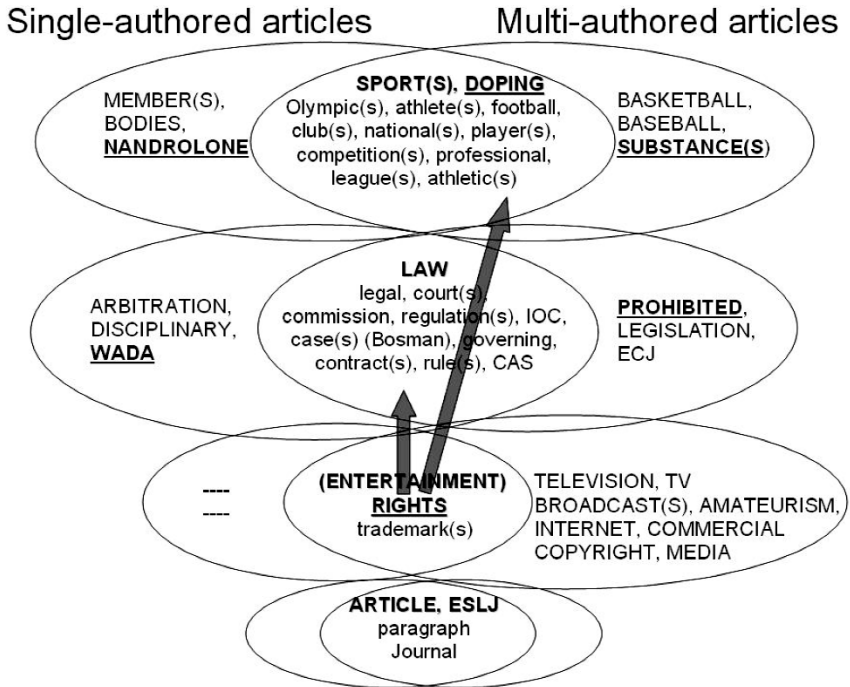


Figure 3. Keywords and their semantic areas.

A striking instance is the keyword *rights*, which ranks high in both subcorpora and belongs to a semantic field that I have termed Entertainment (though *entertainment* itself is not a major keyword in either subcorpus). The low status of *entertainment*, especially when compared to the prominence of *rights*, is quite surprising if we consider that two of the journals (though admittedly contributing fewer texts to the corpus, which includes only sports-related articles) have the word in their name. Multi-authored articles have a particularly high number of keywords in this category, such as *television*, *broadcast(s)*, *media*, etc. Of course the lack of Entertainment-related keywords in the single-authored side of the figure does not mean that they were not present in the subcorpus, but rather that these keywords ranked too low in the list

to be shown here. Finally, textual metadiscourse is a feature so prominent in the whole corpus that it deserves its own semantic field. In fact, *article* is itself a relevant keyword, as are *paragraph* and *journal*.

Not only do the subcorpora share keywords but their semantic areas overlap as well. The keywords *law* and *sport* are interconnected by words such as *doping*, while *rights* connects all three areas, since it is used in co(n)texts involving legal problems related to the broadcasting of sporting events. The authors' multi-membership is thus reflected in their construction of professional identities and in their use of cross-disciplinary language. Wenger's (1998: 158) concept of a 'nexus of multimembership' applies to them perfectly:

Our various forms of participation delineate pieces of a puzzle we put together rather than sharp boundaries between disconnected parts of ourselves. An identity is thus more than just a single trajectory; instead, it should be viewed as a nexus of multimembership.

The *rights* clusters are of special interest (see Table 6)⁴. As mentioned, this keyword is usually related to sports events broadcasts. It is found above all with these collocations in multi-authored articles, which most frequently use clusters (in italics in the table) such as *Olympic TV rights*, *pay TV rights*, *the broadcasting rights*, etc.

| No. | Clusters – Single-authored articles | No. | Clusters – Multi-authored articles |
|-----|-------------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------|
| 1 | <i>of rights to broadcast</i> | 1 | <i>non rights holders</i> |
| 4 | convention on human rights | 4 | <i>Olympic TV rights</i> |
| 6 | the Bill of Rights | 7 | <i>exclusive rights to</i> |
| 7 | <i>the sale of rights</i> | 8 | <i>the rights holder</i> |
| 9 | <i>selling of TV rights</i> | 9 | <i>pay TV rights</i> |
| 10 | <i>sale of broadcasting rights</i> | 10 | <i>the broadcasting rights</i> |
| 12 | Office for Civil Rights | 11 | <i>Sydney Games rights</i> |
| 13 | the rights of persons | 12 | <i>TV rights in</i> |

⁴ The missing entries in Table 6 are due to the selection that had to be made for the sake of brevity. The clusters that do not appear were very similar to the clusters included. For the single-authored subcorpus, 4-word clusters were also considered in order to include entire chunks of significant occurrences.

| | | | |
|----|--|----|--------------------------------|
| 14 | <i>selling of broadcasting rights</i> | 14 | rights and the |
| 16 | the fundamental rights of | 15 | of non rights |
| 22 | protection of human rights | 16 | <i>television rights to</i> |
| 24 | human rights and fundamental | 20 | the exclusive rights |
| 25 | <i>exploitation of broadcasting rights</i> | 23 | <i>Champions League rights</i> |
| 26 | Convention on the Rights | 27 | intellectual property rights |
| 27 | <i>to sell the rights</i> | 28 | <i>games rights holders</i> |

Table 6. Main clusters of *rights*.

Conversely, in single-authored articles the keyword *rights* also features in clusters related to a more general, legal sphere, e.g. *convention of human rights*, *the bill of rights*, *office for civil rights*, as well as in expressions like *the sale of rights*, *selling of TV rights* and *sale of broadcasting rights*. This is an important difference, which seems to indicate a wider range of issues in single-authored articles; however, as explained previously, the limited size of the multi-authored subcorpus and the excessive weight of certain articles within it may have contributed to this difference.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, there appear to be no major differences in the way the dual process of identity construction investigated here is expressed in single- as compared to multi-authored articles in sports law journals. The working hypothesis is not therefore proved. This means that the number of authors only marginally influences their personal manifestation and use of professional language, while the construction of the authorial identity intersects both the relationship with readers and the author's professional community.

Negotiation of meaning and authorial identity take place on three levels in both subcorpora. First with readers directly, through the interpersonal play of inclusive and exclusive strategies in the use of first-person pronouns (however limited) and through the assertion of authors' opinions and beliefs. Secondly, within the texts, through

metatextual elements and internal references, whose strong presence is evidently due to the lack of a rigid I-M-R-D structure in most articles and is aimed at helping readers to navigate the text. Finally, authors negotiate meaning intertextually, especially through quotations (a feature whose statistical frequency calls for further examination). All in all, the small differences between subcorpora depend mainly on the slightly alternative strategies chosen for the negotiation of meaning in each article, regardless of the number of authors.

As for professional identity, the process of identification seems to develop intrinsically within a multi-disciplinary context, without any major differences between the subcorpora. The authors' professional identity is built on what Wenger (1998) terms a "nexus of multimembership" and their language is specific to a number of overlapping communities of practice.

In light of these findings, the single-/multi-authored dichotomy loses importance, for it is reformulated and absorbed into the dual process of identity building, which works interpersonally in the negotiations and intersections between (as well as within) individuals and communities.

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