

Akdeniz Language Studies Conference 2012

Self-mention in scientific articles written by Turkish and non-Turkish authors

Pınar Karahan*

Anadolu University, Faculty of Education, ELT Dept, 26470, Eskisehir, Turkey

Abstract

This study explored the distribution and frequency of first person pronouns, particularly the use of “I” and “we” perspective, through comparative qualitative and quantitative analysis of 20 articles written by Turkish authors in English, and 20 articles written by non-Turkish authors in English. All articles were randomly selected from one specific English Language Teaching (ELT) Journal. Results indicated that both Turkish and non-Turkish authors mostly preferred to employ the inclusive “we” perspective instead of the “I” perspective in their academic writing. Depersonalization strategies such as the use of passive constructions were mostly observed in the articles written by the Turkish authors.

© 2012 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd.
Selection and peer-review under responsibility of ALSC 2012

Keywords: First person pronouns; Semantic references; Socio-pragmatic functions; Self-mention; Depersonalization; Academic writing

1. Introduction

Traditional view of academic discourse is most often regarded to be impersonal and objective. Academics are usually encouraged to use impersonal language in order to avoid revealing their presence in their written texts. Hyland (2001) has stated that impersonality has been supported by most journals, manuals and textbooks as a means of getting the message across to the reader in an unmediated way. However, recent research on personal attribution has revealed that the use of first person pronouns is

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +00-000-000-0000; fax: +00-000-000-0000
E-mail address: pinarkarahan@anadolu.edu.tr.

nowadays a rhetorical strategy that is often used by the international English-speaking community to promote research claims (Martin, 2004). Ivanic (1998), Kuo (1999), Tang and John (1999) and Hyland (2001) are some of the recent researchers who have suggested that academic writing need not be totally impersonal and that it should reflect the writer's presence to some extent, indeed.

Some writers choose to make explicit their personal stance in the text in an attempt to establish themselves competent members of the discourse community. They take the risk of full responsibility for their research claims through the use of first person pronouns. Some other writers, on the other hand, adopt an impersonal style, and they are referred to as 'humble servants of the discipline' by Myers (1989, p. 4). These two contradictory views of academic discourse often result in confusion and, many novice writers or language learners have difficulty in choosing which stance to adopt.

Writers' preferences to make explicit their personal identity in academic texts largely depend on social practices of a specific academic discourse community, and the rhetorical conventions may show variation in different cultures (Martin, 2004). Hence, this study explores the distribution and frequency of occurrence of first person pronouns through comparative qualitative and quantitative analysis of articles written by Turkish authors in English, and articles written by foreign authors in English, in order to find out whether there is variation between the two groups in terms of the use of first person pronouns in their academic writing. The possible semantic references and various socio-pragmatic functions of these pronouns are also investigated. Pedagogical implications of the findings of the study for language learners are finally discussed.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Historical development of academic discourse

The review of literature shows that the development of scientific studies brought about a change in their form and style over time. Textual evolutions were observed in the communicative purposes of researchers. This in turn affected the discourse function of their journal articles. These discourse functions were shaped in accordance with the requirements of the academic community.

Early scientific articles were often in the form of letters that scientists wrote to each other. Scientific discourse at those times was in the form of peer exchanges and the individual scientist was prominent. Therefore, many of them used the first-person narrative (Swales, 1990). Kuo (1999) claims that this use of the first-person narrative reflected personal honesty and modesty by the researchers of that time.

Following the nineteenth century, scientific articles were mostly in the form of experimental reports. Methods of investigation, results and findings of research studies became important. This growing trend was reflected by textual changes in academic discourse. Dividing the article into sections and giving references to other studies became the central part of academic discourse. There was a shift from description and narration towards explanation and analysis. In line with this kind of shift, impersonality was adopted as a distinctive feature of academic reports.

"Author-evacuated" discourse in Harwood's (2005) terms was adopted in traditional scientific prose. Gilbert and Mulkey (1984, p. 56) stated that scientists' impersonal stance of writing makes their research objective and "denies its character as an interpretive product". According to the findings of the same authors' analysis of biochemistry articles, impersonality was found to serve as a kind of insurance policy.

That is, writers protected themselves against falsification of their research findings through impersonalization. By avoiding the use of personal pronouns, they distanced themselves from their findings.

Nowadays, the increasing professionalism has brought about a dynamic style of academic discourse. Linking and relating the research findings to the previous larger research context gained importance. Scientists have felt the need to integrate their research into the whole community. However, a paradoxical point arises at this point. Writers have to show the significance and contribution of their research to the community on the one hand, but also have to appeal to editors and readers for their approval and acceptance (Kuo, 1999).

The complexity of modern scientific articles, in this vein, is also related to the issues of politeness and maintaining positive face (Myers, 1989). In addition to the complicated role relationships between the writer and his/her peer readers within the academic community, the use of politeness strategies, information structuring and personal pronouns, which is the central focus of this study, all serve as the important linguistic devices of the writer.

The central role of personal pronouns in face-to-face interaction and their function of revealing interpersonal relationships within academic discourse communities have promoted their use by the researchers in modern times. From the perspective of pragmatics, insights from the use of personal pronouns have resulted in the analyses of written texts.

2.2. *Current definitions of academic discourse*

As has been mentioned in the historical development of academic discourse, modern definitions of academic writing do not favor static and monolithic texts anymore. It has also been claimed by many academic sociologists that writers need to promote their work and emphasize its uniqueness. As a result of the big changes that occurred in grammatical, rhetorical and discursal functions of academic writing over time, current definitions of academic writing have not only been regarded as the reflection of linguistic ability but also an awareness of the rhetorical features of particular discourse communities (Işık Taş, 2008).

To give some examples to modern definitions of academic discourse, Tardy (2005, p. 325) defines it as the ‘transformation of knowledge’, which involves the persuading of readers of the significance and credibility of the work concerned. According to Hyland and Tse (2005, p. 1092), academic writing process is an ‘act of identity’, because it represents the writer. Casanave (2003, p. 88) claims that academic writing is a ‘socio-cultural process’ in which institutional norms and contexts determine the criteria for success.

2.3. *Writer identity in academic discourse*

The question of identity is based on a philosophy of thinking that has become increasingly popular through the work of Halliday and some other linguists of the Systemic school of linguistics (Halliday, 1998; Martin, 1989). According to the philosophy of the systemic school of thought, ‘reality’ is not something that is independent from entity, it is indeed a construction of human creation through language. Tang and John (1999, p. 24) state that ‘...language does not merely *reflect* an existing reality, but actually

creates that reality'. Hence, language is not only a tool to express self, but also a resource to create that self.

Research into writer identity in academic discourse has come into play in recent years. Cherry (1988) addressed this issue and distinguished between *ethos & persona* in writing, with *ethos* referring to the personal characteristics attributed to the writer by the reader based on textual evidence, and *persona* referring to the various roles of writer when writing a particular text.

Tang and John (1999) suggested three levels of adopting and performing roles- the societal level, the discourse level, and the genre level. According to these researchers, societal roles are the identities that are inherent to a person (e.g. mother, father, daughter, son). Discoursal roles are the identities that a person acquires within a particular discourse community (e.g. a teacher in a school context, a doctor in medical discourse). Genre roles are the identities that are specific to a particular genre within a particular discourse community. When speaking about the writer of a specific text, genre roles and identities are discussed. These roles bring about the issue of self-representation in writing.

Ivanic (1998) developed a framework of four interrelated aspects of writer identity. These four aspects were the autobiographical self, discoursal self, self as author and, possibilities for self-hood in the socio-cultural and institutional context, respectively. To explain briefly, autobiographical self is defined as 'the identity which people bring with them to any act of writing' (Ivanic, 1998, p. 24). Discoursal self is referred to 'the image a writer projects in writing'. Self as author is described as 'the self who originates a position or stand in writing'. Lastly, the possibilities for self-hood in the socio-cultural and institutional context is explained as 'In any institutional context, there will be several socially available possibilities for self-hood; several ways of doing the same thing. Of these possibilities, some will be privileged over others, in the sense that the institution accords them more status' (Ivanic, 1998, p. 27).

2.4. *Theoretical background to the study of first person pronouns*

The study of first person pronouns is directed by the employment of two different perspectives: namely, the traditional text linguistics and information presentation. From the traditional text linguistics point of view, personal pronouns are the devices of personal reference and they "refer to something by specifying its function or role in the speech situation (Halliday and Hasan, 1976, p. 44). Therefore, the interpretation of pronouns is most often left to the addressee/s and this interpretation highly depends on the particular situation and context.

From the perspective of information presentation, 'I/we' pronouns that are particularly focused in the scope of this study, reflect the author-knowledge relationship. In addition to this relationship, there are social relations, such as the author-audience relationship. Social relations reflect the relations outside the semantic scope of the text. Halliday and Hasan (1976, p. 48) maintain that "first person forms do not normally refer to the text at all; their referents are normally interpreted exophorically, by reference to the situation".

2.5. *Semantic references and socio-pragmatic functions of first person pronouns*

Analyses of first person pronouns in previous studies (Ivanic, 1998; Tang and John, 1999; Hyland, 2001) revealed a number of semantic references and discourse functions performed by these pronouns.

Various ways in which the personal pronouns may be used in academic writing were identified by several researchers.

To start with some of these studies, Ivanic (1998) attempted to show the degree of power by authorial presence through the use of first person pronouns. She categorized the use of personal pronoun ‘I’ with verbs associated with the process of structuring writing, ‘I’ in association with the research process, and finally ‘I’ with verbs associated with cognitive acts.

Tang & John (1999) developed Ivanic’s (1998) categorization of first person pronouns and they labeled their categories: ‘I’ as the representative, ‘I’ as the guide through the essay, ‘I’ as the architect of the essay, ‘I’ as the recounter of the research process, ‘I’ as the opinion-holder, and ‘I’ as the originator. To briefly explain each category, *the representative ‘I’* was realized by the use of first person plural form ‘we’ or ‘us’, and these pronouns were used when writers wanted to refer to larger group of people. *‘I’ as the guide through the essay* referred to the writer’s role as a guide during the reader’s journey through the text. *‘I’ as the architect of the essay* was realized by the use of first person singular when referring to the writer who wrote, organized and structured the text. *‘I’ as the recounter of the research process* was used in the description of the various steps of the research process. *‘I’ as the opinion-holder* was realized when sharing opinions, views or attitudes with regard to established information or facts. Finally, *‘I’ as the originator* involved the writer’s discovery of new ideas and claims in the text and this was regarded the most powerful role category.

Martin (2004) made a classification of first person pronouns in order to show the degree of authorial presence. He suggested that a first person plural pronoun ‘we’ can have either inclusive or exclusive semantic reference. The inclusive function of ‘we’ refers to both writer and reader and it is the least powerful function. The exclusive function, on the other hand, refers only to writers. This function has a greater degree of authorial stance, because it refers exclusively to the writer.

Harwood (2005, p. 1210) made a list of the functions of first person pronouns (particularly ‘I’ and ‘we’) as helping the writer organize the text and guide the reader through the argument (e.g., *First I will discuss x and then y*), stating personal opinions and knowledge claims (*On the basis of my data I would claim*), recounting experimental procedure and methodology (*We interviewed 60 subjects over the space of several months*), and acknowledging funding bodies, institutions and individuals that contributed to the study in some way (*I thank Professor X for his help with the calculations*). Harwood (2005, p. 1211) also identified three important ways of using ‘I’ and ‘we’ for self-promotion. These three ways can be summarized as personalizing claims: the writer as authority and originator, Procedural soundness and uniqueness and Self-Citation, respectively.

2.6. Overview of studies on first person pronouns & authorial stance in academic discourse

As has been mentioned above, a great number of research articles have identified the functions of personal pronouns in academic writing. Results of these studies in general have shown that first person pronouns play a crucial role in writers’ communication with their audience and their construction of authorial identity. For instance, Ivanic (1998, p. 32) emphasized that the presentation of discursive self is central to the writing process and “writing is a particularly salient form of social action for the negotiation of identities, because written text is deliberate, potentially permanent and used as evidence for many social purposes”. Kuo (1999) stated that the use of personal pronouns permits writers to reveal their own contribution to the field and to seek agreement for it.

Some other studies, on the other hand, have shown that the use of personal pronouns in academic discourse is still a controversial issue and the choice of which linguistic style to adopt- the linguistic choice of representing oneself explicitly or adopting an impersonal rhetorical style of writing- is confusing for both second/foreign language students and sometimes even for professional writers. According to Hyland (2001, p.211) this confusion is related to “the absence of clear direction in pedagogic texts, and conflicting expectations among supervisors and teachers”.

As for the research studies focusing on students’ use of personal pronouns in their writing, Hyland (2002) compared a corpus of undergraduate reports by L2 learners in different fields with a corpus of research articles in terms of first-person pronouns use. Findings of his study revealed that the L2 learners mostly used first-person pronouns in non-controversial situations and avoided using them when expressing thoughts and opinions.

Hyland and Tse (2005) also investigated the PhD students’ use of self-mentions and those of MA students’ use of them. Many of the participants were interviewed in the study and, the results revealed that students in general viewed self-mentions as inappropriate and believed that the use of them conflicted with the standards of academic writing.

Martinez (2005) compared first person pronouns in a corpus of biology articles produced by non-native English-speaking (NNES) writers with a corpus of research articles produced by native English-speaking writers (NES). The study examined the distribution and function of first person pronouns in the different sections of articles. Findings of the study demonstrated overuse, underuse and phraseological problems in the NNES corpus. Significant differences of first person occurrence across different sections of the articles were found. NES used first person pronouns mostly in the results section of the articles which shows that they took responsibility for the results obtained.

Harwood (2005) carried out a qualitative corpus study in order to find out how academic writers used the personal pronouns ‘I’ and ‘we’ for self-promotion. Research articles from the disciplines of economics, computing science, physics and business and management were examined in the study. Results of the study surprisingly revealed that even the so-called “author-evacuated” articles in the hard sciences displayed the use of personal pronouns as a self-promotion strategy.

Isık Taş (2008) examined a corpus of Ph.D theses and research articles with an attempt to discover how first person pronouns were used by expert and novice writers. Findings of the study showed that the expert writers of research articles used self-mentions often in the introduction sections. In contrast, the writers of Ph.D theses rarely marked their personal identity. They referred to themselves as “the researcher” or “the author” instead of using ‘I’ and ‘we’.

In accordance with the findings of Işık Taş’s (2008) study, it is important to mention Swales’s (2004) claim at this point. Swales (2004) stated that research articles are written in more competitive settings, and therefore the writers of these articles need to make explicit their authorial identity in order to show that they are making a substantial and original contribution to the discipline. However, the Ph.D theses may lack this kind of explicitness with regard to the role and character of the writer’s study.

3. Method

3.1. Purpose of the study

With pedagogical purposes in mind, this study aims to investigate the variations in the use of ‘I’ versus ‘we’ perspective in the academic discourse of the articles written by the Turkish authors, and the articles written by all other foreign authors of different nationalities. In other words, it focuses on the presence of author in the academic discourse representation of both Turkish authors and all other writers, within the same journal. As English is, undoubtedly, the most recognized international language of academic communication, one important purpose of this study is to find out whether Turkish authors use the first person pronouns, particularly “I” and “we”, in their articles in English, in the same way as authors of different nationalities use them. Hence, this study will attempt to establish the similarities and differences between the rhetorical styles of the articles written by Turkish authors in English, and the articles written by all other foreign authors in English again.

3.2. Sampling

All of the articles were randomly selected from one specific journal, namely *The Asian EFL Journal*. This journal is published monthly and it presents information on theories, research methods and materials related to language acquisition and language learning. It is an academic Second Language Acquisition Research Journal, and is one of the world's leading refereed and indexed journals for second language research. Moreover, it does not discourage the use of “I, we” perspective in its submission criteria.

20 articles, all written by Turkish authors, were randomly selected to constitute the Turkish corpus (TA corpus). The other 20 articles, all written by authors of different nationalities, were again randomly selected to constitute the Non-Turkish Authors corpus (NTA corpus). The NTA corpus mostly included writers whose native language was English. This information was obtained from the bio-data provided for each author at the beginning of the article. However, some articles did not provide this information; therefore, English may not be the native language of some authors in the NTA corpus.

In total, the corpora contained 40 articles. All articles were selected as single-authored articles, in order to control for the use of “we” instead of “I”. The use of “I” and “we” perspective was analyzed in all sections of the articles except for the acknowledgements, appendix, quotations, interview and questionnaire extracts in some of the articles. As all of the articles were randomly selected from the same journal focusing on similar topics in EFL/ESL contexts, the length of the articles in both corpora were quite similar. Therefore, length is not considered as a factor to affect the distribution of “I, we” perspective across the corpora. Citations of all articles in both corpora are provided in the Appendix.

4. Results and discussion

Each occurrence of “I” and “we” was manually counted by the researcher for the 40 articles in the corpora. Then, a quantitative analysis was performed with regard to the “I” and “we” perspectives used by Turkish and Non-Turkish Authors in both corpora. Results of this analysis are provided in Table 1 below. Table 1 demonstrates the descriptive statistics results with regard to the use of “I” and “we” pronouns by Turkish Authors (TA) and Non-Turkish Authors (NTA).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the use of “I, we” perspective across the two corpora.

Categories	I		We	
	Number	Percents	Number	Percents
Turkish	36	30.25	68	44.74
Non-Turkish	83	69.75	84	55.26
Total	119	100	152	100

As can be seen from Table 1, the number and percentage of the use of “I” perspective by Turkish and Non-Turkish authors differs from each other significantly. Results indicate that the Turkish Authors did not use the “I” perspective in their academic writing as many as the Non-Turkish Authors used them. As for the “we” perspective, both Turkish and Non-Turkish Authors used it in similar frequencies, though the Non-Turkish Authors still used it more frequently than the Turkish authors. The more frequent use of the “we” perspective instead of the “I” perspective among the Turkish authors may reflect the collectivist rather than individualistic properties of the Turkish culture.

As for the inclusive and exclusive functions of the “we” perspective across the corpora, they were also manually counted by the researcher. Then, a quantitative analysis was performed with regard to these two different functions. Results of this analysis are provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for the use of Inclusive and Exclusive “we” across the corpora.

Categories	Inclusive “we”		Exclusive “we”	
	Number	Percents	Number	Percents
Turkish	46	38.33	23	71.88
Non-Turkish	74	61.67	9	28.13
Total	120	100	32	100

As can be seen from Table 2, Turkish authors used the inclusive “we” in 46 cases, and the exclusive “we” only in 23 cases. Non-Turkish authors, on the other hand, used the inclusive “we” for 74 times, and the exclusive “we” only 9 times. Both Turkish and Non-Turkish authors mostly preferred employing inclusive “we” in their academic writing.

One reason for the less use of self-mention by the Turkish authors compared to the Non-Turkish Authors might stem from the fact that the Turkish education system favors depersonalization in academic writing. The common belief is that depersonalization brings about objectivity. Therefore, many writing instructors from high schools to universities promote the use of passive structures in academic writing. Another reason might be that the Turkish culture respects and promotes modesty. The use of “I” might be discouraged in the name of modesty.

This study also qualitatively examined the various semantic references and discourse functions indicated by “I” and “we”. Below are the results of the qualitative analysis with regard to the different references and functions of the first person pronouns, in particular “I” and “we”. Striking examples from both corpora are also provided under each category and subcategory.

4.1. Semantic references and discourse functions of the first person singular pronoun "I"

The use of "I" by the authors in both corpora was classified in accordance with the degree of authorial presence. The first person singular pronoun "I" was divided into the following semantic reference categories:

- **The author as the sole conductor of research:** This role of "I" is the same as "The author as conductor of research" categorization of the first person plural "we". Such uses of "I" assure the reader of the author's professional abilities by emphasizing the "sole" part of the author in the research process. The following examples can be considered in this vein:

- *In this study, I analyzed the discursive structure of classroom talk both academically and socially to identify the nature of literary discussions. (TA-3)*

- *In my first paper, I critically examined the theory of communicative competence as developed by Hymes without any reference to foreign and second language teaching. (TA-19)*

- *In the focus group discussions with the engineering students in this study I investigated what teaching strategies these students appreciated their lecturers using. (NTA-16)*

Some of the authors in both corpora used the "I+ try", "I+ attempt" expressions as a means of reducing responsibility for what they have done. The following examples can be considered in this vein:

- *In the rubric I adapted, I tried to measure the extent to which pre-service English language teachers incorporated their reflective inquiries into their writing of essays. (TA-10)*

- *In this paper, I tried to describe an enhanced L2 Classroom Interactional Competence and developed Teacher Language Awareness combined with critical reflective practice, peer-evaluation, and collaborative mentoring... (TA-4)*

- *So far, I have attempted to show how the theoretical and applied areas of the SLA research field and the language learner beliefs research field have followed almost parallel developments over the last few decades. (NTA-3)*

- *I attempted to discuss intercultural inferencing in terms of pragmatic theory using a specific example from an intercultural simulation involving foreign and Japanese students of intercultural communication in a Japanese University. (NTA-9)*

In some cases, authors avoided the use of first person "I" to realize this role by employing the following strategies. These strategies were observed to be commonly used in the Turkish corpus:

Passivization:

By using the passivization strategy, the authors removed themselves as the agent of any actions performed, as in the following examples:

- To strengthen the study design through triangulation, quantitative methods of data collection were also applied for more vigorous interpretation of the students' capacity for self-assessment in autonomous language learning. This was conducted using a Swiss version of the Council of Europe's self-assessment checklists, and one of the past examination papers of FCE (First Certificate in English December 1998). (TA-12)

Passive structures were used in many of the articles in the Turkish corpus, and the use of "I" was avoided by the replacement of "the researcher" instead. Below are the examples:

- The questionnaire used in the study was developed by the researcher. (TA-11)

- By conducting this study, the researcher aimed to contribute to the literature by providing naturalistic, uncontrolled data about the nature of literary discussions in an advanced level English literature class at a Turkish university. (TA-3)

Inanimate object treated as the agent of the actions performed:

In many cases, authors made an inanimate object the agent of the action (e.g. *this study*). The following instances, commonly found in the abstract and/or introduction sections of the articles, can be considered as examples to such cases:

- Motivated from the lack of research on the nature of discussions in literature classrooms, this study examined the nature of literary discussions in an advanced level English literature class in a Turkish EFL (English as a Foreign Language) setting. (TA-3)

- This paper aims to investigate the issue of standards in teaching English as an international language. (TA-20)

Nominalization: In this strategy, some authors turned an action performed by themselves (*observe* in the example below) into an abstract noun and then, portrayed it as the agent of another action. (*indicate* in the example below):

- Observations also indicated that most of the learning opportunities listed in the observation form below were not created except for pair and group works in all courses, keeping diaries, and, to some extent, peer and self editing in writing courses. (TA-12)

• **The author as the describer or recounter of research:** By using this function of "I", the author explains in a detailed manner the various steps of the research process, such as data collection and presentation of data, thereby informs the reader rather than making claims about something. The author also serves the role of a guide to the reader throughout the article in this category. The following two instances can be considered as examples to this category:

- What follows is first a quantitative analysis of the relative effectiveness of each participant, after which I will present a qualitative analysis. (NTA-18)

- After I identified 69 episodes of teacher-fronted text-based discussion, and coded them according to the research constructs, two external reviewers were asked to re-code some parts of the data to increase the reliability of the findings. (TA-3)

Many authors in the Turkish corpus employed passive structures when describing their research process as in the following example:

- The first draft of the questionnaire was written considering the issues pointed in the literature. Then, the first draft was sent to two experts to be reviewed in order to ensure the content validity of the questionnaire. Following the suggestions from the experts, the first draft of the questionnaire was revised and the necessary changes were made in the second draft. (TA-11)

• **The author as expressing an opinion or feeling:** In this usage of “I”, the author holds an opinion or expresses his/her attitude towards known information. This role manifests itself by the use of cognition verbs such as “*think, believe*”. The following occurrences are only taken from the Non-Turkish Authors Corpus, because the Turkish Authors Corpus did not include any examples to this category:

- I fear that this foundational principle is carried over into the export of English-medium universities worldwide. (NTA-12)

- Finally, I believe the teacher who pursues this kind of research, if only as an aid to professional development, is likely to gain a greater awareness of the individual differences in the abilities of readers ostensibly at the same level in a program. (NTA-18)

- Although the questions of definition in TBI cannot be ignored, I think it is the broader conceptual issues that are more critical. (NTA-19)

- ...I argued that it was the (design) purposes of different tasks that were more crucial than trying to differentiate various different types of learner activity into task or non-task, or degrees of taskiness – hence the title of my first article, “From tasking purposes to purposing tasks”. (NTA-19)

• **The author as talking about personal experiences:** In this category, the author tells the reader about his/her personal experiences by using the first person singular “I”. The use of “I” in this context might be regarded as unacceptable and unusual in academic discourse. However, some of the writers in the Foreign Authors corpus used this function of “I” as in the following examples. As for the Turkish authors, none of them used this function of “I” in their discourse. Below are the examples to this category:

- Anecdotally, I witnessed the case of a middle age single western woman being told that she was an “old maid” by a senior male from a certain non-western country I lived in for several years. (NTA-7)

- Having found the experience of taking the CELTA course very rewarding in the early stages of my career, and being an experienced CELTA tutor, course director and external assessor, I had, over the years, developed an interest in understanding initial training. (NTA-10)

- I lead a multilingual everyday life in a multi-ethnic society. I live in a country with a strong national language, in my case Danish; as an immigrant, I have needed to develop fluency in the language. (NTA-12)

4.2. Semantic references and discourse functions of the first person singular pronoun "We"

The use of "we" by the authors in both corpora was classified in accordance with the degree of authorial presence. The first person plural pronoun "we" was divided into either *inclusive* or *exclusive* semantic reference categories:

1. Inclusive: This role of "we" refers to both writer and reader. It is the least powerful role in terms of the authorial presence displayed in the text. This category is divided into two subcategories:

- **Inclusive A:** This function of "we" represents the weakest role of author presence through the use of first person plural "we". In this subcategory, "we" is used to refer to people in general, as can be seen in the following examples taken from both corpora:

- *There is hardly any disagreement about the fact that the world we are living in is changing at an accelerated rate. (TA-18)*

- *... we find ourselves living in an information era where knowledge is power. (TA-8)*

- *People like to use the "global village" to describe the present world. Because of frequent cross-cultural communication, the world has become smaller and smaller. Therefore, it seems that we live in the same village. (NTA-4)*

- **Inclusive B:** This function of "we", on the other hand, is used to refer to the members of the discourse community rather than people in general, as in the following instances:

- *In the process of cross-cultural reading, we often meet the comprehension barriers that are caused by such differences of historical cultures. (NTA-4)*

- *By understanding what aids our students in comprehending their lectures in English, we are able to develop a picture of the type of strategies students might prefer their lecturers to use. (NTA-16)*

- *When we examine the motivation and the assumptions behind the attempt to design a new EFL curriculum in this context, we can see that a content-based language program would be suitable to provide opportunities for all students with different majors of specialty to use English effectively in their future careers. (TA-8)*

2. Exclusive: This role of "we" refers only to writer. Therefore, the examples listed in this subcategory reflect a greater degree of author presence. As a result of the qualitative analysis of both corpora, several roles of exclusive "we" were identified and, these roles were classified into the following subcategories. As the corpora used in this study include only single-authored articles, the instances provided below each subcategory are the situations when "we" is used in single-authored articles instead of "I":

- **The author as describer or recounter of research process:** This usage of "we" refers to the author who structures, designs and writes the article. This function of "we" is also used when stating the purpose of the article. By using this type of "we", the author informs the reader by showing guidance throughout the article, but does not make any claims about something. Therefore, this is a fairly non-threatening role to employ by the author. Examples to this subcategory are listed as follows:

- Therefore, in this paper, we aim to measure critical thinking levels of EFL students in order to gain insights into the problem mentioned. (TA-5)

- As we have mentioned the problem of self-esteem and inhibition in adult learners, it will be beneficial to recall a study to see the other side of the coin: (TA-1)

- We will consider three task performance options that have figured in the research to date. (NTA-11)

- We now return to six key questions posed in the introduction that will help determine the overall effectiveness of the SA procedure and whether it should be retained for future CS classes. (NTA-15)

- The notion of competence needs to be clarified for the purpose of this article, especially after we discuss and consider English as an international language (EIL) in the Introduction section. (TA-8)

• **The author as conductor of research:** This usage of “we” summarizes the work done by the author prior to writing the article. This function of “we” was typically observed in the Methods section of the articles and, it was signaled by the verbs such as “*examine, conduct*” usually used in the past tense form. The function of “we” in this subcategory assures the reader of the author’s professional abilities, and emphasizes the part of the author in the research process. The following instances were detected in single-authored articles from both corpora:

- We measured the internal consistency of our FLWCAS and the scale items indicated high internal reliability and consistency: $\alpha = .9167$. We conducted a treatment phase and carried out a FL anxiety questionnaire twice i.e. before and after treatment to see whether there is any significant difference. (TA-15)

- With data retrieved from more advanced students, the teacher might exploit the text to point out successful discourse strategies, vocabulary choices, features of natural and spoken English and perhaps even as sample for a more elaborate analysis as we have attempted here. (NTA-5)

• **The author as expressing an opinion:** In this usage of “we”, the author holds an opinion or shares an attitude by expressing agreement or disagreement with regard to known information or so-called facts. This role manifests itself by the use of cognition verbs such as “*think, believe*”. By the use of these verbs, the author invites the discourse community to participate in an interactive discussion. No instances of this function were found in the Corpus of Non-Turkish Authors. Authors in this corpus preferred to use “I” instead of “we” when expressing their opinions. Keeping in mind that this study focuses on single-authored articles in both corpora, the use of “we” instead of “I” by few, if not many, Turkish authors in their expression of opinions is an interesting finding. This might show that these few Turkish authors seemed to avoid self-mention when expressing their opinions, and used the “we” perspective instead of “I” perspective. The following occurrences were commonly found in one specific article in the TA corpus:

- We believe that there needs to be an empirical attempt to guide especially non-native teachers since there is not any consensus about this issue. (TA-15)

- For such a tiny change, we do not think that a pilot study is needed for the renamed scale... (TA-15)

• **The author as cautiously making a statement:** This use of “we” establishes a more personal authority based on the author’s command or confidence when revealing the results of a study and drawing conclusions or implications. However, in this subcategory, the degree of authorial presence is decreased due to the use of “we” with modal verbs such as “should, may, might” The use of these kinds of verbs reflects the hedging of a claim. Hedging is a recently used strategy in academic discourse as a means of avoiding responsibility for the expressed claims (Hyland, 1996). Hedges show themselves with tentative statements by the author in an attempt to minimize possible criticism from other researchers in the field. The following instances were identified in the corpora with regard to this function:

- *For this purpose, we should conduct more comprehensive studies in similar teacher training institutions. (TA-12)*

- *In order to enable teachers to implement pedagogical intentions effectively, we should develop an understanding of the interactional organization of L2 classes, ... (TA-4)*

- *As a result of such ethnographic investigations, we may have a clearer idea of how to approach training/advising lecturers who teach in a second language. (NTA-16)*

- *However, we might also note the increasing risk of proposing a reductionist – “less is easier” – unilateral linguistic model, a 2024 Newspeak of our post-cold war era, in the name of concepts such as mutual intelligibility, that are best understood in the domain of Pragmatics. (NTA-9)*

• **The author as showing full-commitment to his/her claims:** This function of “we” is the most powerful one, and it reflects the highest degree of author presence. By using this type of “we”, the author displays full ownership for his/her claims. According to Hyland (2001), this function reveals explicitly the author’s contribution to the field by exhibiting full-commitment to his/her academic position. The instances found in the scope of this category are very rare. The following occurrences to this subcategory are listed as follows:

- *We asserted that L1 use, when taken as a technique or strategy, is not merely an effective way in clarifying meaning but also can decrease learners’ language anxiety since using learners’ mother tongue as a compensation strategy is not only helpful in furthering negotiation in L2 but also an important psychological motivation. Thus, we dare to say that allowing optimal L1 use raises self-assurance thus decreases FL anxiety and directs learners to take part eagerly to in-class activities. (TA-15)*

5. Concluding remarks and implications

Upon listing the wide-ranging functions of first person pronouns qualitatively, particularly “I” and “we” perspective, different kinds of identities were explored. Results of the quantitative analysis indicated that the Turkish authors used the “I” perspective only 36 times; whereas, the Non-Turkish Authors used it 83 times in their articles. This is a significant difference to be compared. As for the “we” perspective, Turkish authors used it 68 times. Non-Turkish authors, on the other hand, used it 84 times. As can be seen from these results, both Turkish and Non-Turkish authors mostly preferred to employ the “we” perspective instead of the “I” perspective in their academic writing.

With regard to the inclusive and exclusive functions of the “we” perspective, Turkish authors used the inclusive “we” in 46 cases, and the exclusive “we” only in 23 cases. Non-Turkish authors, on the other hand, used the inclusive “we” for 74 times, and the exclusive “we” only 9 times. As can be

concluded from these results, both Turkish and Non-Turkish authors mostly preferred employing inclusive “we” in their academic writing.

Last, but not least, findings on the frequencies and various functions of the first person pronouns analyzed in this study might offer some insights into the EFL academic writing context. Students, particularly in the Turkish EFL setting, may conventionally avoid the use of first person pronouns due to the preconceived notion of impersonal and distant academic discourse. Therefore, both writing instructors and students should be aware of the variety of important functions displayed by first person pronouns in academic texts. If students are aware of these functions, and are able to understand them, then they can decide how to present themselves best in their own academic writing. In this vein, academic writing programs should promote critical language awareness by focusing on writer identity and different acceptable language choices in academic discourse.

References

- Casanave, C. P. (2003). Looking ahead to more sociopolitically-oriented case study research in L2 writing scholarship (But should it be called “post-process”?). *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 12, 85-102.
- Cherry, R. (1988) Ethos vs. persona: self-representation in written discourse. *Written Communication*, 5, 251-276.
- Gilbert, G. N., & Mulkay, M. (1984). *Opening Pandora's Box: a Sociological Analysis of Scientists' Discourse*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Halliday, M. & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1998) Language and knowledge: The ‘Unpacking’ of text. In D. Allison, L. Wee, Z. Bao, & S. A. Abraham, *Text in education and society* (pp. 157-178). Singapore: Singapore University Press.
- Harwood, N. (2005) “Nowhere has anyone attempted...In this article I aim to do just that” A corpus based study of self-promotional *I* and *we* in academic writing across four disciplines. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 37, 1207-1231.
- Hyland, K. (1996). Talking to the academy: Forms of hedging in science research articles. *Written Communication* 13: 251-281.
- Hyland, K. (2001). Humble servants of the discipline? Self-mention in research articles. *English for Specific Purposes*, 20, 207-226.
- Hyland, K. (2002). Authority and invisibility: Authorial identity in academic writing. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 34, 1091-1112.
- Hyland, K., Tse, P. (2005) Hooking the reader: a corpus study of evaluative that in abstracts. *English for Specific Purposes*, 24, 123-139.

Isik Tas, E. (2008). A corpus-based analysis of genre-specific discourse of research: The research article and the PhD thesis in ELT. Unpublished PhD Thesis. Middle East Technical University, Ankara.

Ivanic, R. (1998) *Writing and Identity: the Discoursal Construction of Identity in Academic Writing*. John Benjamins: Amsterdam.

Kuo, C. H. (1999) The use of personal pronouns: role relationships in scientific journal articles. *English for Specific Purposes*, 18(2), 121–138.

Martin Martín, P. (2004) “Personal attribution in English and Spanish scientific texts”. *BELLS: Barcelona English language and literature studies*. Retrieved 09.01.2012 from URL:<http://www.publicaciones.ub.es/revistes/bells12/PDF/art09.pdf>

Martin, J. R. (1989). *Factual writing: Exploring and challenging social reality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Myers, G. (1989). The pragmatics of politeness in scientific texts. *Applied Linguistics*, 4, 1–35.

Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Swales, J. M. (2004). *Research Genres: Exploration and Applications*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tang, R., & John, S. (1999). The ‘I’ in identity: exploring writer identity in student academic writing through the first person pronoun. *English for Specific Purposes*, 18, 23–39.

Tardy, C. M. (2005). “It’s like a story”: Rhetorical knowledge development in advanced academic literacy. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 4, 325-338.

Appendix A.

	Turkish Authors Corpus Contents	Coding
1	Ozmen, K. S. (2004) Make them be aware, not beware of learning the cognitive therapy technique (CTT) in adult EFL classes, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> 8(3),174-191.	TA-1
2	Acar, A. (2006) Models, norms and goals for English as an international language pedagogy and task based language teaching and learning, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> 8(3),174-191.	TA-2
3	Yuksel, D. (2009) Nature of discussions in a foreign language literature class, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i>	TA-3
4	Sert, O. (2010) A Proposal for a CA-integrated English language teacher education program in Turkey, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 12(3),62-97.	TA-4
5	Alagozlu, N. , (2007) Critical thinking and voice in EFL writing, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 9(3), 118-136.	TA-5
6	Aydin, S., (2005) An Investigation on the language anxiety and fear of negative evaluation among Turkish EFL learners, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> .	TA-6
7	Uçkun, B., (2008) How does context contribute to EFL Learners’ assessment of vocabulary gain, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 10(2), 102-131.	TA-7

8	Genc, Z.S., (2011) EFL in Higher education: Designing a flexible content-based curriculum at university-level, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 12(1), 85-113.	TA-8
9	Coskun, A., (2011) Future English teachers' attitudes towards EIL pronunciation, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 6(2),46-68	TA-9
10	Arikan, A., (2006) The value of reflection in writing courses in ELT preservice teacher education programs, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> ,16,1-16	TA-10
11	Yildirim, O., (2010) <i>Washback effects of a high-stakes university entrance exam: effects of the English section of the university entrance exam on future English language teachers in Turkey</i> , <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 12(2), 92-116.	TA-11
12	Sert, N., (2006) EFL Student teachers' learning autonomy, <i>EFL Journal</i> , 8(2), 180-201.	TA-12
13	Altan, M. Z. (2003) Nationality & language learning strategies of ELT-major university students, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 1-11.	TA-13
14	Coskun, A., (2009) EIL in an actual lesson, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 5, 74-80.	TA-14
15	Kahraman, A., (2009) The role of the mother tongue in fostering affective factors in ELT classrooms, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 5, 107-128.	TA-15
16	Mete, D. E., (2010) EIL and intercultural communicative competence: Two sides of a coin?, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 5, 156-163.	TA-16
17	Gün, B., (2009) Are teachers fully prepared to teach different varieties of English: A case study in Turkey, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 5,164-175.	TA-17
18	Kırkgöz, Y., (2009) Globalization and English language policy at primary education in Turkey, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 5, 176-181.	TA-18
19	Acar, A. (2005) The "Communicative Competence" controversy, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 7(3),	TA-19
20	Acar, A. (2007) Standards and competence in English as an international language pedagogy, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 9(4), 39-53.	TA-20

	Non-Turkish Authors Corpus contents	Coding
1	Mann , G., (2004) An evaluation approach towards feedback "betterment" in an initial teacher training in EFL, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> ,6(1).	NTA-1
2	Lingley, D. (2006) Apologies Across Cultures: An analysis of intercultural communication problems raised in the <i>Ehime Maru</i> incident, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 8(1), 97-122.	NTA-2
3	Bernat, E. (2008) Beyond Beliefs: Psycho-cognitive, socio cultural and emergent ecological approaches to learner perceptions in foreign language acquisition, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 10(3), 7-27.	NTA-3
4	Lin, W. (2004) A Study on cross-cultural barriers in reading of English, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 1-9.	NTA-4
5	Lingley D. (2005) Spoken Features of Dialogue Journal Writing, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 7(2).	NTA-5
6	Luchini , P. L. (2004) Developing oral skills by combining fluency- with accuracy-focused tasks: A case study in China, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> ,1-20.	NTA-6
7	Dash, P. Cross-cultural pragmatic failure: A definitional analysis with implications for classroom teaching, , <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> ,6(4),1-16.	NTA-7
8	Poole, A. (2005) The Kinds of Forms Learners Attend to During Focus on Form	NTA-8

	Instruction: A Description of an Advanced ESL Writing Class, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , , 7(3).	
9	Nunn, R. (2004) The “Unknown Unknowns” of Plain English, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , , 6(10), 1-13.	NTA-9
10	Brandt, C. (2010) Competition and collaboration inInitial teacher education in TESOL: A case of a classic double bind, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> ,12(3),8-39.	NTA-10
11	Ellis, R. (2006) The methodology of task-based teaching, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 8(3), 19-45.	NTA-11
12	Phillipson, R. (2009) Disciplines of English and disciplining by English <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 11(4),8-30.	NTA-12
13	Moody, J. (2007) Plagiarism or intertextuality?: Approaches to Teaching EFL Academic Writing, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 9(2), 195-210	NTA-13
14	Litz, D. (2010) Distance doctor in Education degrees: Past experiences, current developments and future possibilities in Asia , <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 12(3) ,181-194.	NTA-14
15	White, E. (2009) Assessing the Assessment: An Evaluation of a Self-assessment of Class Participation Procedure, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 11(3), 75-109.	NTA-15
16	Miller, L. (2009) Engineering lectures in a second language: What factors facilitate students’ listening comprehension?, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> ,11(2),8-30.	NTA-16
17	Cross, J. (2009) Diagnosing the process, text, and intrusion problems responsible for L2 listeners’ decoding errors, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> ,11(2),31-53.	NTA-17
18	Weil, N. (2008) Vocabulary size, background characteristics, and reading skill of Korean intensive English students, 10(4),26-59.	NTA-18
19	Bruton, A. (2007) Description or prescription for task-based instruction? A reply to Littlewood, 9(1), 227-235.	NTA-19
20	Crosthwaite, P. (2011) The effect of collaboration on the cohesion and coherence of L2 narrative discourse between English NS and Korean L2 English users, <i>Asian EFL Journal</i> , 13(4),135-166.	NTA-20