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## NON-OMISSION OF DEICTIC PERSONAL PRONOUNS

### *Abstract*

Whereas linguistic literature is abundant concerning the use or non use of personal pronouns as anaphoric units, especially from the syntactic perspective, the non-omission of deictic, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> pronouns, both singular and plural, has received less attention. This is not surprising, since 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns seem to be more frequent units in texts, and typically tie with other syntactic elements. But there seems to be no agreement as to what factors influence their omission (or non-omission), syntactic, phonological, or discourse-pragmatic. Also, the fact that rich agreement languages show tendency to allow deletion of pronouns is not an undisputable fact, since some such languages actually do not allow it, and some poor agreement languages actually do, in some contexts at least. The primarily deictic pronouns in Serbian, a rich agreement language, however, prove to be very frequent units, at least in spoken conversational language. Even in linguistic contexts when the agreement verbal form is overtly indicating person, i.e. when the pronouns could be easily omitted, they are being used. The possible explanations, then, naturally, fall within discourse, pragmatic functioning of these pronouns. Yet it is not easy to determine why non-omission of these pronouns occurs so often. Based on the examples from a corpus of spoken conversational language, we will try to determine their use, i.e. the factors that might be influencing the choice between overt and omitted deictic personal pronouns.

*Keywords:* non-omission, deictic personal pronouns, conversation, discourse.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. ON PERSONAL PRONOUNS – DEICTIC AND NON-DEICTIC PRONOUNS

The pronouns and deixis have been subjects of a great number of studies in not only linguistic, but psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic, computational linguistics, anthropological and philosophical literature. It seems that 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronoun has been more studied, in view of the fact that it poses the problem of anaphor resolution, i.e. the antecedent–anaphor relation, primarily from a syntactic point of view but also dependent on some functional and discourse factors (Barss 2003). While the third person pronoun is deemed often syntactically undetermined and non-specific, the first and second person pronouns are generally not considered problematic in the sense that they are semantically specific, i.e. referring to the speaker and listener, as Bath puts it, they denote “speech role distinctions rather than distinctions between referents” (Bath 2004: 10). A distinction is being made here between what pronouns ‘denote’ – “direct participants”, – and what other words ‘denote’ – “conceptual content” (Oliva 2018: 72). The sometimes contradictory statements in literature about the semantic content of the personal pronouns are probably due to terminology such as ‘denote’, ‘refer’, ‘signify’, etc. (Lyons 1977: 174–224).

This differentiation between the first and second person pronoun on the one hand and third person pronouns on the other, was already pointed out in Benveniste (1966), who also wrote that an utterance containing the pronoun *je* belongs to the level of pragmatics, and to different types of texts, for example hardly ever to appear in a long scientific text, but almost impossible to avoid in “un court texte parlé” (*ibid.*, 252). There is a “process of discourse appropriation” taking place by means of personal pronouns and all the elements that agree with them, including the verb forms. The language (*langage*) is an instrument used to confide, order, question, inform and provokes a certain response (“comportment”), and if we define discourse as the “*langage mis en action*”, “*nécessairement entre partenaires*”, there is, in

behaviorist's terms, an exchange of stimulus et response. This capacity allows for the fact that subjectivity is established by pronouns *ja* and *tu*, and other "void" forms. The conscience of self is possible only if there is a contrast with another person. (*ibid.*: 258–260). In other words Benveniste claims that "*Le langage propose en quelque sorte des formes "vides" que chaque locuteur en exercice de discours s'approprie et qu'il rapporte à sa "personne", définissant en même temps lui-même comme je et un partenaire comme tu*" (*ibid.* 263).

This interactional situation and its pragmatic impact on the use of pronouns and similar deictic forms is more or less confirmed and further developed in more modern approaches. Conversation is constantly being developed contextually and situationally, as underlined by interactionalist point of view (Hausendorf 2003). There are grammatical signals to signify whose role (speaker/listener/third person's) is active at the moment, plus "demonstration and perception *ad oculos et ad aures*", i.e. visual, acoustic and kinetic signs, separately or together combining to maintain the communication (Hausendorf 2003: 261).

These ideas concerning pragmatic and interactionalist side of the use of deictic signals, such as first and second person pronouns in spontaneous conversations, are highly relevant for our study. It is important to stress that spontaneous conversations evolve round many topics and subtopics that change quickly, that interlocutors' contributions are not planned in advance and in that sense, it is a type of discourse that is quite obviously being co-created verbally by interlocutors – "again and again, as economically as possible and highly inconspicuously" (Hausendorf 2003: 261).

## 1.2. THE OMISSION AND NON-OMISSION OF PERSONAL PRONOUNS

The interest in pronouns and pronominal systems is closely connected to various approaches to the omission and obligatoriness of pronouns. This is particularly important in typology of languages as pro-drop, null-subject, allowing the lack of overt pronoun, in

which the verb forms as morpho-syntactic categories mark the same 'person' information as the pronoun. In rich agreement languages, as is Serbian (Stevanović 1989, Piper et al. 2005), a bound pronominal affix on the verb can also indicate the referent, thus showing the same information twice. Due to the agreement between the pronoun and the verb form, in such languages one would expect, at least in majority cases, that the morphological form of the verb allows that the pronoun be omitted. But there is no clear-cut division into types of languages according to this criterion. Cole (2010) analyzing, on a sample of six languages, whether covert or overt subjects occur following different types of antecedents, also gives a variety of cases which show that the overt pronoun subjects are possible even "in consistent null subject languages where there is overt subject verb agreement, namely Greek, Serbian and Spanish", whereas for example, in languages with no agreement verb morphology null subjects also occur (Cole 2010: 284).

The agreement itself presents a variety of cases concerning grammatical marking of categories of person, number and gender. Even in South Slavic languages, for example, in which the agreement between person pronouns and verb forms is mainly similar, there are differences. For instance, in Slovenian, that has kept the dual as grammatical number, there are two forms for second person plural, masculine and feminine (Đukanović 2009). In Serbian, for example, the syntactic gender agreement for second person plural is shown only through the agreement in the nominative case of adjectives used in sentences with second person plural pronoun subjects, otherwise the agreement is purely semantically based, especially with first and second person singular (more on interesting examples for Serbian in Popović 1991, 2000, Moskovljević 1983).

Though the pronominalisation can refer back to non-subject grammatical roles, the dominant syntactic role to be referred with an anaphoric pronoun is the subject role. But, even with non-subject role there are many instances of anaphoric use of pronouns (and agreement verb forms). An illustrative example in English is *Few people amaze Brittany*, where the grammatical object is more likely to

be pronominalized further in a sentence/text, since the verb meaning is such that the topic tends to attach to the non-subject syntactic role (Rohde and Kehler 2014: 919). In majority of cases the subject coincides with the topic, a functional, information category, and the anaphoric chain with pronouns and/or agreement morphological markers is created so as to signal the continuation of the topic. Whether the subject position is the default place for the topic in all the languages of the world is not the matter that we can go into in our study, but it is worth mentioning not only because of the obvious reason that subject 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> deictic pronouns agree most clearly with verb forms, but also because we have not included in this research any of the non-subject syntactic forms of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> personal pronouns in Serbian that occur in our corpus, such as “logical subjects” occurring with some verbs (for example: *sviđati se* – “to like someone” which has “semantic subject” in an oblique, non-nominative case: *Meni se sviđa Jovan* – “Me (oblique) like Jovan”, or as “qualifiers”: *Nas dvoje smo odlučili* – “Us (oblique) two decided”).

The linguistic literature on referential chain/pronominalization usually points out the chain generally starts with full NPs, most often in subject position, and continues with pronouns (up to a certain, psychologically based distance) or null subjects, or continues with person marked verb forms. Beside the above mentioned preference for antecedents in higher syntactic position (subject as opposed to object, etc.) in languages with rich agreement, “there have been also proposals that overt pronouns in such languages “prefer antecedents in a lower position” (cf. Carminati’s 2002 *Position of Antecedent Hypothesis*, cited in Herbeck 2018: 173). But that, and other similar matters of tackling the referential chain concerning people and things with third person pronouns and verb forms is not within the domain in this study (A comparative overview of Serbian vs English concerning referential continuum with the third person pronouns can be found in Šajinović 2020).

### 1.3. FIRST AND SECOND PERSON PRONOUNS IN STUDIES OF CONVERSATION

There is an ever-growing literature on the use of deictic personal pronouns in conversational language from pragmalinguistic point of view. Several facts have been documented by theoretical, psycholinguistic and corpus driven studies of deictic personal pronouns (Grenoble 1998, Lenz 2003, Oliva et al 2013, Hernandez et al. 2011, Kragh et al. 2013)

In conversation the frequency of first person pronoun seems to be one of those undisputable facts. In Spanish, the frequency of 1<sup>st</sup> person subject (*yo*) is followed by 2<sup>nd</sup> person (*tu*), than 1<sup>st</sup> person plural (*nosotros*), and 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural (*usted*) in conversational language (Oliva et al, 2013, 77–79), with different percentages but the same order in our corpus. In spite of the differences between types and size of corpora in this and other studies (Tamaredo 2018, Detges 2013, for example), the general tendencies follow the same pattern.

Secondly, the pragmatic functions of pronouns are generalized into two functions: “*topic-shift*, if it indicates a contrast with respect to the foregoing old discourse topic” and “stance formulae” (*I think, I believe, etc.*) (Detges 2013: 34–45, Benvenist 1966: 264, among others). Detges gives a detailed justification for these uses of the pronouns, and analyzes interesting examples, such as the following:

*Moi* mes parents mon pere etait sous-chef de gare.  
'I my parents my father was second head of station'.

The author's explanation is that *moi* 'functions as a conceptual “anchor” – that the “speaker is the most accessible discourse referent in the situation and is therefore maximally suited as a starting point for the elaboration of the topic” (Detges 2013: 35). For other authors (for example, Oliva, 2013: 31–34), the notions of informativeness and saliency are key notions used to explain the discourse relevance and function of deictic personal pronouns.

The second function of the use of deictic personal pronouns is the “attitude”, “stance formula”. This is often linked to a couple of verbs that are most frequent in texts/discourses, especially in

conversational language: *think, believe, know* and *say, tell*, etc. The explanation goes along the following lines: “stance formulae (*I think, I believe*, etc.), express the “speaker’s viewpoint, thereby lending it a special pragmatic weight” (Detges’ example in French is: *Moi, je trouve que c’est pas normal*).

In connection with these frequent verbs, there are clear examples of pragmaticalization of their expression. According to Detges, from “a syntactic and a prosodic point of view, the so-called disjoined or tonic pronouns of Modern Spoken French are neither necessarily disjoined nor stressed elements any more”, from which he assumes that such pronouns, especially the first-person form *moi*, represent the process of “cliticization” (Detges 2013: 34). It is due to the rhetorical, systematic over-use of the constructions undergoing a process of rhetorical devaluation, thereby losing their contrastive potential.

However, in spite of the similarities between languages on a discourse and pragmatic level, it is still difficult to fully, or precisely, explain the functioning of deictic pronouns: What is the reason that the speakers use them so often, even in the presence of other person signals, such as person marked verb? How does a speaker make him/herself “more prominent” or give themselves “extra weight”, or turn themselves into “focus” within a discourse? What is behind the various examples that authors mention, or even get repeated in other paper and studies? For example, Klajn quotes the example given by Bar-Hillel (Bar-Hillel 1954: 367–368, cited in Klajn 1985: 24) of a man who, if he wanted to be “precise” would not be able to ask for breakfast from his wife without using some indexical such as “I”, “here”, “now”. What exactly the words such a man would use is beside the point, since we now quote this same example to illustrate how specific contexts, thought up or observed/experienced by an author, can be found in literature that deals with deictics.

In our analysis of the Serbian conversational language, our chief aim was to answer some questions on the use or non-use of deictic person pronouns with person marked verb forms. The corpus consisted of three types of communication: spontaneous conversations between friends and relatives, mostly students but also participants varying

in age recorded among family members and relatives, recordings of television interviews where most of the guests were politicians or public figures such as sports coaches, people from entertainment industry, and the recordings of parliament sessions. Though the largest corpus was that of spontaneous conversations, the range of tokens for the other two corpora was about 60% of the main corpus (altogether there were 188312 tokens in the whole corpus).

## 2. THE ANALYSIS OF THE CORPORA

### 2.1. QUANTITATIVE DESCRIPTION OF DEICTIC PRONOUNS

The striking feature in conversational language is the fact that 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> pronouns occur among the most frequent words in corpora. Since interlocutors are present in speech situation, this frequency is at odds with the fact that interlocutors need to refer to themselves so often, when there are other cues, such as voice quality, prosody, kinemic and proxemic signals, and in languages such as Serbian, syntactic agreement markers on verbs in great majority of cases. In order to check whether similar picture presents itself in informal and more formal dialogic contexts, we counted the number of occurrences in Casual conversation, TV interviews and Parliamentary communication. In Table 1 the frequency of each pronoun is expressed as percentage of occurrences within the total number of words/tokens in the relevant corpus:

Table 1. The frequency of first and second person pronouns in three types of spoken discourse<sup>1</sup>

Casual conversation	TV interviews (debates)	Parliamentary discourse
ja – 1,43%	ja – 0,71%	ja – 0,51%
ti – 0,35%	ti – 0,01%	ti – (0,00%)
(mi – 0,12%)	(mi – 0,43%)	(mi – 0,79%)
(vi – 0,01%)	(vi – 0,30%)	(vi – 0,25%)

<sup>1</sup> These results have also been presented in Panić Cerovski & Polovina (in press).



As can be seen from Table 1., the first person pronoun is by far the most dominant deictic personal pronoun in conversation, twice as much as in TV interviews and almost three times more frequent than in parliamentary discourse. As expected, the second person pronoun *ti* is almost non-existent in more formal contexts, whereas the plural forms, especially the first person plural *mi* rise in frequency with more formal contexts. This picture of the use of personal deictic pronouns in the corpus needs further clarification, in terms of verbs they collocate with, some of them occurring also frequently, with or without pronouns, but marked for person by their endings.

### **2.1.1. Types of verbs with high frequency**

In all three types of corpora there are some verbs in 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> subject agreement forms that stand out as the most used, with or without the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> pronouns, and they can be grouped roughly into *verba dicendi* and *intelligendi* used as modal verbs and corpus specific verbs. The first place in the frequency list are always the verb forms: *sam, ste, smo* (“am, are”), used either as a copulative verb or as an auxiliary. Near the top of the list are generally two ‘full’ verbs: *znati* – “know” and *misliti* – “think”. Following them we find in the corpus of conversational language: *imati* – “have”, *moći* – “can/be able”, *kazati* – “say/tell”, *morati* – “must/have to”, *videti* – “see”, *ići* – “go”, *razumeti* – “understand/see”, *reći* – “say”; in the corpus of TV interviews: *kazati* – “say/tell”, *imati* – “have”, *moći* – “can/be able”, *morati* – “must/have to”, *pitati* – “ask”, *reći* – “say”, in parliamentary discourse: *imati* – “have”, *moći* – “can/be able”, *morati* – “must/have to”, *kazati* – “say/tell”, *reći* – “say”, *govoriti* – “speak”, *moliti* – “(beg) ask for permission/attention”, *verovati* – “believe”.

*Verba intelligendi et dicendi.* Benveniste (1966) wrote that there is only a semblance of the verb forms with three persons paradigm, because when attention is focused on some verbs conjugated in the present tense, for example *je mange, tu manges, il mange*, the sense of that verb, the action of *manger*, seems to remain the same in all three cases. But if one looks at the verbs such as *je crois (que...) je presume*,

*je conclus*, etc., no action is being “described” – it is an attitude that is expressed concerning the utterance that follows. Such subjectivity occurs only with first person (Benveniste 1966: 264). If some such verb is used with the second person pronoun: *tu supposes qu’il est parti*, again it is just a *verbatim* repetition of the what the previous speaker said in a sort of argumentative discourse, whereas in third person use *il suppose que ...* it is a statement (Benveniste 1966: 265). This is confirmed by the further analysis of these two verbs in our corpus.

First of all, some of the verbs, especially *znati* – “know” and *misliti* – “think”, have 1st and 2nd person forms used as discourse markers in their shortened forms: *'naš* and *mis'im*:

... pa tu prolaze automobili, znaš<sup>2nd sing</sup> tamo u Leskovcu... (“and there pass the cars, [you] know there in Leskovac...”)

... a jednom je bilo nešto što je 'naš ono kad vidiš da je muva ... (“and once there was [y']know sort of when you see he’s hooking up her...”)

Both *znaš* and *'naš* usually precede a short assertion and invite the listener to accept a brief introduction into a state of affair or situation (Polovina 1994). This function comes from the general use of this verb as a sort of introduction even in its full form as the following example shows:

B: Znaš<sup>2nd sing</sup> ti<sup>2nd sing</sup> koju sam ja imala foru sa odg, odg... (“Know you what kind of cool thing I had with my ans, answer...”)

Even if the verb was used with question particle *li*, in its full interrogative form *Znaš li ti ...* it is not a genuine question, but rather a signal that there is an interesting story to follow. The interlocutor could even answer: “No, I don’t know”, which would probably sound a bit unkind, but the speaker would proceed with their story.

In our count of the verbs *znaš* represents 15% of the 2<sup>nd</sup> sing person marked verb forms but we excluded *'naš* from counting since in that phonetic form it cannot be considered a verb, but as a proper discourse marker.

A similar thing happens with the verb *misliti*, “think” since in one of its uses the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular form *mislim* has been pragmatized as a discourse marker, most often pronounced in its shortened version: *misim*, so much so that one of the not many abbreviations used by SMS texters in Serbian, especially the younger generation, often write it as *msm* (Polovina 2019: 113–121).

G: Poenta je što me ne boli uopšte, *misim*, nadam se da ne boli, *misim* šta da me boli.

(“G: The point is it doesn’t hurt at all, *I mean*, I hope it doesn’t hurt, *I mean*, why would it hurt.”)

T: Nije to jedina opasnost, *misim*, može da ti se stvori neko stanje.

(“T: It’s not the only risk, *I mean*, some situation can come about to you.”)

Since this form cannot be considered a verb of cognition, but a particle used mostly as a discourse marker to signal the ensuing reformulation, or self-correction, it has been excluded from the total of counted 1<sup>st</sup> person verb forms, as opposed to *misliti* used as a verb of cognition. As a verb of cognition it is used to express attitude or belief of the speaker towards the statement that follows in the complement clause:

S: Ili spavaćim kolima.

(“S: Or in the sleeping car [of the train]”)

K: Da/ treba videti i to, da li ima?

(“K: Yes/ one should see that too, is there one?”)

A: Ma ne spavaćim kolima! / prvo, idete znaš kad je / mi putujemo celog dana, od koliko // od devet sati ima voz.

(“A: Well not the sleeping car! / first y’know when it’s / we travel the whole day, from // there is a train at nine o’clock”)

M: **Ja mislim** da ima i ranije. **Mislim** da ima ranije.

(“M: I think there is one earlier. [I] think there is one earlier.”)

Another verb that was excluded from the counting was the verb *reći* in the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular form aorist: *rekoh* > *reko* which is shortened in the same way as the participle *rekao* when used for preterite: *je sam rekao* > *reko*, which again often appears in the conversational language

mostly as a discourse quotative marker: *on je reko oko pola sedam* (“He said about half past six”), *ja reko pa reko znam tata je to imao* (“I said well said I know daddy had it”), ... *a, reko ja čekam Ivanu tamo...* (“Oh, I said I am waiting for Ivana there”), and actually could often be translated into English with “and *I go* ‘I am waiting for Ivana there’”). (More on quotatives see Panić Cerovski & Đukanović & Kovačević 2012; Панић Церовски 2013; Panić Cerovski & Ivanović, 2016.)

There are slightly more than 2% of 1<sup>st</sup> person verb form of *kazati* (“say”, “tell”) in the total of person marked forms (Table 2.) which also shows some properties of discourse markers, as in:

A: U malim bio  
 (“A: was in small [pots])

B: Al’ dobro *kažem*<sup>1<sup>st</sup> sing</sup> bio je i u najvećoj zato što sam vadila zemlju.  
 (“B: But ok [I] *say* was in the biggest one too because I took out some soil”)

The conversation topic is “a plant that did not grow properly”. The verb *kažem* is at the beginning of the last turn of that segment about the plant, and follows two other introductory words “but ok”, slightly adversative, and together they precede an opposite statement implying: “no, not only the small pots but also in big pots”.

Both 1<sup>st</sup> singular and 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular and plural of this verb have the function of signaling that the repetition of something previously said will follow, and together with the 3<sup>rd</sup> person verb form in present tense, this verb is a kind of quotative verb, similar to Russian *grit* or *gyt*, or *govorju* (1<sup>st</sup> sg) or *grju*, which is “pervasive in colloquial Russian”, and called a new “evidential particle” by Grenoble (1998: 142).

**Verbs specific for the context.** It is worth mentioning that in everyday casual communication between friends there are verbs that are frequent but do not appear in other corpora: *voleti* – “like”, *sećati se* – “remember”, for example. This is because there are some frequent themes in casual conversation: what each of the interlocutors likes or dislikes, they talk about themselves and other people, things, events: *ali volim kad on priča a ja slušam*. “I like when he talks and I listen”, *Ja i bananu volim / one, više one zelenije* – “I also like banana / those, more those greener”, *ona ja nju jako volim znaš a ali* – “she, I like her

very much b but”. Or as a way to remind themselves of a story, event, situation: *ja se sećam iz istorije još u osnovnoj školi* – “I remember from history even from the primary school”, *sećam se pričala si* – “I remember you talked”, *e se sećaš kad smo se ja i ti jednom* – “hey d’ye remember once when you and I”.

There are also verbs used with a specific meaning, relevant for the context, that characterize the corpus more than the first ten most frequent. For example, in TV interviews, the verb *varati*, the basic meaning of which is “to cheat”, is used by several speakers in a set form *ako se ne varam* – “if I am not wrong”. In Parliamentary discourse the use of *moliti* – “beg” occurs in context of asking for some extra time for speech: *Još samo jedna rečenica, molim Vas.* – “One more sentence, please”, a criticism of opponents speech: *I, znate, molim Vas, molim Vas, nemojte, nemojte na taj način govoriti o ministrima.* – “And, you now, I beg, I beg of you, do not, do not speak about ministers in that way”, general warning context: *Dakle, molim vas, razmislite* – “Therefore, I beg of you, think it over”. On the other hand, in conversational language, casual speech between friends, this verb has more versatile function: as a formulaic expression M: *Šta, molim!?* – “What, beg your pardon? (What did you say)?”, or just *Molim?* – “Pardon?”, a demand for correcting listener’s behaviour/speech: *E, nemoj da si moja mama, molim te..* – “Don’t be like my mom, please”, etc.

## 2.2. QUANTITATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE NON-OMISSION OF DEICTIC PERSONAL PRONOUNS

Since Serbian is a language with agreement markers on verbs we were interested in checking how often it is not omitted. We counted the number of deictically marked verb forms altogether and then pronoun plus marked form. The following table gives percentage of deictic pronoun plus verb marked forms within the total number of deictically marked 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> verb forms.

Table 2. The percentage of deictic Pronoun + V<sup>agr</sup>

	Casual conversation	TV interviews	Parliamentary discourse
JA + V 1 <sup>st</sup> sing	38,44%	30,1%	19,37%
TI + V 2 <sup>nd</sup> sing	18,78%	/	/
MI + V 1 <sup>st</sup> pl	15,16%	29,4%	18,39%
VI + V 2 <sup>nd</sup> pl	22,93%	8,54%	11,25%

Table 2. shows the percentage of use of the person pronouns that appeared with verbs clearly marked for person. There are variants of the certain verb forms, however, that could not be taken into account. One form, for example, the so-called *potencijal* (conditional) in Serbian grammars, is not always produced with the necessary person ending *bih* (“would”) but is pronounced as *bi* so that it becomes the same as the form for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular and 3<sup>rd</sup> plural, and such cases could not be included in our counting. As a third person form (*bi mogao, bi mogla* “would be able”) it is quite frequent in the corpus, much more frequent than 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person form.

Slightly different is a nearly syncretic form of the modal *moći*, the 1st person singular in the present tense: *moгу*. Though it is the same as 3rd person plural in writing, it differs in spoken language due to different accents, and therefore has been included in the counting. It is more often than not used with another form, so-called *da + present*, which always has the agreement ending, thus showing twice the marking of the first person at a short distance: *Mogu<sup>1st</sup> da objasnim<sup>1st</sup>* ([I] can<sup>1st</sup>, *da+explain<sup>1st</sup>*, “I can explain it”), *Ne mogu<sup>1st</sup> da stignem da jedem<sup>1st</sup>* ([I] cannot<sup>1st</sup> *da+manage<sup>1st</sup> da+eat<sup>1st</sup>*, “[I] cannot get to eat”), and in conversation sometimes even with the omitted *da*: *Mogu<sup>1st</sup> ga vidim<sup>1st</sup>*, ([I] can<sup>1st</sup> him see<sup>1st</sup>, “I can see him”).

We also ignored the very few examples of 2<sup>nd</sup> person sing marked verbs in TV interviews and parliamentary interviews from calculation of percentage, since the 2<sup>nd</sup> singular pronoun did not occur at all, whereas the verb forms appeared only a couple of times. For example, in the corpus of parliament communication the 2<sup>nd</sup> person verb form appeared only in a quoted proverb:

Ja znam da postoji posledica, poslovice [...] „Kad **si**<sup>2nd sing</sup> zadužen **nisi**<sup>2nd sing</sup> slobodan“

(“I know of a proverb ‘When [you] are in debt, [you] are not free’”).

And more interestingly in a paragraph of very critical lines by a representative of opposition directed towards the then president of the country:

... i, Borise Tadiću dok god **podržavaš**<sup>2nd sing</sup> ovakve ljude, koji prave statute, zastave, himne, koji prave državu u državi mi gubimo silno vreme. nema od **tebe**<sup>2nd sing pron oblique</sup> Borise ništa. ....

(“and, Boris Tadić, as long as [you] **support** such people, who are making states, flags, hymns, who are making a state within a state we are losing immense time, no use of you Boris” ...)

Though formal situation would demand the use of honorific 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural pronoun and 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural verb form, nevertheless, the transition to 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular pronoun is a well-known marked form when the speaker gets angry with someone, even a person of higher social status, meaning some kind of “loss of control” over proper behaviour (Polovina 1983). In this, parliamentary context it is highly marked and adds extra critical and pejorative emphasis.

### 2.3. THE DISTRIBUTION AND PRAGMATIC FUNCTION OF DEICTIC PRONOUNS PLUS DEICTIC VERB FORMS

In Serbian conversation the non-omission seems not to be the preferable choice for speakers, since the percentage is greater for verb forms used without pronouns. The speakers can easily talk even about one of them as a topic without using pronouns. So how is the topic of *I* or *you* introduced? Is it directly introduced with the pronoun used in a sentence at the beginning of the topic, or some other units? Or do speakers use deictic pronouns as a supportive device, as Bath puts it: “agreement markers are used obligatorily and consistently in these bound-pronoun languages, independent personal pronouns are used only optionally, and have only a supportive role” (Bath 2004: 24). Or they use ‘supportive devices’, i.e. such language units as appositive

noun phrases, vocatives, noun phrases in a matrix clause, etc. for “denoting some of the identifying characteristics of these performers (referents of personal pronouns) in certain non-prototypical contexts (like oath-taking or telephone conversation)” (Bath 2004: 124).

In the following passage we will illustrate two things: 1) that a vocative, a “supportive” device can be used to call out the next speaker, even though it is not necessary since the non-verbal situation can easily indicate who the next speaker is, and 2) that if that person is also the topic, well established, the “fit looks” of the called-out interlocutor in this example, there is no need for the use of any pronoun:

B: Može sa ledom... pa kako si<sup>2nd</sup> Miloše? Dobro izgleda<sup>3rd</sup>. Nešto si<sup>2nd</sup> se promenio. Ne znam<sup>1st</sup> šta...

(“B: With ice please ... so how are you Miloš (vocative)? You look good. You’ve changed somehow. I don’t know what)

M: Jesam<sup>1st</sup> se prolepšao?

(“M: Have I become handsomer?)

B: Pa ne znam<sup>1st</sup>, nešto si<sup>2nd</sup> se promenio...

(B: Well I don’t know, you’ve changed somehow...)

M: Ne znam<sup>1st</sup>, bildujem<sup>1st</sup>. Sad sam<sup>1st</sup> malo veći...

(“M: I don’t know, doing builds-up. I’m a little bigger...)

B: A ugojio si<sup>2nd</sup> se sad, promenio frizuru..

(B: And you got some weight, changed your hair...)

S: A frizura! Možda, možda!

(“S: Oh the haircut! Maybe, maybe!)

M: Nije to, bildujem<sup>1st</sup>.

(M: Not that, am doing build-ups)

In this tight-knit segment there is only a vocative: *Miloše* at the beginning, as a sort of calling out the addressee, and then the topic is introduced: his “good looks”. Since there are other lexical and pragmatic ties and the turns are short, there is no need for any pronouns, only the verbs marked for person are used.



But casual conversations between friends and relatives in our corpus are longer, and the non-omitted pronouns plus verb forms present a challenge to explain, especially if they are felt as syntactically not obligatory. What we found was that there are some typical functions of the use of deictic personal pronouns with person marked verbs. In the following we suggest what these functions and contexts of their use most commonly occur.

### 3. FIRST PERSON SINGULAR PRONOUN AND FIRST PERSON SINGULAR VERB FORMS

#### 3.1. THE TAKE/UP (APPROPRIATION) OF A TOPIC – ANALOGY AND CONTRAST

Our corpus shows that there are two main positions and types of context in which both the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns plus verb agreement forms occur. It is most clear in the case of 1<sup>st</sup> person. Since in conversations the turns are rarely of considerable length, and the interchange of speakers occurs often, the speaker must have a way of giving a signal to their contribution. It may be with a number of markers: discourse markers, exclamations, use of set phrases, etc, but also combined with using the pronoun *I*. The typical position of this pronoun is at the beginning of a turn. These turns are linked to the previous ones mostly by the relations such as 1) analogy or 2) contrast:

#### 1) analogy

B: znam<sup>1st sing</sup> da me je cimala sa nekog u fazonu daj kao daj taj broj, [...]  
“[I] know that she rang me up from some she was like give like give that number”

C: da, znam<sup>1st</sup> / i ja<sup>1st</sup> kad sam<sup>1st</sup> joj poslala poruku da nije... /  
“C: yes, [I] know / also when I sent her a message that she didn’t.../”

In this segment about problems of communicating with a mutual friend over the phone, there is a clear case of analogy, the confirmation that the speaker C. knows of the problem because when she also sent a message there was no communication, the same as it happened to B.

2) contrast

The following examples shows a type of contrastive relation between the turns:

A: A još bolje/mislim/na nju mogu manje da računam nego na tebe zato što ona radi...

(“A: And even better/ I mean/ I can count less on her than on you because she works...”)

S: A **ja**<sup>1st</sup> ništa ne **radim**<sup>1st</sup>!

(“S: And I don’t do anything!”)

The contrastive response of speaker S. is not really an introduction of a topic, but the cancellation of the implicature coming from the previous turn in which the speaker implied that S. is not a person one can count on much, but even less is the person she “who works”, the implicature being that S. does not work, and therefore the contrastively used 1st person pronoun in S.’s turn could not be omitted in this context. Here the contrast is emphatic.

The following example shows a more typical context of contrast in conversations between friends:

C: ... tako da nekad ono isključim<sup>1st</sup> [...] nekad ili okrenem<sup>1st</sup> na drugu stranu znaš da... [...] a nekad ga jednostavno **ugasim**<sup>1st</sup> pa ono

(“C: so that sometimes I turn it off [...] or I turn myself to the other side, you know [...] and sometimes I simply turn it off and so”).

D: **ja**<sup>1st</sup> ga ne **gasim**<sup>1st</sup>

(“D: I don’t turn it off”)

C: pa i **ja**<sup>1st</sup> opšte dugo dugo **nisam**<sup>1st</sup> gasila, sad sam<sup>1st</sup> nešto ...

(“C: well neither did I turn it of for a long time, but now I have sort of ...”)

The topic is the habit of switching the light off when going to bed. Each of the interlocutors present his / her habit that are opposite. This continuation of a topic by personal contribution of the speakers in this manner can be characterized as elaboration of a topic (Detges 2013: 35), but we could add some more observations on topic change at this moment, since it might better explain the positioning of the first person singular pronoun plus marker agreement verb form.

The point is that in a longer conversation there are frequent topic changes, which often develop into subtopics, and then subsubtopics, so the most relevant distribution of certain discourse markers, including the position of deictic pronouns, can be better seen when we treat paragraph units (though most transcriptions of conversation are usually confined to turns only), i.e. units around a topic/subtopic. When such comparisons are looked at, we can see the clearer picture of the change of topics and use of deictic pronouns. Here is one example, in which we marked end of a paragraph with the symbol (¶), and skipped short turns that are not necessary for this illustration (marked as [...] *n* turns)

1. J: A šta si<sup>2nd</sup> dan<sup>1st</sup> radila sa bakom?  
 (“J: What did [you] do with your grandma?”)
2. O: Mesila sam<sup>1st</sup> kolače. [...]  
 (“O: “[I] made cookies”)  
 [...] 7 turns on making the cookies ¶-1
3. J: Pa dobro jesi<sup>2nd</sup> ti<sup>2nd</sup> mesila sa bakom ove s jabukama?  
 (“J: Well ok did you make with grandma these with apples?”)
4. O: Jesam<sup>1st</sup>, ¶-2 (*obraća se baki, S.*) Lepo sam ti rekla da staviš više brašna, a ti<sup>2nd</sup> nisi<sup>2nd</sup> ... ¶-3  
 (“O: Yes. (*Turning to S, grandma*) [I] did tell you to put more flour, and you didn’t..”)
5. S: [...] Stvarno, odnela mi Jeca vagicu, pa kad nemam vagice  
 (“S: Really, Jeca took my kitchen scales, so when [I] don’t have the scales”)  
 [...] 1turn ¶-4
6. O: Imali smo mi neku, pa smo mi / pa / kao nešto nije radila / pa smo je popravljali. Ja sam ono izvukla pa nije moglo da se uvuče.  
 (“O: We had one, and we have / well / it somehow didn’t work / so we were repairing it. I took that thing out and couldn’t put it back”)
7. V: Pa to li si ti<sup>2nd</sup> pokvarila? ¶-5a  
 (“Oh it was you who broke it?”)

- [...] 4 turns continuing on the broken kitchen scales ¶-5
8. J: Pa ima sad vagica kuhinjska [...] ... **Ja** ne mogu da mesim bez vage.
9. (“J: Well there are now kitchen scales ... [...] I can’t make cakes without the scales”)  
[...] 1 turn and a pause ¶-6  
[...] 5 turns on the high quality of a cake. ¶
10. S: **Kako ti** Jovanka stigneš da sve tako dobro radiš i da odlično kuvaš i da dobijaš nagrade za nauku.
11. (S: “How do you, Jovanka, manage to do things so well and cook well and get awards for science?”)
12. J: **Ja** volim kuvati. To mi je kao neki rad u laboratoriji. **I** za to treba imati ljubavi i strpljenja.
13. (“J: I like cooking. It’s sort of like working in a laboratory. One should have love and patience for that too.”)  
S: **Aja** nemam mnogo strpijenja. [...]
14. (“Well, I do not have much patience [...]”)
15. [...] 4 turns on how S dislikes cooking. ¶-7

The general topic of cooking was introduced through a question and answer (turns 1 and 2) without the use of any deictic pronoun. Turn 3 is “elaboration”, again question on a subtopic “cooking of the apple cookie”, and within it a critical remark of the O. to her grandmother S. for forgetting to put enough sugar in the apple cookies, which can be considered as a sub/subtopic, embedded within the two wider topics. The use of the pronoun *ti* + *marker verb* can be said to be a type of individuation, but also fit the further elaboration of the general topic. Turn 5 is cohesive with the previous paragraph, but also signals a new topic: “broken kitchen scales”. Turns 6 and 7 are again new subtopic – with *mi* (“we”), *ja* (“I”) and *ti* (“you”) + person marked verb forms again used to tie up with previous turns but giving new perspectives on “who broke the kitchen scales”, then in 8 a new subtopic with *ja* introducing the “importance of scales for cooking”, and finally the invitation with a vocative and emphatic *ti* within the utterance expressing

the admiration for J's excellent cooking, and two *ja* in a contrastive context: the speaker J. "likes cooking", the speaker "S. dislikes it".

In most of these utterances where deictic pronoun + deictic verb form were combined, their purpose was to take up or "appropriate" a subject and further elaborate from the interlocutors' standpoints, mostly as characters in the events they are talking about. This becomes even clearer in narrative contributions, usually starting with one type of situation and then each of the interlocutors present their "own story".

### 3.2. APPROPRIATION OF STORY THEMES

In spontaneous conversation the interlocutors very often give reports and stories on what happened to them in the past, share their experiences (Norrick 2000, Jefferson 1978, Mandelbaum 2013, Polovina 2019), some are about themselves and some about third persons. It is therefore to be expected that first person pronoun often occurs in them. Concerning deixis the often quoted Bühler's transfer of *origo* proper into the realm of imagination is illustrated by "mind's" eye or ear in everyday language. Fricke (2003) points out that the speaker, once s/he assumes the speaker role, is in a position to provide the local *origo* or "to intentionally allocate secondary *origos* to intrinsically arranged entities, be these perceptual or imaginary" (Fricke 2003: 88). Since much of the storytelling in our corpus deals with personal experiences of the speaker, it is not surprising that many of the combined uses of 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun + 1<sup>st</sup> person verb form were found in such contexts.

The following excerpt from our corpus of spontaneous conversation will illustrate two typical uses of first person pronoun plus first person verb form, 1) to give an analogous story by the speaker, and 2) to posit himself as a character who participated in a story dialogue, and therefore must quote his own words. This example is taken from a conversation of four students in which the main topics are the "way they remember things", "the way they study

for the exams” and their “university and high school experiences”. Because of the length of this excerpt we skipped some short turns of other participants – comments, expressions of surprise, agreements, exclamations (by marking them as “[... short turn]”). The main topic of the D’s narrative, here segmented into “paragraph” units, marked with the symbol (¶) at the end of each paragraph, is expressed in the first lines (1, 2, 3): “once he had a crib sheet at a history test”, then proceeds with “why he made crib sheet for that test” (lines 4 – 9), “what happened during the test” (lines 9 – 13), and finally “the dialogue between him and the teacher who caught him out” (lines 14 – 18):

1. D: *ja<sup>1st</sup> sam<sup>1st</sup> jednom kod Ćuftice a to je bilo jedini put da sam<sup>1st</sup> iz istorije imao pušku [...]*  
 (“D: I once at Ćuftica’s and that was the only time in history class that [I] had crib notes [...]“)  
[... 3 short turns]
2. D: *i onda nam je on dao kontrolni [...]*  
 (“D: And then he gave us a control test [...]“)  
[... 2 short turns]
3. D: *gluposti... i sećam<sup>1st</sup> se bilo ono nešto rani srednji vek ono franačka država ... Hlodoveh neki...*  
 (“D: Silly ... and [I] remember something like Middle Ages some Frankish state ... some Chloderic ...”)  
[... 1 short turn]
4. D: *e da, i ja<sup>1st</sup> tu i sad imamo kontrolni / ¶-1 a ja<sup>1st</sup> baš naučio dobro i reko<sup>1st</sup> samo sam<sup>1st</sup> uzo godine,*  
 (“D: And so, and I here and now we have the test / and I really learnt good an’ [I] said [I] just took the years“)
5. *stavio na papir, samo da se podsetim<sup>1st</sup> godina ja<sup>1st</sup> otprilike znam, lupam, ajde da je neki*  
 (“wrote them on paper, just to remind myself of the years / I sort of knew / for example / ok that)
6. *papa i/zdao neku bulu osamsto neke godine.*  
 (“a pope issued a decree in eight hundred and some year“)  
[... 1 short turn]

7. *D: ... znači deveti vek ali ne znam<sup>1st</sup> tačno godine / ja<sup>1st</sup> znam<sub>1st</sub> sve to lepo / stoji onako kako*  
 (“D: ... so the ninth century but [I] don’t know the exact year / I know everything / there like how“)
8. *kada zašto sve ali ne znam<sup>1st</sup> tačno dal je osamsto šezdes pete ili osamsto sedamdes neke /*  
 (“when, why, everything, but [I] don’t know if it’s eight hunderd sixty five or eight hunderd seventy“)
9. *znam<sup>1st</sup>, samo čisto da imam<sup>1st</sup> brojke napisane. ¶-2 Ja<sup>1st</sup> napišem<sup>1st</sup> to i stavim<sup>1st</sup> ispod i on ništa*  
 (“[I] know things / just to have the numbers put down/ I write that down and put it beneath an’ he nothing“)
10. *ja<sup>1st</sup> radim<sup>1st</sup> kontrolni, završim<sup>1st</sup> sve, nisam<sup>1st</sup> ni koristio taj papir, što je najbolje ,*  
 (“I do the test / finish it / everything/ didn’t even use that paper, that’s the best of all“)
11. *i samo sam<sup>1st</sup> ovako izvadio čisto da proverim<sup>1st</sup> jednu godinu i on me provali.*  
 (“An [I] only took it out like this just to check a year and he found me out.“)
12. *i kao... a reko je ne znam<sup>1st</sup> kao – ako vidim<sup>1st</sup> nekoga dajem<sup>1st</sup> mu keca,*  
 (“and like ... an’ he said I don’t know like – if [I] see someone [I] give him a zero“)
13. *i ja<sup>1st</sup> reko- jao bože šta mi ovo trebalo*  
 (“an’ I go – oh God what did [I] need it for“)  
 [... 3 short turns] ¶-3
14. *D: a poenta što sam se ja<sup>1st</sup> toliko unervozio- e nećeš majke ti profesore to nije moje*  
 (“and the point is that I got so nervous / hey you won’t damn it – teacher it’s not mine“)
15. *i ja<sup>1st</sup> krenem<sup>1st</sup> tako da lažem<sup>1st</sup> providno, a on fazon zna čovek ono ...*  
 (“and I start lying so obviously, and he like the man knew ...“)  
 [... 1 short turn]

16. *D: ovaj, aaa, e, a to to mi bio jedini argument koji sam<sup>1st</sup> mogo.../*  
*C: da/ ...ja<sup>1st</sup> reko, a vi ste baš*  
 (“And well, and that was the only argument [I] could sort of ...  
 I said, you teacher are really”)
17. *imali čas pre nas, ja<sup>1st</sup> reko-pa profesore to sigurno ostalo od*  
*nekog iz, iz drugo jedan, on kao.*  
 (“had another class before us, I said, well that must have been  
 left by someone from another class”)
18. *Pa tetkica čistila sad i nije, ja<sup>1st</sup> – pa ne znam<sup>1st</sup> jaaaa<sup>1st</sup>.*  
 (“Well, the cleaning lady cleaned now but she didn’t, I don’t  
 know not meeee”) ¶-4  
 (Smeh – “laughter”)

The speaker D. is continuing the series of reminiscences that the four interlocutors have been engaged into in the conversation. In ¶-1 he introduces “his story”, and by using 1<sup>st</sup> person pronoun + V<sup>1st</sup> activates himself as a chief character, and then gives the general setting of the story. The next segment of the story ¶-2 starts again with the pronoun *I*, and there is an interesting combination of *origo* replacement in line 14: *i ja<sup>1st</sup> tu i sad imamo<sup>1st</sup> kontrolni* – literally “and I here and now we have the test”, which is a short reformulation of the setting and the main character, and a conclusive line for introduction. This is followed, in the same turn (line 9) by an utterance beginning with *ja<sup>1st</sup> + V<sup>1st</sup>* to start ¶-3, a kind of psychological justification of his action of taking crib notes to the test: *a ja<sup>1st</sup> baš naučio dobro* (“and I learned quite well”), *ja<sup>1st</sup> otprilike znam<sup>1st</sup>* (“I know approximately ... the year”), *ja<sup>1st</sup> znam<sup>1st</sup> sve to lepo* (“I know all that nicely”), thus emphasizing that “he did study, and did know”, implying he did not really need the crib notes. The central part ¶-4 (lines 9-14) of what happened during the test begins with two uses of JA + V<sup>agree</sup> for the main actions: *Ja<sup>1st</sup> napišem<sup>1st</sup> to i stavim<sup>1st</sup> ispod* (“I wrote that down and put it down under”), and *ja<sup>1st</sup> radim<sup>1st</sup> kontrolni, završim<sup>1st</sup> sve, nisam<sup>1st</sup> ni koristio taj papir* (“and I do the test, finish it all, didn’t even use that paper”).

These first three segments of the story show that the use of personal pronoun can serve both as a means of segmenting a narrative



structure into its expected parts and simultaneously connecting them, since even though it would be possible to use only the verb agreement form, the story would not easily proceed from the role “I” in the setting, “I” in the psychological description of the main character’s motivation, and “I” as the performer of the main actions.

The last segment ¶-4, “the dialogue between him and the teacher who caught him out”, is the culmination of the narrative – the teacher caught D. having the crib sheet, and a stressful dialogue ensued, where the need to use *on* (“he”) and *ja* (“I”) is pragmatically necessary. In a reported dialogue quotative markers: *reko*, (colloquial form of aorist lacking the first person marker – “said, say”), *krenem* (“start, go”), *fazon, kao* (“sort of”, “like” in lines 15 and 17), are used in this part of the narrative in combination: 1st person pronoun + marked verb forms + quotative markers. A reported dialogue with longer introduction of direct speech would certainly go against the need to create a vivid culminating segment.

Thus, the first person pronoun plus first person marked verb are distributed at the beginning of the segments of narrative structure, helping to segment that structure into paragraph units, “actively placing the speaker” Fricke (2003: 70) as the main character of the story.

### **3.3. SECOND PERSON SINGULAR PRONOUN AND SECOND PERSON SINGULAR VERB FORMS**

As noted in literature for other languages (Helbrecht 2003, Oliva 2013) the use of the second person pronoun singular is much less frequent in conversational language than the first person pronoun. But it is nevertheless used often enough to posit it among relatively frequent words, and therefore worth examining. Most often one thinks about the use of this pronoun in terms of theories of politeness. It is the fact that some languages have grammatical sensitivity to this phenomenon, and that in certain contexts the speakers of Japanese and languages similar in this respect avoid using personal pronouns

when addressing other persons and “rather use status and kinship terms, titles and other complex nominal expressions” (Helmbrecht, 197). However, for our study of the conversational language, we must point out that in a corpus of casual conversation between friends, relatives, young people such as students, politeness must be taken as a very general principle of organization of communication, since the cooperativeness and closeness of the relations between the analyzed speakers does not give much material for some explicit hierarchy of politeness.

It is quite difficult sometimes to determine the pragmatic function of use of 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun in singular. Even if it is about the generalized *ti* in an utterance like: *Ti*<sup>2nd</sup> *imaš*<sup>2nd</sup> *i druge programe*. (“You have also other programs”), said by one teenager to another who previously had some negative remarks about the program he was using, the question is – why did the speaker use both the pronoun and the person marked verb? He could have used the marked verb only: *Imaš*<sup>2nd</sup> *i druge programe*. The generalized meaning would remain. Was it because he wanted to add an implication “so go and find those other programs, and then you will have solved the problem”? In order to try to answer that question we analyzed examples from our corpus, and we suggest some pragmatic functions of *ti* in conversational language.

Most of the cases show that even without special prosodic emphasis, the largest number of uses imply a contrast of *ti* and the speaker, *ti* and other people, *ti* and everyone else.

*M: [...] možemo da idemo sutra u poštu*  
 (“M. [...] we can go to the post office tomorrow”)

*N: Možemo*  
 (“N: We can”)

*M: Kad ti*<sup>2nd</sup> *ideš*<sup>2nd</sup> *na fakultet?*  
 (M: “When are you going to the faculty?”)

*N: Pa moram da budem do tri tamo*  
 (“N: Well I should be there about three”)

Both M. and N. are planning a visit to the post office, but in order to arrange at what time to go, M., who knows her own time schedule, uses the pronoun *ti* here, implying: “I know when I can go, but not when you can go”. Without the pronoun, the question could sound a bit disconnected with the topic of planning, more casual, and could even be understood as a continuation of some previous topic.

One more example of the closeness of interlocutors and emphatic use of both *ti* + verb<sup>2nd</sup> in a jokingly formulated question, with the contrast implied, and emphasis on the “reproach”:

*M. ...pa dobro jesi<sup>2nd</sup> ti<sup>2nd</sup> normalna, pa kak... kako ja sad ovo da pijem?*  
 (“M. .... now really are you normal, well how...how am I to drink this?”)

In the following example, the contrast is between *ti* and other people:

*B: [...] upisaću ja njoj četiri ali ću je pitati kad dode [...] daj brzo i privatne časove/ i inače su mi treba ..*  
 (“B: [...] I will write down mark four but I’ll ask her when she’s back [...] so get me private lessons quick [...] I needed those anyway”)

*C: da; nevezano za...*  
 (“C: Yeah, not because of ...)

*D: dobro ti<sup>2nd</sup> si<sup>2nd</sup> bar svesna toga al brate ono*  
 (“D: OK, you are at least aware of that but oh bro ...)

The conversation is between high school students, and B. is narrating an event when she got assessment by a teacher who said she would give B. mark four, and promised to examine her again, so B. took private classes to be sure not to fail when re-examined. Again, the use of *ti* by speaker D. could be explained as implication that other people in such situation would not be aware that they need extra classes, but that B. was, which also serves as a conclusive and supportive comment after the story.

As for the generalized *ti* it is possible that the use of both pronoun and marked verb contribute some meaning pragmatically, but it is not an easy task to determine for all the cases a common characterization. We mentioned the example of a teenager saying “you have also other

programs”, but apart from saying there is some sort of individuation within the generalized meaning of the sentence, not much else can be concluded. One more example from the corpus:

*B: znaš drugo su one cipele dok je beba još mala / već drugo je kad imaš ti četiri godine naš ono ... drugo je sad kad imaš nešto što se šnira ...*

(“B: you know one thing is the shoe wear while the baby is still small / but another thing is when you are four years you know ... it’s different when you have something you must tie the laces” ...)

Whereas in the “*you have other programs*” example we could suggest some nuance of hortative meaning, in the previous example about “shoe wear”, the utterance context does not allow such interpretation. There may be a simple case of added emphasis on the general condition “when you are four”, since similar argument has already been given in a previous turn.

### **3.4. FIRST AND SECOND PERSON PLURAL PRONOUNS AND MARKED AGREEMENT VERB FORMS**

Most of the discussions of first person plural in literature bring in the question of whether it is inclusive or exclusive plural, i.e. whether the use of *we* denotes speaker and listener(s) or speaker/listener(s) and third person(s), or speaker and third persons. However in our corpus it seems that this issue is not bothering much the interlocutors, since we have not found any demand for clarification, although it is possible to imagine that in case of a confusion any of the listeners can ask for clarification “Who do you mean by ‘we’?”. This can be explained partly by the fact that interlocutors are friends and have common social background, or that the speakers, if they think it necessary, as some examples will show, do give additional information. As one author puts it “Covert inclusivity can only be inferred from the situational context: if a speaker A welcomes a hearer B with the words *I’m glad we two could meet*, it can be assumed that *we two* means ‘A and B’. ....or as in *We/ Us linguists are a crazy bunch* or *We/ Us three have to be leaving now*. (Hernandez 2011: 144). Similarly to the functioning of the first

person singular, approximately 50% of all the occurrences of *mi* is somewhere at the beginning of a turn, serving a rhetorical function of initiating analogues experience:

*D: a mi<sup>1st pl</sup> kod Emice kad smo<sup>1st pl</sup> radili sastave / Vanja je uvek pre nego što, otprilike uvek znali smo na temu nešto uglavnom i svaki put pre pismenog [... ] i Vanja kupi „Moju tajnu/ Moju sudbinu“ nešto pročita i bukvalno uzme zaplet rečenice i to i napiše sastav i uvek je dobijala dobre ocene kad je to radila, uvek...*  
 (“D: and we at Emica’s when we did essays / Vanja would always before we, sort of always knew the topic something and every time before the essay writing Vanja buys “*My secret/ My destiny*” reads something and literally takes over the plot sentences and so on and writes the essay and she always got good marks when she did that, always”)

This is the third “experience” in the line of anecdotes, stories from school, and again we can see the pattern of the introduction with the connective *a* plus first person pronoun plus person marked verb to refer to the class of D. and then the story proceeds about a classmate (Vanja), a member of the “we”/group, who cleverly read a literary piece and then used its sentences/ideas in her essay writing.

The following example illustrates another typical occurrence of *we*:

*D: a pazi, pazi – Milan, ja, ovde Nevena i ovde / Ema sela tu je bilo kao slobodno a iza nje Maja i Kostićka. Znači Milan, ja, Nevena i ovde sada Ema se okrenula njima kao / [... ] znači okrenuta je njima [... ] a mi bukvalno ja sam ja samo meni je Milan bukvalno dao Neveni moju vežbanku da proveriti i nas troje smo<sup>1st pl</sup> svi dobili petice, [... ]*

(“D: but look, look – Milan, me, here Nevena and here / Ema sat there it was sort of empty and behind her Maja and Kostić. So, Milan, me, Nevena and now here Ema looking towards them / ... and **we** literally I only I only towards me and Milan literally gave Nevena my notebook to check and the three of us all got five”) [... ]

There is obviously an effort on the part of the speaker D. to first describe the situation very clearly as to where the *we/three of us* were seated in contrast to Ema (the teacher), which is repeated twice and then proceeds to the main “action” during the class (“my notebook from Vlada to Tamara”), and finishes off with “the three of us all got five (the highest mark)”. Even though this is perhaps an example of the

speaker's extreme concern to define where the "group" she belongs to were seated, it is typical for talking about experiences of a group including speaker and third people in conversational contexts.

Another way of defining the group to which the speaker belongs, if necessary, is by use of *we* + defining NP/PP/S that defines the group: *Mi što smo*<sup>1st pl</sup> *navikli da živimo*<sup>1st pl</sup> ..., ("We who are used to living...") *Majke mi, mi kući jedemo*<sup>1st pl</sup> *rukama*, ("Honestly, we at home use hands to eat"), *Pogotovo mi koji se bavimo*<sup>1st pl</sup> *time*, ("Especially we who do that job"), *E tako da mi imamo*<sup>1st pl</sup> *bosanskog porekla*, ("And so we have Bosnian origin"), *Mi ovako, mi iz Leskovac ovako zavrćemo*<sup>1st pl</sup> ("We like this, we from Leskovac accentuate like this"). These are contexts in which *we* plus agreement verb forms is sometimes obligatory for syntactic reasons, but even without wider context it is obvious that most of these utterances are either emphatic conclusive remarks, or elaboration of a topic.

#### 4. CONVERSATIONAL LANGUAGE VS TV INTERVIEWS AND PARLIAMENTARY DISCOURSE

Since our primary goal was to study the use of pronouns in conversational language, the comparison with spoken television interviews and parliamentary communication was undertaken to see what similarities and differences can be observed, beside the mere frequency of the use of the deictic pronouns and their non-omission in those contexts.

One general observation is as expected, the second person singular pronoun in more formal context is practically non-existent. This does not mean that in another corpus, for example, TV talk shows, the relationship between the host and the guests cannot be more friendly, and then the use of those forms could appear more natural. The relatively frequent use of the first person singular seems to be more connected to the anchor's turns in TV interviews, and the speech acts and modal utterances in parliamentary discourse. But this general statement could certainly be qualified further if these

two corpora were analyzed in detail. For example, we find that *ja* + *mislím* “I think” might be connected with more critical turns, as in the following example from parliamentary discourse:

*... Ja ( ) mislim da je, apsolutno, nekorektno na političkoj sceni Srbije, političke stranke kvalifikovati da su dobre ako žele da saraduju sa vama a ne, ukoliko tu saradnju ne žele.*

(“I think that it is, absolutely, unfitting at the Serbian political scene, to qualify the political parties as good if they want to cooperate with you, and not good, if they don’t want to have that cooperation”)

Or emphasizing an individual for a critique:

*Gospodine ministre, tužno je to je pričao, to nije smešno, Vi niste bili prisutni, tako da Vas molim da se ne smežete.*

(“Mister Minister, it is sad what he told, it’s not funny, **you** were not present, so that I beg you not to laugh”).

Or used to initiate a conclusive remark:

*Ja mislim da smo mi u ovom slučaju ( ), praveći jedan širi aranžman, koji se ne tiče samo NIS-a, nego je mnogo značajniji strateški, zapravo napravili dobar izbor za Srbiju. Hvala!*

(“I think that **we** have, making a wider arrangement, not only for NIS, but much more strategically significant, made a good choice for Serbia. Thank you!”)

In parliamentary discourse with opposing political parties and opinions there are also emphatic uses of deictic pronouns plus marked verbs, serving exactly that need, to emphasize the opposing groups:

*[...] Ovo je pisao neko iz DSS-a pošto vi nikada nećete imati predsednika Republike! Očigledno! A mi koji se spremamo za tu funkciju zaista bismo želeli da znamo šta to od nas zahtevate, da vam kažemo da li možemo da ispunimo vaše uslove ili ne! [...]*

(“[...] This was written by someone from DSS, since **you** are never going to produce the president of the Republic! Obviously! And **we** who are preparing for that position we would really like to know what you are asking from us to do [...]”)

These cases not fundamentally different from conversation, but situations are different and impact the style and function of use of

deictic pronouns and verb forms. In TV interviews the relationship between the TV host and guests is respectful, the former being more dominant in asking questions and assigning the topics. In parliamentary discourse the communication is restricted by administrative rules and the 'turns' are of limited duration, but usually much longer than in conversation or TV interviews. There is no free exchange, since each member of the parliament must get permission to speak from the presiding person, and might be warned to get back to an in advance established topic, if necessary. Also, while in conversation and TV interviews there is a sense of solidarity and cooperation, the parliamentary discourse presupposes opposition between parties, whereas in conversation and interviews there is less motivation to oppose the opinion of the other.

Another difference between the three corpora, which should be more balanced in some further research, is the fact that the corpus of conversational language includes dozens of different speakers, the TV interviews are mostly those with one host plus one guest, and the host is in majority of those interviews the same individual. Some possible social differences between the speakers, such as age and gender could not be compared either, even less the individual differences, which might characterize certain speakers in different contexts.

## **5. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

Our analysis of the corpus of conversational language in informal and more formal communication situations has shown that there are strong similarities with other rich agreement languages such as Spanish, French and Russian in terms of the variations in expressing subjectivity, attitude towards the ensuing complement sentences after modal verbs or verbs of cognition and speech, for example. Some of the most frequent verbs have also undergone the process of pragmaticalization, and have become discourse/pragmatic markers in one of their uses. Another feature of the use of deictic person pronouns and agreement verb forms is their distribution – they occur



within the process of elaboration of a topic, or as “take-ups” of a topic, either by analogy or contrast, but not within the initiating turns (at least not without some supportive devices).

We insisted on the deictic pronoun not being omitted when the relevant verb form is used, but it would be interesting to study further the use of “logical subjects” in stressed versus non-stressed form (*Nama je velika čast* “To us it is a great honour” vs. *Velika nam je čast* – “It is our great honour”) as well as some variants that occur in the conversational language. We also noted that prosodically these deictic pronouns are not accented, but behave more as proclitics (as observed for French, Detges 2013). Only a few seem to be more accented (e.g. *Pa to li si ti<sup>nd</sup> pokvarila?* – “Oh it was you who broke it?”). It would be interesting to compare prosodic and possibly kinesics aspects of communication with these diverse uses – with overt, non-omitted pronoun and without it.

One more general topic from the point of view of discourse and pragmatics would be a thorough comparison between the use of all the person pronouns deictic and non-deictic third person, since even with the deictic forms plus agreement verb forms, they seem to follow the general rule, that in case they are used (for the take-up of the topic, as explicit introduction into a speech act, a conclusive remark, or other reasons), the following utterance would include a number of omitted deictic pronouns, unless there is a need for disambiguation if two or more characters are included in the story or conversational segment. Transitions to the next segments of conversation, new topics/subtopics, expressed in paragraphs, would quite often prompt a new use of deictic pronouns plus agreement verb form.

Generally speaking, the findings confirm that the primary function of non-omission of deictic pronouns in Serbian is pragmatic in nature and a discourse matter, linked with psychological need of the speaker to re-establish their role and other people’s roles in it, so as to clearly indicate their stance towards a statement, or towards the parts of the discourse itself.

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## NON-OMISSION DES PRONOMS PERSONNELS DÉICTIQUES

### Résumé

Tandis que la littérature linguistique abonde en articles concernant l'usage ou le non-usage des pronoms personnels en tant qu'unités anaphoriques, surtout du point de vue de la syntaxe, la non-omission des pronoms déictiques – à savoir de la 1<sup>ère</sup> et de la 2<sup>ème</sup> personne du singulier et du pluriel – a reçu une attention moindre. Ces pronoms, principalement déictiques en serbe – langue riche en accords –, s'avèrent en effet être des unités très fréquentes, au moins dans la langue parlée dans le cadre d'une conversation. Ils sont utilisés même dans les contextes linguistiques où la forme verbale indique ouvertement la personne, c'est-à-dire où les pronoms pourraient être facilement omis. Les explications possibles résident alors naturellement dans le fonctionnement discursif, fonctionnel de ces pronoms (Benveniste, 1966). Récemment, on découvre une littérature croissante sur l'usage des pronoms personnels déictiques dans la conversation (espagnol, portugais, français etc.) du point de vue pragmatolinguistique.

Notre analyse du corpus du langage parlé dans les situations de communication non-formelles ou plutôt formelles a démontré qu'il existe des similarités considérables avec les autres langues riches en accords, telles que l'espagnol, le français et le russe, par exemple, en ce qui concerne les variations dans l'expressions de la subjectivité et dans l'attitude envers les complétives régies par les verbes modaux, les verbes épistémiques ou les verbes d'énonciation. Quelques-uns parmi les verbes les plus fréquents à la première ou à la deuxième personne (*mislím, kažem, znaš*) ont également subi le processus de pragmatolinguistique, de sorte qu'ils sont devenus marqueurs discursifs/pragmatiques. Une autre caractéristique de l'utilisation des pronoms personnels déictiques et des formes verbales comportant l'accord est leur distribution : ils apparaissent dans le cadre de l'élaboration d'un sujet, ou de la reprise d'un sujet – soit par l'analogie, soit par le contraste –, mais jamais dans les tournures d'ouverture d'un sujet (au moins sans dispositifs de support).

*Mots-clés*: non-omission, pronoms personnels déictiques, conversation, discours