

Authorial Self-Representation in Abstracts of Research Articles of Applied Linguistics¹

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Abstract:

Authorial self-representation has been a much-discussed topic in research on academic discourse, most of which has concentrated on the personal pronouns, ignoring some implicit authorial self-representations such as passive voice. To make a systematic and comprehensive exploration of the authorial self-representation in abstracts of research articles, this paper examines both the explicit (first-person pronouns) and implicit (impersonal pronouns and passive voice) representations of the authorial self, and explores various author roles with their discourse functions in abstracts of research articles of applied linguistics. Meanwhile, this paper takes move into consideration by adopting Hyland (2000)'s classification of abstract moves to find out the influence of abstract move on authorial self-representation.

The findings are as follows: 1) Authorial self-representations are unevenly distributed among the five moves. 2) writers of research article abstracts tend to choose implicit ways to represent themselves. 3) As for the author role, the frequency of author as researcher and writer is significantly greater in all the moves than as arguer and promoter. However, all the four role with different forms of authorial self-representation serve specific discourse-related purposes. It is hoped that the findings of this study can both raise awareness and be pedagogically suggestive for abstract writing and teaching.

Keywords: Authorial self-representations; moves; author roles; discourse functions; research article abstracts

1 Introduction

Academic writing is a social act in which the author is highly involved (Hyland 2006). While objectively presenting the research to the readers, the author inevitably presents their own position and constructs their own identity. The authorial identity is constructed through the communication between the author and the reader in the text and is realized by various linguistic resources. Numerous studies have explored the linguistic resources used by authors to construct their identities. Although different terms are used, such as self-mention (Hyland 2001), authorial reference (Molino 2010), authorial presence (Dontcheva-Navratilova 2013), and authorial self-representation (Walková 2018), most of their attention is focused on personal and impersonal pronouns.

The use of first-person pronouns has been the subject of numerous research studies in this regard, focusing on the characteristics and differences in the use of first-person pronouns in research articles from different genres, disciplines, cultures and levels of authorship (e.g., Cheung 2020; Gao 2017; Hyland 2001; Işık-Taş 2018; Kuo 1999; Lafuente Millan 2010; Tang and John 1999). Besides, impersonal references, such as ‘*this paper*’, ‘*this article*’, and ‘*this research*’, can also indirectly reflect the presence of an author, which has also attracted the attention of some scholars (e.g., Choi 2021; Hryniuk 2018). Furthermore, while traditionally considered to foster an overall objective tone in academic writing, the passive voice can also constitute a subtle way to express the writer’s position by either omitting or deemphasizing the subject in a sentence while revealing what the author deems important. Baratta (2009: 1406) and Molino (2010: 88) argued that the passive voice plays a role in indicating the writer’s presence and stance. These line of research have greatly expanded the study of authorial self-representation in academic discourse and helped explicate better the processes by which authors construct discourse while writing. However, there has been no systematic study of the semantic notion of “authorial self-representation” to examine its linguistic realizations (first-person pronouns, impersonal pronouns, and the passive voice) and to the author roles they construct as well as discourse functions in discourse. This is a gap that the current study seeks to fill.

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Walková(2018: 87) have defined authorial self-representation as how authors opt to present themselves and their research in a text through various personal means of self-mention, either explicitly or implicitly. In this study the term “authorial self-representation” is used to refer to how author use linguistics resources to present themselves and their research. And its linguistic devices are divided into two types, explicit representations and the implicit representations. The former refers to singular first-person pronouns (abbreviated to Es in this paper) and plural first-person pronouns (abbreviated to Ep), and the latter refers to impersonal pronouns (abbreviated to Ii), such as ‘this’, ‘the’, and ‘it’ accompanied by nouns such as “*author, paper, study*” and passive voice (abbreviated to Ip).

Using 100 research article abstracts on applied linguistics as research data, and adopting the five move model of Hyland (2000), this study aims to determine 1) the frequency of different types of authorial self-representations in each move; 2) the frequency of author roles in each move; 3) the discourse functions that each author role achieves by adopting different self-representations.

By adopting a “top-down” path to explore authorial self-representation, this research not only expands and enriches the semantic lexical grammar of self-representation but also pays more attention to the author's role and discourse function by using authorial self-representations, so as to achieve the unity of formal description and functional interpretation. What's more, the corpus we established and the finding of our study may provide some suggestions of academic writing instructions and raise the awareness of the author self-representation.

2 Relevant studies on authorial self-representation

Research articles, constitute the main medium for publishing the results of scientific research and spreading academic ideas. However, the characteristics of academic discourse are constantly changing. An increasing number of studies (Hyland 2000, 2008; Myers 1989) show that academic writing is also an area where writers build a credible representation of themselves and their work. As early as the 1980s, some scholars began paying attention to authorial identity. For example, Cherry (1988:268) distinguished ‘ethos’ from ‘persona’ to express the author identity, with the first one referring to the personal qualities that a reader attributes to a writer based on textual evidence and the second referring to the roles that a writer adopts while producing a specific piece of writing. Ivanič (1998:23) used the word “identity” to express the representation of writer in their paper, and established three kinds of authorial identity: ‘autobiographical self’, ‘textual self’ and ‘authorial self’. He proposed that “writing always conveys a representation of the self of writer”.

Since then, the issue of how writers construct their identity in academic discourse has been a continuing focus of research interest, although scholars have used different terms such as ‘voice’, ‘presence’, and ‘identity’. Tang and John (1999:S27-S29) proposed a typology of writer ‘persona’, which includes ‘a representative of a group’, ‘the guide through the essay’, ‘the architect of the essay’, ‘the recounter of the research process’, ‘the opinion holder’, and ‘the originator’. Flottum (2009:112) classified the authorial identity into three roles: the researcher, the discourse constructor, and the arguer. Instead of considering the author as a collection of identities, Hyland (2002:1099) divided authority into various functions: expressing self-benefits, stating a goal or purpose, explaining a procedure, elaborating an argument, and stating results and claims. Although different references or terms are used in existing research, they all addressed the issue of authorial identity.

It should, however, be acknowledged that the visibility of authorial identity can be realized by using various linguistic resources, such as personal pronouns and other forms of self-mention. First-person pronouns are the most significant choices in projecting authority and, thus, constitute a perennial focus of research. Kuo (1999:123) also noted that the use of first-person pronouns helps reveal the author's presence in academic discourse. The studies concerning first-person pronouns have been carried out with different focuses. One was on the variation across cultures. Scholars contrasted the use of first-person pronouns by L1 and L2 writers of English, exploring the influence of culture on writers' language use. It was found that English learners use fewer first-person pronouns and more impersonal pronouns than native writers (Gao 2017; Ik-Ta 2018). Another study was on variation across disciplines. One of the leading scholars in this area, Hyland (2001, 2002, 2008) found that first-person pronouns are preferred more in soft disciplines than in hard ones. Besides, writers in soft disciplines tend to use ‘I’ frequently, while writers in hard disciplines tend to use ‘we’ frequently. Under this trend, scholars compared many disciplines, such as English literature and computer science (Cheung 2020), linguistics, economics and medicine (Salas 2015), and applied linguistics, enterprise management, food science and urology (Millan 2010). These findings indicate that the discipline and even intradisciplinary variables may influence authorial self-representation. The third type of study focused on researchers at different levels. This line of research contrasted the use of first-person pronouns by native experts, by L1 and L2 students as well as by L2 experts. These studies demonstrated that the frequency of first-person use shows a decreasing trend (e.g., Çandarlı et al 2015).

Although first-person pronouns constitute the most explicit means for authors to present themselves, certain implicit resources have also been discovered and explored. Baratta (2009:1406) and Molino (2010:88) indicated that the passive voice can be used to reveal the writer’s stance. In addition to the passive voice, some self-references, such as ‘*this paper*’ and ‘*the article*’, are used by authors to represent themselves (e.g., Dahl 2009; Hyland 2001).

From the review above, it appears that first-person pronouns, impersonal pronouns, and the passive voice are available rhetoric devices for authors to represent themselves in constructing different author roles and realizing various discourse functions. Taking the idea of “hierarchy and realizations” of systematic functional linguistics as the theoretical basis, this study systematically explore the semantic notion of authorial self-representation by examining explicit and implicit linguistic realizations, the author roles and discourse functions that these self-representations perform with the assistance of the corpus.

3 The moves of research article abstracts

As the main platform for scholars to express and disseminate their academic thoughts, the research article abstract is one of the most important factors that determine whether the article can be accepted, published, researched and be read further. It is a vital means of achieving international academic exchange. Therefore, it has been an important object of attention for scholars. A considerable number of studies on research article abstracts have concentrated on linguistic features or rhetorical moves. Linguistic studies of research article abstracts have investigated investigated such features as tense, lexical bundles (e.g., Li et al. 2020; Qi and Pan 2020), and metalanguage (e.g., Ariannejad et al. 2019) in specific disciplines.

Most of studies on abstracts of research article focused on the rhetorical move constructs since the concept of the genre was proposed and combined with discourse analysis. A genre is ‘a group of communicative events with a common communicative purpose’ (Swales, 1990). Swales (1981), Bhatia (1994), and Hyland (2000) are the pioneers in studying research article abstracts. They proposed models for research article abstracts. Swales (1981) proposed a four-move model for research article introductions, which is called the ‘create a research space’ (CARS) model. Bhatia (1994:78-79) also proposed a four-move model, which includes ‘1) Introducing the purpose; 2) Describing the methodology; 3) Summarizing the results; 4) Presenting the conclusions’. Hyland (2000) advanced a more elaborate model that includes five moves: introduction, purpose, method, results and conclusion (shown in Table 1). This model was regarded as ‘the most common structure and the most consistent across time’ by Gillaerts (2013: 51). The present study will adopt this model as the basis due to its broad applicability to the data used here.

Table 1: The move model proposed by Hyland (Adapted from Jiang and Hyland[2017: 4])

Move	Function
Introduction	Establishes the context of the paper and motivates the research or discussion
Purpose	Indicates the purpose of the thesis or hypothesis and outlines the intention of the paper.
Methods	Provides information on design, procedures, assumptions, approach, data and so on
Results	States the main findings or results, the argument or what was accomplished
Conclusion	Interprets or extends the results beyond the scope of the paper, draws inferences and highlights applications or wider implications.

Some studies have covered the use of moves in the abstracts of multidisciplinary papers in linguistics (Morales 2020), applied linguistics (Shim 2013), literature (Tankó 2017) and materials science, and some studies have conducted cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural comparative analyses. Studies on the moves of research abstracts from different disciplines and cultures have extended the applicability of moves, reflected disciplinary and cultural differences and helped provide effective suggestions for teaching dissertation writing.

Previous studies showed that the research article abstract is a relatively comprehensive genre containing various moves, each of which not only has its own distinct communicative purpose but also constitutes an important site for the construction of authorial identity. Authors of this genre not only provide facts or expertise but also convey their points of view. However, the review of previous studies on authorial self-representation reveals that most studies examine one or two linguistic resources of authorial self-representation and their distribution in abstracts as a genre in comparison with research articles and even other sections of research articles such as discussions, results and so on(e.g., Sanz 2008). These studies proved that authorial presence varies from section to section and from discipline to discipline.

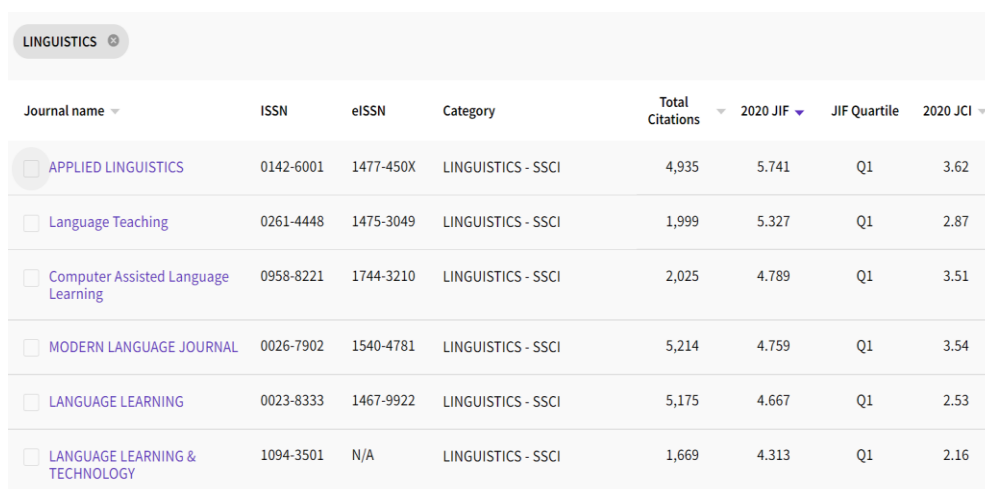
Authorial presence or stance actually varies from section to section, but may also vary across moves. Considering this view, this paper aims to determine whether the authors of abstracts are aware of the moves while presenting themselves and whether they use different means of authorial self-representations in the moves of the abstract. To achieve this objective, this paper combines authorial self-representation with specific rhetoric moves by investigating the author roles and discourse functions that the two types of self-representation can achieve in each move.

Besides, publication is necessary for research to be recognized by the academic community, to inform education, and to stimulate intellectual discussion, and is also a significant aspect of individual career development, typically leading to grant money, promotion, and notoriety. Abstract of research article, which precedes the main article, is one of the most important factors that determine whether the article can be published and read further.

4 Methodology

4.1 Data Collection

This article used the Web of Science (WOS) core collection as the data source. First, the top four linguistic journals were selected according to the data of journal impact factor (JIF) in 2020. The journals are as follows: *Applied Linguistics*; *Language Teaching*; *Computer Assisted Language Learning* and *Modern Language Journal*. Second, each journal was sorted according to the number of citations, the top five single-authored research articles that were published between the years 2016 and 2020 were selected and the abstracts of these articles were extracted. Then, a corpus consisting of a total of 100 research article abstracts was created. It should be noted that these articles were written by both native and non-native scholars, as a high number of citations can, to some extent, reflect high peer recognition of the author's specialty and excellent writing skills rivaling that of native writers. Although the culture may exert some influence on their writing, it cannot change authors' tendency to cater to guidelines and standards of international journals and build an authoritative and appropriate self. Hence, this paper did not take authors' cultural background into consideration.



Journal name	ISSN	eISSN	Category	Total Citations	2020 JIF	JIF Quartile	2020 JCI
APPLIED LINGUISTICS	0142-6001	1477-450X	LINGUISTICS - SSCI	4,935	5.741	Q1	3.62
Language Teaching	0261-4448	1475-3049	LINGUISTICS - SSCI	1,999	5.327	Q1	2.87
Computer Assisted Language Learning	0958-8221	1744-3210	LINGUISTICS - SSCI	2,025	4.789	Q1	3.51
MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL	0026-7902	1540-4781	LINGUISTICS - SSCI	5,214	4.759	Q1	3.54
LANGUAGE LEARNING	0023-8333	1467-9922	LINGUISTICS - SSCI	5,175	4.667	Q1	2.53
LANGUAGE LEARNING & TECHNOLOGY	1094-3501	N/A	LINGUISTICS - SSCI	1,669	4.313	Q1	2.16

Figure 1: Information on the selected journals

Besides, the discipline of linguistics was selected, as it helps address the issue of authorial self-representation in applied linguistics, which is moving towards empirical studies and is increasingly objective. However, the publication and recognition of research still depend on peers. Therefore, learning how to present oneself in research can be of tremendous benefit to applied linguists.

4.2 Data Analysis

The UAM Corpus Tool beta 3.0 and Antconc were used as data tagging and data analysis tools. The analysis had two stages. The first stage involved establishing the analytical framework. First, each abstract was divided into moves according to the move model proposed by Hyland; then, each abstract was searched and analyzed clause by clause to determine the authorial self-representations and their author roles. For classifying author roles, the categorization of Flottum (2009:112) was used for its adaptability to the data used in this study as well as the clear definition of the categorization. Additionally, a role named 'promoter' was added. The definitions of the four roles are presented in Table 2. On this basis, the analytical framework of this study was established.

Table 2: Classification of author roles in this paper

Role type	Definitions	Marks
<i>Researcher</i>	the action or activities directly related to the research process, such as <i>analyzing, assuming and examining</i>	R
<i>Writer</i>	the writing process related to text structuring and the guiding of the reader, such as <i>'begin by', 'focus on', and 'return to'</i>	W
<i>Arguer</i>	the process related to position and stance, such as <i>'argue' and 'claim'</i>	A
<i>Promoter</i>	the process of persuading others and emphasizing the importance and necessity of their academic writing	P

The second stage is called corpus annotation. A project was created on the UAM software. Figure 2 is the screenshot of the established project in the UAM Corpus Tool, in which three systems are included: moves, representation types and author roles. The three system are in the 'or' relation, which means that the moves, representation types and author roles as well as discourse functions can be annotated simultaneously (as seen in Figure 3). Then, data was tagged to carry out the analysis. Subsequently, statistical information was extracted based on the labeled corpus.

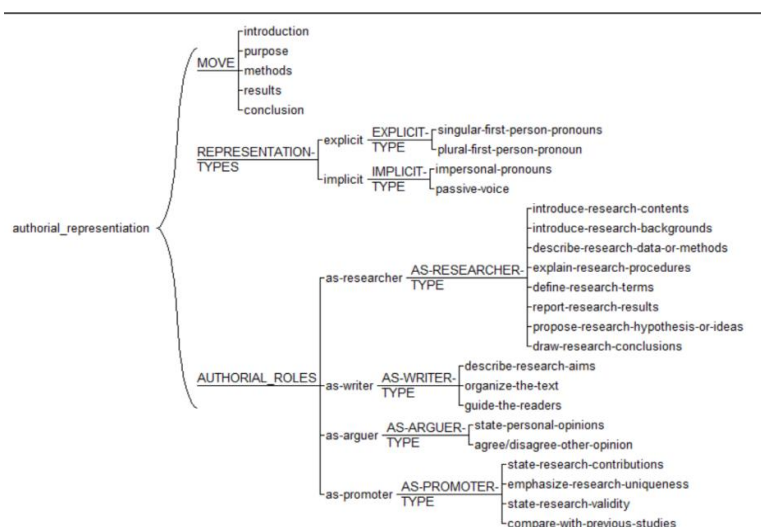


Figure 2: The analytical framework

criticisms in the 1990s in cultural studies. The notion of hybridity has been especially criticized for its privileged status, individual orientation, and disparity between theory and practice. Furthermore, the conceptual features of the multi/plural turn overlap with neoliberalism and neoliberal multiculturalism, which uncritically support diversity, plurality, flexibility, individualism, and cosmopolitanism, while perpetuating color-blindness and racism. The multi/plural turn also neglects the ways in which neoliberal competition and the dominance of English affect scholars. **This article** examines the multi/plural trend by drawing on some critiques of postcolonial theory and neoliberal ideologies and proposes an increased attention to power and inequalities as well as collective efforts to resist the neoliberal academic culture underlying the multi/plural turn.

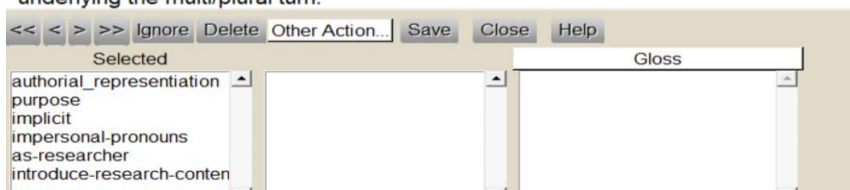


Figure 3: Sample of corpus annotation

Besides, it is necessary to note that due to the shared subject in English, author roles or discourse functions are not absolutely exclusive. There are cases where one authorial self-representation plays two author roles or realizes two or more discourse functions. Presented below are some cases from the corpus.

- (1) *I suggest* possibilities for team-based research projects that aim to understand cases from multiple, integrated perspectives on different scales of analysis, and then *provide* a brief reflection on some of the troubling political ideologies that SLA researchers who embrace multilingualism must now confront on a daily basis. (2019-5 MLJ)
- (2) Adopting *affordance* as a theoretical and analytic construct, *this study* investigates using *qualitative research methods* what language development *affordances* WeChat, one of the most popular Social Networking Systems in Chinese-speaking communities, provided to two university-level Chinese language learners while they were studying abroad in an intensive language program in Shanghai. (2018-2 CALL)

In Example (1), the author uses the explicit ‘*I*’ to represent himself in proposing his opinion on the one hand and emphasizing the uniqueness of his research on the other, thus functioning as both researcher and promoter. In Example (2), the authors choose ‘*this paper*’ to introduce their research content by using the predicate ‘*investigates*’ and state the method by using the non-finite verb ‘*adopting*’ in one main sentence, thereby functioning as the *researcher*.

Additionally, a greater focus is required in corpus annotation to distinguish the passive voice whose function is to present authorship or help maintain text cohesion, which depends on contextual factors. Let’s look at Example (3).

- (3) Forty-two writing samples ① *were collected* from one Thai university student in Thailand studying actuary science in English. The writing samples ② *were composed* over four years and ③ *were holistically coded* for degrees of appropriate authorial voice. (2020-3 AL)

There are three instances of the passive voice in Example (3). However, the agents of ‘*collect*’ and ‘*code*’ are the researcher, while the agent of ‘*compose*’ is not the researcher or writer because the writing samples are actually written by a Thai university student. Hence, the first and third instances were regarded as authorial self-representation and the second one was neglected.

5 Results and discussions

5.1 Overall distribution of authorial self-representation in each move

The forms and functions of authorial self-representation in each move of research article abstracts were explored. Overall, there were 428 cases of authorial self-representations in the data used in this study, with roughly four cases per abstract, which indicates that authors indeed adopt various linguistic resources to present themselves.

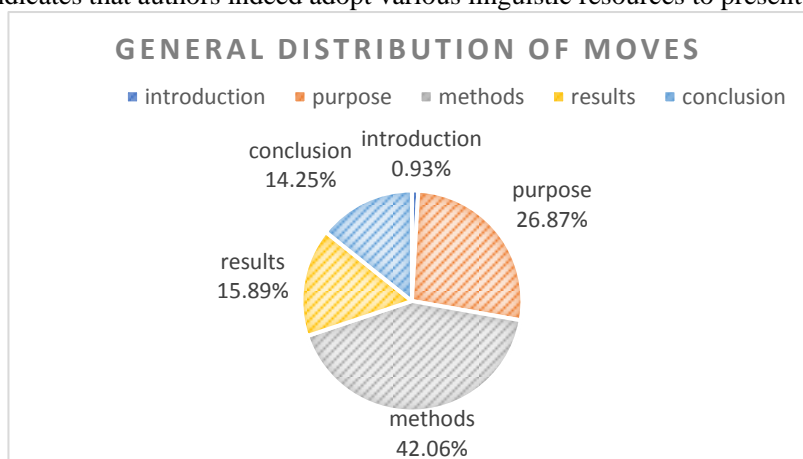


Figure 4: Overall distribution of authorial self-representation in each move

From Figure 4, it is evident that authorial self-representations occur most frequently in the method move (42.06%), less frequently in the purpose move (26.87%) and least frequently in the introduction move (0.93%), which indicates that the purposes of each move influence the frequency of authorial self-representation. In the method move, the author is expected to introduce the research design, procedure and hypothesis, and in the purpose, the reader needs to be informed of the research aims. Therefore, these two moves require high involvement on the author’s part. On the contrary, the main function of the introduction move is to state the research status quo and background; so, it is more objective and does not require the author’s excessive presence.

Table 3: Overall distribution of authorial self-representation types in each move

Move	Total	Explicit representation		Implicit representation		Chisqu.	Signif.
	428	Es(73)	Ep(4)	Ii(251)	Ip(100)		
Introductions	4 (0.93%)	1 (25.00%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (75.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0.134	
Purposes	114 (26.87%)	20 (17.39%)	1 (0.87%)	90 (78.26%)	4 (3.48%)	0.008	
Methods	180 (42.06%)	45 (25.00%)	1 (0.56%)	63 (35.00%)	71 (39.44%)	12.049	+++
Results	68 (15.89%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	56 (82.35%)	12 (17.65%)	17.735	+++
Conclusions	61 (14.25%)	7 (11.48%)	2 (3.28%)	39 (63.93%)	13 (21.31%)	0.505	

Table 3 also shows the proportion of the author’s self-representation in each move. In each move, implicit representation appears to occupy a larger proportion than explicit representation. A traditional view is that academic discourse should maintain an objective and neutral stance and that the use of first-person pronouns should be avoided to reduce personal overtones. Therefore, most authors tend to use implicit impersonal pronouns and the passive voice to indicate their personal presence. Moreover, the impersonal pronoun is one of the most frequent choices for authors to present themselves in moves other than the method move. Authors often refer to themselves by using impersonal pronouns such as ‘*this paper*’ and ‘*this study*’, avoiding direct reference to themselves as a sign of modesty and increasing the distance from the discourse.

In the method moves, the passive voice accounts for the largest proportion of the four types of authorial self-representation, which conforms to the conclusions of previous research (Hanidar 2016). The method move needs to objectively introduce the steps in the methods of the research, and the passive voice has always been regarded as a sign of objective expression. On the one hand, authors sometimes use the active voice for stylistic reasons and to avoid the long and awkward sentence structure of the passive voice and the disadvantage that it sometimes fails to highlight new information. On the other hand, the use of first-person pronouns by some authors indicates that they assume direct responsibility for a non-standard or unexpected experimental approach to a study, thus demonstrating their confidence in and the uniqueness of the study.

With regard to explicit first-person pronouns, since the data of this research is all single-authored, the use of the singular first-person pronouns is significantly higher than plural ones. However, there are still several cases where authors use plural forms of first-person pronouns to refer individual writer, especially in the conclusion move. The use of plural pronouns in methods or purposes moves is intended to indicate the authors’ direct responsibility for the content of the proposition. However, these intervention markers in the conclusion move are mainly used to interact with the reader, to bring the reader closer to the text and to enhance the reader’s engagement with the discourse. The adoption of explicit ways to present the author themselves contributes to enhancing the effectiveness of persuasion and building an authoritative identity.

5.2 Overall distribution of each author role in the five moves

As mentioned above, based on the categorization proposed by previous scholars, author roles were divided into four types: *researcher*, *writer*, *arguer* and *promoter*. Table 4 presents a clear idea of the distribution of author roles in the abstracts of research articles, indicating that the *researcher* and the *writer* constitute the main author roles of research articles, while the author offers personal insights and sells their research to others. This is also in line with the characteristics of academic discourse. Due to the high-risk nature of the roles of the *arguer* and the *promoter*, their proportion of appearance is significantly lower compared to that of the *researcher* and the *writer*. By elaborating arguments and opinions, expressing attitudes and commenting on other studies, authors demonstrate a high level of commitment, making these two authorial positions the most powerful and face-threatening.

Table 4 : Overall distribution of author roles in each move

Move	Total	researcher		writer		Arguer		Promoter	
Introductions	4	2	50%	1	25%	1	25%	0	0%
Purposes	114	50	43.48%	46	40.00%	12	10.43%	7	6.09%
Methods	180	107	59.44%	66	36.67%	3	1.67%	4	2.22%
Results	68	65	95.59%	2	2.94%	0	0.00%	1	1.47%
Conclusions	61	25	40.98%	14	22.95%	2	3.28%	20	32.79%

Table 4 also illustrates a broad panorama of the general distribution of the author role appearing in each move of research abstracts. It is clear from this table that the proportion of the *researcher* is the highest in each move, followed by the *writer*. However, the case is different for the conclusion, where the proportion of the *promoter* is significantly higher than that of the *writer*, although the *researcher* still plays the dominant role.

5.3 Author roles and discourse functions

After showing the general distribution of author roles in each move of an abstract, the next section discusses the specific representation forms and discourse functions of each type of author role.

5.3.1 Author role as the *researcher* in each move and the discourse functions

The *researcher* constitutes the most important author role in a research paper (Wu, 2013:8), and authors use personal pronouns, impersonal pronouns and the passive voice to describe the research process in order to enhance the credibility and uniqueness of the research. As seen in Figure 5, the proportion of the *researcher* is the largest in the methods move, followed by the results move. The authors present themselves by describing the processes they have carried out and their findings during the research process.

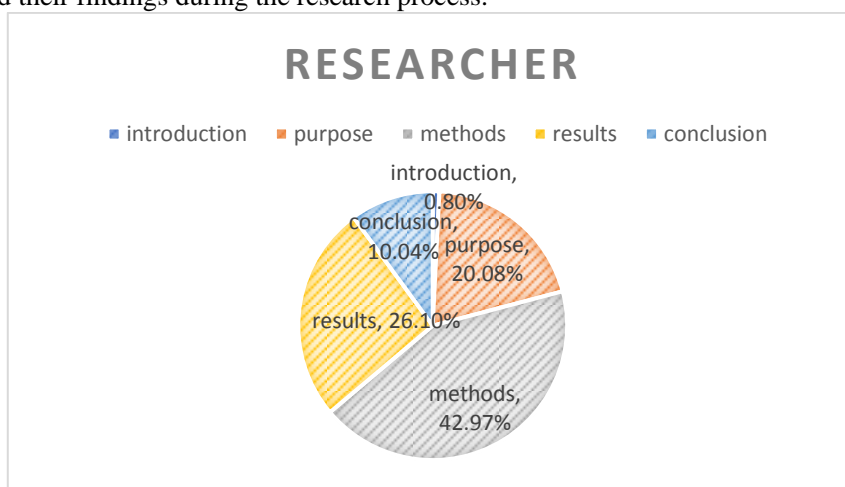


Figure 5: Overall distribution of the *researcher* in each move

As shown in Table 5, eight discourse functions of the *researcher* as an author role were identified. Research article authors usually introduce the background of the research and their assumptions, describe the research methods and report the results and sometimes reach research conclusions. It is worth noting that 'report the results' occupies the largest percentage among the eight discourse functions identified, which resonates with the new empirical trend of applied linguistics.

Table 5: The discourse functions of the author role as the *researcher*

Discourse function	Total	Explicit representation		Implicit representation		ChiSqu.	Sign.
		Es(25)	Ep(3)	Ii(153)	Ip(68)		
Introduce research contents	38 (15.26%)	3 (7.89%)	1 (2.63%)	32 (84.21%)	2 (5.26%)	1.57	
Introduce research backgrounds	2 (0.80%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (100%)	0 (0.00%)	0.44	
Describe research data or methods	47 (18.88%)	1 (2.13%)	0 (0.00%)	19 (40.43%)	27 (57.45%)	9.00	+++
Explain research procedures	60 (24.10%)	13 (21.67%)	2 (3.33%)	23 (38.33%)	22 (36.67%)	2.32	
Define research terms	4 (1.61%)	2 (50%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (50%)	0 (0.00%)	2.80	
Report research results	70 (28.11%)	2 (2.86%)	0 (50%)	56 (80%)	12 (17.14%)	12.99	+++
Propose research hypotheses or ideas	9 (3.61%)	4 (44.44%)	0 (0.00%)	3 (33.33%)	2 (22.22%)	4.36	++
Draw research conclusions	19 (7.63%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	16 (84.21%)	3 (15.79%)	4.36	++

Besides, for each discourse function, implicit representations were more frequently used than explicit representations. For the functions of ‘introduce research contents’, ‘report research results’ and ‘draw research conclusions’, the proportion of impersonal pronouns is significantly greater than that of the passive voice. Singular first-person pronouns were used more frequently than plural ones, as this finding is based on single-author data.

Table 6: Frequent collocations of the author role as the *researcher*

Discourse function	Frequent collocates		Total
	Verb	Concordance	
Introduce research contents	investigate	This (present) study(14)/ it(1) investigates + nouns(the effect/impact/...of) / + how-clauses	15
	examine	This study/article examines + nouns/how-clauses(7); I examined(1); The NOUN was examined(1).	9
	explore	This study/article explored + nouns/how clauses(5); NOUN were explored(2).	7
Introduce research backgrounds	is	The study is a review of ... There is a gap between the research and ...	2
Describe research data methods or	employ	METHOD were/was employed(5); I employ(2) + a ...method/approach/design	7
	use	NOUN(questionnaire/instrument...) were/was used as data collection tools(4); This/the (present) study/its data analysis used(3)	7
	collect/gather	Data was/were collected/gathered through/from...	4
	present	NOUN(video / condition...)+Were/was presented(4);	4
	adopt	Adopt...method/ approach	3
Explain research procedures	conduct	NOUN (analysis/interview/study) were/was conducted(3); The researcher/investigators conducted(2)	5
	consider	It/this article/ considers+ what/whether clauses(3); I consider(1)+nouns NOUN(factors/solutions)are considered (1)	5
	examine	It examined(3); are examined	4
	focus on	The study/speech focuses on Nouns	3
	develop	Being developed	3
Define research terms	call	What I call ‘supralingualism’,	2
	operationalize	PROPER NOUNS(dynamic glosses)+Were operationalized as...	2
Report research results	show	(The)results showed(9);findings showed(2); it /the analysis/study showed(6); was shown(1)	19
	reveal	Results revealed(6); analysis revealed(2);it revealed(1); other nouns revealed(7)	16
	find	Be found	5
	indicate	The results/analysis indicated that ...(3); other nouns indicated that...(2)	5
	demonstrate	It/I demonstrated how-clauses...(1); the data/the work/findings demonstrated that...(3);	4
	suggest	Finding/results suggested(3);other nouns suggested(1)	4
Propose research	propose	I propose that / propose a model / research tasks(3); The article proposes a framework for...	4

hypotheses or ideas			
Draw research conclusions	suggest	the findings/ the results/ it suggests(3); it is suggested(1)	4
	show	the results/it showed(3)	3
	indicate	Results/findings indicate that/ indicate largely positive perceptions/ a potential interaction	2

In Table 6, some typical verbs and collocates that authors adopt to realize their role as the *researcher* can be found. For example, authors use the verbs ‘*show*’ and ‘*reveal*’ to report their research findings and ‘*employ*’ and ‘*use*’ to describe the data or methods used to conduct the research.

Here are some examples from the corpus of the study. In Example (4), the author used ‘*were employed*’ to report his research data and method to achieve the aim of identifying students’ use of mobile devices and their attitudes towards those devices. In Example (5), the use of ‘*The results showed*’ helped present the research results, with the author functioning as the researcher by using impersonal pronouns.

- (4) To achieve this aim, three instruments, i.e. questionnaires (n = 345), in-depth semi-structured interviews (n = 128), and non-participant observations (50 sessions), ***were employed*** to collect quantitative and qualitative data.(2016-1 CALL)
- (5) ***The results showed*** that shame strongly but negatively affected L2 learners' motivation and language achievements, whereas guilt had positive effects on their motivation and language achievements.(2018-2 MLJ)

5.3.2 Author role as the *writer* in each move and the discourse functions

Authors inevitably construct their identity as *writers* in the academic writing process, during which they use discourse verbs such as ‘*discuss*’ and ‘*comment*’ or verbs such as ‘*turn to*’ and ‘*focus on*’ to denote text organization and guide the reader. By making their identity as *writers*, authors wish to express their intention in the text, involve the reader in it, engage in a dialogue with the reader and lead the reader to accept their ideas step by step. The distribution of the *writer* in the five moves is shown in Figure 6.

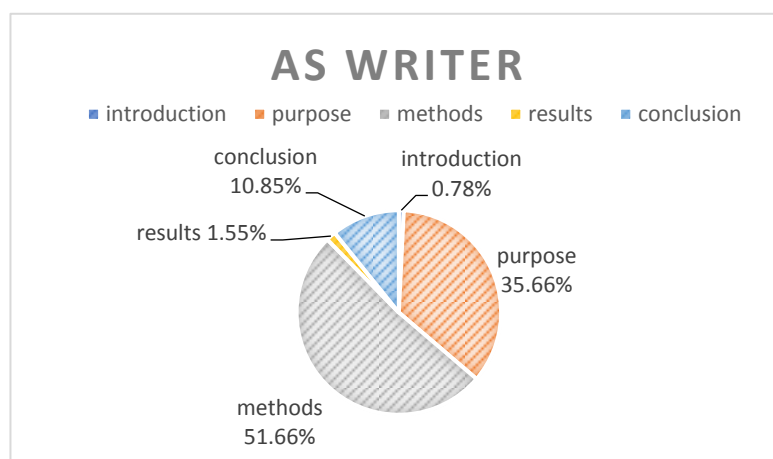


Figure 6: Overall distribution of the writer in each move

Similar to the *researcher*, the proportion of the *writer* in the methods move is the highest. The only difference between the two roles is that the percentage of the *writer* in the purpose move is quite large compared to that of the *researcher*. This is relevant to the specific discourse functions of the *writer*, which are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: The discourse functions of the author role as the writer

Discourse function	Total	Explicit representation		Implicit representation		ChiSqu.	Sign.
	129	Es(37)	Ep(0)	Ii(65)	Ip(27)		
Describe research aims	21 (16.28%)	1 (4.76%)	0 (0.00%)	20 (95.24%)	0 (0.00%)	2.619	
organize the text	96 (74.42%)	34 (35.42%)	0 (0.00%)	40 (41.67%)	22 (22.92%)	25.472	+++
Guide the readers	12 (9.30%)	2 (16.67%)	0 (0.00%)	5 (41.67%)	5 (41.67%)	0.015	

From Table 7, it can be seen that there are three discourse functions, among which ‘organize the text’ occupies the largest proportion. The abstract is a ‘snapshot’ of the thesis and introduces the reader to the main structure of the thesis; thus, authors use various self-representations to organize the text. ‘Describe research aims’ occupies the second largest proportion among the functions of the writer. The use of impersonal pronouns for conveying research aims appears prominently in the purposes move, achieving a relatively high level of authorial visibility.

Table 8: Frequent collocations of the author role as the *writer*

Discourse function	Frequent collocations		Total
	Verb	Concordance	
Describe research aims	aim	This study aims to explore the effects of.../aims at exploring... This study/article aims to introduce/show/develop... This study/article aims to draw scholar’s attention...	8
	is to	The goal/intent/purpose/aim is to explore/investigate	4
organize the text	discuss	be discussed (8); the /this paper(article)discusses(8); I discuss(4)	20
	review	I review... Noun(researches/studies/the contributions of key studies(7); the study/it reviews ...representative articles (3) ; be reviewed (1)	11
	present	Variation /condition was presented(2) ;I present...a new model (4) ; this article /it ... presents ...case studies/projects(3)	9
	offer	I offer...examples/review/rationale... (4); the article/it offers a history of... (2)	6
	describe	The article/paper describes...Noun(approaches/variation /a project)(4); I describe...language research(1); The benefits of... were described (1)	6
	provide	the results/paper provides examples/ a case study(3); I provide data...(2)	5
Guide the readers	outline	I outline a research agenda (2);this paper outlines three areas(2)	4
	look at	This section look at...(1); ...is looked at	2

Table 8 summarizes the main typical verbs and collocates of the author as the *writer*. Some examples are presented below:

- (6) **The present study aims to** guide pre-service teachers in incorporating technology into their situated teaching practices during a 12-week practicum experience via a step-by-step training procedure(2019-5 CALL).
- (7) Based on the findings, several main themes are identified (RMIRiRF6) and three implications involving pedagogy, group dynamics, and training for future research on this mode of peer feedback **are discussed**. (2016-2 CALL)

Through ‘The present study aims to’ in Example (6), the author, as the *writer*, presents their research aim of guiding pre-service schools to incorporate technology into their situated teaching practices. Additionally, ‘... are discussed’ is a frequently used phrase and helps show what the writer is about to discuss. In Example (7), the author used the passive voice of the discourse verb ‘discuss’ to illustrate or state what they would present.

5.3.3 Author role as the arguer in each move and the discourse functions

In academic discourse, authors must demonstrate a strong level of commitment to their opinions and claims by expressing attitudes, providing details supporting their arguments and making claims and commenting on the findings. In this case, the authors play the role of the *arguer*, which is regarded as the most powerful and face-threatening author role.

Figure 7 presents the overall distribution of the arguer in the five moves. The *arguer* is embodied in each of the four moves, although its proportion in the purpose move is the highest. In the purpose move, authors often propose their argument and, hence, occupy the largest proportion among all the moves. In the conclusion move, by using ‘I argue’, authors can indicate the possible limitations of the applicability of a suggested model or idea and then open a dialogue space for the discussion of their views.

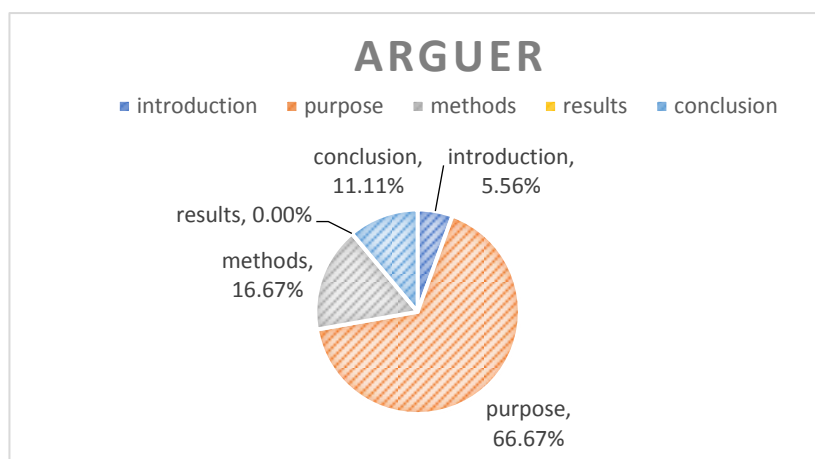


Figure 9: Overall distribution of the *arguer* in each move

Arguing is a high-risk act in academic discourse; however, it contributes to the construction of a professional author. Therefore, the proportion of the *arguer* is remarkably less than those of the *researcher* and the *writer*. The main discourse functions include presenting personal opinions, expressing agreement and disagreement with the opinions of others and using the persuasive force of personal intrusions realized by both first-person and impersonal pronouns, as shown in Table 9. Through personal arguments, the authors secure readers’ involvement and invite them to join the discussion and negotiation.

Table 9: The discourse functions of the author role as the *arguer*

Discourse functions	Typical verbs	Total	Explicit representation		Implicit representation		ChiSqu.	Sign.
			Es(8)	Ep(0)	Ii(8)	Ip(2)		
State personal opinion	argue	18 (100%)	8 (44.44%)	0 (0.00%)	8 (44.44%)	2 (11.11%)	8.912	+++
Agree/disagree with others	—	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)		

It needs to be emphasized that, in the data used in this study, ‘agreeing/disagreeing’ with others was not found. Personal opinions were usually put forward by using ‘argue’, and authors mainly used ‘I argue’ (10/18) or ‘this/the paper argues’ (7/18) to present their thoughts.

5.3.4 Author role as the promoter in each move and the discourse functions

Abstracts of research articles present the main content of the research, emphasizing ‘new value’, and are products packaged for sale. In a ‘market society’, academic discourse is routinely laced with promotionalism (Wang and Yang 2015: 162). It is, thus, clear that abstracts carry an overt promotional flavour.

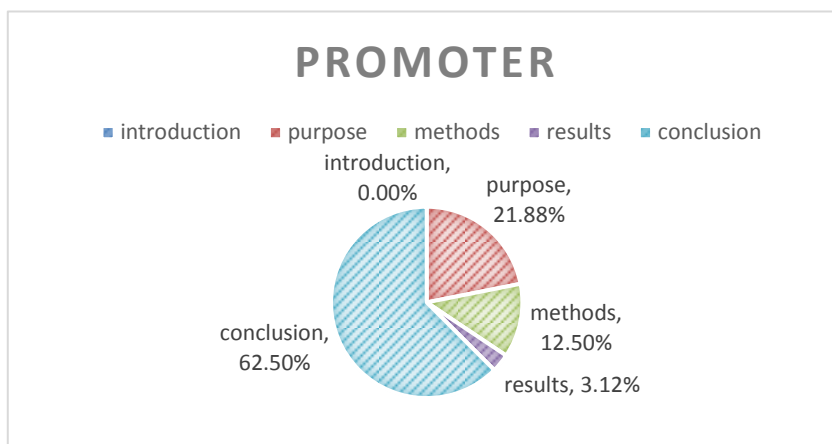


Figure 8: Overall distribution of the promoter in each move

Although the proportion of promoters was relatively small, Figure 8 shows that authors almost always sell their work, especially in the concluding remarks of the abstract by emphasizing the potential contribution of their research as well as its inspiration for and contribution to future research. This is consistent with the findings of Xu (2020), who also stated that, when authors construct a promoter, they usually place the role at the end of each abstract. This aligns with the function of conclusions. Additionally, acting as a promoter should be circumspect and understated while promoting the research in order to make the promotion acceptable to the reader. Therefore, authors do not usually have abstracts as their first choice for marketing their work due to the brevity and the abstraction of abstracts. Instead, they prefer to do most of the promotional work in the conclusion part of their articles. In the abstract, they are likely to dedicate more space to outlining study objectives and the methodology. As a result, constructing the promoter in abstracts is less common and relatively less frequent than creating the other roles.

Table 10: The discourse functions of the author role as the promoter

Discourse functions	Total	Explicit representation		Implicit representation		ChiSqu.	Sign.
	32	Es(3)	Ep(1)	Ii(25)	Ip(3)		
State research contributions	14 (43.75%)	1 (7.14%)	0 (0.00%)	12 (85.71%)	1 (7.14%)	1.154	
Emphasize research uniqueness	15 (46.88%)	2 (13.33%)	1 (1.68%)	10 (66.67%)	2 (13.33%)	0.043	
State research validity	1 (3.12%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (100%)	0 (0.00%)	0.220	
Compare with previous studies	2 (6.35%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	2 (100%)	0 (0.00%)	0.441	

Table 10 presents the four specific discourse functions of the promoter, in which ‘stating research contributions’ and ‘emphasizing research uniqueness’ are the main functions. Authors emphasize their research contribution by stating their findings and highlight the ‘selling points’ of their research by indicating the uniqueness of their methodology, corpus or theory.

Table 11: Frequent collocations of the author role as the *promoter*

Discourse functions	Frequent Collocations	Total
State research contributions	This study contributes to... Contribute to the literature... Contribute to the ongoing debate... Contribute to the field of... Contribute to our understanding of language... Contribute to furthering/advancing...	5
	Results are important...	1
	This paper... would be fruitful for future research...	1
	This study also expands...	1
Emphasise research uniqueness	This study provides a detailed analysis of... This study provides/offers new insights into... This study employed a different design... This study revealed the overlooked effects...	4
State research validity	Findings may illuminate future practices...; This study calls for more refined analytical tools	2
Compare with previous studies	These findings strengthen the validity of previous research... The results question the inferences...	2

Table 11 presents some main collocations that the author employs to promote themselves and their research. Here are some examples:

- (8) *The paper provides concrete examples* of small-scale longitudinal studies in each of these areas, including recommendations as to the kind of data and measures to employ. (2018-2 LT)
- (9) Drawing on ecological linguistics (EL) and semiotics, *the present review contributes to* the field of applied linguistics by reviewing online intercultural exchanges (OIEs) and ICC development in relation to the modality...

Example (8) expresses the uniqueness of the article by stating that the example in the article is concrete, to promote the research, while Example (9) underlined the contribution of the current study to the field of applied linguistics. Additionally, similar to the case of other roles, authors tend to adopt impersonal pronouns to promote their research rather than explicit ways.

5.4 Discussion

This paper aimed to explore how authorial self-representation is realized across the moves of abstracts in research articles on applied linguistics. It identified four kinds of authorial self-representation, 4 author roles, and 17 discourse functions.

With regard to the distribution of authorial self-representation in moves of abstracts, they are unevenly distributed in the five moves. There is the least authorial involvement in introduction move, and applied linguists are likely to use the active voice to introduce their research. However, their personal presence is mostly implicitly expressed in this move. In contrast, the frequent occurrence of authorial self-representation in the method and purpose moves demonstrates the necessity of these two moves and the authorial high involvement in them. Authors must explain research design procedure and inform the readers of the research aims in the two moves, which is crucial for persuading the readers to go through the entire text. By comparison, stating the research status quo and background in the introductions does not require the author's excessive presence. In brief, the authorial involvement depends on the communicative purpose of the move.

Authorial self-representation is realized by explicit personal pronouns, implicit impersonal pronouns and the passive voice, although the latter ones occupy a large proportion. More specifically, impersonal pronouns mainly occur in the purpose, method and result moves, while the passive voice largely appears in the method, result and conclusion moves. Impersonal pronouns can be used to construct four roles, as it can effectively avoid the redundancy and ambiguity of the passive voice and display objectiveness, thereby serving as the main strategy for

author self-representation. the passive voice is mostly used to construct the researcher and the writer, especially while ‘explaining research procedures’, ‘describing research methods’ and ‘organizing the text’.

The use of first-person pronouns often constructs the roles of the *researcher*, the *writer* and the *arguer*, suggesting an increasing tendency for authors to present themselves and take responsibility in their abstracts. However, it is important to note that when authors use explicit personal pronouns to present themselves, especially when single authors use singular personal pronouns, they tend to choose less risky discourse functions, such as ‘organizing the text’ and ‘introducing the research’, suggesting that authors seek to speak ‘safely’ to their readers. Although a small number of authors use first-person pronouns to construct an *arguer* to explicitly project the originality of their ideas, highlighting their contribution to the academic community in a more direct and assertive way, the proportion is relatively small. These differences in the frequency of authorial self-presentation occur due to the interplay between the choice of interpersonal strategies, subjectivity or objectivity, and the extent to which scholars intervene in a particular discourse. Hence, although it cannot be surmised that certain authorial self-representations are designed for some moves or discourse functions, there does appear to be a tendency or convention governing their usage. It was a goal of this paper to highlight this.

With regard to author roles, the proportions of the *researcher* and the *writer* are significantly greater in all the moves than those of the other two author roles, which suggests that objectivity is still an important feature of academic discourse. Besides, authors always construct a promoter in the conclusion move by emphasizing the contribution and uniqueness of their research. Finally, authors realize various discourse functions while constructing identities, and in considering these roles together, the aim of the abstract is achieved. Authors successfully display their expertise, writing skills as well as their confidence in the research by presenting their authorship in a proper manner.

6 Pedagogical implications

By exploring linguistic realizations of authorial self-representation in research article abstracts of applied linguistics, this paper provides novice writers in this discipline with an insight into the move structure of the abstracts of research articles and how they can present themselves and their research appropriately. Furthermore, they provide teachers of academic writing with a tool for instruction of authorial self-representation.

First, it is crucial for both novice writers and teachers with a need of academic writing to raise the consciousness of showing their authorial self in a proper way since researchers must adapt to the trend of ‘commercialization’ of knowledge and technology and the ‘popularization’ of professional discourse as well as the high requirements of journals for scholars’ basic language literacy. Consequently, researchers must strive to improve their writing skills and their ability to promote their own works while showing their expertise, which will enhance the acceptability of a novice writer’s paper.

After realizing the importance of authorial presence, it is necessary for novice writers and teachers of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) to learn the available resource of authorial self-representation and its proper use. The corpus and findings of this study will provide a valuable resource for them and help them decide how they can present themselves in the different moves of research article abstracts. For example, teachers can instruct their students to analyse authorial self-representation across moves in abstracts of applied linguistics, one by one, and to identify the author roles and discourse functions. Then, novice writers or students can be instructed to write their own abstracts and compare them with sample abstracts of experts.

In this process, writers should consider the following points.

(1) It is important to not be too shy to present oneself in explicit ways such as through personal pronouns. Though convention maintains that paper writing should avoid first-person pronouns, this is proved to be biased. The correct use of first-person pronouns in scientific research papers is reasonable and feasible; however, the key is to note the use of conventions. First-person pronouns are mainly used to explain the research procedures introduce the research content, organize the text and state personal ideas. In contrast, no case of using explicit first-person pronouns in the results move was found in the corpus of this study. Using first-person pronouns, the author conveys a sense of authority to the reader. To some extent, it is a helpful way of convincing the readers.

(2) The passive voice retains an important role in essay writing. The use of the passive voice appears to be controversial. Some advise novice writers to use the passive voice in their academic writing, while some reckon that the passive voice should be avoided due to its disadvantage of being unclear, inefficient and cumbersome to read. However, as this paper shows, the passive voice is an important means of presenting the authorial self, especially while describing research methodology and organizing the discourse. Hidden authors make the abstract more objective and scientific. However, it is important to avoid using the passive voice while describing the purpose of the study.

Furthermore, the collocations of authorial self-representations in each move for different author roles and discourse functions can also serve as a reference for teachers and students to check when necessary, in that these typical

collocations reflect the conventions of the academic community with regard to showing the authorial self in research article abstracts.

In sum, this study can be both awareness-raising and pedagogically suggestive. The findings can help teachers and novice writers transcend the conservative prescriptions of writing guide books and delve into the context and conventions of a specific discipline by knowing the preferred patterns of self-representation in research article abstracts. Teachers' clear instructions on the discourse functions of the two types of self-representation pronouns will also help learners gain better control over their writing and meet the challenges of participating in international publications.

7. Conclusion

By examining both explicit (first-person pronouns) and implicit (impersonal pronouns and the passive voice) resources for authorial self-representations in research article abstracts of applied linguistics, this study has the following findings. First, authorial self-representations are unevenly distributed in the five moves. There is less authorial self-presence in the introduction move and more in the method, result and purpose moves, which is consistent with the overall characteristics and generic goals or functions of the abstract moves. Second, writers of research article abstracts tend to choose implicit ways to represent themselves. More specifically, impersonal pronouns mainly occur in the purpose, method and result moves, while the passive voice largely appears in the method, result and conclusion moves. Third, with regard to author roles, the proportions of the *researcher* and the *writer* are significantly greater in all the moves than the other two author roles, which suggests that objectivity is still a key feature of academic discourse. Additionally, the findings show that different types and forms of authorial self-representation serve specific discourse purposes.

As shown here, this paper suggests that the move is an important factor in the distribution of authorial self-representation in abstracts. When the communicative purpose or the discourse functions changes, authorial self-representation varies to some extent, resulting in differences in the construction of author roles. It is important to track and follow the convention of experts to skilfully present the self in academic writing and improve the acceptability and readability of one's writing. In this aspect, this study offers insights into how experts of applied linguistics choose different resources to project themselves and situate their work within their domain. This findings have some implications for EAP teaching. However, there is no doubt that this study has certain limitations. For example, due to the small size of the corpus, the results should be verified by a larger-scale one, and authorial self-representation in other sections of a research article and across different disciplines and cultures is also worthy of exploration.

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