

Writing to make a difference: Discursive analysis of writer identity in research articles on management

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Abstract

Our purpose in this research is to quantitatively analyse how the communication of managerial knowledge is realised in research articles written by experienced writers for publication and those produced by graduate students as a course grade requirement. Specifically, we look at the ways these writers construct their authorial identities (textually conveyed in ‘voice’). To do so, we combine Hyland’s (2008) interactional model of voice with Lehman’s (2018), Lehman & Sulkowski (2021) conceptualisation of ‘writer identity.’

The study results reveal important differences with regard to the expression of interaction in written discourse, with novices employing more interpersonal features to involve readers and experienced authors making linguistic choices to establish authority in their texts. We show that the use of interpersonal metadiscourse renders academic texts more accessible, reader engaging and interesting. This enables us to work towards the development of more effective writing instruction which is particularly relevant for English for Academic Purposes pedagogy.

Keywords: discourse analysis, management writing, writer identity, reader inclusion

Resumen

Escribir para marcar la diferencia: análisis discursivo de la identidad del escritor en artículos de investigación sobre gestión

Nuestro propósito en esta investigación es analizar cuantitativamente cómo se lleva a cabo la comunicación del conocimiento gerencial en artículos de investigación para su publicación por parte de autores experimentados y en aquellos producidos por estudiantes graduados como requisito de calificación del curso. Específicamente, nos centramos en las formas en que estos escritores construyen sus identidades de autor (expresadas textualmente en “voz”). Para ello, combinamos el modelo interaccional de voz de Hyland (2008) con la conceptualización de la “identidad del escritor” de Lehman (2018) y Lehman & Sułkowski (2021).

Los resultados del estudio revelan diferencias importantes con respecto a la expresión de la interacción en el discurso escrito, donde los principiantes emplean más características interpersonales para involucrar a los lectores, y los autores experimentados toman decisiones lingüísticas para establecer su autoridad en los textos que crean. Mostramos que el uso del metadiscurso interpersonal hace que los textos académicos sean más accesibles, atractivos e interesantes para el lector. Esto nos permite trabajar en el desarrollo de una instrucción de escritura más efectiva que es especialmente relevante para la pedagogía del Inglés para Fines Académicos.

Palabras clave: Análisis del discurso, escritura de la gestión, identidad del escritor, inclusión del lector.

1. Introduction

In the field of management there is a growing concern as to how managerial knowledge and belief claims are presented in scholarly texts with respect to the reader (Grey & Sinclair, 2006; Hambrick, 2007; Tourish, 2020). A cursory look at the content of the top management journals through Scopus shows us that many articles are highly theoretical and abstract, and are written in unengaging, self-righteous, pompous and full of unnecessary jargon style. As Tourish notes, authors are expected to develop convincing theories and use a “tortured writing style characterized by vagueness, euphemisms, and long words where shorter ones are readily available” (2020, p. 99), and he argues that this creates “barricades to keep readers out rather than open doors to invite them in” (Tourish, 2020, p. 105). The ‘torture’ metaphor used by Tourish follows Grey and Sinclair’s charge that “the assumption seems to be that writing and reading should involve suffering and that writing is not good enough unless it causes a little suffering” (2006, p. 448). It is clear then that more accessible writing is a desirable objective to attract, inform and persuade a more diverse and global readership.

In the current study, we quantitatively investigate whether there is a difference in the way experienced authors (further referred to as experts) and graduate students (further referred to as novices) construct their authorial identities (textually conveyed in ‘voice’). In doing so, we take Hyland’s conceptualisation of metadiscourse as a point of departure (Hyland & Tse, 2004; Hyland, 2005) which enables us to see how an academic text demonstrates both the writer’s stance on the propositional content and an awareness of readers’ responses. According to Hyland, metadiscourse is “a cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers/listeners as members of a particular discourse community” (2005, p. 37). This definition goes to the essence of academic communication, that is an interactive construction of meaning by discourse participants in a communicative event. The interpersonal potential of metadiscourse is realised in the function of taking “account of the reader’s knowledge, textual experiences and processing needs and that it provides writers with an armoury of rhetorical appeals to achieve this” (Hyland, 2005, p. 41) (see also Fu & Hyland, 2014; Alonso Belmonte, 2009).

The present research approach is novel in that it analyses the nature of authorial identity of scientific writers in management with specific focus on whether knowledge and beliefs are communicated in a reader-inclusive or authoritarian way. This is achieved by the analysis of selected articles for the presence and frequency distribution of metadiscourse features that mark both reader-consideration and writers’ enforcement of their views and opinions on readers. We place a new lens on scholarly writing in management, suggesting more analytical scrutiny of the rhetorical conventions which exist in the field and support the recent efforts in Critical Management Studies (CMS) (Grey & Sinclair, 2006; Kiriakos & Tienari, 2018; Gilmore et al., 2019; Pullen et al., 2020) to ‘write differently’ to address the aesthetic, moral and political concerns of writing.

2. Theorising concepts of identity, self and voice

‘Identity’ is a central organising feature of public life, and social sciences and humanities increasingly regard it as a multifaceted phenomenon constituted in interpersonal exchange or, more specifically, in discourse. In this perspective, ‘identity’ becomes relocated from “the ‘private’ realms of

cognition and experience, to the ‘public’ realms of discourse and other semiotic systems of making meaning” (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 4). Being ontologically multiple is not to say that identity is fragmented. Identity is rather fluid as it entails different ways people think of themselves depending on the context of communicative event.

The multiple social identities or aspects of identity both add to and influence each other. For example, a textual self-representation of a Polish scholar writing in English for international publication is permeated by their other identities/or identity facets constituted by both prescriptive and normative standards of Polish culture (including values, religious beliefs, worldview, history etc.) and transient participation in different social interactions, relationships and tasks. As Handley et al. note, “[i]ndividuals bring to a community a personal history of involvement with workplace, social and familial groups whose norms may complement or conflict with one other” (2006, p. 642). Consequently, writers move between different, socially available identity options depending on the context of the communicative situation. Hence, the real concern related to the complex and evolving nature of identity refers to how these different options, which can be complimentary, incompatible or even contradictory, ultimately unite to comprise an identity of the individual writer. The production of an academic text is a particularly illustrative example of this process. Every time a scholar reports scientific work, they make a decision to either draw on privileged or less privileged possibilities¹ for textual self-representation.

The tension between writers’ desires to claim their personal identities and the pressure to conform to institutional and community expectations has been reflected in many studies (e.g., see Hyland and Sancho Guinda’s 2012 edited volume). As found by Hyland (2012) in his research based on corpus-approaches for studying the discursive construction of identity, the interplay between the individual and social factors contributes to identity construction and evolution. Following this perspective, Lehman formulated a model of writer identity based on the trichotomy of selves (Lehman, 2018; Lehman & Sułkowski, 2021), which consists of the individual self, collective self and depersonalised self (see Figure 1).

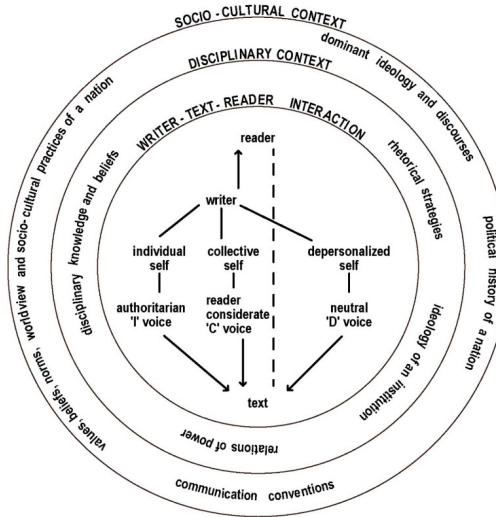


Figure 1. Revised model of writer identity (primary sources: Lehman 2018; Lehman & Sulkowski, 2021).

Within the field of identity studies, some researchers use the notions of ‘self’ and ‘identity’ interchangeably (Roeser, Peck & Nasir, 2006) while for others they are two different concepts (Côté & Levine, 2002). In Lehman’s view (Lehman, 2018), ‘identity’ is the whole kaleidoscopic picture while different ‘selves’ constitute colours and shapes which can be found in this picture. Consequently, the various ‘selves’ exist: ‘ideal self’, ‘independent self’, ‘communitarian self’, etc.

The three selves from Lehman’s conceptualisation are constituted by the author’s sense of self-worth, gender, psychological and intellectual capacities, socio-cultural and educational backgrounds, writing practices of their disciplinary community, and are textually conveyed in the respective voices. The individual self is constructed by an individual’s unique cognition, personality and life history and conveyed in an authoritative voice that signals the writer’s opinions, beliefs as well as their position towards the propositional content. The collective self refers to how the author positions themselves in different socio-cultural settings, relationships and tasks, and is textually manifested in a voice that communicates the writer’s struggle for affiliation and belonging to a shared discourse community. This is usually done by establishing a relationship of commonality and equality with the reader. The depersonalised self is devoid of any individuality which is dictated by the anonymity that academic writing typically requires and makes

the author assume an impersonal voice, free from the personal and cultural bias. This is manifested in the author's alignment with the writing conventions of their disciplinary community. However, this adherence to the disciplinarily sanctioned rhetorical rules also shows consideration of the reader who, as a community member, has specific expectations about how disciplinary texts should be written.

In the present conceptualisation, *voice* is perceived as a phenomenological concept (Matsuda, 2001, 2015; Hyland, 2008a). This has affinity to Cheung and Lau's understanding of the term who argue that, in contrast to *stance*, "voice takes on a wider perspective, involving the construction of writer identity. Research into voice helps to locate the 'person behind the written word' (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001, p. 85), perceived by the reader" (Cheung & Lau, 2020, p. 216). A consequential assumption of this approach is that *voice* situates writers culturally, socially and institutionally and is achieved through the ways they negotiate their textual representations within a particular discursive context of the text production.

The link between identity, or identity aspects, and voice has been investigated from different perspectives, including pedagogy-oriented (Castelló et al., 2012; Liang, 2013; Dressen-Hammouda, 2014) and reader-oriented research (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Tardy & Matsuda, 2009; Tardy, 2012b; Morton & Storch, 2019); and in a number of studies which examined voice as a typification linked to social identities (Prior, 2001) and as the outcome of different types of positioning affecting identity formation (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) (see also Flowerdew and Wang's review article of 2015).

Table 1 presents a description of the textual realisations of the three types of voice captured in two dimensions, or 'systems' as Hyland (2008a) puts it, 'writer stance' and 'reader engagement'. 'Stance' dimension has been defined by Hyland as "community recognised personality, an attitudinal, writer-oriented function which concerns the ways writers present themselves and convey their judgement, opinions and comments" (2008a: 7). In this way, 'stance' represents an individualistic, or writer-oriented, aspect of voice which is, in Hyland's model, conveyed through four types of linguistic and discourse-level features: *hedges*, *boosters*, *attitude markers*, and *self-mention pronouns*. Hyland's conceptualisation does not fully square with Lehman's point who places hedging devices in the 'reader engagement' dimension arguing that when academic writers present their findings tentatively and in a non-authoritative manner, they aim to forestall any criticisms from their

peers. Indeed, ‘engagement’ dimension reflects writers’ consideration of their readers whose presence is rhetorically recognised in writers’ efforts to “actively pull them along with the argument, include them as discourse participants, and guide them to interpretations” (Hyland, 2008a: 7). But when the writer is deliberately not employing these strategies, they are aiming for a more monologic and telling style corresponding to ‘stance’. As a result, ‘engagement’ signals an interdependent, or reader-oriented, aspect of voice which is, in Hyland’s model, textually marked by the following five linguistic and discourse-level features: *reader pronouns, personal asides, references to shared knowledge, directives, and rhetorical/audience directed questions* and, in Lehman’s conceptualisation by *reader pronouns, references to shared knowledge, rhetorical/audience directed questions, hedges and directives* (see Table 1).

Dimension 1: Writer stance	
Descriptors of 'I' voice	Metadiscourse markers that signal 'I' voice
The writer presents the ideas and arguments in a way that shows their depth of knowledge of the topic.	Boosters (e.g., <i>clear(ly), show, undoubtedly, must</i>)
The writer expresses a clear and firm opinion on the topic.	Authorial self-mention pronouns (e.g. <i>I, my, we</i> (exclusive), <i>us</i> (exclusive), <i>the author</i> ('s))
The writer establishes authority for the content by citing their own work.	Self-citations
The writer reveals their positive and negative feelings towards propositional content of the text.	Attitude markers (e.g., <i>significant, better, surprising(ly), unfortunately</i>)
Dimension 2: Reader engagement	
Descriptors of 'C' voice	Metadiscourse markers that signal 'C' voice
The writer reveals their thinking about the topic in a way that directly engages the reader.	Reader pronouns (e.g., <i>you, your, we</i> (inclusive), <i>our</i> (inclusive).
The writer refers to shared knowledge and experiences with the reader.	References to shared knowledge (e.g., <i>it is generally thought, as we all know, of course</i>)
The writer invokes a response from the reader.	Rhetorical/audience directed questions
Writer uses words that reduce their commitment to claims	Hedges (e.g., <i>might, perhaps, possible, sometimes</i>)
Descriptors of 'D' voice	Metadiscourse markers that signal 'D' voice
The reader feels that they are encountering a textual structure which is familiar, acceptable and helpful	Directives (e.g., <i>note that, consider, first</i>)

Table 1. Textual realisations of three types of voice.

The voices activated within these two dimensions are all dialogic in nature and potentially persuasive as they show how the writer positions themselves with respect to the reader. The individual voice ('I' voice) refers to writer stance and has the capacity to convince the reader by the author presenting

themselves as a self-assured commentator who establishes authority for the content of their writing. The adoption of this kind of writing style creates a *writer-dominant* dialogue in the text. The collective voice ('C' voice) is linked to reader engagement as the writer invites the reader to enter into a dialogue by invoking the reader's response and making references to common knowledge and experiences. In this way, the writer constructs an *equable* dialogue. Similarly to 'C' voice, the depersonalised voice ('D' voice) is also captured in the reader engagement dimension. 'D' voice marks the writer's alignment with the discursive practices of their disciplinary community and the authorial credibility is based on the universal, plain and objective language which allows for communicating unbiased ideas, knowledge and belief claims. Writer position themselves as being impersonal towards the propositional content of the text and, thereby, distant from the readers. However, in being consistent with the discipline-sanctioned writing conventions, the writer is reader-sensitive and creates an *equable* dialogue with the reader to satisfy their expectations as to the discipline's writing conventions.

The three types of voice can be mapped onto Hyland's (2012) notions of *individuality* and *communality*. These two concepts are the mediating variables in the act of writer identity construction which reflect "an encounter, possibly a struggle, between our multiple experiences and the demands of the current context" (Hyland, 2012, p. 147). By claiming ownership over the propositional content and demonstrating stylistic distinctiveness, the writer leaves an individual stamp on the text which can be linked to Hyland's notion of *individuality* and Lehman's concept of *individual* self encoded in *individual* voice. What these two concepts have in common is that they imply a writer-oriented view of communication by emphasising the agentive power of "a unique selfhood [that] overflows the semiotic categories which [authorised] discourses offer us" (Hyland, 2012, p. 148). Since linguistic choices are typically made by academic authors from disciplinarily sanctioned resources, any act of writing involves negotiation between the writer's desire for *individuality* and the need for alignment with the writing conventions of a given disciplinary community to satisfy the reader's needs and expectations. The latter variable corresponds to Hyland's concept of *communality* and Lehman's conceptualisation of *collective* and *depersonalised* selves, textually conveyed in *collective* and *depersonalised* voices. The common denominator for these two notions is the idea of reader-oriented communication in which writers "create a mutual frame of reference and anticipate when their purposes will be retrieved by their audiences" (Hyland, 2012, p. 27).

The proposed model of writer identity (see Figure 1) comprises identity components, grouped into three, internally tied together, levels. The outer band, which describes the socio-cultural context involved in the process of identity construction, is made up of values, beliefs, norms, shared worldview, socio-cultural practices, history, dominant ideologies together with their discourses, and traditional communication conventions. The intermediate band, which refers to the disciplinary context of identity construction, includes disciplinary knowledge and beliefs, the ideology of an institution with the relations of power inscribed in it, and the rhetorical strategies sanctioned in a given discipline. The inner core explains the dynamics of writer-text-reader interaction in which different elements of this exchange are in continuous interplay. By activating specific identity facets (textually encoded in voice), the writer makes lexico-grammatical and rhetorical choices that support and validate their purpose in writing.

For successful communication to occur, there needs to be a degree of shared disciplinary knowledge and beliefs, and awareness of the institutional and ideological context in which the text is written. It is necessary for the writer then to be able to exploit this context to involve the reader in the creation of meaning. To persuade the audience to accept the propositional content of the text, the author also has to skillfully choose from a wide repertoire of personal and disciplinary available rhetorical resources. A broken line between ‘reader’ and ‘text’ indicates potential communication failure.

3. Study

3.1. Rationale for the study

The rationale for the present study is that, as things stand, scholarly writers have a paucity of advice concerning how to navigate the difficult terrain of scholarly writing. The awareness of how to use discursive strategies offers scholarly writers in management an opportunity to decide whether they want to be reader-sensitive, and in this way, challenge the existing rhetorical and lexical norms and rules which have been criticised within the field for their lack of reader inclusivity.

Recognising the importance of individual, social and dialogic aspects of voice in the construction of writer identity, the current study extends and expands Tardy’s (2012a) work exploring further the link between textual identity² and voice facets³. In doing so, it takes a critical perspective on writer

identity as a trichotomy of selves and investigates the metadiscoursal linguistic resources via corpus approach.

3.2. Sample

Our sample comprises two types of data and, thus, two corpora of research articles, a pre-eminent genre of scholarly writing (Swales, 2004). The first corpus consists of research articles from management journals which were highly rated by the Scimago Journal Rank Indicator and classified into the area of Business, Management and Accounting. The journals include *Academy of Management Annals*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Journal of Management*, *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, *Organization Science*, *Personnel Psychology*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, and *Journal of Marketing*.

It is worth noting that only two among the nine journals are of non-US origin. We selected 103 articles characterised by a similar length with the average number of words (word tokens) per text amounting to 10,272. The articles were published between 2016-2020 and were written by both singular and multiple writers. The collected corpus provided us with a wide and diverse range of data to explore a textual realisation of voice in management journals.

The second corpus consisted of research papers written in English by management students at the Master's level for those courses which required them to design, conduct and report their own research. These courses included Human Resource Management, Intercultural Management and Leadership in Contemporary World, Business Environment, Business Ethics, International Business, Strategic Management, and Operations Management. Student writers constituted a diverse group with regards to gender, institutional belonging and cultural and linguistic background and were enrolled in graduate management study programmes conducted in both public and private universities in Poland. They were holders of Business English Certificate Higher, Certificate in Advanced English (CAE), Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE), International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or IELTS Academic test (with scores of 7, 8, and 9), BEC Higher, or university placement test scores at C1-C2 level according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*.

We collected 100 research papers with the average text length of 3174,16 words/word tokens per each research paper. The collected corpus enabled

us to scrutinise how novice management writers convey their voice textually in their research papers. We considered our novice corpus in a way similar to Yoon and Römer's (2020) automated approach employed to quantitatively analyse disciplinary voices in 829 upper-level student papers from 16 academic disciplines. The findings from their research brought to light notable differences in the patterns of interactional metadiscourse use based on Hyland's (2008a) dimensions of stance and engagement both across and within academic divisions. This points to the need for studies, like the current one, which focus on increasing the discursive awareness of students and practitioners and developing their knowledge of how to skilfully create interaction in written academic discourse.

3.4. Methods and tools

In the current study, we integrated Lehman's (2018) conceptualisation of writer identity as a trichotomy of selves (textually conveyed in three types of voice) with Hyland's (2008) framework incorporating interactive and interpersonal metadiscourse markers as linguistic representations of voice (see Table 1).

The research sought to answer research question:

Is there a difference in the way experts and novices construct their authorial identities (textually conveyed in 'voice')?

We conducted an analysis of the differences in the frequency of metadiscourse markers that signal writer 'stance' and reader 'engagement', and which correspond to the descriptors for the textual realisations of Lehman's three voice types: individual – 'I' voice, collective – 'C' voice and depersonalised – 'D' voice (see Table 1). The comparative aspect of our analysis focused on the areas of differences and similarities in the use of these features by experts and novices in the field of management.

In accordance with Hyland (1998), we excluded the following parts of articles published in the journals: references, appendices, notes and abstracts. Typically, in linguistic analysis abstracts are treated as a compact summary irrespective of the main body of a research article. Subsequently, we counted the metadiscourse markers (voice features) through the Wordlist tool of AntConc (version 3.5.8), ensuring manually the appropriateness of the function of the analysed words. After generating the concordance lists, we scrutinised each instance of voice features in each concordance line. In this way, all the data

obtained was examined and the non-relevant tokens were dismissed. Next, we divided the number of the relevant tokens representing metadiscourse markers by the number of all tokens in the corpus (see Table 2).

<i>Total word tokens</i>		1058055 (103 experts' texts)		317416 (100 novices' texts)	
Voice dimension	Metadiscourse markers	Number of metadiscourse markers	Percent (%) of total number of word tokens	Number of metadiscourse markers	Percent (%) of total number of word tokens
Writer stance	boosters	5232	0.49	1570	0.49
	self-mention pronouns	6003	0.57	2001	0.63
	self-citations	908	0.08	0	0.00
	attitude markers	20934	1.98	1280	0.40
Reader engagement	hedges	22098	2.09	1690	0.53
	reader pronouns	442	0.04	2833	0.89
	directives	2804	0.26	2410	0.75
	references to shared knowledge	51	0.004	150	0.04
	rhetorical questions	248	0.023	200	0.06

Table 2. Number of voice features per total number of word tokens in the two corpora.

Finally, we calculated the percentage of metadiscourse features in the total number of metadiscourse resources and then established the frequency with which metadiscourse features correspond to each voice dimension (see Table 3).

Total number of metadiscourse markers					
		in experts' texts = 58720		in novices' texts = 12134	
Voice dimension	Metadiscourse markers	Number of metadiscourse markers	Percent (%) of total metadiscourse markers	Number of metadiscourse markers	Percent (%) of total metadiscourse markers
Writer stance	boosters	5232	8.91	1570	13
	self-mention pronouns	6003	10.2	2001	16.4
	self-citations	908	1.55	0	0
	attitude markers	20934	35.7	1280	10.6
	Total	33077	56.4	4851	40
Reader engagement	hedges	22098	37.6	1690	13.9
	reader pronouns	442	0.75	2833	23.3
	directives	2804	4.78	2410	19.9
	references to shared knowledge	51	0.09	150	1.24
	rhetorical questions	248	0.42	200	1.65
	Total	25643	43.6	7283	60
Together		58720	100	12134	100

Table 3. Percentage of metadiscourse features in the two corpora.

Pursuing to answer the study’s research question, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: A higher percentage (proportion) of *boosters* is used by novices than by experts.

H2: A higher percentage (proportion) of *self-mention pronouns* is used by novices than by experts.

H3: A higher percentage (proportion) of *self-citations* is used by experts than by novices.

H4: A higher percentage (proportion) of *attitude markers* is used by experts than by novices.

H5: A higher percentage (proportion) of *hedges* is used by experts than by novices.

H6: A higher percentage (proportion) of *reader pronouns* is used by novices than by experts.

H7: A higher percentage (proportion) of *directives* is used by novices than by experts.

H8: A higher percentage (proportion) of *references to shared knowledge* is used by novices than by experts.

H9: A higher percentage (proportion) of *rhetorical questions* is used by novices than by experts.

As is orthodoxy, inferences were made about relevant populations using the sample data. The above hypotheses were tested using a one-tailed t-test protocol adapted for use with a sampling distribution comprising proportions for each of the nine metadiscourse markers identified in the hypotheses.

4. Findings

The total word count in both corpora indicated the prevalence of the rhetorical option of ‘stance’ over that of ‘engagement’ in the expert corpus and the dominance of ‘engagement’ markers in the novice corpus. When the two corpora were compared against each other, the same categories of metadiscourse markers revealed statistically significant differences in occurrence (see Table 4).

$n_1 = 58720$	$n_2 = 12134$
Total number of metadiscourse markers in the research articles written by experts	Total number of metadiscourse markers in the research papers written by novices

Metadiscourse markers	Number of metadiscourse markers in experts' texts	Number of metadiscourse markers in novices' texts	Sample proportion for experts	percent	Sample proportion for novices	percent	sample difference	Hypothesis (for one tailed test)	Test Statistic	Result
	m_1	m_2	$\hat{p}_1 = \frac{m_1}{n_1}$	%	$\hat{p}_2 = \frac{m_2}{n_2}$	%	$\hat{p}_1 - \hat{p}_2$	H_1	$\frac{\hat{p}_1 - \hat{p}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{\hat{p} \cdot \hat{q}}{n}}}$	
boosters	5232	1570	0.00494492	0.494492	0.00494619	0.494619	-1.268E-06	$p_1 < p_2$	-0.0089317	insignificant
self-mention pronouns	6003	2001	0.00567362	0.567362	0.00630403	0.630403	-0.00063041	$p_1 < p_2$	-4.09549794	significant
self-citations	908	0	0.00085818	0.085818	0	0	0.000858178	$p_1 > p_2$	16.50998216	significant
attitude markers	20934	1280	0.01978536	1.978536	0.00403256	0.403256	0.015752798	$p_1 > p_2$	61.75162996	significant
hedges	22098	1690	0.02088549	2.088549	0.00532424	0.532424	0.015561249	$p_1 > p_2$	58.982384	significant
reader pronouns	442	2833	0.00041775	0.041775	0.0089252	0.89252	-0.00850745	$p_1 < p_2$	-86.2541183	significant
directives	2804	2410	0.00265015	0.265015	0.00759256	0.759256	-0.00494241	$p_1 < p_2$	-39.7417378	significant
references to shared knowledge	51	150	4.8202E-05	4.82E-03	0.00047257	0.047257	-0.00042436	$p_1 < p_2$	-17.3476677	significant
rhetorical questions	248	200	0.00023439	0.023439	0.00063009	0.063009	-0.0003957	$p_1 < p_2$	-10.8358127	significant

Table 4. Comparison of proportions of metadiscourse markers per total number of word tokens between the two corpora.

The following data illustrates the differences which are summarised below:

- a) the percentage of the use of ‘stance’ items by experts (group 1) is 56.4% and by novices (group 2) is 40%, while the use of ‘engagement’ items is lower in the group 1 and equates 43.6% and as high as 60% for the group 2 (see Table 3);
- b) novices use a higher proportion of *self-mention pronouns*, *reader pronouns*, *directives*, *references to shared knowledge* and *rhetorical questions* in research articles than experts (see Table 4);
- c) experts use a higher proportion of *self-citations*, *attitude markers* and *hedges* in research articles than novices (see Table 4);
- d) the differences between the proportions of *boosters* used by experts and novices are insignificant.

5. Discussion

Our major findings are twofold: (1) the prevailing tendency in the textual self-representation of experts is to portray themselves as self-assured and confident commentators on the propositional content of the text, adopting an authoritarian (reader exclusive) writer stance encoded in 'I' voice. In contrast, (2) the novices demonstrate a preference for the use of communitarian (reader-inclusive) 'C' voice. The first finding supports Hyland's observation that sciences usually produce texts which do not consider the reader (2005, p. 144) whereas the latter confirms the results of Lehman and Sułkowski's previous study (2021) into representations of voice in English essays written by English as an Additional Language (EAL) students of business that novice authors tend to write 'with the reader in mind'.

Due to juxtaposing the specific metadiscourse markers that were found dominant in the previous and the present study (see Table 5), we can see that novices marked their authorial presence by assuming reader-inclusive positions mainly through the employment of reader pronouns, directives and hedges.

Previous study		Current study	
Metadiscourse markers	Explanation	Metadiscourse markers	Explanation
Plural self-mentions	the use 1 st person plural and 2 nd person singular and plural pronouns, and possessives to include the potential point of view of the reader <i>you, your, yours, we, us, our, ours;</i>	Reader pronouns	the use 1 st person plural and 2 nd person singular and plural pronouns, and possessives to include the potential point of view of the reader. <i>you, your, yours, we, us, our, ours;</i>
Frame markers	express structural relations within the text; often indicating sequences and stages in order to guide the reader in the process of reading and understanding the writer's intention <i>first/second/third, finally, to conclude</i>	Directives	the use of cohesive devices imperatives, obligation modals, or other phrases that direct readers to certain information that is presented elsewhere and instruct them how to interpret the author's claims <i>first, second, finally</i>
Reader engagement markers	make explicit appeals to the reader <i>consider, note that, you can see, you will agree that</i>		<i>consider, note that, you can see, you will agree that</i>
Transition markers	express semantic relations between clauses that signal additive, comparative, consequential and illustrative relations. Addition: <i>and, moreover, as well as</i> Comparison: <i>similarly, alike, equally</i> Consequence: <i>as a result, therefore</i> Exemplification: <i>as an illustration, such as, for example</i>		<i>and, moreover, as well as, as similarly, alike, equally as a result, therefore as an illustration, such as, for example</i>
Hedges	reduce force of statement, make statements indefinite and decrease responsibility for the claims made Modal verbs: <i>might, may, could, can</i> Adverbs of time: <i>usually, sometimes</i> Adverbials of probability: <i>maybe, possibly, perhaps</i>	Hedges	allow the writers to distance themselves from the claims being made allowing the readers the space to dispute or critically interpret what is being presented <i>might, may, could, usually, sometimes, maybe, possibly, perhaps</i>

Table 5. Comparative description of dominant metadiscourse markers found in the previous Lehman and Sułkowski's (2021) study and in the current study.

This is in contrast to the expert writers' self-representations analysed in current research which shows that the *sine qua non* for scholarly writing in management seems to be the adoption of a strong and often authoritarian writer stance. Among the 'stance' features, the most commonly employed by experts were attitude markers which can be illustrated by the following example:

- (1) attitude markers: "... there are likely other *unique* dynamics that occur when considering co-creation ..."; "... work-family practices are *effective* in the recruitment and retention of employees ..."

Attitude markers explicitly convey the writer's attitude to what is being stated, and in this, the author invests their *persona* and credibility in the veracity and validity of these claims. The expression of the writer's attitude also serves to develop an interaction with the reader and in so doing, to make the text's whole argumentation more difficult to dispute.

Another metadiscourse feature that marks strong authorial presence in the corpus of experts' articles are self-mention pronouns. They convey authorial assertiveness and confidence in the truth of the claims made. Our analysis showed that this was mainly done by writers outlining the novelty of their research and contribution to their fields as illustrated by these examples:

- (2) authorial self-mention pronouns: "*I* address this shortcoming by showing that firms use"; "The answer, *we* anticipate, is that there is a strong implicit consensus about the essence of the field"; "*I* develop broader, more comprehensive theory regarding their unintended consequences".

Other research (e.g., Myers, 1989; Hyland, 2005) also confirms this finding by indicating that the use of self-mention pronouns shows substantial differences between discourse communities and is much higher in soft fields, including management, where writers take apparent personal responsibility for their claims.

In contrast to the findings from previous studies in other soft sciences (e.g. Hyland, 2005), our study shows that boosters (see the example below), which seek to suppress alternative opinions to the propositional content of the text, are not very commonly used to report scholarly work in management.

- (3) boosters: "... which *clearly* was not our purpose"; "... the present results *demonstrate* that advancing understanding of ..."

We interpret this finding as not going against the principal findings but rather that research articles in management, as a genre of discourse, may present their results in a less abrasive way.

Importantly, our research revealed that although expert writers tend to communicate their research in a self-assured way, at the same time, they employ hedging devices out of deference to their peers as presented in this example:

- (4) hedges: "... it is far more difficult, or *possibly* even ineffective, for foreign MNEs to build up..."; "Although equitable distribution *might* be more fair in many settings..."; "...underdog expectations *could* be perceived as more credible if observers demonstrate competence and trustworthiness in the domain ...".

As mentioned before, in Lehman's conceptualisation hedges are indicative of 'C' voice and form part of the concept of 'engagement'. They are used to highlight the subjectivity of a proposition often by demonstrating its contingency on other aspects of the argument. In this way, the writer is demonstrating that the claim is open to negotiation and that their commitment to that claim is reduced, or at the very least distanced (Myers, 1991; Hyland, 1998). This finding also confirms Hyland's claim that in humanities and social sciences hedges are particularly strongly represented.

One interesting feature which we feel deserves further attention is the rather low count of references to shared knowledge in both corpora (51 items and 0.09% of total metadiscourse markers in group 1 texts and 150 items and 0.04% of total metadiscourse markers in group 2 texts). Knowledge claims in the field of management are typically presented in two ways, namely, (1) through the experiences of individuals and organisations, and usually presented in narrative or case studies, and (2) through abstract theorising of management issues. However, neither sub-genre involves the solicitation and engagement of the reader's shared beliefs and knowledge to substantiate the claims made. Although this perspective stays outside the purpose of the current enquiry, we find that this is a promising area for future research.

The results of the voice analysis in research articles produced by the novices show that reader consideration was a central aspect of their authorial self-representations which was textually marked by a more frequent use, in comparison to group 1, of five interpersonal metadiscourse features organised below in order of importance.

- (1) reader pronouns: “It is understandable that you can only gain experience by working (...)”; (...) “we should know more about the specifications of the company, and the position that we need an employee for”; “When you answer these questions, your customer...”;
- (2) directives: “Secondly, technology is widely used in gaming industry ...”; Third of all, laws covering the preservation of genetic data...”;
- (3) rhetorical questions: “How can needs of customers be fulfilled in the e-commerce sector?”; ... “...but can it lead to further development?”;
- (4) references to shared knowledge: “As we know, the examination of business environment gives us an opportunity to ...”; “We all know that this sector is”.

An interesting observation was a higher use of boosters and a lower use of hedges when compared to group 1. We interpret this result as the novices’ desire to present their ideas and arguments enthusiastically but deferentially, rather than assertively and confidently.

- (5) Boosters: Certainly, this does not mean that our investment in coaching will always bear fruit” “...it is obvious that their privacy statement will change...” “...and this proves that such procedures need to be regulated by law”; “...evidently, employees will seek assistance...”.

This interpretation contrasts Hyland’s (2008b) explanation of the high proportion of engagement markers in his research on clusters in published and postgraduate writing. Hyland does not view the high proportion of engagement markers in such a positive light noting that while engagement markers guide the readers’ understanding and pull them along with the argument (‘C’ and ‘D’ voice), at the same time, they represent a reluctance on the part of the novice writer to adopt a more intrusive personal voice (‘I’ voice) (see Hyland, 2008b). However, Hyland’s follow-up interviews with the students’ professors revealed that the deployment of more ‘I’ voice resources in students’ work was a wish of their professors not the students themselves, who, we believe, had different reasons for not activating a self-assured writing style in their texts. Herein lies the tension between expert and novice writing.

The most revealing interpretation of this study’s findings is the novice writers’ preference for establishing a communication with readers based on the ideas of equality, commonality and a desire to help the reader comprehend the text. As Darwin and Norton rightfully point out, “students

do not just reproduce or internalize discursive practices, but exercise agency through resistance, innovation, and self-determination” (2019, p. 179). This implies an awareness that the writer has different identity options to choose from. For example, they may decide to use less privileged patterns of textual self-representation, which consider readers’ needs and expectations, and which may work as “a drop that wears away a stone”.

If we accept that writer identity is socially co-constructed in discourse, then the opportunities and constraints that dictate how authors mark their presence in the text are influenced by the perceived relations of power that exist between the writer and the reader. When the writer assumes more power than the reader, they adopt a self-assured and assertive way of presenting disciplinary knowledge and beliefs, and this is indicative of I-voice. In Table 1, which shows textual realisations of three types of voice, this type of reader-writer interaction is captured in the ‘stance’ dimension. When the writer employs ‘C’ voice, they recognise the role the reader plays in processing the meaning the writer intends to convey in the text. In this case, metadiscourse serves the function of a strategy of accommodation through which the writer actively seeks approval for their claims while being aware of the possibility of the reader holding diverse views. If the writer focuses on the accommodation of the rhetorical and lexical rules sanctioned in the shared discourse community and effaces their authorial presence, this is captured in ‘D’ voice. Consequently, both ‘C’ and ‘D’ voices are indicative of the ‘engagement’ dimension.

With the present study, we offer a new path of investigating the conditions within which publications in management set up multiple subject-positions for their writers. More specifically, the analysis of metadiscourse markers makes it possible to examine clearly how writers and readers negotiate interactional meanings in a text and how their conscious use allows writers to effectively control their authorial self-representations (e.g. Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Morton & Storch, 2019). The important finding of this research is that novices intuitively tend to establish the relationship of equality and commonality with their readers and this potential, we argue, should not be suppressed but developed and reinforced. This new investigative avenue has important pedagogical implications enabling us to work towards the development of more effective writing instruction to assist teachers in introducing students of management to the linguistic choices available to them in the conscious creation of their writer identity and reader-sensitive academic texts.

6. Future research

Although this research has only been an issue-raising study, it revealed differences in textual self-representations of experienced and novice writers on management issues. It has opened up new avenues for future research which include discursual analysis of writer identity construction. Further research into managerial written discourse should be carried out to better understand the genre-specific features of these texts. Specifically, we need studies into the contextual circumstances under which one voice type assumes dominance in authorial self-representation, with specific attention given to the presence, or otherwise, of a reader-embracing discourse. Undoubtedly, a detailed analysis of the socio-rhetorical contexts in which specific aspects of writers' voice are employed is particularly relevant for novice academics and EAL writers in the field who experience the sense of "disempowerment (...) in global business contexts where English is increasingly used as a *lingua franca*" (Takino, 2020, p. 517).

7. Conclusion

Since the field of management lacks discursive research based on empirical evidence and frameworks into the individual and social factors which influence scholarly writing, this study is an important contribution to fill this void. The creation of a credible writer identity involves the activation of authorial voice formed from the conscious and skillful use of available linguistic resources. This enables writers to mediate not only the contexts within which they write but also "to construe the characteristic structures of knowledge domains and argument forms of the disciplines that create them" (Hyland, 2016b, p. 13).

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NOTES

¹ *Patterns of privileging* is the idea introduced by Wertsch who argues that “Privileging refers to the fact that one mediational means, such as a social language, is viewed as being more appropriate and efficacious than others in a particular sociocultural setting” (1991, p. 124).

² *Textual identity* has been referred to by Tardy (2012b: 65) as the way in which voice (as self-representation) is constructed through text.

³ Tardy's (2012a) conceptualisation of *voice* encompasses three dimensions: the individual (representation of self in or behind the words), the social (disciplinary aspects, social groups, and the context), and the dialogic or interactional (co-construction of voice, including the interpretation of the reader) (Fortanet-Gómez, 2014: 229).