

“I/we believe that...”: Establishing Author’s Stance in English Literature and Linguistics Articles

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Abstract

The current study investigates the establishment of the author’s stance towards writing through the employment of first-person pronouns in English literature and linguistics research papers. The significance of the writer’s position in academic writing has attracted considerable attention as a result of its influence on the tone, credibility, and level of reader engagement. The prime focus of this study is to analyze a corpus of scholarly publications from two different disciplines in order to identify the similarities and differences in the employment of personal pronouns and determiners by authors to establish their position within their academic articles. The study included both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to examine the data. Corpus analysis was used, and the theoretical framework of Biber et al. (1999) was implemented to categorize first-person pronouns grammatically. The results of the study indicated that the writers on the subject of linguistics had a greater frequency of employing specific pronouns and determiners. These linguistic choices may reflect adherence to writing rules relevant to the discipline, personal writing preferences, or an emphasis on collaborative authorship and objectivity.

Introduction

Engagement of Authors in Academic Writing

Academic written engagement involves the dissemination of knowledge as well as the examination and evaluation of various ideas and viewpoints. Throughout this procedure, individuals strive to build a clear and unique stance for their study, effectively persuading their audience of the importance, reliability, and novelty of their statements and opinions. The authors seek to contextualize their work within the current scholarly literature of their subject in order to offer a cohesive and authoritative presentation of themselves along with their narratives. (Swales, 1990; Gosden, 1993; Kuo 1999; Hyland, 2001, & Harwood, 2005). Furthermore, their objective is to create a platform for discourse in which members of their specific community can actively participate in discussions and embrace the suggested advancement of knowledge within their field. Therefore, it can be evident that in the last

twenty years period, the notion of authorial stance has gained significant attention. Authorial presence pertains to the degree to which writers are inclined to assert their visibility and authority within their texts in order to personally endorse their statements when conveying their attitudes, evaluations, and judgments. This matter has attracted the interest of discourse analysts who investigate diverse academic genres and fields, as well as scholars engaged in cross-cultural studies who analyze the narrative of both native writers and non-native writers. (Tang & John, 1999; Hyland, 2002; Charles, 2006; Mur-Dueñas, 2007; & Samraj, 2008). Recently, there has been a growing academic emphasis on the analysis of textual interaction during the course of the past thirty years. (Coulthard, 1977; Bakhtin, 1981; McCarthy, 1993; McCarthy & Carter, 1994; Davies, 1994; Bolivar, 2001; Hoey, 2001; Gea-Valor, 2010). Drawing from prior classifications of author and audience engagement.

Meta-discourse Model

Hyland (2005) proposed an extensive conceptual framework referred to as the meta-discourse model, which offers a valuable lens for analyzing the dynamics of interconnection inside written data. The model comprises a range of linguistic resources that can be classified into 2 main classes namely interactive resources and interactional resources.

The facilitation of interactivity through meta discourse signals involves the utilization of different aspects, including the following:

1. Transition markers
2. Frame markers
3. Endophoric markers
4. Evidential markers
5. Code glosses.

Regarding the interactive dimension, the components involved consist of hedges, boosters, attitude indicators, self-references, and markers of participation (including reader pronouns, personal digressions, shared information, directives, and inquiries).

The primary emphasis of the present investigation revolves around the establishment of authorial presence via the utilization of self-references in the form of first-person pronouns. The incorporation of self-references by scholars serves multiple functions. The functions associated with these actions include organizing the written content in a logical and cohesive manner, offering guidance and support to the reader in understanding the material, and expressing appreciation to the entities that have contributed financial backing for the project. Several taxonomies have been proposed in order to classify the pronouns utilized by writers.

(Tarone, et al. 1998; Kuo, 1999; Tang & John, 1999; Hyland, 2001, 2002; Harwood 2003).

Employment of Self-referential Pronouns

The employment of self-referential personal pronouns represents a mechanism for establishing authorial presence, revealing the ways in which authors actively or passively present their texts. Additionally, it offers valuable insights into how authors show their presence in their texts, readership, and the wider discourse community. (Shehzad, 2007). Therefore, the inclusion or omission of self-reference pronouns in academic writing has presented difficulties for both proficient English speakers and non-native English speakers involved in scholarly communication (Hyland, 2002a).

The utilization of personal pronouns in several academic fields has resulted in divergent outcomes. As an illustrative instance, Atkinson (1992) conducted an examination of medical reports spanning the period from 1735 to 1985. This investigation revealed a progressive transition away from a prevailing author-centric mode of discourse, which was distinguished by frequent utilization of the first-person pronoun "I." In a similar vein, Atkinson (1999) presented findings that illustrate a constant upward trend in the presence of informational components, suggesting a shift from a rhetoric focused on the author to a more abstract style in scientific writing from 1675 to 1975.

This research is focused on an analysis of authorial presence in research articles across two distinct academic disciplines, namely English Literature and Applied Linguistics. In academic discourse, the author assumes a crucial role as they build the narrative and establish their credibility by articulating ideas and presenting arguments. Through an examination of the author's presence, encompassing a range of linguistic and stylistic choices, this research endeavors to illuminate potential distinctions and similarities between the two fields of study.

Research Questions

- What are the similarities and differences in using first-person pronouns and determiners as author's stance markers in English Literature and Applied Linguistics research articles?

Research Objectives

- To identify the similarities and differences in the use of first-person pronouns and determiners as author's stance markers in English Literature and Applied Linguistics research articles

Literature Review

Wang & Zang (2021) examine the rationale of using self-mentions with boosters and hedges in research writing, as well as the ways that authors from different groups use them to establish their authorial stance. Two sets of corpora were made for comparing the divergent practices of Chinese Ph.D. students and authors of journal research papers from 4 hard-applied and hard-pure science fields. When compared to experienced authors, Ph.D. student writers frequently use more self-mention with hedges however less self-mention with boosters. A review of the stylistic purposes of these elements unveils that expert writers and Chinese students utilize the majority of self-mention with boosters while reporting research results, although PhD students have more tendency to do so than journal papers' writers when discussing research paradigms, approaches or developing conclusions. While they over-obscure their participation in this regard, pupils Self-mention using hedges is primarily used to clarify arguments when compared to expert writers.

Moreover, Li (2021) looks at how first-person pronouns affect the ways authors are portrayed in abstracts of research articles. Four applied linguistics publications were chosen to provide the data for this study, with publication dates ranging from 1990 to 2019. The findings imply that the number of authors participating affects how authorial presence is portrayed. We regularly utilize the pronouns "we" and "I," which have eight discourse functions. It has been noted that low-stakes tasks are favored over high-stakes tasks since the former entail a smaller danger of attracting reader criticism or challenges and the latter a larger risk. Significant diachronic fluctuations can be seen in the frequency of the low-stakes tasks "Arrange the text" and "Explain methods" in co-authored abstracts. In particular, it has been found that the former function has generally increased while the other function has steadily decreased through time.

However, in abstracts written by a single person, there is no discernible difference in the number of the mentioned two low-impact functions. When compared to abstracts written by a single person, the main high-stakes function known as "State opinions" shows different diachronic patterns in terms of its prevalence. Particularly, single-authored abstracts are on the rise while co-authored abstracts are on the decline.

The study conducted by Munoz (2013) examines the discourse functions carried out by the use of personal pronouns and verb forms that are relevant to the interaction between the writer and reader. The corpus comprises a total of 60 scholarly articles encompassing the disciplines of linguistics, psychology, and educational research. These articles have been authored in both the English and Spanish languages. This work seeks to expand and enhance

the taxonomy established by Tang and John (1999), by providing additional elaboration and refinement to their pre-existing categories. Furthermore, a novel classification, denoted as the Interpreter (I), is put forth. The importance of an author's position within the continuity of writers. The study reveals that writers in both the English and Spanish languages employ pronominal discourse functions to a considerable degree. Nevertheless, Spanish writers exhibit a tendency to employ quotations with greater discretion and assign varying degrees of importance to their respective purposes. Frequently, they place significant emphasis on their function as data interpreters, rather than merely describing the research process or providing an original addition to the area.

In another investigation carried out by Navratilova (2013), the objective was to analyze the occurrence of authorial presence in the realm of current academic discourse. This study examines the multitude of considerations that authors consider while making decisions about their participation in academic writing. This analysis also examines the traditional assumptions surrounding the presence of the author in academic writing, in comparison to the contemporary behaviors observed in the composition of scholarly papers. The study also examined the proposition that there has been a shift from the conventional scientific paradigm, as delineated in scholarly writing style manuals, to a more subjective approach in academic writing. This study centers on the decisions made by authors regarding their inclusion in a collection of research articles in the field of applied linguistics, which were authored by individuals who are native English speakers. The research employs a methodology that is based on the analysis of a corpus of texts. The results of the analysis suggest that the authors employ various rhetorical functions of pronouns referring to authors presence in order to maintain the writer-reader relationship and develop a voice of authority. The study additionally includes the results of a cross-cultural analysis that explores the contrasting approaches to writer-reader interaction and the expression of authorial voice between Anglo-American linguists and Czech linguists. The diminished frequency and limited usage of author-reference pronouns utilized by Czech linguists can be ascribed to their status as non-native speakers and the influence of Czech academic writing norms.

Millán (2010) examines the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the utilization of exclusive first-person markers in research articles authored by individuals from four distinct fields of knowledge: Applied Linguistics, Business Management, Food Technology, and Urology. Additionally, the perspectives of experts in each respective field are considered. Furthermore, the present study has examined the fundamental discourse tasks that authors fulfill while

employing the pronoun "we". The findings demonstrate variations in the usage of first-person markers and their preferred functions across different academic disciplines, which challenges the traditional categorization of sciences into hard and soft.

Methodology

Theoretical Framework

To examining the manifestation of the author's stance through the use of first-person pronouns and determiners in their written academic writings, the researcher employs the theoretical framework proposed by Biber et al. (1999), which entails a grammatical classification of first-person pronouns. This framework allows the researcher to collect a wide range of first-person pronouns in English grammar, thereby serving as the corpus for the study.

First-person Pronouns and Determiners as Indicative of Author's Stance

The first-person pronoun is grammatically classified as a noun within a distinct category that signifies a speech role and refers to the person who is engaged in the act of speaking or writing. The concept of speech role pertains to the position held by a participant within an encounter, and can be categorized into three distinct roles: speaker, hearer, or non-participant referent. The aforementioned positions can be further classified into first-person, second-person, and third-person categories.

In a more expansive context, Table 1 demonstrates the employment of first-person pronouns as a linguistic mechanism for conveying the author's presence.

Table 1 English first-person pronouns (Biber et al., 1999)

		Case			
Person	Nominative	Accusative	Possessive		Reflexive
			Determiner	Pronoun	
Singular	I	Me	My	Mine	Myself
Plural	We	Us	Our	Ours	Ourselves

Development and Analysis of Corpus

This study is an empirical analysis that utilizes a corpus of 40 research publications written in English. The corpus comprises a total of 20 scholarly papers derived from the domain of English Literature, alongside an additional set of 20 scholarly articles sourced from the domain of applied linguistics.

The total words in the corpus are as follows:

Corpus Heads	No. of Words
Literature research articles	20919
Linguistics research articles	15957
Total number of words	36876

In order to do corpus analysis, the researchers utilized an automated technique called Antconc (Anthony, 2014). AntConc is a highly advanced software tool for text analysis that provides extensive insights into the data of individual or many text files when batch processing is used.

In order to carry out the investigation, a first step involved the retrieval of 40 publications from several reputable academic journals. Among the collection of 40 publications, half of them (20) pertained to the domain of English literature, while the remaining 20 articles were associated with the subject of applied linguistics. Furthermore, three distinct portions, namely analysis, results and discussion, and conclusion, were chosen from each article. Two distinct Word documents were created, with one comprising data extracted from literature articles and the other containing data extracted from linguistics papers. Both files were converted to a text format. Subsequently, one file underwent execution within the software, whereby the Word choice was chosen to get the intended search outcome. Analogously, the second file was subjected to the identical method. The software was provided with a set of prompts including the first-person pronouns 'I', 'we', 'me', 'us', 'my', 'our', 'my', and 'us'. The software provided data on the frequencies, ranks, and categories of the words. However, since our study focused just on the frequencies, we extracted all the frequency data into a separate file and subsequently organized it into tables.

Findings and Discussion

The results of the research articles from the field of English Literature are presented in Table 3.

Literature Research Articles

Number	Pronouns						Determiners	
	Nominative	Frequencies	Accusative	Frequencies	Possessive	Frequencies	Possessives	
Singular	I	12	Me	1	Mine	0	My	6
Plural	We	33	Us	13	Ours	0	Our	1

Table 3 shows the number of first-person pronouns and determiners utilized in the research articles of English literature. These pronouns and determiners are categorized into singular and plural ones. First-person pronouns and determiners are commonly utilized in many contexts to indicate the stance of writers in the text authored by them. The frequency of the single pronoun "I" in the Nominative case, namely when it functions as the subject of a sentence, is noted to be 12 occurrences. To exemplify, one can use the statement "I have the intention to visit the store." The Accusative case of the singular pronoun "me," which serves as the direct object to a verb or preposition, is noticed to appear once in phrases, thereby demonstrating its frequency. To provide an example, I was presented with a gift by him. The Possessive case comprises both pronouns and determiners. The data presented does not include the singular possessive pronoun "Mine," suggesting that its usage may be less common. The single possessive determiner "My" is discovered to occur six times. When examining the Plural pronouns and determiners, it is evident that the pronoun "We" is utilized in the Nominative case on 33 occasions. This usage shows its role as the topic of a sentence when referring to a group of individuals. The Accusative case demonstrates the presence of the plural pronoun "Us" on 13 occasions, so illustrating the frequency with which it functions

Table 4 Linguistics Research Articles

as the direct object to a verb or preposition when referring to a collective unit. The dataset does not encompass the plural form of possessive pronoun "Ours" in the Possessive case, suggesting a likely absence of widespread usage. The plural form of possessive determiner "Our" is identified in the text 13 times. The table data provided offers significant variations into the number of pronouns and determiners usage in the English language, spanning both singular and plural forms. The provided data offers insights into the structural and functional dimensions of language, particularly in regard to the expression of possession, reference, and interpersonal connections.

Num ber	Pronouns					Determiners		
	Nomina tive	Frequen cies	Accusa tive	Frequen cies	Possessi ve	Frequenc ies	Possessi ves	Frequen cies
Singu lar	I	32	Me	0	Mine	0	My	1
Plural	We	30	Us	5	Ours	0	Our	19

Table 4 shows the results for the author's stance in linguistics research papers. The Nominative case has a significant frequency of the singular pronoun "I," which appears 32 times. This observation highlights the prominent usage of "I" as the subject in various phrases. To provide an example, the assertion "I am writing this to explain something." Conversely, the omission of the singular pronoun "Me" in the dataset concerning the Accusative case (object form) suggests that its utilization as a direct object to a verb or a preposition in a sentence may be quite unusual. The lack of occurrence of the possessive pronoun in singular form "Mine" and the possessive determiner in singular form "My" in the dataset indicates that these forms may not be often used in the specific context being examined. However, the single possessive determiner "My" is employed sparingly, suggesting a limited frequency of occurrence. In the domain of plural elements, the pronoun "We" is found to appear 30 instances in the Nominative case, indicating its frequency in sentences where it serves as the subject while representing a group of people. The Accusative case demonstrates the usage of the plural pronoun "Us" in five instances, so illustrating the frequency with which it is employed as the direct object of a verb or preposition when referring to a collective unit.

As a demonstrative example, it is evident that the instructor conveyed a sense of admiration for the collective as a whole. However, it is important to acknowledge that the plural possessive determiner "Our" is found to appear 19 times, indicating a substantially higher number of occurrences.

In conclusion, the table presents statistics that offers significant insights into the frequency of usage for different pronouns and determiners in the English language, including both singular and plural versions. This exemplifies the way in which language is structured and employed to communicate ideas of ownership, referring, and relationships between persons and groups.

The comparative analysis of both corpora reveals that authors in the field of applied linguistics employed a significantly higher frequency of the singular first-person pronoun 'I' in their articles, in contrast to the authors of English literature research articles. In terms of the plural first-person pronoun, there exists a marginal disparity between the two corpora. However, literature writers exhibited a slightly greater utilization of the pronoun 'we' compared to the linguistics writers. In relation to the accusative case of first-person pronouns, it is observed that literary writers employ a greater frequency of such pronouns in comparison to authors in the field of linguistics. Regarding possessive first-person pronouns, it is noteworthy that both writers abstained from utilizing them in their respective pieces, so establishing a commonality between the two corpora. In terms of possessive first-person determiners, it was observed that literary writers exhibited a higher frequency of employing singular determiners compared to authors in the field of linguistics. Conversely, when it came to the employment of plural determiners, linguistics writers surpassed their literary counterparts in terms of prevalence.

Conclusion

The objective of this research project is to examine the different forms of authorial stance through the use of first-person pronouns and determiners found in scholarly works within the fields of English Literature and Linguistics. The author's stance in academic writing has garnered significant attention due to its impact on the tone, believability, and engagement of readers. The objective of this comparative analysis is to examine a collection of scholarly publications from two unique academic disciplines. The aim is to explore the similarities, and differences in the utilization of personal pronouns and determiners by writers in order to establish their academic stance. The study employed corpus analysis as the primary research methodology. The analysis of the corpus involved the utilization of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Quantitative and qualitative textual analysis were performed to elucidate the similarities and contrasts within the corpora. A corpus consisting of 40 articles was compiled. A total of 20 articles were chosen from the domain of English literature, while an equivalent number of papers were selected from the field of linguistics. The study's theoretical approach was based on Biber et. al. (1999) grammatical categorization of first-person pronouns. In order to calculate the number, the researchers utilized the Antconc software (Anthony, 2014), which effectively identified and emphasized the pronouns and determiners included in both corpora. The findings indicate that there are both parallels and variations in the usage of first-person pronouns and possessive determiners in research

articles related to English literature and linguistics. The higher number of particular pronouns and determiners in research papers on linguistics could perhaps reflect established writing norms, individual preferences, or the prioritization of collaborative authorship and objectivity in the field of linguistics research. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that scholarly publications within the realm of English literature may exhibit a propensity for unconventional wording or a discernible mode of articulation among academic writers. Acquiring knowledge about these patterns can yield useful insights into the linguistic preferences employed by researchers across diverse academic fields, so augmenting our understanding of language utilization in a broad array of circumstances.

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