CHAPTER 6

Competing for funding: Contrasting Slovene and British genre conventions in research grant proposals

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Abstract

Research grant proposals (RGPs) are texts which represent a key step towards the acquisition of research funding and therefore also the development of scholarly knowledge. Their central position is reflected in the fact that to become sucessful members of an academic discourse community, researchers need to develop the skills of writing effective RGPs. Researchers competing for public funding in Slovenia need to submit their proposals both in Slovene as well as English, as the peer review process includes international reviewers, which, of course, requires strong translation or writing skills in L2 English. Acquisition of the latter may be challenging as, due to the confidential and occluded nature of these texts, they have to date not been given much research attention which would shed light on their genre conventions or their intercul-

tural and translational aspects. This chapter offers an overview of an extensive study into the genre of RGPs conducted on a purpose-built corpus of 66 RGPs (Slovene originals and translations into English) submitted in response to public calls for the co-financing of research projects published by the Slovenian Research Agency Poglavje and 88 RGPs submitted to the Research Councils UK (RCUK) in the context of applications for public research funding. It presents the macro-level differences in the rhetorical structure of Slovene and English RGPs, and then narrows its focus on the intercultural and translational aspects of self-mentions in lexical bundles as quantitative indicators of interpersonal style.

Keywords: research grant proposals, academic discourse, intercultural rhetoric, translation studies, lexical bundles

Izvleček

Predlogi raziskovalnih projektov (PRP) so besedila, ki tvorijo ključni korak na poti do financiranja znanstvenih raziskav in posledično razvoja akademskega znanja. O njegovem središčnem pomenu lahko sodimo tudi po tem, da uspešna vključenost v akademsko diskurzno skupnost sloni na vse bolj poudarjeni potrebi po spretnosti oblikovanja učinkovitih PRP. V Sloveniji se v sklopu javnih razpisov za (so)financiranje raziskovalnih projektov zaradi procesa ocenjevanja, ki vključuje tujejezične recenzente, tej spretnosti pridružuje še spretnost pisanja tovrstnih besedil v angleščini oziroma njihovega prevajanja v angleščino. Poglavitna težava za uspešno prevajanje je, da so zaradi svoje zaprte narave (tajnost, nedostopnost) ta besedila deležna vse premalo raziskovalne pozornosti, ki bi osvetlila njihove žanrske in meddisciplinarne lastnosti, predvsem pa v literaturi drugih jezikovnih kombinacij in žanrov že nakazane medkulturnoretorične ter prevodoslovne specifike. Poglavje ponuja pregled obširnejše raziskave žanra PRP, izvedene na namensko zgrajenem korpusu 66 izvirnih slovenskih in v angleščino prevedenih PRP, oddanih v sklopu prijav na javne razpise Javne agencije za raziskovalno dejavnost Republike Slovenije (ARRS) za (so)financiranje raziskovalnih projektov, ter 88 PRP, oddanih v sklopu prijav na financiranje raziskovalnih projektov preko britanskega RCUK. Podrobneje predstavi medkulturno in prevodoslovno primerjavo rabe enega od kvantitativnih kazalcev stopnje osebnosti diskurza, namreč besednih nizov v medosebni funkciji, in specifiko njihovega prevajanja.

Ključne besede: predlogi raziskovalnih projektov, akademski diskurz, medkulturna retorika, prevodoslovje, besedni nizi

1 INTRODUCTION

Successful research grant proposals (RGPs) form a vital part of facilitating research by securing its financing and further dissemination (Myers 1991) and have therefore been described as crucial not only for the work of researchers, but also entire university departments and universities (Tardy 2003, 7). This, of course, means that both postgraduate students and established researchers writing RGPs in English as native (NES) or non-native English speakers (NNES) need to be familiar with the specific conventions of this genre if they are to participate in grant-funded research projects (Connor and Mauranen 1999; Flowerdew 2016; Stašková 2012). However, despite its prominent role in academia, this genre is not intended for the public eye, but remains accessible only to its author(s), the funding agency and reviewers, and has as such been termed an "occluded genre" (Hyland 2005; Swales 1990), a "behind-the-scenes" document (Englander 2014, 26). The obscure nature of RGPs presents academics – those wishing to study its conventions, as well as those needing to produce such texts – with considerable difficulties. Moreover, with the growing internationalization of research communities, researchers applying for funding need to be aware of potential discipline-specific rhetorical conventions of RGPs not only in their native language, but in English as well (Hyland 2002). Such is the case in Slovenia, where proposals for public funding through the National Research Agency (ARRS) require RGPs to be submitted in English as well as Slovene, as the RGP review process includes international reviewers. RGP reviewers may come from various cultural backgrounds, and it is quite likely that English is not going to be the first language of the person reading the RGP. At the same time, it has been shown that, with the internationalization of academia, the pervasive use of English has also brought with it Anglo-American rhetorical norms and conventions in constructing academic texts (House 2001). Therefore, in accord with the theory of Toury (1995), reviewers may (consciously or not) expect translated RGPs to read as native-speaker English texts and find acceptable those RGPs which conform to the conventions of the target culture. Since, to date, studies in intercultural rhetoric have revealed the existence of several differences between the rhetorical conventions governing academic discourse in English and other Slavic languages (e.g. Dontcheva-Navrátilová 2013, Chamonikolasová 2005, Čmejrková 2007 (for Czech); Lewandowski 2015, Duszak 1997 (for Polish), Vassileva 2001 (for Bulgarian), Yakhontova 2002 (for Ukrainian and Russian)), pronounced differences between original Slovene and original British RGPs may well cause problems in the process of translation of RGPs from Slovene into English.

As part of a broader domain of academic discourse, the RGP does share with other research genres (e.g., conference proposals, research articles (RAs), RA introductions (Cotos 2019, 15; Connor and Mauranen 1999, 60)) general rhetorical and

discourse conventions of academic writing, e.g. the formality of register, citing and referencing of sources, and presence of some similar rhetorical moves (Swales 1990), such as *establishing a territory, indicating a gap, reporting previous research, describing means* (Cotos 2019, 17). However, as the RGP writer aims to persuade the funding agency/reviewer of the value of the proposed idea by highlighting its importance, their own competence to conduct the research, and benefits of the expected outcomes, the rhetorical conventions of RGPs have been characterized as typical of *persuasive* (Connor 2000; Connor and Mauranen 1999), *promotional* (Koutsantoni 2009; Stašková 2012), *promissory* (Swales and Feak 2000) and *problem-oriented* (Connor and Mauranen 1999) discourse. Consequently, as Tseng (2011, 20) puts it, "writing a proposal is not the same as writing a research paper", and RGP writers need to be familiar also with the conventions the entire genre system (Tardy 2003, 33). In the context of an interview-based study investigating the process of peer review in the assessment of RGPs, conducted by Porter (2005), respondents (RGP reviewers) outlined the stylistic features of a well-presented RGP. These included clarity and conciseness of expression, and a well-organized and readable text conveying the enthusiasm and commitment of the researcher, which would spark a similar level of interest and enthusiasm in the reviewer. Conversely, an abstract, information-heavy and highly academic writing style was considered a feature of a poorly written RGP.

An increased level of reader-writer interaction and personal engagement of the author is, according to Hyland (2005, 65), more and more characteristic of English academic discourse in general. It is realized particularly through the elements of metadiscourse he labels "interactional" (which directly correspond to Halliday's (2004) interpersonal metafunction), which include self-mentions, hedges, boosters, attitude and engagement markers (Hyland 2005, 65). Self-mentions in particular have been investigated as prominent elements of self-promotional discourse (e.g. Harwood 2005a; Stašková 2012) and their use as "means of promoting a competent scholarly identity" (Hyland 2012, 145) has even been regarded a "marketing tactic" (Harwood, 2005a, 1217). On the other hand, compared to Anglo-American academic discourse, Central European academic discourse has been characterized as less interactive, more writer-oriented, and having more of a backgrounded authorial presence (Dontcheva-Navrátilová 2013, 10). More specifically, writing in Slavic languages has been said to lack the elements of promoting and persuading (Stašková 2012), which are otherwise central to the genre of RGP, and use structures of 'telling', as opposed to 'selling' (Swales and Feak 2004, 214; Yakhontova 2002). This, in effect, may produce discourse focused on the information and content as opposed to the interaction between the reader and the writer. Similarly, studies by Pisanski Peterlin comparing English and Slovene academic discourse (e.g. 2005, 2011) reveal a less pronounced interpersonal metafunction in Slovene texts.

Focusing more specifically on the cultural differences in the use of self-mentions in Slovene and English, research shows that in RA the use of self-mentions, particularly the 1st-person pronoun *we,* is much more frequent in native-speaker English papers than in non-native-speaker papers in English produced by Slovene authors (Grad 2010). A study by Pahor (forthcoming) compares the use of pronominal personal references in Slovene academic writing by undergraduate and postgraduate students and translations into English and finds that pronominal authorial references are frequently rendered with impersonal structures in the translation of texts into English. A survey focusing on the use of 1st-person pronouns in Croatian and English RA by Bašić and Veselica Majhut (2017) shows that Croatian researchers prefer the use of impersonal references rather than explicit self-mentions, shying away in particular from 1st-person singular pronouns and striving to achieve an objective tone of writing which they perceive as the norm of academic discourse. As can thus be seen, there are considerable cultural differences in the use of these rhetorical elements, and they also seem to cause certain challenges in the process of translation and writing in English as L2.

Generally, researchers tend to learn the conventions of the genres they need to produce simply through exposure to similar texts (Connor and Mauranen 1999, 47). As grant applicants usually have no access to previous successful RGPs from their discipline or even native-speaker RGPs (when writing in English as L2), they tend to learn the complexities of the genre via "trial and error" (Connor 2000, 14; Tardy 2003, 33). This, however, may not be the most efficient way, as the benefits of targeted instruction supported by explicit explanations have been shown to outweigh those of exposure alone (e.g., Flowerdew 2016; García Izquierdo and Borja Albi 2008; Koutsantoni 2009: 54). The occluded nature of this genre – and the consequent difficulty sourcing these texts – presents the main obstacle for incorporating it into courses of academic writing (Flowerdew 2016). Producing RGPs in a foreign language (i.e. English, as is the case in Slovenia) might be even more of a struggle[1] in case of translators, who are most often not experts in the discipline and have hence been termed "outsiders" (García Izquierdo and Montalt 2002). In addition to using discipline-appropriate terminology, the work of translators also entails following culture-specific genre conventions, i.e. a set of skills which García Izquierdo and Borja Albi (2008, 45) refer to as "contrastive genre knowledge or genre competence", a concept closely related to what House terms "application of a cultural filter" (2006, 30). Producing a text which applies such a filter requires access to the relevant findings of contrastive studies comparing the conventions of a certain genre in different languages/cultures. So far not much is known about the discourse conventions governing this genre in Slovenian, and neither have there been any contrastive studies focusing on their differences in Slovenian and English.

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1   "Genre-as-Struggle" is a metaphor used by Tseng (2011) to describe the process of composing RGPs.

In the light of the mentioned distinctive features of the genre of RGP, namely its obscurity, distinctive rhetorical features and promotional nature, as well as potential intercultural differences, this paper aims to compare native-speaker Slovene and native-speaker British RGPs[2] to define the differences in their rhetorical structure and use of self-mentions as a rhetorical element of persuasion, which is characteristic of promotional discourse (e.g., Harwood 2005a; Hyland 2005; Stašková 2012).

The present study forms part of an extensive research project investigating the genre of RGPs in Slovenia and the UK (Zajc 2012, 2014, 2015). Following an overview of previous studies on the genre, the paper presents the respective socio-cultural contexts of RGPs submitted for national funding, describes the compilation and structure of the purpose-built parallel and comparable corpus of RGPs, and, finally, focuses on the Slovene-English intercultural differences in the rhetorical structure of RGPs and use of self-mentions (in lexical bundles).

2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

2.1 Studies on the genre of RGPs

To date, relatively little research attention has been devoted to the genre of RGPs. As mentioned above, the main reason behind this lies in the difficulty of sourcing a substantial enough corpus of RGPs (e.g. Cotos 2019, 17–18; Flowerdew 2016), as these are high-stakes and confidential texts, which their authors are not willing to disclose for analysis. While poor accessibility is arguably the biggest problem, Feng and Shi (2004, 8) mention two other issues that may prove problematic in compiling a corpus of RGPs for linguistic research, namely that of the substantial length of national RGPs, and discrepancies in RGPs stemming from the related funding agency's specific requirements. The challenging task of RGP sourcing becomes even more evident in the context of intercultural rhetoric or translation studies, as such studies would entail obtaining a large enough corpus of comparable RGPs from two or more cultural/linguistic contexts. This may be the reason why studies focusing on RGPs have more often than not been based on a rather limited number of texts or have only focused on their individual sections.

While most of the existing research focuses on the rhetorical structure of RGPs in English, following the model of rhetorical moves analysis introduced by Swales (1990), Connor and Mauranen (1999), Connor (2000), Feng and Shi (2004), Koutsantoni (2009) and selected lexico-grammatical features of RGPs (e.g. Feng

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2 Although English is the *lingua franca* in the academic world used by both native and non-native speakers, British English will be used for comparison in this study, as it is a standard variety of English.

and Shi 2004), studies on intercultural aspects of RGP writing have been limited to examining RGPs in English by NNES (e.g., Connor and Mauranen 1999; Feng 2011; Pascual and Unger 2010). Even though the need for more studies focusing on their cross-linguistic/cultural aspects has been recognized (e.g., Feng 2008; Flowerdew 2016), save for a study by Feng (2008), who examined research grant writing in Chinese and compared it against her previous study focusing on Canadian English-language RGPs (Feng and Shi 2004), none have been conducted on a comparative corpus of RGPs in two languages.[3]

The first scholarly examination of the genre of RGPs to apply the model of rhetorical structure by Swales (1990) is that of Connor and Mauranen (1999), who examined a corpus of 34 RGPs in English by Finnish authors (NNES) and compared the identified rhetorical moves against that of the RA. The results of this study reveal rhetorical moves that are typical of the genre of RGPs (*Territory*, *Gap*, *Goal*, *Means*, *Reporting Previous Research*, *Achievements*, *Benefits*, *Competency Claim*, *Importance Claim* and *Compliance Claim*). Applying the same model to a corpus of 14 RGPs in English written by NES from the USA, Connor (2004) identified certain discrepancies between individual texts in terms of the presence, order/sequence and length of the moves. Also focusing on the rhetorical structure of RGPs is the study by Feng and Shi (2004), who analysed nine RGPs in English submitted to a Canadian research agency and found that their RGPs do not include the *Compliance Claim* move identified by Connor and Mauranen, but do include a move that had not yet been identified in previous studies (*Communication of Results*). Koutsantoni (2009, 54) applied the same methodology to a corpus of 14 RGPs submitted to the Research Councils UK (by NES) and found a great complexity of individual moves, highlighting the influence of not only the author's native language/culture and discipline, but also the funding agency's guidelines and assessment criteria. More importantly, she distinguished another previously unidentified move, namely *Time Plans*. Feng (2008) applied the same method of investigation on Chinese RGP writing, analysing the rhetorical moves in nine RGPs, and found a move that is unique to Chinese RGPs (*Research Difficulties*). Pascual and Unger (2010) focused on interpersonal (engagement) elements in the *Benefits* and *Importance Claim* sections of two RGPs in English by Argentinian NNES. Feng (2011) performed a rhetorical moves analysis followed by an analysis of keywords, hedges and boosters on a total of 37 RGP abstracts in English by NNES (in Hong Kong) and the citation practices (in the *Literature Review* section and the *Gap* rhetorical move). Fazel and Shi (2015) examined the citation practices in six RGPs by doctoral students in Canada (NES and NNES). The corpus of RGPs compiled by Cotos (2019) is the most substantial one to date, as it includes a total of 91 proposals in English (US); however, the study

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3   Within a related genre of non-profit grant proposals (NGPs), we can find two such studies: one by Connor and Wagner (1998) on the differences between non-profit grant proposals (NGPs) by NES and NNES (Latino non-profits) and one by Khadka (2014), comparing eight American NGPs to six Nepalese NGPs.

limited its investigation of rhetorical moves and n-grams to the BI (Broader Impact) section.

2.2 Competing for public research funding in Slovenia and the UK

In Slovenia, researchers competing for public funding of research projects (basic, applied, postdoctoral) apply to public calls for the (co)financing of research projects published annually by the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS). Since 2008, the application, consisting of two application forms and appended documents, is submitted in an entirely electronic form. Since 2007, the review process is conducted in two phases, whereby, typically, applicants first submit a Phase I Application Form (comprising a biography and the main achievements of the principal investigator and a brief description of the research project) and, having successfully passed through Phase I, are then invited to submit their Phase II Application Form which contains the achievements of all the project group members, the allocation of their workload (along with appended statements of intent) and a detailed description of the proposed research project (the RGP itself). Due to the inclusion of international reviewers,[4] both application forms must be completed in Slovene as well as in English.[5]

In the UK, the financing of scholarly research from the national budget takes place through various research councils, government agencies and national academies (BIS 2014, 10). Research is also funded through private funds, e.g. by philanthropic organizations such as the *Leverhulme Trust*. (BIS 2014, 43). To allow for a comparative overview of the research funding procedures in Slovenia and the UK, we shall focus only on the proposal submission and assessment procedures established by the largest of these funding bodies, namely the Research Councils UK (RCUK), a strategic partnership of a total of seven research councils, covering specific fields of research. These are the *Arts and Humanities Research Council* (AHRC), *Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council* (BBSRC), *Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council* (EPSRC), *Economic and Social Research Council* (ESRC), *Medical Research Council* (MRC), *Natural Environment Research Council* (NERC), and *Science and Technology Facilities Council* (STFC) (BIS 2012, 2014, 13). As in Slovenia (ARRS), applications to calls for proposals are

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4   In 2006 and 2007, applications were assessed by one national and one international reviewer in Phase I and two international reviewers in Phase II. Currently, applications are assessed by two international reviewers in Phase I and three international reviewers in Phase II (Articles 92, 94 and 97 of the Rules on the Procedures for the (Co)financing and Assessment of Research Activities and on Monitoring the Implementation of Research Activities).

5   The Public Call for the (Co-)Financing of Research Projects in 2019 states that reviewers receive the English part (entry fields) of the application.

submitted electronically through *the Research Councils' Joint Electronic Submission System (Je-S)*[6], which also includes the guidelines for completing the application form.[7] The *Case for Support (CfS)* can be considered as the actual RGP as a concise, specific and clear explanation of the proposed research on the basis of which the reviewers are able to assess the proposal (AHRC 2019, 55). It is not part of the application form, as is the case in Slovene grant applications, but takes the form of an attachment (along with *Justification of Resources*, the principal investigator's CV, *List of Publications*, etc.). The peer review process for the RGPs submitted to the RCUK takes place in two stages, whereby in the first stage proposals are evaluated by external experts from similar disciplines in the UK or abroad, and in the second stage these reviews and the applicant's subsequent comments are considered by the Research Council Board/Panel, which decides on whether or not to fund the proposed project (RCUK 2015: 4, AHRC 2015a).

3   CORPUS AND METHOD

3.1   Corpus compilation

To investigate the cultural differences of the genre of RGPs in Slovene and English, it was necessary to build a parallel (consisting of RGPs in Slovene and their translations into English) and comparable (consisting of original RGPs in English) corpus of RGPs, which was to be balanced in terms of size, discipline and the approximate time-frame of submission, and the comparable part of which would only incorporate texts written by NES (as explained in the Introduction). As RGPs are not publicly accessible, the task of compiling such a corpus proved to be a long and demanding one.

Slovene RGPs and their translations into English were obtained from the Science and Research Centre Koper – SCR. Having signed a confidentiality agreement, the RGPs submitted by the associates of the SRC in the period from 2004 to 2009 were sourced from the Centre's database of submitted proposals.

For the comparable part of the corpus, grant holders of previously awarded grants published on the web portal of the RCUK were contacted with a request for access to their RGP for the purposes of linguistic research. This request also contained a clear statement that their RGPs would be anonymized and used for research purposes only, whereby no personal or confidential data would be disclosed. Approximately 15% of the researchers responded to the request favourably.

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6   https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk

7   https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Handbook/Index.htm#pages/NavigationGuidance/NavigationGuidance.htm

There is a slight discrepancy in the success of the RGPs included in the respective parts of the corpus. While all the RGPs included in the comparable part of the corpus were successful due to the nature of obtaining the texts (by contacting the principle investigators of funded projects), the parallel part of the corpus includes both successful and unsuccessful proposals, the reason for this being that leaving out unsuccessful RGPs would make the already challenging task of compiling a balanced enough corpus representative of individual disciplines even more demanding if not impossible. Moreover, the reasons for an RGP not being successful may not lie in the quality of its text in terms of specific genre and rhetorical conventions, but may be dependent on other factors as well, such as specific priorities of the call, annual funding resources, etc.

As in both cultural contexts grant applications consist of the application form(s) and several attachments, a decision had to be made regarding which sections of the application form(s) to include in the corpus as the actual RGP. In the Slovene context the section from Phase II Application Form entitled *Research Project Proposal*[8] was chosen as the RGP, and only the subsections containing connected stretches of text (connected discourse) were included in the corpus, while those containing mere lists, e.g. codes, amounts, bibliography, were left out. As for the British context, the CfS was included in the corpus, and in the few cases where the researchers also contributed the entire application form, the following parts were also included: *Objectives, Summary, Beneficiaries, Impact Summary, Communications Plan and User Engagement,* and *Outputs,*[9] so as to allow for a better comparability of the parallel and comparable corpus in terms of text length within individual sections.

3.2   Corpus structure

The parallel and comparable corpus of RGPs compiled for the purposes of the research contains a total of 1,093,243 words and 220 RGPs. Its parallel part comprises a total of 66 original RGPs in Slovene (SLO RGPs) and the same number of translations into English (TRA RGPs). Although information is not available on the identity of the translators of individual proposals, according to the SRC administrative services there were seven translators cooperating with the SRC on a regular basis in that time period, which means that although "outsiders" to the field, in some cases at least, the translators might have been familiar with the field within which they were translating. They were all translating into English as L2, and these texts had not been edited by NES. Some texts may have been

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8   *Predlog raziskovalnega projekta.*

9   The RCUK application forms vary to a certain extent by individual research councils.

translated or subsequently edited (parts of the text added or deleted) by the re-searchers themselves. The comparable part of the corpus consists of a total of 88 original British RGPs written by NES. As can be seen in Table 1, the RGPs come from three scientific domains and a total of 11 disciplines, with the percentage of ENG RGPs from each domain and discipline largely corresponding to that of the parallel part of the corpus.

Table 1: Structure of the parallel and comparable corpus of RGPs

Domain	Discipline	SLO RGPs			TRA RGPs		ENG RGPs		
		No. of RGPs	Word count	% of words	Word count		No. of RGPs	Word count	% of words
HUMANI-TIES	Linguistics	9	27,006	7.7%	33,783	7.9%	12	25,239	8.0%
	History	14	101,460	29.0%	122,849	28.9%	15	43,036	13.6%
	Archaeology	4	20,661	5.9%	25,949	6.1%	10	26,992	8.5%
	Art	4	14,534	4.2%	18,398	4.3%	5	21,116	6.7%
	Philosophy	7	47,166	13.5%	56,585	13.3%	5	13,217	4.2%
	Theology	4	24,257	6.9%	29,735	7.0%	4	17,383	5.5%
	Total	**42**	**235,084**	**67.2%**	**287,299**	**67.5%**	**51**	**146,983**	**49.6%**
SOCIAL SCIENCES	Cultural Anthropology	6	30,448	8.7%	36,574	8.6%	8	32,066	10.1%
	Social & Human Geography	5	30,371	8.7%	35,741	8.4%	6	26,470	8.4%
	Sociology	3	12,518	3.6%	15,751	3.7%	8	37,995	12.0%
	Total	**14**	**73,337**	**21.0%**	**88,066**	**20.7%**	**22**	**96,531**	**30.5%**
NATURAL SCIENCES	Plant Genetics, Food	6	22,891	6.5%	27,811	6.5%	9	39,279	12.4%
	Zoology	4	19,936	5.7%	22,226	5.2%	6	33,800	10.7%
	Total	**10**	**42,827**	**12.2%**	**50,037**	**11.8%**	**15**	**73,079**	**23.1%**
TOTAL		**66**	**351,248**	**32.0%**	**425,402**	**39.0%**	**88**	**316,593**	**29.0%**

The parallel and comparable parts of the corpus are balanced not only in terms of text/word count and discipline, but also with regard to the time period of RGP submission. Overall, the RGPs included were submitted between the years 1996 and 2010, with the average year of submission being 2006,3 for SLO RGPs and 2006,2 for ENG RGPs.

Compilation of the corpus entailed conversion of .doc, .docx and .pdf files into the .txt format, whereby line breaks were removed but the paragraph structure of documents was preserved to also allow for qualitative examination of individual

texts. All RGPs were anonymized and classified according to discipline. Each .txt file was named with an acronym denoting the research field (e.g. ARC – Archaeology, HIS – History), followed by the letter E for original English texts, S for Slovene texts, T for translations, and an ordinal number.

3.3   METHODS

3.3.1 Contrastive analysis of the formal and rhetorical structure of Slovene and British RGPs

To obtain a clearer insight into the potential differences between the rhetorical structure of RGPs in the two cultural contexts, the texts of individual RGPs were first manually examined and qualitatively compared in terms of their formal structure (sections), requirements of respective funding agencies (JeS Helpdesk) and presence of rhetorical moves as defined by Connor in Mauranen (1999), Feng and Shi (2004), and Koutsantoni (2009) (*Territory, Gap, Goal, Means, Reporting Previous Research, Achievements, Benefits, Competence Claim, Importance Claim, Compliance Claim, Time Plans, Communication of Results*).

3.3.2 Self-mentions (LBs) in the parallel and comparable corpus of RGPs

The second aim of the study was to quantitatively explore and compare the use of self-mentions in individual parts of the corpus (SLO RGPs, TRA RGPs and ENG RGPs). To this end, a quantitative corpus-driven analysis of lexical bundles (LBs) in the function of self-mentions was performed. Introduced by Biber et al. (1999) and subsequently widely applied in studies of academic discourse (e.g., Allen 2009; Biber et al. 2004; Cortes 2004; Hyland 2008a, 2008b; Vo 2019; Wright 2019), LBs have been defined as statistically most frequently occurring combinations of words across a minimum number of texts in a given corpus (Biber et al. 1999). In identifying a string of words as an LB, existing studies typically set the distribution criterion to five texts, i.e., a string of words must appear in at least five texts (e.g., Biber et al. 2004, Cortes 2004), but use different cut-off frequencies, i.e., the number of times an LB occurs in the corpus per million words: 10 (Biber et al. 1999), 20 (Cortes 2004 and 2008; Hyland 2008a and 2008b), 25 (Chen and Baker 2010), 40 (Biber 2006 and Jablonkai 2009, 2010). In the present study, a frequency cut-off point of 40 per million words for three and four-word units and 20 per million words for five-word units was used

(following the suggestion of Biber et al. (1999: 990) to use lower cut-off frequencies for longer LBs).

For the purposes of investigating the use of lexical bundles, the corpus was processed using the WordSmith 5.0 software (Scott 2008), and also by the AntConc corpus tool (https://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/). The WordSmith software (Scott 2008) was used to generate lists of three-, four- and five-word LBs in each part of the corpus of RGPs (SLO RGP, TRA RGPs and ENG RGP), whereby 40/mil was set as the cut-off frequency for three- and four-word LBs and 20/mil was set as the cut-off frequency for five-word bundles. Since the three parts of the corpus differ in size in terms of word count, the results were normalized to 100,000 words. Thus, the cut-off frequency used for the extraction of three- and four-word LBs was set as 14 occurrences (tokens) for SLO RGP, 17 tokens for TRA RGP and 12 tokens for ENG RGP; while the cut-off frequency for five-word LBs was seven tokens for SLO RGP, eight tokens for TRA RGP and six tokens for ENG RGP. To avoid potential distortion of results caused by idiosyncratic uses of strings of words by individual authors or translators, the minimum requirement of an LB occurring in at least five different texts was used, which is in line with the recommendations of the study by Biber and Barbieri (2007, 267).

It should also be noted that some LBs were found to be part of longer LBs, whereby in some cases there was a complete overlap (e.g., *'project team will'* (55 tokens in TRA RGPs) in *'the project team will'* (also 55 tokens in TRA RGPs). In such cases, these occurrences were only counted once. In other cases, the shorter LB was found to be part of a longer LB only in some occurrences, e.g. *'we will be'* (13 tokens in ENG RGPs) was part of the LB *'we will be able to'* (six occurrences in ENG RGPs) in six cases. As suggested by Bychkovska and Lee (2017) and Lu and Deng (2019), in such cases of overlap, the number of occurrences of shorter LBs was subsumed under the longer LBs. To this end, a concordance analysis using the AntConc software (Anthony 2014) was performed to verify that the overlap was in fact complete.

Although not always structurally complete (Biber et al. 1999), it is possible to discern the function of LBs in a text and classify and compare them from a functional perspective. For the purposes of this study, LBs in the function of self-mentions were compared between the three parts of the corpus. To first classify the obtained LBs according to their function in the text, Hyland's (2008a) classification of the function of LBs (*research-oriented, text-oriented* and *participant-oriented*) was applied, complemented by his classification of metadiscourse (2005a), in which he includes self-mentions as a separate category within the interactional (participant-oriented) elements of metadiscourse. While Hyland (2000a) limits self-mentions to first-person pronouns, other authors (e.g. Heng and Tan 2010;

Pho 2008; Walková 2019) also include other self-references such as *the writer* and *the author*. Hence, such (non-pronominal) self-references were also taken into account (e.g. *the project team*). Walková 2019 (61–62) distinguishes the following rhetorical functions of self-mentions: stating the researcher's contribution to the discipline, expounding an argument, outlining the research procedure, stating intention, acknowledging the work of others and stating the plans for future research. She states (ibid., 63) that of all the possible forms of self-referencing, the 1st-person pronoun (e.g., *we*) as the subject presenting the author as an active agent indicates the most powerful authorial presence.

The list of LBs generated by the WordSmith software was manually checked for all occurrences of self-mentions, which resulted in a list of LBs containing self-mentions for each subcorpus (SLO RGP, TRA RGP and ENG RGP). Where necessary, the AntConc concordancing tool (Anthony 2014) was used to investigate the context of individual LBs in order to verify their function in the text.

4   RESULTS

4.1   Formal and rhetorical structure of RGPs

On the whole, the requirements of the Slovene and British funding agencies as to what information to include in the application forms and their attachments are very similar, although the specific guidelines of individual research councils within the RCUK consequently also affect the structuring of the CfS and the entire application form. Thus, some sections of the RCUK application forms are unique to individual research councils (e.g. *Technical Summary* and *Animal Costs* to the BBSRC, *Communications Plan and User Engagement* and *Data Collection* to the ESRC, *Outputs* to the AHRC). The ARRS application forms, on the other hand, show substantial changes over the years (2004–2009). Not only have there been changes in the application procedure (single-phase to two-phase) which, naturally, affected the application form structure and number of application forms, there have also been changes in the sequence and presence of individual sections, as well as their headings and translations into English. To allow for a simpler overview, only the English terms were used for the Slovene RGPs in the formulation in which they were presented in the 2009 ARRS application form, while the Slovene wording is provided in the footnotes.

The most comparable and similar sections in the two sets of RGPs were found to be the *Proposal Abstract – Summary (SLO RGP – Example 1)* and *Summary (ENG RGP – Example 2)*. In both cultural contexts, the author is expected to place the

proposed research into the academic and broader context, to justify the need to conduct the research, to state their motivation for the project, to specify its aims, and to list the potential benefits of its expected results.

Example 1 (SOCS1): Temeljni cilj projekta je v najširšem pomenu celovito preučiti in analizirati ...

[*Goal*] Projekt … predvideva izvedbo kvantitativnega in kvalitativnega raziskovanja na ... Analiza … vidikov … vključuje dve ravni raziskovalnega interesa: …. V primeru prve se bo ugotavljalo …. V primeru … ravni pa se bo ugotavljalo … [*Means*] Pri navedenih determinantah preučevanja se pričakuje razlike glede na … [*Achievements*] Zaradi očitne odsotnosti raziskovalnega interesa in posledičnega pomanjkanja raziskav in literature, ki bi obravnavala fenomen … [*Gap*] v Sloveniji se omenjen projekt izpostavlja kot še posebno pomemben … [*Importance Claim*] bodo rezultati projekta uporabni kot osnova za nadaljnje komparativne študije in temeljno raziskovanje, kot del izobraževalnih kurikulov …, kot strokovne podlage za …. [*Benefits*]

Example 2 (CULE2): The proposed project investigates the ways in which… [*Territory*] It asks… To

address these theoretical questions it takes the example of... [*Means*] … the project addresses

current sociological debates by asking whether … [*Goal*]

What we want to find out is how … [*Goal*] To address this question, five focus groups … Case studies will therefore explore … [*Means*]

The work will be disseminated to academic audiences through a symposium, at conferences and in scholarly books and journals; wider dissemination to more general audiences will be achieved by a website, an interim workshop with … [*Communication of Results*]

The AHRC guidelines to British RGPs require applicants to formulate their CfS by first stating the Research Questions or Problems and providing the Research Context. Although the sequence of these headings is not strictly prescribed, most researchers within the humanities tend to structure their proposals in this sequence. Conversely, RGPs from the field of social sciences tend to first provide the research context and then outline their research questions.

In the section titled *Research Questions or Problems* applicants are required to clearly state the research questions or issues they intend to address (AHRC 2019). Although the authors tend to do this applying the rhetorical move of *Goal*, they also incorporate rhetorical moves of *Territory*, *Gap* and *Reporting Previous Research* and thus put the stated objectives into perspective (Example 3).

Example 3 (ARCE4): The proposed research will explore … – a region that has undergone little

systematic research, yet is central to the question of …. [*Territory, Gap*] Recent findings

…have produced evidence of … [*Reporting previous research*] In order to assess the

development of …, the objectives of the proposed project are to 1) excavate … 2) describe,

analyze… 3) conduct systematic survey of … [*Goal*] the study aims to understand the

processes through which …. These processes include … The study will therefore consider

the ways in which … and will investigate the ways in which … Through doing this, the study

aims to establish … [*Goal*]

Within the investigation of … a number of core questions emerge:

- Does …? – How do …? – What is …? – What qualities …? – How are these …? [*Goal*]

The corresponding section of Slovene RGPs is that of Scientific Background, Problem Identification and Objective of the Proposed Research[10] in which applicants are required to describe the current situation in the field, outline the research questions or problems, justify the need for this research, and state its objectives and methodology. Similarly to British RGPs, authors were also found to apply the rhetorical moves of Territory, Gap and Goal. However, this section differs from that of Research Context in that it also includes the move of Means (description of methods to be used) (Example 4), whereas in British RGPs, this move is mostly part of the Research Methods section.

Example 4 (LINS3): Raziskava temelji na dosedanjih ugotovitvah …. Gre namreč za dejstvo, da …

[*Territory*] Predvidena raziskava bo skušala poiskati celovit odgovor na vprašanja:

a) …; b) …; c) … [*Goal*] Raziskava bi bila tako dvodelna: 1) osnovni del bi zajemala … 2)

aplikativni del pa bi predstavljale študije … [*Means*] …, ki jih namerava raziskava še posebej vzeti pod drobnogled, doslej … še niso bili niti obdelani niti objavljeni, … [*Gap*]

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10 *Znanstvena izhodišča ter predstavitev problema in ciljev raziskav.*

In the *Research Context* section in British RGPs, applicants are required to place the proposed research into context (*Territory*), cite the relevant existing studies on the topic (*Reporting previous research*), define the gap or niche to be filled by the project (*Gap*) and the objectives of the proposed project (*Goal*) along with its contributions and beneficiaries (*Achievements, Benefits)* (Example 5).

Example 5 (LINE8): … is, in comparison with …, the least covered specialisation of … [*Territory,*

Gap] A number of studies have been carried out on …, [*Reporting Previous Research*] but

these are rare. Explanations for this comparative lack of treatment are not difficult to find: … It

is very difficult to analyse …. [*Gap*] Some work has been carried out on these matters in …

[*Reporting previous research*] Although there have been no scholarly analyses of …, [*Gap*]

studies such as … are also of some importance to our understanding of … [*Reporting previous research*]

Beyond this, a number of excellent data resources on … These works differ in their coverage and quality, but present further material upon which a comparative study can be based. Finally, all … contain … which … can be particularly rewarding for an investigator. [*Reporting previous research, Gap, Goal*]

Although in Slovene RGPs there is a separate section allocated to the overview of *literature entitled State-of-the-Art in the Proposed Field of Research and Survey of the Relevant Literature,*[11] *the main rhetorical move in this section is Reporting Previous Research*, which also offers a convenient starting point for stating the perceived niche (*Gap*) in previous research (Example 6). However, many Slovene RGPs were found to only contain the bibliography in this section and rarely included a thorough discussion of previous findings, as it was already presented in the *Scientific Background, Problem Identification and Objective of the Proposed Research section.*

Example 6 (LINS9): Kot je razvidno iz zgornjega pregleda ključne aktualne literature s področja …, se večina tako domačih kot tujih del nanaša na … Nekaj del obravnava… [*Reporting previous research*] Le v manjšem delu literature … je pozornost usmerjena na …. očitno pa je, da so tako teoretske osnove kot aplikacije s področja … še v povojih. Sploh pa pogrešamo usmeritve, ki bi … [*Gap*]

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11 *Pregled in analiza dosedanjih raziskav in relevantne literature.*

The sections entitled *Research Methods* in British RGPs and *Detailed description of the work programme*[12] in Slovene RGPs are similar as they both incorporate a detailed description of the proposed methodology. In Slovene RGPs, applicants are also required to state the main objectives and research hypotheses, and this is where they often also outline their plans for disseminating the results (Example 7). British applicants, on the other hand, are advised to describe the role of individual members of the research team and the reasons for recruiting them (Example 8). Most of the Slovene RGPs contain this same information in the sections *Detailed description of the work programme* and *Project Management: Detailed Implementation Plan and Timetable*.[13]

Example 7 (HISS11): Projektna skupina si prizadeva zastaviti raziskavo, ki bo predstavljala

temeljno podlago za proučevanje … [*Territory*] V prvi fazi bo projektna skupina zastavila

oziroma nadaljevala z že utečenimi prizadevanji… [*Goal*] Metodološko bo raziskava …

temeljila predvsem na izvedbi kvantitativne analize... [*Means*] Teme oziroma naloge, s katerimi

se bo projektna skupina spoprijela, so:

1. Proučitev … [*Goal*] Ta cilj bo projektna skupina zasledovala v prvi fazi s kritično … analizo … V drugi fazi bo skušala … Proučene bodo … Na ta vprašanja bo raziskava skušala odgovoriti s proučevanjem … [*Means*] Ti pristopi lahko prispevajo k jasnejši konfiguraciji … [*Gap*, *Goal*], koristijo pa tudi boljšemu razumevanju … [*Benefits*]

Example 8 (ARTE3): Stage One: The research will draw on …. The investigation will be located at ….

The aim will be to …

Stage Two: The concepts … that emerge from the …, will be investigated through …

Stage Three: … will investigate ways in which ….

Stage Four: Experimentation with … Creation of …

Stage Five: dissemination of research via exhibition/publication/conferences. [*Means, Achievements, Communication of Results*]

The sections which also show great similarity are *Project Management: Detailed Implementation Plan and Timescale*[14] in Slovene RGPs (Example 9) and *Project*

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12 *Podroben opis vsebine in programa dela raziskovalnega projekta.*

13 *Upravljanje projekta: podroben načrt uresničevanja in časovna razporeditev.*

14 *Upravljanje projekta: podroben načrt uresničevanja in časovna razporeditev.*

Management in British RGPs (Example 10). The requirements in both cultural contexts comprise outlining the plan for project activities along with a timetable, milestones and expected results. In texts of both corpora, the rhetorical moves found in this section were *Time Plans, Means* and *Achievements*. The only difference in this section is that in British RGPs, applicants are also required to justify the stated expenses, describe the responsibilities and requirements of recruited research associates, and state staff (career) development opportunities. In Slovene RGPs, the latter are stated in the section *Indirect Impact of the Project for Society.*[15]

Example 9 (BIPS3): 1. leto: … izdelava …, identifikacija …, določanje …, urejanje …

2. leto: Izdelava … in optimizacija … Karakterizacija … Analiza …, vrednotenje in določanje ... Izdelava … in predstavitev … Priprava in objava znanstvenega članka. [*Time Plans, Means, Achievements, Communication of Results*]

Example 10 (HISE5): … we will recruit: 1 RA (3 years) to work on …. 1 RA (1 year) to collect … 2

PhD students to work on … [*Importance Claim*] … will be responsible for overall management;

… for joint coordination; … will help in supervision of …. Throughout the project monthly

meetings will be held of … in order to …. [*Time Plans, Means, Communication of Results*]

Timetable

Year 1 …: intensive programme of shared reading for all project members ….

Year 2: Continuing research of … by all project members;

Year 3: Writing-up of case studies … in preparation for … symposium… [*Time Plans, Means, Achievements, Communication of Results*]

The sections in which the RGPs differ greatly between the two cultural contexts are those which require outlining the means of disseminating the expected outcomes. In British RGPs, this section is titled *Dissemination*, and is expected to describe the nature and focus of the expected outcomes, the ways to maximize their value and the beneficiaries within and outside the discipline (Example 11). While for the description of the dissemination of results, there is no separate section in Slovene RGPs, such plans are usually outlined in the *Detailed description of the work programme* and *Project Management: Detailed Implementation Plan and Timescale.*

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15 *Posredni pomen projekta za družbo.*

Example 11 (ARHE2): We shall disseminate our findings to both scholarly and
	wider audiences. We

	shall produce an academic book; publish a series of articles in peer re-
	viewed journals and as

	conference presentations …; and organise an international workshop at
	…. We shall give

	regular public lectures at …; produce for publication by … a … book
	containing …; and provide

	materials for … [*Communication of Results, Achievements*]

On the other hand, Slovene RGPs allocate a few sections to the relevance and
potential benefits of the proposed project, namely *Relevance to the Development
of Science or a Scientific Field*[16] (Example 12), *Direct Impact of the Project for the
Economy and Society*[17] and *Indirect Impact of the Project for Society.*[18] In British
RGPs, this information is to be placed within the *Research Context* section of the
CfS, however, it is often cross-referenced to the *Beneficiaries / Academic Benefi-
ciaries* (Example 13) and *Impact Summary* sections of the application form.

Example 12 (THES2): … je praktično še neraziskano in nepoznano področje…
	[*Gap*] Projekt in njegovi

	rezultati bodo po mojem mnenju pripomogli tako k izpolnitvi metodolo-
	škega instrumentarija,

	ki zadeva proučevanje … kot tudi …. [*Benefits*]

Example 13 (HUGE4): The research will be of benefit to the academic commu-
	nity by contributing to

	the big theoretical debates on… As this is a collaborative application involv-
	ing community organisations, … it will be of direct benefit to these particu-
	lar groups, but will also benefit… The data will be of use to other researchers
	working in this area, which will stretch beyond the confines of a particular
	discipline owing to the project's interdisciplinary nature. [*Benefits*]

4.2   Results: LBs in the function of self-mentions

The quantitative corpus-driven analysis resulted in lists of LBs identified in each
part of the corpus. From these, the LBs in the function of self-mentions, i.e.

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16   Pomen za razvoj znanosti oziroma stroke.

17   Neposredni pomen projekta za gospodarstvo in družbo.

18   Posredni pomen projekta za družbo.

Table 2: LBs containing self-mentions in the corpus of RGPs

Subcorpus	SLO RGPs		TRA RGPs		ENG RGPs	
Share of LBs normalized to 100,000 words	23.6		68.2		156.7	
Total number of LB occurrences	83		290		496	
LBs with number of occurrences in the corpus	BO PROJEKTNA SKUPINA	26	(THE) PROJECT GROUP (WILL)	71	(MEMBERS OF) THE PROJECT TEAM	66
	PROJEKTNA SKUPINA BO	25	(THE) PROJECT TEAM (WILL)	55	**WE** WILL USE	43
	ČLANI PROJEKTNE SKUPINE	18	**WE** WILL BE (ABLE TO)	28	**WE** WILL ALSO	42
	KI JIH **BOMO**	14	THE RESEARCH GROUP	24	THE RESEARCH TEAM	38
			WE WISH TO	22	**OUR** UNDER-STANDING OF	29
			OF **OUR** RESEARCH	20	**WE** AIM TO	29
			THE RESEARCH TEAM	19	**WE** PROPOSE TO	23
			ENABLE **US** TO	17	ALLOW **US** TO	22
			WE INTEND TO	17	**WE** INTEND TO	21
			WE WILL ALSO	17	**WE** WILL INVESTIGATE	20
					BY THE PI	19
					THE PI AND	18
					WE DO NOT	16
					ENABLE **US** TO	15
					WE PREDICT THAT	15
					WE HAVE ALSO	15
					WE WILL BE (ABLE TO)	13
					WE WILL EXPLORE	13
					WE WILL TEST	13
					ALLOWS **US** TO	13
					THE PI WILL	13

those containing first-person pronouns and other self-mentions, were compared between the three parts of the corpus. Particular attention was devoted to the comparison of the results between TRA RGPs and ENG RGPs, due to the use of the same language.

Table 2 presents the lists of LBs in the function of self-mentions in the three subcorpora, stating the number of occurrences of individual LBs as well as their overall share with regard to the word count of individual corpora (see Table 1), normalized to 100,000 words. First-person pronouns are printed in bold print. As can be seen, the share of self-mentions in LBs was lowest in SLO RGPs and highest in ENG RGPs. Although the share or LBs containing self-mentions is considerably higher in TRA RGPs than in SLO RGPs, it still does not come close to that identified in ENG RGPs.

A perhaps even more striking difference is that in the use of 1st-person pronouns between the three parts of the corpus. Figure 1 shows the share of LBs which contain self-mentions in individual parts of the corpus of RGPs, whereby particular attention is paid to the comparison of the use of 1st-person pronouns as opposed to other options.
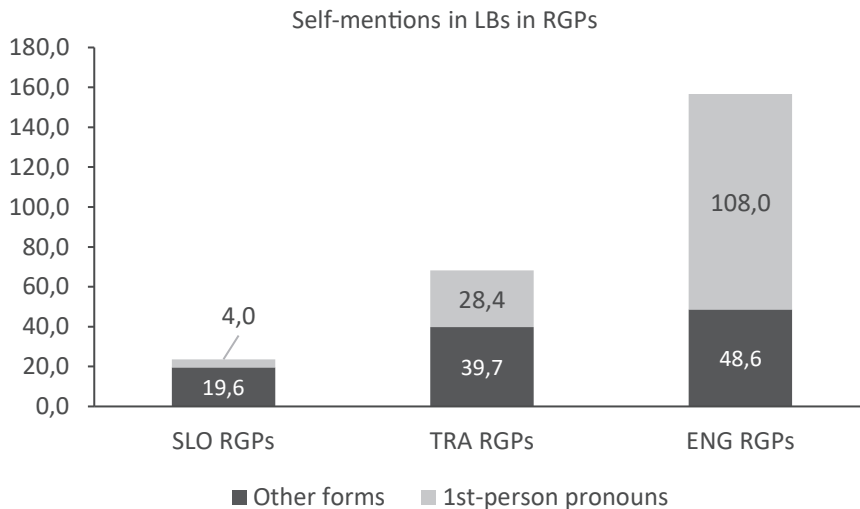

Figure 1: The share of LBs containing self-mentions in SLO RGPs, TRA RGPs and ENG RGPs, with a focus on the use of 1st-person pronouns vs. other forms of self-mentions, normalized to 100,000 words

The share of LBs containing self-mentions is lowest in SLO RGPs. The reason for this most probably lies in the morphosyntactic differences between Slovene and English, as the first person reference in Slovene does not require an explicit subject, but can be expressed with the verb (e.g. *nameravamo*, meaning *'we intend (to)'*), which means that self-mentions will not often be reflected through the use of LBs but instead through the use of single words. It is therefore much easier to compare original English texts and English translations. The difference

in the share of LBs in the function of self-mentions between ENG RGPs and TRA RGPs is striking, and so is the difference in the share of 1st-person pronouns in these LBs. While the use of non-pronominal self-mentions is quite similar in these two corpora, the use of 1st-person pronouns in LBs is over three times greater in ENG RGPs. Moreover, in ENG RGPs, LBs in 1st-person pronouns in the function of grammatical subjects (*we*) (normalized value of 76.8) also greatly outnumber those found in TRA RGPs (normalized value of 19.7).

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Rhetorical structure

Slovene and British RGPs were found to be very similar in terms of their individual sections and rhetorical moves. The greatest differences between the two were observed primarily in the sequencing and scope of individual sections and consequently the rhetorical moves contained within each section. This means that the differences are not so much in the content-related requirements but rather their formal organization. In this regard, an interesting correlation with a previous finding was revealed, namely that of the so-called 'move recurrence' and 'move mixing', which according to Feng and Shi (2004, 10) characterizes promotional discourse. In Slovene as well as British RGPs there is a recurrence of moves throughout different sections, creating the "niche-centred tide-like structure" identified in RGPs by Feng and Shi (2004, 24), which keeps repeating the identification of *Gap*, *Goal* and *Benefits* in particular (see examples), thus re-establishing the need for the proposed research.

The main difference is that Slovene RGPs have formally delineated sections as they are submitted as part of application forms, while British RGPs (CfS) are submitted as an attachment to the application form, which is not restricted by form sections. While it may seem that British applicants are therefore less restrained in terms of structuring their CfS, the guidelines of individual research councils are very detailed in terms of what sections and information to include. In most cases, researchers closely follow these guidelines, which makes RGPs in both cultural contexts equally structured and formally organized. In contrast, a detailed analysis of the ARRS application forms in Slovenia shows that some sections (e.g. *Scientific Background, Problem Identification and Objective of the Proposed Research*) are very broad in scope and therefore allow a fair amount of freedom in formulating the required contents. The guidelines in both Slovenia and the UK contain very similar requirements, which in turn explains the presence of the same rhetorical moves.

In this regard, the findings of this study differ from those obtained by Feng (2008), who found substantial differences in the rhetorical functions of RGPs in Canadian and Chinese cultural contexts (e.g., overall brevity of RGPs and less focus on *Means* in Chinese RGPs). The author attributes these differences to the discrepancies in the research traditions, socio-political structure and economic conditions of the two countries, which in turn influence the respective funding policies and evaluation procedures (ibid.). In a similar vein, the parallels identified in the rhetorical structure of Slovenian and British RGPs might also be attributed to the contextual factors of the two sociocultural contexts, such as similarities in research tradition and similar review procedures. Moreover, the Slovene research community is increasingly internationally oriented (academic mobility, international projects, etc.), with its members being in daily contact with English academic discourse, which can also account for reducing intercultural differences at the rhetorical level (Łyda and Warchał 2014, 6).

5.2   Self-mentions

While the results referring to the share of LBs in the function of self-mentions between SLO RGPs and TRA RGPs are quite similar, the comparison between the parallel and comparable part of the corpus reveals substantial discrepancies in the proportion as well as the structure of the LBs in this function. Through the use of first-person pronouns, British grant applicants show a more explicit authorial presence and higher degree of interactivity, thus accentuating the interpersonal, persuasive and promotional aspect of the genre of RGPs, whose aim is, after all, to persuade and promote (e.g. Harwood 2005a; Hyland 2002d, 1091). As has been shown in Table 2 above, in ENG RGPs, LBs in the function of self-mentions containing the 1st-person pronoun *we* (normalized value of 76.8) greatly outnumber those containing the phrases *the project/research team* or *the PI* (normalized value of 48.6). Conversely, translators seem to opt for more impersonal choices, using, e.g. *the project/research group/team* (normalized value of 39.7) instead of *we* (normalized value of 19.7) even when explicitly placing the author(s) into the text. As argued by Walkova, the 1st-person pronoun in the subject position (*we*) expresses a much more powerful authorial presence than other options of self-mentions (*our, us, the research team*). Through the use of this rhetorical device, British researchers therefore seem to assume a much more powerful authorial stance than Slovene researchers in translated RGPs.

The results of this part of the study are in line with previous research on the intercultural differences between in the use of self-mentions in Slovene and English academic discourse (e.g., Balažic Bulc, this volume; Grad 2010; Pahor

forthcoming) as well as research contrasting other Slavic and Anglo-American academic discourse (e.g., Dontcheva-Navrátilová 2013). The fact that NNES seem to be more reserved than NES in the use of self-mentions in academic writing (Hyland 2002a, 1092) has recently also been confirmed for the Slovak cultural context (Walková 2019), and has been attributed mainly to the conventions governing the author's cultural context and imagined or learned expectations of the target-language (Anglo-American) cultural context (e.g., Dontcheva-Navrátilová 2013, 22).

Walková (2019, 61) points out that while NS of English expect the author to claim authority in the text, the author's (perhaps culturally-conditioned) reluctance to use personal forms of self-referencing in presenting their contribution to the academic field may cause reservations in the reader with regard to the author's commitment to the claims they are making. It is true that the process of RGP peer review in Slovenia may not necessarily involve NS of English, however, a higher level of interaction and dialogue, achieved also through the use of 1st-person pronouns contributes to a more reader-friendly and easier-to-understand discourse, which is highly suitable for intercultural communication (Dontcheva-Navrátilová 2013: 10).

6   CONCLUSION

As part of one of the first extensive intercultural rhetoric studies on the rhetorical conventions of RGPs, the aim of this paper was to present the cultural contexts and contrastive comparison of Slovene and British RGPs. While considerable differences were found in the formal structure of respective RGPs in terms of the mode of delivery of their required contents, no major discrepancies were found in the presence of rhetorical moves. Moreover, in both sets of texts, the phenomena of move mixing and the tide-like recurrence of moves centred around highlighting the gap in existing research were observed. However, the micro-level investigation focusing on the use of LBs in the function of self-mentions revealed a more striking difference between RGPs in respective cultural contexts. In contrast to British RGPs, Slovene RGPs and their translations into English show a lower degree of interactivity, which is in line with the findings of previous studies on Slavic and Anglo-American academic discourse. As self-mentions (and first-person pronouns) have been found to also serve the promotional purpose of the genre, these findings may prove useful for L2 translators and researchers writing in L2 English by raising their awareness of the expectations and conventions regarding the use of these rhetorical elements in the target culture when composing texts of this genre.

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