

**THE USE OF AUTHORIAL SELF-MENTION**

**WORDS IN ACADEMIC WRITING**

**Akademik Yazılarda Yazarı İşaret Eden Sözcük Kullanımı**

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this corpus-based study is to explore how academic writers from different cultural backgrounds employ authorial self-mention words in their research articles (RA). The data set of the present study comprises roughly 300 research articles, which were selected through criterion sampling method, from the field of Applied Linguistics. Randomly selected 100 articles were examined through document analysis technique in order to unearth how writers from different cultural backgrounds use authorial self-mention words to achieve a variety of rhetorical purposes. The data were analyzed using Hyland's (2002) text analysis model. The findings reveal that the RA is not a modest, self-effacing genre, devoid of writer presence; rather it is a site where writers strategically employ authorial self-mention words and project themselves in their works. The study ends with suggestions for non-native novice writers, underscoring the need to raise (non-native) novice writers' awareness of the strategic use of authorial self-mention words in academic writing.

**Key words:** *Authorial self-mention words, voice, genre, academic writing.*

**Özet**

Bu derlem temelli çalışmada farklı kültürel altyapıya sahip Amerikan ve Türk akademisyenlerin akademik çalışmalarında kendilerinden bahsetmek için sözcükleri nasıl kullandıklarının incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Çalışmanın veri seti Uygulamalı Dilbilim alan yazınından ölçüt örnekleme yoluyla seçilmiş yaklaşık 300 makaleden oluşan derlemden oluşmaktadır. Derlemden rastsal olarak seçilen 100 makale doküman analizi tekniği ile incelenerek farklı kültürden gelen akademisyenlerin kullandıkları ve yazar kimliğini yansıtan sözcükler belirlenerek yazarların bunlarla çeşitli retorik amaçları nasıl gerçekleştirdiklerini araştırılmıştır. Hyland'in (2002) metin analizi modeli kullanılarak incelenen verilerden elde edilen bulgular akademik çalışmaların tamamen yalın, yazar varlığını içermeyen ve kendinden bahsetmeyen bir yazın olmadığını, aksine yazarın akademik eserinde yazar olarak varlığını belirtmek için sözcükleri stratejik bir şekilde kullandıklarını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Elde edilen bulgulara dayanarak anadili İngilizce olmayan genç yazarlara öneriler sunulmaktadır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** *Akademik yazın, akademik yazında yazar varlığı, tür, öz-bahsedim.*

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### Introduction

The advice “Don’t use first person pronouns in academic writing!” should sound familiar to many of us in the academia. This recommendation can help us recall some distant memories from our old school days. A decade ago or so, it was very common to give and/or get this kind of recommendation. As students, writing teachers, academicians, academic journal reviewers or editors, most of us have given or received it. Now? We do not need to go as far back as to our school days: It was exactly this warning that I received at the very beginning of my paper in 2015. This line of thinking is nothing more than a mere reflection of our understanding of academic writing “as a modest, self-effacing genre in which the writer acts as a humble servant of the discipline” (Hyland 2001: 209). Tracing the roots of the convention of impersonal reporting to positivist assumption, Hyland (2001:208) underlies that it is a “hallowed” concept, which helps explain why it is so common and still pervasive in the academia.

This widely-held view of academic writing as “a convention-bound monolithic entity, involving distant, convoluted and impersonal prose-devoid of writer presence” has now been challenged with the ever-growing recognition of the need “for negotiation of identity within academic writing” (Tang and Suganthi 1999:23-24). Recent research has shown that more and more academic writers instill their voice into their claims and interactions with their audiences, project themselves in their texts, and present an appropriate persona within the constraints of disciplinary conventions (Bazerman, 1988; Swales 1990; Hyland, 2000, 2001; Charles, 2003). Tracing the roots of identity in academic writing to Systemic School of Linguistics e.g. Michael Halliday, Tang and Suganthi (1999:24) underline that “language actually creates reality and serves to create as a resource for creating self” in addition to reflecting an existing reality. Echoing a similar view, Hyland (2002:1091) emphasizes that academic writing serves to represent oneself; not just convey ideational “content, but that academic writers gain credibility by projecting an identity invested with individual authority, displaying confidence in their evaluations and commitment to their ideas”.

The notion ‘identity’ has come to be seen as a complex and a contentious issue. The controversy revolves around whether it is an internal projection of the self or a social product. As a projection of this debate, it has been referred to as “ethos”, “identity” “person”, “persona”, “position”, “self”, “subject”, and “voice”, while others use the plurals of many of these words, representing the private, inner as well as the public, social aspects of the notion (Ivanic, 1998:10). The concept ‘identity’ has been embraced as a social product more and more (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, 1989; Halliday, 1978, 1994; Tajfel, 1982; Fairclough, 1989; Turner, 1991; Ivanic, 1998). Social constructionist views of identity see that identity is built on the relationship or interaction people have with their discourse communities. In other words, people’s affiliation with and adoption of the values and beliefs of particular discourse communities they align with create their identities.

Underlying that “identity in written discourse involves both empirical reality that can be described and measured (e.g., demographics and textual features) and phenomenological reality that exists in people’s perceptions (e.g., social constructs)”, Matsuda (2015:141) stresses that we need to “distinguish between the identity positions of the writer that is external to discourse, such as the demographic information and identity as constructed and negotiated through discourse, which is captured by concepts such as ethos and voice”. By drawing attention to the socially constructed nature of identity, Matsuda

further elaborates that two concepts; Aristotle's notion of "*ethos*" which "is concerned with the character of the speaker" and "*voice*" -"the amalgamative effect of the use of discursive and non-discursive features that language users choose, deliberately or otherwise, from socially available yet ever-changing repertoire"- have been key notions in the exploration of identity (2001:40). Matsuda, in other words, sees that "the writer's identity is a part of the interpersonal meaning that is negotiated through the interaction among the writer and the reader mediated by the text" (Matsuda, 2015:145). Drawing on (Voloshinov, 1973; Halliday, 1978; Bakhtin, 1981; Wertsch, 1991; Prior, 2001), Matsuda (2015:146) explains that the contemporary definitions of writer identity resonate with the dialogic and sociohistoric view of voice and the notion of language as meaning making resources. These definitions, according to him, share a number of key assumptions:

- Identity is not optional; all texts says something about the writer, although some are more marked than others.
- Identity is multiple and dynamic.
- Identity is constructed through socially shared resources for meaning making.
- Identity is both individual and social.

Acknowledging that writer identity is not an optional extra but an inseparable part of the text, Hyland (2002:192) asserts that "academic writing is in act of identity: it not only conveys disciplinary 'content' but also carries a representation of the writer". Writers create their identities by using lexical, syntactic, organizational, and material aspects of writing (Ivanic 1994, 1995, 1998). For Hyland (2002: 191), "the most visible manifestation of authorial identity is the use of first person pronouns and their corresponding determiners". Self-representation is common not only in soft sciences but also in "even supposedly 'author-evacuated' articles in the hard sciences as they carry self-promotional flavor with the help of personal pronouns" (Harwood, 2005:1207). In underlying the importance of self-representation in displaying confidence, authoritativeness, and creating appropriate level of deference and attitude to the reader, Hyland (1994:2005) sees self-representation as a key element in successful academic writing, stating "effective academic writing depends on interactional elements which supplement propositional information in the text and alert readers to the writer's opinion."

Despite serving writers as a powerful means to help accomplish a number of rhetorical functions; self-representation has received relatively little empirical study partly because of the conflicting information on their use and the absence of clear direction in style manuals and the preferred cultural practices for authorial concealment (Hyland, 2001, 2002). Yet, with the recognition of the importance of first-person pronouns as a rhetorical device that writers manipulate to create an authorial discursive self, it has attracted more and more attention (Hyland, 1994, 2001, 2002; Ivanic, 1998; Vassileva, 1998, 2000, 2001; Tang & John, 1999; Kuo, 1999, 2004; Ivanic and Camps, 2001; Charles, 2003; Harwood, 2005; Martinez, 2005; Carciu, 2009; Lores-Sanz, 2011). In addition to drawing cross-disciplinary research, first-person pronouns have also attracted cross-cultural investigation and become the foci of analysis for cultural identity in academic writing (Vassileva, 2000; Breivega, Dahl, and Flottum, 2002; Yakhontova, 2006; Mur Duenas, 2007; Molino, 2010).

Both the cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural investigations of self-representation have consistently shown that academic discourse is not purely objective and impersonal; "even supposedly author-evacuated articles in the hard sciences carry self-promotional flavor with the help of personal pronouns" (Harwood, 2005:1207). Yet, the extent writers project

themselves into their texts may differ because of discipline variation or social-cultural background (Raymond, 1993; Hyland, 1999).

As is widely acknowledged, writers' conscious or unconscious linguistic choices cannot be considered independent of their respective discourse community conventions and contexts, since these choices reflect ideologies of social groups writers would like to align with or even oppose. That is, writer identity is constructed socially through interactions with the social groups that writers would like to identify with and is revealed through the use of language during the process writers seek recognition (Halliday, 1978, 1994; Tajfel, 1982). Writers, in other words, have no choice but to take on the identity of their discourse community when they employ its discourse (Hyland, 2002). Recent research on the use of first person pronouns in research articles has demonstrated that first person pronouns do have a place in academic texts and are used as a powerful strategic resource to construct authoritative self (Tarone, Dwyer, Gillette & Icke, 1998; Kuo, 1999; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999; Tang & John, 1999; Hyland, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c; Ivanić & Camps, 2001; Harwood, 2005; Tang, 2006; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Lores-Sanz, 2011; Flowerdew & Wang, 2015). These scholars have invariably shown the importance of first person use in the construction of the writer's persona and a credible image of themselves.

Recent research, for example, has shown that self-representation differs across disciplines depending on the epistemological conventions of knowledge construction (Charles, 2003; Harwood, 2005; Hyland, 2001; 2003; Martinez, 2005). Hard sciences display less authorial presence, constructing scientific knowledge based on measurable results and clear-cut criteria, whereas soft-sciences have more room for tentativeness, with comparatively more personal projection to build writer credibility and seek recognition.

Another determining factor behind self-representation is writers' socio-cultural backgrounds. Culture plays an important role in the way writers "portray an image of themselves as credible members of a disciplinary community and in the way they project both authorship and authority" (Lorés-Sanz, 2011:174). Writers from different socio-cultural backgrounds have been seen to display different degrees of self-representation in their academic works (Shen, 1989; Ramanathan and Kaplan, 1996; Cadman, 1997; Vassileva, 1998; Ivanić and Camps, 2001; Matsuda, 2001; Prior, 2001; Breivega, Dahl, and Flottum, 2002; Martinez, 2005; Yakhontova, 2006; Mur Duenas, 2007; Carciu, 2009; Sheldon, 2009; Molino, 2010; Abdollahzadeh, 2011; Basal and Bada, 2012; Karahan, 2013). These researchers have consistently shown that personal authorial reference varies from culture to culture; demonstrating Anglo-American academic scholars being more welcoming to using personal pronouns as self-mention devices in their academic works.

Despite numerous cross-disciplinary and cross-linguistic researches on authorial self-mention in academic writing, very few studies have been conducted on Turkish academic writers' use of them. In their comparative study, Basal and Bada (2012) and Karahan (2013) investigated the use of inclusive and exclusive 'I' and 'we' by Turkish academic writers and non-Turkish academic writers. The corpora of these two studies consisted of limited number of research articles-40 each, published in only one journal each, leaving a lacuna to be filled in. Motivated by this need, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing research on the use of authorial self-mention words by studying its frequency, distribution, and use-rhetorical purpose- across the different sections of applied linguistic research articles by AWs (American academic writers) and TWs (Turkish academic

writers). Specifically, the use of authorial self-mention words by AWs and TWs will be investigated in this paper.

### **Method**

The study employs both qualitative and quantitative approaches, comprising frequency counts and text analysis of two corpora of roughly 300 research articles (RA). The data set of the present study was compiled through a criterion sampling technique. Each corpus consists of 50 research articles in the field of English language teaching: 50 research articles by American academic writers (AWs) and 50 research articles by Turkish academic writers (TWs). Only one article by the same writer was chosen. Frequency analysis was conducted to offer data for the interpretation of the importance of personal pronouns in the articles. Also, the semantic references and discourse functions of authorial-self mention words were analyzed qualitatively on the basis of actual occurrences in the articles.

The AWs come from eight journals; four from Applied Linguistics, six from English for Academic Purposes, two from English for Specific Purposes, eight from Journal of Second Language Writing, four from Journal of Pragmatics, thirteen from Written Communication, and thirteen from TESOL QUARTERLY. The issues published between 2000 and 2014 in these journals were scanned and only single-authored empirical research articles were chosen. These journals were chosen because of their online availability and impact factor. American writers' surnames, location of their institutions, and the information given in their CVs were taken into consideration.

The TWs come from twelve indexed journals produced mostly in universities in Turkey between 2000 and 2014; three from Ahi Evran University journal, three from Mediterranean Journal of Humanities, two from Atatürk University journal, one from Balıkesir University journal, two from Çukurova University journal, two from Gazi University journal, sixteen from Hacettepe University journal, three from Mersin University journal, one from Selçuk University journal, four from Education and Science journal, one from GEFAD, and twelve from NOVITAS-ROYAL journal. In the choice of Turkey-based journals, all the journals that are indexed in ULAKBIM- Turkish Academic Network and Information Center- were chosen. Then single-authored empirical articles were chosen to constitute the TWs corpus. All of the authors of these articles are from the English Language teaching academia. They hold either MA and/or PhD in addition to having a BA in English. The papers by these authors were deliberately chosen, for they serve as writing teachers, journal editors, reviewers, language consultants, and MA and PhD advisors. Besides serving as gatekeepers, these academics are more likely to follow the developments in their global discourse community conventions around the world. It was hoped that this homogeneity would make this study more reliable and increase its generalizability, representativeness, and credibility of the study. None of the journals has an explicitly stated editorial policy about the use of personal pronouns. The AWs address an international audience, whereas the TWs' audience is mostly Turkish people, for not enough articles by TWs were found addressing international audience. The corpora's having different audiences may be considered as one of the limitations of the study.

### Data Analysis

The corpora were then searched for authorial self-mention words; first person uses (I, me, my, we, us, our) and the words (researcher, writer) using WordPilot 2000. All cases were examined in context to make sure that they were exclusive first person uses and to determine their pragmatic function. An independent rater, an American university lecturer holding a PhD in Applied Linguistics, who was also familiar with the categories, coded all of the articles, independent of the researcher. The comparisons between the two raters' coding showed 91% agreement according to inter-rater reliability formula of Miles and Huberman (1994:64). To solve the few cases of disagreement, a third rater, another American lecturer who was familiar with the categories was consulted. The three coders analyzed those cases and reached full agreement.

The cases of the first person singular and plural pronouns and their derivative forms and the words 'writer' and 'researcher' in the five sections; abstract, introduction, method, results, and conclusion, of the articles were classified, using Hyland's (2002) categorization framework of the functions of the authorial reference realized through the words under investigation. Hyland distinguishes five discourse functions of authorial self-mention words: (i) expressing self-benefits, (ii) stating a purpose, (iii) explaining a procedure, (iv) elaborating an argument, (v) stating results/claims. Two of these involve little risk for the writer; 'Stating a Goal/Purpose' and 'Explaining a Procedure'; and two involve high risk; 'Stating Results/Claims' and 'Elaborating an Argument'. "Stating a purpose" is a low-risk role writers adopt "to signal their intentions and provide an overt structure". Explaining a procedure is also considered a rather low-risk writer role. Elaborating an argument runs high in the cline as a face-threatening writer role. Stating results and/or claims seems to be the more demanding functional role in terms of face threat for the writer (Hyland, 2002:1100).

### Results and Discussion

#### Frequency of authorial-self mention

The results of the analysis of both corpora confirmed the presence of self-mention words in different sections of the RA (Table 1). Almost all of the AWs (96%) but three employed self-mention words, whereas (70%) of the TWs did so. What is interesting is that only in three instances TWs writers used first person singular pronoun 'I' and its derivative forms.

**Table 1.** Overall frequency of self-mention

	<b>AWs</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>TWs</b>	<b>%</b>
I	680	83.3	3	2
My	83	10	4	2
Me	17	2	1	,
We	11	1	67	40
Our	--	--	--	--
Us	2		2	1
researcher	32	3	81	48
Writer	1		--	---
<b>Total</b>	<b>816</b>		<b>169</b>	

Turning to overall frequencies, comparison between the AWs and shows that AWs were almost five times more likely to explicitly intervene with authorial-self mention words. Authorial intervention allowed AWs to present their research into the field in a much more personalized manner. The decision to employ a first person pronoun might be closely related to what Hyland (2002:217) calls “authorial stance” and “invoking a real reader in the text.” By doing so, writers can identify themselves “with a particular argument and to gain credit or one’s individual perspective or research decisions”. This authorial stance also helped AWs create a personal standing in their texts and separate their own work from that of others, helping them distinguish who they are and what they have to say. Invoking a real reader in the text is a precondition for successful communication and “self-mention can help construct an intelligent, credible, and engaging colleague, by presenting an authorial self firmly established in the norms of the discipline and reflecting an appropriate degree of confidence and authority” (Hyland, 2002:217).

In TWs, the human subject was played down, which might be related to the distinction between writer responsible and reader responsible languages. By adopting a less intrusive personal style, TWs may aim to reinforce the objectivity of their interpretations and subordinate their own voice to that of unmediated nature. Such a strategy, according to Hyland (2002:216) “subtly conveys an empiricist ideology that suggests research outcomes would be the same irrespective of the individual conducting it.”

As seen in Table 1, almost all of the words, except for ‘our’ under investigation, were used to some extent. ‘I’ was the most common author reference word and first person singular pronouns comprised 83% of the total occurrences of AWs authorial intervention, followed by ‘my’. This observation supports Hyland’s (2001) finding in that in his study on the use of self-mention words in soft and hard sciences, he found that ‘I’ and ‘We’ comprised 70% of all pronouns. The high presence of cases of first person clearly indicates that AWs chose rhetorical moves involving authorial intervention, which makes the author’s presence the most prominent in AWs corpus. This tendency is directly related to what Bakhtin (1986:301) calls “the Anglo-Saxon idea of ‘author responsibility’; -authors are positioned by their discursual choices as single authors, as independently responsible for the contents of their writing... ‘we’-authors - a collaborative rather than a competitive approach.” Underlying the close relationship between authorial intervention and writers’ awareness of their roles, (Ivanic and Simpson, 1992:144) underscore that the common use of authorial self-mention words is a “reflection of a constantly growing awareness of the role of the author rather than being a simply a fashionable trend.”

Interestingly, the word ‘researcher’ comprised almost half of TWs self-mention, followed by ‘we’. This finding provides evidence of overall under-use of first person in TWs texts, particularly ‘I’ and ‘my’, but substantial overuse of the word ‘researcher’ and ‘we’. This, at first sight, seems to be related to the fact that subjective forms are marked choices in Turkish, a pro-drop language. In Turkish, explicit mention of the subject is grammatically redundant, as person is marked by a verb suffix. Thus, the use of first person subjects, especially first person singular pronouns, tends to sound unusual, egocentric, and pompous. This finding, at first sight, seems to suggest that Turkish writers may transfer this perception to English, which may account for the avoidance of the use of subjective forms of the pronoun. Yet, interestingly, first person plural form ‘we’ was quite common in single-authored TWs, which clearly indicates that TWs consciously employed first person plural, avoiding first person singular pronouns. The conscious preference for first person plural pronouns in single-authored RAs indicates how they wish to “reduce their personal intrusion.... and yet emphasize the importance that should be given to their

unique procedural choices or views” (Hyland, 2001:217). Thus, single-authored TWs seem to avoid personal intrusions in their RAs, but they still emphasize their role as authors, by preferring plural self-references.

Another motivation behind TAs’ intention to reduce personal attributions could be related to distinction between “individualistic vs. collectivist” oriented cultures (Clyne, 1993:14). From this perspective, the TAs’ discourses mostly favor the ‘collective approach’ resulting in collective responsibility.

As we can see, AWs preferred to project a more prominent identity and build a relationship with their readers by employing more authorial self-mention words. This rhetorical preference is partly “influenced by a disciplinary community’s epistemological beliefs and social practices” (Hyland 2002:2018), which helps explain why over 95% of AWs employed it.

### Discourse functions of self-mention

The frequency occurrence of self-mention words gives us fairly important information about the underuse and/or overuse of these times as we have seen above. The rhetorical functions for which the self-mention words are used can present a lot more information about the identity of authorial identity. Table 2 shows the distribution of authorial self-mention words by their main functions.

**Table 2.** Discourse functions of self-mention

Function	AWs	%	TWs	%
Stating a goal/purpose	50/15	30	50/6	12
Explaining a procedure	50/40	80	50/26	52
Stating results/claims	50/20	40	50/19	38
Expressing self-benefits	50/3	6	50/--	--
Elaborating an argument	50/16	32	50/5	10

As can be seen, both groups used self-mention words the most to explain a methodological approach, followed by a more argumentative function; presenting and justifying claims. The other argumentative function, elaborating an argument was more commonly expressed with less direct reference to the author, especially by TWs. This finding yields support to Hyland’s (2002) findings. In his study on the use and functions of self-mention words in research articles and student papers, he found that both groups used self-mention words for same rhetorical functions in the same order as it is in this study. We can see here that AWs made a lot more authorial intervention into their works, which carries both the most risks and potentially gained them the most credit. AWs used almost one third of the occurrences of self -mention to present arguments or claims, compared with only a quarter in TWs. The least frequent use in both corpuses was expressing self-benefits.

**Table 3.** Distribution of self-mention words and their discourse functions

Function	AWs	%	TWs	%
Stating a goal/purpose	70	9	11	7
Explaining a procedure	554	68	82	49
Stating results/claims	130	16	65	38
Expressing self-benefits	7	--	--	--
Elaborating an argument	55	7	7	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>816</b>		<b>169</b>	



### Stating a goal/purpose

As seen in Table 2 and 3, 30% of AWs used 9% of the self-mention words to state a goal/purpose, whereas 12% TWs employed 7% of the self-mention words for the same purpose. As writers employed this rhetorical purpose to signal their intentions and provide an overt structure for their texts, this rhetorical purpose carries little threat of criticism or rejection. Such a strategy “helps clarify the direction of the research and the schematic structure of the argument”, and helps foreground “a fairly low risk writer role, simply signposting readers through the text” (Hyland, 2002:1100). What is interesting about this finding is that AWs employed only first person singular pronoun and its derivative forms as seen in excerpt below:

(1) ... In the present study, *I* seek to understand the choices that writers have in creating textual cohesion with the use of demonstratives as pronouns and determiners, recognizing that demonstrative structures can be powerful tools that help writers build on their previous discourse to create cohesion in their texts...  
(AWs)

However, none of the TWs used first person singular pronoun and its derivative forms. Instead, they used only ‘we’ to serve the same function as seen below:

(2) ... *We* are interested in what teachers think rather than what they do although we recognize that there is a strong link between what one does and what one thinks...  
(TWs)

### Explaining a procedure

In both corpuses, writers’ principal use of authorial self-mention words was to explain a procedure; their unique role in the work that they had carried out, as previous studies have shown (Hyland, 2002; Mur Duenas, 2007; Lafuente, 2010). 80% of AWs employed it using 68% of the total self-mention words, while 52% TWs did so employing 49% of the total self-mention words. AWs mostly used first person singular pronoun and its derivative forms as seen in the below excerpt:

(3) ... In an effort to investigate the role that peer reviewers play in opening (or not) the gates to off-network scholars, *I* decided to collect and analyze, with the journal publisher’s permission...  
(AWs)

In addition to first person singular pronoun and its derivative forms, AWs employed the word ‘researcher’ in six instances as seen below:

(4) ... The *researcher* collected data from digital recordings of adult students ( $N = 41$ ) who attended classes for 30 weeks at Portland State University Laboratory School. During the focused observation, the *researcher* recorded tokens of praise...  
(AWs)

However, only one of the TWs used first person singular pronoun to realize the same function as seen below:

(5) ... The results of this analysis are the point that *I* turn to in the following section...

(TWs)

It is seen that the great majority of TWs- over 90%- used the word ‘researcher’ to explain a procedure:

(6) ... The content of the repertory grid was constructed by the *researcher* but nothing was imposed as used in other data collecting tools. This gave to the *researcher* a chance to see things from the teacher’s own perspective objectively and chance to uncover the teacher’s personal theories related to effective language teaching in her profession...

(TWs)

### **Stating results/claims**

With respect to ‘Stating results/claims’, we again observe similar patterns of behavior in both corpora, with a very high use of the high risk function ‘Stating results/claims.’ As we can see in Table 2 and 3, both groups used self-mention words explicitly to announce their presence, underline their role, construct a plausible interpretation for their phenomenon, and to make knowledge claims by employing the “most self-assertive and consequently potentially the most face-threatening use of self-reference” (Hyland, 2002:1104). A similar inclination is seen in the realization of this rhetorical purpose in that 40% of AWs employed self-mention words; only first person singular pronoun and its derivative forms were used as seen below:

(7) ... In my own 10-year journey as a reentry college student, bilingual academic, language researcher, teacher, editor, and doctoral candidate, *I* have found that coming to “voice” is not a single event but a process of multiple acts of self-authorization

(AWs)

Only in one instance, they employed the word ‘researcher’ as seen below:

(8) ... This study considered interlanguage as a complex adaptive system and demonstrated a statistically significant effect of positive feedback rate on L2 learning. The *researcher* found a positive feedback mechanism, working at the same cognitive area where much SLA is likely taking place...

(AWs)

Contrary to AWs, TWs used first person plural and its derivative forms only for the same purpose.

(9) ... There was no statistical finding about creative writing activities are whether effective or not in attitudes of the students towards to course or writing activities in our research, however, according to the observations of researcher, attitudes of the students devoted to writing activities were positively affected in this research where creative writing activities were practiced...

(TWs)

### **Expressing self-benefits**

As seen in Table 2, ‘Expressing self-benefits’, the least threatening function of authorial self-mention, was employed the least. Only in three instances did AWs use self-mention words to employ it to comment on what they had personally gained from their work as seen below:

(10) ... Focusing on the transactions allowed *me* to follow, from beginning to end, the language used throughout each entire activity, as students initiated their groupwork, came to terms with the details of their assignment, completed the work, and prepared for the presentation...

(AWs)

### **Elaborating an argument**

Finally, in the case of 'Elaborating an argument', both groups chose to stake their commitments to their arguments with the use of first person singular or plural pronouns to realize this high-risk rhetorical function. Yet, as has been the case with the expression of other rhetorical purposes, AWs almost exclusively used first person singular pronoun to elaborate their arguments as seen below:

(11)... I argue that in order to document the wide range of language demands and language learning opportunities inherent in doing academic work...

(AWs)

Yet, as seen in Table 2, only one author used self-mention word three times as seen below:

(12) ... Irrespective of these findings, *we* believe that there will be quite a few, expert and non-expert alike, who will continue to place blame on teachers, saying...

(TWs)

Almost all of TWs, except for just one author, disguised their responsibility when elaborating arguments and giving opinions. Compared with AWs, only one author's article contained first person plural pronoun associated with explicit cognitive verbs such as "think", "believe" and "assume."

As we have seen thus far, both groups employed self-mention words in varying degrees to realize rhetorical purposes. AWs preferred to thematize 81% of their total self-mention word use (816), while of all the self-mention word use of TWs (169), 71% exclusive first person singular and plural pronouns were clause initial. In fact, the decision to construct a more engaged and committed presence in text brings an important syntactic consideration into the fore: the decision to thematize (Halliday, 1994). By thematizing-fronting a clause with a self-mention word- we can serve two complementary purposes at the same time: as writers, we can signal the important entity we attach special importance to and guide the reader regarding what to attend to first in the clause.

### **Conclusions**

In this study, I have explored the way writer identity is constructed discursively in English RAs in applied linguistics through authorial self-mention words. Using a combination of quantitative frequency analysis of two sets of corpuses and qualitative rhetorical text analysis, I have investigated how academic writers from two different cultural backgrounds represent themselves in their research articles.

The findings of this study have supported Hyland's (2002) argument that authorial self-mention words are not stylistic extras in that both American and Turkish academic writers employed them to varying degrees to construct their texts and their rhetorical selves. The findings have also demonstrated that cultural background has an impact on

writers' preferences for authorial intervention into their texts, as TWs significantly underused authorial self-mention words, downplaying their role in their studies, and adopting a less clearly independent stance compared to AWs. In other words, AWs consciously exploited authorial identity to manage the reader's awareness of the author's role and viewpoint; TWs were reluctant to promote their individual self, as they downplayed their authorial identity by restricting their visibility to the more innocuous functions. This reluctance to display a strong authoritative persona and to promote individual self among TWs may be "a product of a culturally and socially constructed view of self which makes assertion difficult", as suggested by Ohta (1991) and Scollon (1994), who demonstrated "that the use of first person pronouns is largely unacceptable in the traditions of some cultures because of its association with individual rather than collective identity." Also, the idea that the size of a discourse community affects the decision to employ authorial self-mention words looks plausible. "As small and homogeneous cultures are more coherent, 'collective thinking' tends to prevail over 'individual thinking' in them" (Vassileva, 1998:181). Behind TWs scant use of authorial self-mention words could also be the rather conflicting "recommendations from style manuals, uncertainties about disciplinary conventions, culturally shaped epistemologies, culture specific views of authority, conflicting teacher advice, or personal preferences" (Mauranen, 1993; Hyland, 2002). Despite explicitly stating that writers' decisions to be visible in their works seems to be related to the "social and epistemological practices of their disciplines", Hyland (2001:218) underlines that "disciplinary conventions are enabling rather than deterministic and that issues of seniority, experience, relationship to the community, and general sense of self can influence writers' decisions to intervene into their texts".

Given the limitations of this research, it would be wise to conduct more comprehensive research on this important issue to fully grasp it. In such a study, the motivations behind Turkish academic writers' avoidance of authorial self-mention words could be investigated. Still, with the importance of corpus-based research findings for academic writing in mind, we can say that the findings of this descriptive paper may have some pedagogical implications for academic writing materials developers and policy makers. Together with the findings of similar studies on authorial identity in academic writing, the findings of this paper could be made use of in EAP courses and academic writing courses for graduates and post-graduates. This is important especially for Turkish academic writers who aim to seek global recognition and gain accreditation by gatekeepers through publication in leading international journals. Rhetorical and linguistic features of RAs driven from corpus-based studies could be included in academic writing courses. In such courses, students' awareness of authorial self-mention word use could be increased. Students could be trained as ethnographers of academic writing, especially in their field of study. And finally, rather than being prescriptive on the use of authorial self-mention words, we could raise novice academic writers' awareness regarding how best they can employ these important rhetorical devices considering the flow of their texts.

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