

Authorial Presence in Applied Linguistics Journals: A Comparative Study of self-mention in Iranian and International Publications

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Research Paper

IJEAP- 2309-2000

Received: 2023-09-27

Accepted: 2023-12-03

Published: 2023-12-22

Abstract: Self-mention markers are important in academic writing to establish the author's presence, but using them inappropriately can violate writing conventions and compromise professionalism. This study investigates the use of self-mention markers in Iranian and international applied linguistics journals. The analysis was conducted on a total of 225 research articles published from 2015 to 2018, including 125 international and 100 Iranian articles. The study found that self-mention markers were used more frequently in international journals, with 'I' being the most frequently-used self-mention marker. In contrast, Iranian journals used self-mention markers less frequently, with 'we' being the most-frequently used self-mention marker. The most common function of authorial presence in both contexts was 'explaining a procedure', though this occurred more in international journals. 'Stating results/claims' was the second most frequent function in both contexts as well, with similar frequencies. The least common function was 'expressing self-benefits'. Iranian researchers also used authorial presence to state goals/purposes and elaborate arguments less frequently than international authors, but used it more to explain procedures. The study has implications for observing academic writing conventions and expectations of knowledge construction in the humanities. It underscores the importance of recognizing diverse academic traditions in different cultural and linguistic contexts.

Keywords: Academic Writing, Author Presence, International Applied Linguistic Journals, Iranian Applied Linguistic Journals, Self-Mention

Introduction

The process of academic writing entails a dynamic exchange between the writer and the intended readership (Çandarlı et al., 2015). Meta-discourse, which utilizes self-reflective language to establish mutual communication, is a crucial component of the process of professional writing (Hyland, 2005a; Hyland & Tse, 2004). According to Hyland (2017), meta-discourse refers to the writer or speaker's use of language to direct the reader or listener through a piece of text. This aids in the structure of the text and serves to convey the writer's stance on both the subject matter and the intended audience. One critical aspect of meta-discourse is self-mention, which refers to the ways authors refer to themselves in their own published work, such as using the pronouns 'I' or 'we' or referring to their previous research (Hyland, 2002; Walková, 2019).

Self-mention is closely linked to authorial presence, as its use can establish the writer's credibility, voice, and perspective on the topic, while also connecting them directly with the reader. While excessive self-promotion or egocentrism should be avoided, using self-mention for direct self-

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reference can help establish the writer's expertise and authority on the topic (Hyland, 2002; Walková, 2019)

Despite the considerable literature on authorial presence and self-mention (e.g. Hyland, 2001, 2002; Lafuente Millán, 2010; Martínez, 2005; McGrath, 2016; Vassileva, 1997; Walková, 2019), a gap remains in our understanding of how Iranian researchers establish themselves in their writing. The objective of our research is to fill this void by carrying out a comparative examination of self-mentions used by writers in Iranian and international applied linguistics journals as they write the conclusion sections of their papers. Accordingly, the focus of the study is to find similarities and differences, as well as possible conventions and ways in which Iranian researchers may adhere to or deviate from those conventions when establishing themselves in their writing. By understanding the conventions and styles of using self-mention markers, writers can improve the quality and effectiveness of their writing, increasing their chances of being published in international journals. Additionally, our study can provide valuable insights for EAP instructors on how to support novice writers in developing their authorial voice and establishing credibility in their writing through the appropriate use of self-mention.

Applied linguistics journals were chosen for this study as they represent a field where concepts of authorial presence, self-reference, and writer-reader relations are critically important (Swales & Feak, 2012). As applied linguistics aims to apply theoretical linguistic concepts to real-world contexts, establishing credibility and expertise through authorial presence is essential for applied linguistics scholars (Lillis & Curry, 2010). Iranian applied linguistics journals were included in the comparative analysis because little is known about authorial practices and self-mention conventions among Iranian academic writers. As the norms and expectations of knowledge construction may differ across cultural and educational traditions, comparing Iranian articles to international publications can provide insights into whether Iranian writers adhere to global academic writing conventions or exhibit characteristics unique to their context. Establishing both the universality and diversity of scholarly writing practices has implications for international collaboration and publishing. The conclusion section of research articles was selected for analysis because authorial presence and self-mention occur throughout scholarly texts to achieve different rhetorical aims. While conclusions are imperative for summarizing findings and contributions and implications, well-written conclusions help establish expertise, guide readers, and construct knowledge collaboratively (Swales & Feak, 2012). Examining self-mentions across various sections including conclusions can shed light on the diverse rhetorical functions of authorial presence at different stages of knowledge production.

Literature Review

Self-mention is a crucial rhetorical tool for academic writers to establish credibility and make connections with readers. Used judiciously, first-person pronouns ('I' and 'we') allow authors to take responsibility for their arguments, assert their expertise on a topic, and foster a sense of collaboration (Hyland, 2008; Swales & Feak, 2012). However, overusing self-references risks coming across as egotistical or self-promoting (Bazerman et al., 2005). As Hyland (2002) argues, establishing authority is important in academic writing to effectively persuade readers and gain credibility. One way to do this is through language features that position the author as knowledgeable while also including the reader.

Studies show that self-mentions serve important rhetorical functions. They help construct authorial identity and demonstrate competence (Hyland, 2005; Ivanić and Simpson, 1993). By selectively employing first-person pronouns, writers can situate themselves in relation to prior work and their disciplinary community (Hyland, 2005b; Ivanić, 1998). This allows for a balanced presentation where the author acknowledges others' contributions while still asserting their own perspective on a topic. Overall, judicious use of self-references allows authors to take ownership of their ideas, connect with readers, and enhance the credibility and impact of their arguments.

Cross-cultural studies have revealed variations in how academic writers employ self-mentions and other authorial presence markers across different linguistic and disciplinary contexts. Several comparative analyses have found differences based on cultural background. For example, Granger and

Tyson (1996) detected divergences in self-mentions between business management articles from different cultures. Tang and John (1999) also saw L2 writers using fewer first-person pronouns than L1 writers in essays. Çandarlı et al (2015) similarly observed Turkish learners employing more stance resources in their native language essays versus English ones.

Other research has uncovered disciplinary variations. Molino (2010) discovered authorial references frequencies varied between discourse functions in English and Italian linguistics articles. Corpora analyses by Gillaerts and Van de Velde (2010) and Hyland and Jiang (2016) detected self-mention patterns changing over time, especially in social sciences abstracts. Deng and He (2013) also found discipline-specific differences in stance expression between materials science, applied linguistics and electrical engineering articles. Overall, this research highlights the need for sensitivity to variations in rhetorical practices both between languages and academic fields.

Cultural norms and values impact how authors project their authority through their texts (Lorés-Sanz, 2011). The study compared the frequency of first-person pronoun usage in research articles written by Spanish academics in English (both as L1 and L2) and in Spanish. The findings indicate that the frequency and location of the author's visibility is influenced by disciplinary and linguistic factors. The study concludes that Spanish academics may make informed decisions about modulating their voice when writing in English for international publication in Business Management. Ädel (2022) found that conventions for referring to oneself and one's audience in research articles are not fixed, but allow for individual preferences. In 2011, Abdollahzadeh analyzed the use of interpersonal meta-discourse in articles within the field of applied linguistics, finding that Anglo-American authors used more emphatics and attitude markers than Iranian authors. Dontcheva-Navratilova (2023) found that Czech students writing in English tend to use language that makes them seem less visible and less confident, preferring a humble stance and not following usual patterns of self-mention in their discipline. These studies suggest that cultural and linguistic factors play a role in how authors construct their identity and manage social interaction in academic prose.

Several studies in the Iranian context have explored authorial presence in academic writing. Mirshamsi and Allami (2008) found that native English writers used interactive and interactional metadiscourse markers more frequently than native Persian writers and EFL learners. This disparity could stem from EFL learners' lack of awareness of these devices' rhetorical roles due to little explicit instruction in the Persian context, as well as intercultural differences in conventions between English and Persian writing. EFL learners generally do not receive such explicit instruction, unlike native English writers. Jalilifar (2011) specifically examined hedges and boosters in research article discussion sections published in Iranian and international journals within English Language Teaching and Psychiatry. The study found significant differences in the occurrence, type, and functions of these markers between Persian and English articles. These variations may be attributed to unfamiliarity with English rhetorical conventions.

Taken together, these studies suggest EFL writers could benefit from greater awareness and instruction regarding authorial presence markers. Their underuse of such linguistic features may partially explain the disparities seen between native and non-native English academic writing. Further comparative research analyzing self-mentions by Iranian and international authors could provide additional insights into cross-cultural variation in academic discourse practices.

Studies reviewed above provide valuable insights into the use of authorial markers in academic writing, highlighting the importance of considering these factors when analyzing academic texts. For example, there are differences in the use of self-mention markers in soft and hard science disciplines (Hyland, 2001; Matsuda, 2001). Self-mention serves a variety of functions including establishing authorial presence and perspective, indicating the author's stance, and building rapport with the reader (Hyland, 2008; Ivanić & Simpson, 1993). However, its appropriate use depends on the context, purpose of the writing, and disciplinary norms (Swales & Feak, 2012). The review suggests that self-mention should be used carefully and strategically in academic writing, balancing the need for authorial presence and identity with the need for objectivity and professionalism (Ädel, 2022; Bazerman et al., 2005; Granger & Tyson, 1996; Hyland, 2005b).

While studies have explored authorial presence across many contexts, how Iranian researchers establish themselves in their own writing remains underexplored. We aim to illuminate this gap by comparing self-mentions in Iranian versus international applied linguistics journals. Our contrastive analysis seeks to offer new empirical insights and cultural understanding of academic discourse conventions. Additionally, the study will examine the role that self-mention markers play in establishing authorial presence in academic writing and how this role differs across different sections of academic articles. Finally, the study will consider the implications of the findings for teaching academic writing to Iranian writers and how English for Academic Purposes courses can better prepare these writers to project their authorial presence in English academic texts through the appropriate use of self-mention markers. With its purposes in mind, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

Research Question One: What is the frequency and distribution of self-mention markers, such as first-person pronouns, in the conclusion section of Iranian and international applied linguistics journals?

Research Question Two: What role do self-mention markers play in establishing authorial presence in the conclusion section of Iranian and international applied linguistics journals?

Research Question Three: How do Iranian and international authors differ in their use of self-mention markers in the conclusion section of applied linguistics journals?

Theoretical Framework

Ken Hyland (2002) developed a framework that categorizes the five functions related to the use of self-mention pronouns in academic writing. These functions include explaining a procedure, stating results or claim, elaborating an argument, stating a goal/purpose, and expressing self-benefits. When explaining a procedure, writers can use self-mention pronouns to provide a clear and personal account of the steps involved, building trust with the reader by demonstrating their expertise and experience. Self-mention pronouns can also be used to establish credibility and authority in the field by presenting the results of research or staking a claim. When elaborating an argument, writers can use personal examples or experiences that support their position, building a connection with the reader by demonstrating their personal investment in the topic. Self-mention pronouns can also be used to provide a personal account of what a writer hopes to achieve, building a sense of shared purpose with the reader and emphasizing their personal investment in the project. Finally, self-mention pronouns can be used to highlight both the personal and professional benefits of the writing, emphasizing the writer's individualized engagement with and commitment to the ideas, issues, and content presented in the text. By using Hyland's framework, we analyze and compare the use of self-mention in Iranian and international academic publications. This categorization serves the purpose of understanding how authors from different cultural backgrounds establish their authorial presence and negotiate their stance with readers in academic writing.

Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to comprehensively understand the use and functions of authorial self-mention markers in academic writing. It focuses on researchers who publish their works in Iranian and international journals in the field of applied linguistics (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). The quantitative approach measures the frequency of authorial self-mention markers in Iranian and international corpora, while the qualitative approach analyzes their discourse functions.

The Corpus

The size of the corpus is a major issue as it must contain enough data to represent the information (Sinclair, 2005). While some scholars suggest that an ideal corpus should contain between 500 thousand and around a million words (Biber, 1993; McEnery & Wilson, 2006), others argue that smaller corpora can provide optimum results in specialized areas (Bowker & Pearson, 2002). Ultimately, the suitability of the sample depends on the specific study being undertaken (McEnery & Wilson, 2006). In this study,

the corpora comprise research articles (RAs) in applied linguistics that were published in international and Iranian journals. The corpus consists of a total of 102000 words, with 50,000 words from Iranian journals and 52,000 words from international journals. The analysis was conducted on a total of 225 RAs that were published from 2015 to 2018, including 125 international RAs and 100 Iranian RAs.

For the selection of international RAs, we chose the top five applied linguistics journals with the highest impact factor scores: Applied Linguistics Journal, TESOL Quarterly, Journal of Language Learning, Modern Language Journal, and Language Teaching Research. As for Iranian RAs, we selected articles from five prestigious Iranian journals: Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, Issues in Language Teaching Journals, Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics, Applied Research on English Language, and Journal of Teaching Language Skills. The selected RAs must include a conclusion section that can be identified by typographical features such as heading labels and conventional headings such as 'Conclusion'. Hybrid headings, such as 'Discussion and Conclusion', were excluded from the analysis because they serve different communicative functions, as noted by Lin and Evans (2012).

Table 1

International and Iranian Journals in Applied Linguistics

Corpus	International journals	Iranian journals
Journals	1. Applied Linguistics Journal 2. TESOL Quarterly 3. Journal of Language Learning 4. Modern Language Journal 5. Language Teaching Research	1. Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research 2. Issues in Language Teaching Journals 3. Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics 4. Applied Research on English Language 5. Journal of Teaching Language Skills
Year	2015-18	2015-17
Text Type	RAs	RAs
No. of texts	125	100
Total words	52348	51856

Instruments

In this study, the instrument used to analyze the data was the computer program AntConc 3.5.9, which is specifically designed for text analysis. The software was used to identify authorial self-mention markers, including their frequencies, the number of texts in which they appeared, and their context of use (Anthony, 2006). AntConc 3.5.9 is an advanced text analysis software that provides a range of tools, including concordance, file viewer, and a cluster tool, which allowed for the display of results in various formats. The use of this software facilitated a comprehensive analysis of authorial presence in applied linguistics journals, and enabled a comparative study of self-mention in Iranian and international publications.

Procedures

To investigate differences in authorial presence, specifically self-mention, in academic writing by researchers who publish their works in Iranian and international journals in the field of applied linguistics, we followed several procedures. Firstly, we downloaded research articles from two sets of high-impact journals, Iranian and international, for the period of 2015-2018. Next, we converted the RAs into plain text format and removed nonessential elements, such as headers, footers, diagrams, images, captions, references, paragraph breaks, and columnar layouts, to ensure accurate data processing. We then used AntConc 3.5.9 software to perform an analysis of the frequency and distribution of personal pronouns used in academic articles by Iranian and international researchers. To normalize the data, we employed the formula used by Biber and Barbieri (2007) to determine the distribution threshold. This means that a personal pronoun was considered an authorial self-mention marker only if it occurred in three or more texts in a corpus of 50,000 to 100,000 words. After

determining the frequency and distribution of authorial self-mention markers, we used thematic analysis to examine the functions of these markers used by Iranian and international researchers in applied linguistics. To ensure inter-coder reliability, multiple coders were involved in each step of the analysis. Finally, we reported the results of the analysis in accordance with relevant ethical guidelines while maintaining confidentiality and anonymity in the reporting of the results.

Data Analysis

This study uses a quantitative approach to measure the frequency of authorial self-mention markers in Iranian and international corpora, and a qualitative approach to analyze their discourse functions in two groups of the journals. The study utilized Hyland's (2002) framework to examine the discourse functions and frequency of authorial self-mention markers in two corpora. To conduct the frequency analysis, the conclusion sections of the articles were searched for first-person singular and plural pronouns and their derivatives (e.g., I, me, my, we, us, our), as well as the terms 'Author,' 'Writer,' and 'Researcher' using AntConc. In addition to the frequency analysis, a qualitative investigation of the discourse functions of the markers was also conducted. To ensure that all cases were exclusive first person uses, they were checked one by one in context.

To investigate the discourse functions of self-mention markers, the occurrences of authorial self-mention markers were examined one by one in context to determine their pragmatic function based on Hyland's (2002) categorization. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, the involvement of multiple coders, reflexivity, and transparent reporting of methods and analyses all contributed to the validity of the findings.

Results

The study found differences in the use of authorial self-mention markers in academic writing between Iranian and international journals in applied linguistics. Personal pronouns were used more frequently in international journals. Iranian researchers used self-mention markers less frequently than their counterparts in international journals, reflecting cultural and linguistic differences. However, the specific context and audience of each journal should be considered when interpreting the results. These differences may reflect variations in academic writing conventions. For a comprehensive report of the findings, please see below.

Authorial Self-Mention Marker Frequency and Range

The research compared the frequency and range of authorial self-mention markers in Iranian and international journals in applied linguistics. The self-mention markers that were analyzed include 'I', 'my', 'me', 'we', 'our', 'us', 'researcher', 'writer', and 'author'. The findings of the research indicate that a notable difference exists in the frequency and range of self-mention markers used in Iranian and international journals. Iranian journals use authorial self-mention markers less frequently than international journals. The self-mention marker used most frequently in international journals is 'I' (82.94%), followed by 'my' (10%) and 'me' (2%). In contrast, the self-mention marker that was found to be used most frequently in Iranian journals is 'we' (45.26%), followed by 'researcher' (36.54%) and 'our' (14.58%). In terms of the range of self-mention markers used, the results show that international journals use a wider range of self-mention markers than Iranian journals. International journals use all nine self-mention markers that were analyzed, while Iranian journals only use six. 'Writer' and 'author' were not used in Iranian journals.

Table 2

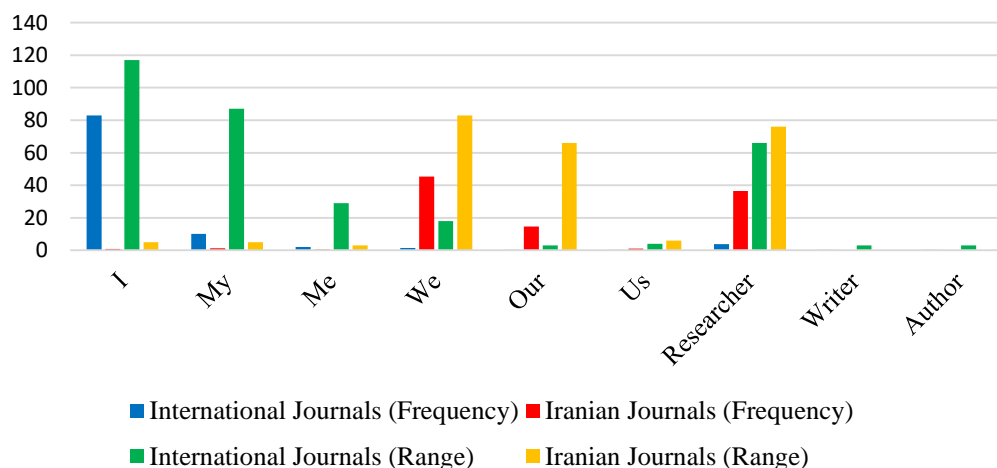
Comparison of Authorial Self-Mention Markers in Iranian and International Journals

Authorial Self-mention Markers	International journals		Iranian journals	
	Frequency	Range	Frequency	Range
I	1530 (82.94 %)	117	6 (0.9 %)	5
My	187 (10 %)	87	8 (1.2 %)	5
Me	38 (2 %)	29	3 (0.45 %)	3
We	25 (1.33 %)	18	301 (45.26 %)	83
Our	4 (0.21 %)	3	97 (14.58 %)	66
Us	5 (0.26 %)	4	7 (1 %)	6
Researcher	72 (3.85 %)	66	243 (36.54 %)	76
Writer	3 (0.16 %)	3	-	-
Author	3 (0.16 %)	3	-	-
Total	1867		665	

Note: the 'Range' column is referring to the span or dispersion of the different journals that a particular self-mention marker appeared in. For example, for the marker 'I' in international journals, 'I' appeared a total of 1530 times, across 117 different international journals included in the sample.

One interesting aspect of the findings is the marked difference in the utilization of the first-person singular pronoun 'I' between Iranian and international journals. The results show that 'I' is used in 82.94% of international journal articles, compared to only 0.9% of Iranian journal articles. This finding suggests that international authors had a tendency to utilize a more personal and subjective writing style, while Iranian authors have a tendency to utilize a more objective and impersonal writing style. Furthermore, the results suggest that the usage of first-person plural pronoun 'we' is more common in the writing style of Iranian authors. 'We' is used in 45.26% of Iranian journal articles, compared to only 1.33% of international journal articles. This finding suggests that Iranian authors tend to emphasize the collective nature of their work and highlight their collaboration with others. The results also show that Iranian authors tend to use the authorial self-mention marker 'researcher' more frequently than international authors. 'Researcher' is used in 36.54% of Iranian journal articles, compared to only 3.85% of international journal articles. This finding suggests that Iranian authors tend to underscore their role and contribution to the research process.

Figure 1

A Bar Chart Comparison of Frequency and Range

Discourse Function of Authorial Self-mention Markers

Table 3 compares the frequency and range of different functions of authorial presence in research articles from international and Iranian journals in applied linguistics. The functions analyzed include stating a goal/purpose, explaining a procedure, stating results/claims, expressing self-benefits, and elaborating an argument.

Table 3

Comparison of Authorial Self-Mention Marker Functions in Iranian and International Journals: Frequency and Range

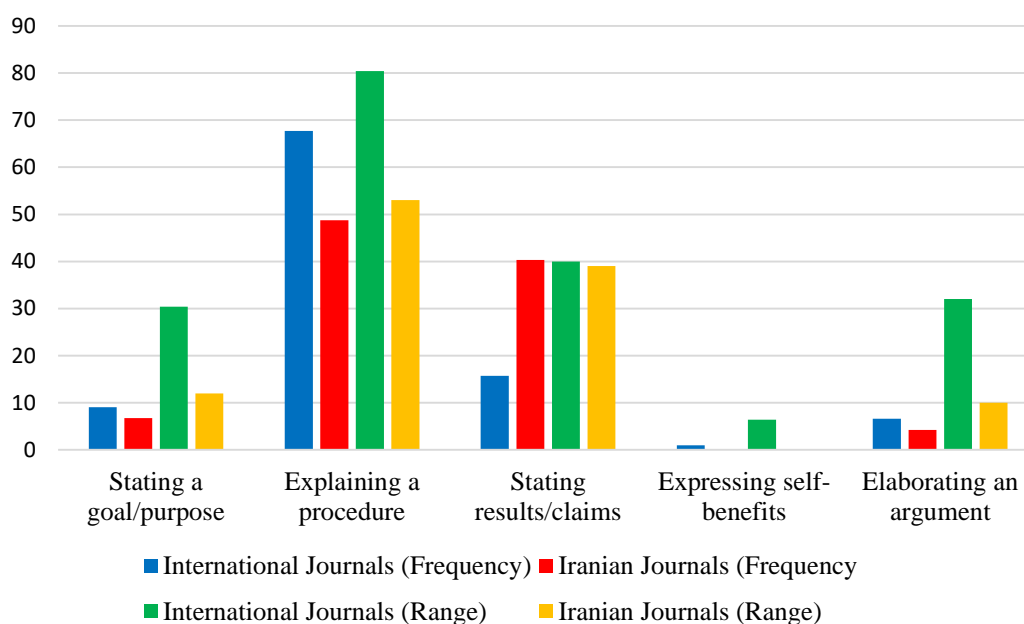
FUNCTION	Iranian Journals		International Journals	
	Frequency	Range	Frequency	Range
Stating a goal/purpose	169 (9.05 %)	38 (30.4%)	45 (6.76 %)	12 (12%)
Explaining a procedure	1264 (67.7 %)	101 (80.4%)	324 (48.72 %)	53 (53%)
Stating results/claims	293 (15.69 %)	50 (40%)	268 (40.30 %)	39 (39%)
Expressing self-benefits	18 (0.96 %)	8 (6.4%)	-	-
Elaborating an argument	123 (6.58 %)	40 (32%)	28 (4.21 %)	10 (10%)
Total	1867		665	

The findings from the study reveal both similarities and distinctions in the functions of self-mentions between academic writing in Iranian and international journals in applied linguistics. Specifically, the results suggest that explaining a procedure was the most frequent function, with a frequency of 1264 in international journals compared to 324 in Iranian journals. Another commonality was that stating results/claims was the second most frequent function, observed at a frequency of 293 in international journals versus 268 in Iranian journals. However, there were differences in the frequencies between journal types for these two shared top functions. On the other hand, expressing self-benefits was the least frequent across the board, appearing at a frequency of 18 in international journals compared to only 8 in Iranian journals, representing an even lower frequency observed in Iranian journals relative to international ones for this uncommon function. In summary, while certain functions were common across journal types, the study revealed variations in the frequency with which authors in each context employed self-mentioning.

The results show that Iranian researchers use authorial presence to state a goal/purpose less frequently than their counterparts in international journals, with a frequency of 45 in Iranian journals compared to 169 in international journals. However, Iranian researchers use authorial presence to explain a procedure more frequently than their counterparts in international journals, with a frequency of 324 in Iranian journals compared to 101 in international journals. In terms of elaborating an argument, Iranian researchers use authorial presence less frequently than their counterparts in international journals, with a frequency of 28 in Iranian journals compared to 123 in international journals.

Figure 2

Comparison of Self-Mention Markers in Iranian and International Academic Journals: Frequency and Range Analysis of Five Functions



Stating a Goal/Claim

Table 2 shows that the function of stating a goal/purpose using authorial self-mention markers was less frequent in both Iranian and international journals compared to explaining a procedure. In international journals, this function accounted for 9.05% of authorial self-mention markers, while in Iranian journals, it accounted for 6.76%. However, it is interesting to note that despite the lower frequency, Iranian journals had a higher range for this function compared to international journals. Iranian authors tended to provide more detailed information when stating the purpose of their research, using multiple self-mention markers to do so. The range for this function was 30.4% in international journals (38 instances) and 45% in Iranian journals (45 instances). The higher range of self-mentions used by Iranian authors to state goals likely reflects an attempt to provide more elaborate details and clarify purposes for readers. In contrast, the original analysis suggested international authors may use self-mentions less frequently yet more concisely to state research purposes. Considering these perspectives together, the data indicates cultural or audience factors may shape the explicitness of articulating aims differently across contexts. A more comprehensive understanding of rhetorical motivations requires qualitative examination, as frequencies alone do not fully explain potential style variations between the academic journals.

The interesting thing about this function is that the range of its use among international journal writers (30.4%) was relatively high due to the overall frequency of this function (9.05% of all self-mention markers). They predominantly used first-person singular pronouns and their derivative forms to express the goal or purpose of their research, while most Iranian journals used the first-person plural pronoun 'We'.

Explaining a Procedure

The findings show that the main function of authorial self-mention markers in both Iranian and international journals is to describe a procedure and methodological approach. This function was also found to be the most common in previous studies such as Hyland (2002), Mur-Dueñas (2007), and Lafuente Millán (2010). The study found that 80.4% of international journal writers employed this function, using 67.7% of the total authorial self-mention markers. In contrast, 53% of Iranian journal writers used this function, accounting for 48.72% of the total authorial self-mention markers.

International journal writers predominantly used the first-person singular pronoun to describe a procedure. In addition to this, they also used the words 'Researcher' and 'Author' in some cases to describe the procedure. In contrast, among Iranian journal writers, 'We' and the word 'Researcher' were the most commonly-used self-mention markers to describe a procedure. Only one Iranian journal writer used the first-person singular pronoun to describe a procedure, as seen in excerpt 1: "I collected the required data by the following instruments."

Stating Results/Claims

The function of 'stating results/claims' using authorial self-mention markers is used to report the findings of a study and to establish the author's credibility and expertise in the field, and choosing the appropriate self-mention marker can help authors achieve this while avoiding potential face-threatening situations (Hyland, 2002).

As Table 3 shows, both Iranian and international authors use this function, but there are differences in the frequency and range of self-mention markers used. Iranian authors tend to use this function more frequently, accounting for 40.30% of authorial self-mention markers in Iranian journals, compared to 15.69% in international journals. The range for this function is also narrower among Iranian authors, with only 'We' and its derivatives and the word 'Researcher' used for this function.

Iranian authors predominantly used the first-person plural pronoun and its derivative forms to report their findings, while international authors used a variety of self-mention markers, including the first-person plural and the words 'We,' 'The present study', and 'This study'. For example, excerpt 2 from an Iranian author reads, "We observed the sessions related to the teaching of the present and simple past and present/past continuous to the students in the traditional group."

Elaborating an Argument

The function of 'elaborating an argument' is used to provide additional support and evidence to strengthen an argument. According to Table 2, there are differences in the frequency and range of self-mention markers used by international and Iranian authors. In international journals, 'elaborating an argument' accounted for 6.58% of authorial self-mention markers, with a range of 40 different self-mention markers used. In Iranian journals, this function accounted for 4.21% of authorial self-mention markers, with a narrower range of only 10 different self-mention markers used. International journal writers also use first-person singular and plural pronouns and their derivative forms to elaborate on their arguments. In contrast, almost all Iranian journal writers rarely use the first-person singular pronoun to elaborate on their arguments and give opinions, instead they tended to use plural pronouns and passive structures to cover the responsibility of the author and elaborate on their arguments.

Expressing Self-Benefits

The function of 'expressing self-benefits' in academic writing involves highlighting the personal benefits or advantages that the author gains from conducting the study or presenting the findings. According to Table 3, this function is used infrequently by both international and Iranian authors. In international journals, 'expressing self-benefits' accounted for only 0.96% of authorial self-mention markers, with a range of 8 different self-mention markers used. However, some international authors

used self-mention markers to express self-benefits. For example, an excerpt from an international author reads, "...it allowed me to estimate the students' level of certainty through..." This excerpt demonstrates how an author can use self-mention markers to express personal benefits gained from conducting the study.

The low frequency of this function may be because of the conventions of academic writing, which prioritize objectivity and impartiality. Authors may avoid expressing self-benefits to maintain their credibility and avoid being perceived as biased. In contrast, Iranian authors did not use self-mention markers to express self-benefits in the articles analyzed in the study. This may be due to cultural and disciplinary norms of academic writing that prioritize modesty and avoiding self-promotion.

Discussion

This study analyzed the use of authorial voice in the conclusion sections of applied linguistics journals. Specifically, it compared the frequency and placement of first-person pronouns and other self-mentions between Iranian and international journals. Additionally, the study sought to examine the role of self-reference in conveying authorial presence within the conclusion portion. Finally, the research aimed to investigate differences in how Iranian and international scholars employ self-mention markers when concluding their articles. Understanding these dynamics could provide cultural insights and support good practices in academic conclusion writing.

The wider range of self-mention markers used in international journals suggests that authors may be more likely to use a variety of self-referential language to convey their ideas and to establish their authorial presence. In contrast, the lower frequency of self-mention markers and narrower range of self-mention markers used in Iranian journals may reflect a cultural preference for avoiding self-promotion and maintaining a more formal tone in academic writing (Lorés-Sanz, 2011).

The marked contrast in the use of the first-person singular pronoun 'I' between Iranian and international journals ('I' appears in 82.94% of international articles, but only 0.9% of Iranian articles) indicates that international writers adopt a more personal and subjective writing style, while Iranian writers favor an objective and impersonal style. In humanities, interpretivist and constructivist approaches emphasize subjectivity and personal interpretation in knowledge construction (Hyland, 2001; Matsuda, 2001). Researchers and writers are encouraged to reflect on their own experiences, perspectives, and biases. International authors are more likely to incorporate their personal experiences and perspectives into their writing. The higher frequency of 'we', even in single-authored RAs, in Iranian journals suggests that authors may be more likely to reduce their personal intrusion. In contrast, the higher frequency of 'I' in international journals suggests that authors may be more likely to highlight their individual contributions to the research and to overtly intervene with authorial self-mention markers, enabling them to write their studies in a much more personal manner. Our findings agree with those of Mur-Dueñas (2007), in that the use of self-mentions in research articles may be determined by the cultural context of the authors (Lorés-Sanz, 2011).

The study found that authorial presence in Iranian and international journals primarily serves to explain procedures and state results/claims, with expressing self-benefits being the least common function in both. This suggests that universal expectations and conventions in academic writing exist which transcends cultures (Hyland, 2002). The high use of self-mention markers in describing procedures and methods may serve to establish an authorial voice, which lends credibility and authority to academic writing.

The study found that Iranian journals had a higher range for the use of authorial self-mention markers to express a goal or purpose. This means that international authors may use self-mention markers less frequently to state the purpose of their research, but when they do, they may use more concise and efficient phrasing. The difference in the use of self-mention markers for 'elaborating an argument' suggests that Iranian authors tend to use plural pronouns and passive structures, while international authors use a wider range of self-mention markers, including first-person singular pronouns. This variation and Iranian authors tendency to use 'We' more frequently to state the purpose

of their research, may be due to cultural differences in academic writing, where some cultures view first-person singular pronouns as too face-threatening (Ädel, 2022; Granger & Tyson, 1996; Tang & John, 1999). However, in certain disciplinary contexts, particularly in the humanities, authors may use first-person singular pronouns to elaborate on their arguments and provide supporting evidence. Our findings support the conclusion that many academic cultures tend to avoid using the first-person pronoun 'I' in research writing, which contrasts with academic English where the use of 'I' is more common (Ädel, 2022).

The difference in the use of self-mention markers for the function of 'expressing self-benefits' may suggest that in Iranian culture, the expression of self-benefits may be perceived as too self-promoting or face-threatening. Therefore, authors may choose to avoid using self-mention markers to express personal benefits gained from conducting the study. The use of self-mention markers may be influenced by various factors, including the research paradigm used. In qualitative research, for example, researchers may use their personal experiences and perspectives to provide context and insight into their findings, making the use of self-mention markers appropriate (Lafuente Millán, 2010). In contrast, in positivist research paradigm (quantitative research), researchers commonly prioritize objectivity and detachment (Mur-Dueñas, 2007). While the difference in the use of self-mention markers between Iranian and international journal writers cannot be solely attributed to their preference for specific research approaches, there may be a correlation between the two.

In humanities and social sciences, where research is often interpretive and constructive, the use of self-mention markers may be more common. Researchers may be a central figure in the research process, and their personal experiences and perspectives may influence the research outcomes. Therefore, the use of self-mention markers may be more common in these fields compared to other disciplines. It is possible that Iranian practitioners may not be familiar enough with the conventions and norms of knowledge construction in humanities, particularly in the context of paradigm change. This finding is in line with Dontcheva-Navratilova's (2023) study, which showed that Czech students tend to use language that makes them seem less visible and less confident, preferring to adopt a humble stance and not following the usual patterns of self-mention in their discipline. Jalilifar (2011) suggests that these differences may be due to Persian writers' lack of awareness of English rhetorical conventions and insufficient explicit instruction and familiarity with the rules of language use in English writing.

Humanities research often involves a critical examination of existing paradigms and the construction of new knowledge that challenges established norms and conventions. This requires a deep understanding of the underlying theoretical frameworks and epistemological assumptions. However, it's important to approach these differences with an open mind and consider multiple factors that may influence authorial presence in academic writing, rather than viewing deviations as a sign of inferiority or inadequacy. Iranian authors may face challenges publishing their work in international journals if they use self-mention markers that differ from those commonly used. To overcome this barrier, Iranian authors can take several steps. First, they can familiarize themselves with the conventions and expectations of academic writing in their field and the international journals they wish to publish (Belcher, 2007; Flowerdew, 2008, Swales, 2004). They can study the writing styles of successful authors in these journals and seek feedback from experienced colleagues and mentors. Second, they can improve their mastery of international academic publishing discourse. Third, they can collaborate with colleagues who have experience publishing in international journals and perform text analysis to learn about the conventions and expectations of academic writing.

Editors, reviewers, and instructors may influence the difference in self-mention markers used by Iranian and international writers. These gatekeepers shape the culture of academic writing and have specific expectations regarding the use of self-mention markers in their cultural and disciplinary contexts (Flowerdew, 2001). Iranian gatekeepers may prefer collective self-mention markers, while international gatekeepers may prioritize first-person singular pronouns.

Conclusions

Our study identified cultural preferences, potential areas of deviation from professional norms, and problematic areas needing instruction. The findings support Atkinson's (2004) idea that the use of self-mentions can be challenging for non-native speakers writing in a different socio-cultural context. Specifically, our study identified problematic areas where authors struggle with the appropriate use of self-mention markers, such as overuse or underuse. Addressing these problematic areas through targeted instruction and feedback can help authors improve their writing practices and adhere to professional norms.

The findings indicated differences in writing styles between international and Iranian authors. International writers adopted a more personal and subjective style, while Iranian writers favored a more objective and impersonal approach. This highlighted the importance of recognizing conventions that vary between fields. Applied linguistics, as a social science, elicits a personal style. These insights are especially relevant for academic writing instructors. Learners who grasp these stylistic conventions can more effectively communicate their ideas to intended audiences. Researchers should also consider how best to present their work based on disciplinary conventions. Those in soft sciences like applied linguistics may be well-served adopting a personalized approach.

Our study adds to the existing literature on academic discourse by examining the use of self-mentions in local and international journals. Previous research, such as Vassileva's (1997) and Hinkel's (1997; 2002), has shown that language, culture, and linguistic background play a role in shaping linguistic preferences in academic writing. Our study contributes to this body of research, along with Çandarlı's (2015) and Hyland's (1998a; 2005b), which emphasize the importance of considering contextual factors when analyzing academic writing.

Our analysis of self-mention markers in the conclusion section of research articles adds to the growing body of research on authorial stance markers in academic writing. Our study builds on the findings of Salager-Meyer (1994) and Gillaerts and Van de Velde (2010), who showed that different sections of research articles serve different communicative functions and rhetorical purposes, resulting in variations in the use of linguistic resources.

Some pedagogical implications can be drawn from the comparison of self-mention markers in academic writing between international and Iranian journals of applied linguistics. One implication is the need to raise awareness of cultural and disciplinary differences in academic writing (Mur-Dueñas, 2007). Instructors can highlight these differences to help students understand their audience's expectations and provide guidance on effective communication. Effective use of self-mention markers can be particularly important in qualitative research, where personal experiences and perspectives may provide context and insight into findings (Swales, 2004).

Another implication is the need to foster reflection in academic writing, especially in the humanities and social sciences where research is often interpretive and constructive (Creswell, 2012). Encouraging students to reflect on their own experiences, perspectives, and biases can help them develop a more personal and subjective writing style (Belcher, 2007).

Learners of academic writing need to involve in activities that provide exposure to different theoretical frameworks and approaches to knowledge construction in the humanities (Creswell, 2012). Authors should recognize and adhere to the conventions and norms of their field when choosing the appropriate self-mention marker. Instructors should provide guidance to students on how to effectively use self-mention markers and communicate effectively (Belcher, 2007; Flowerdew, 2008; Swales 2004). Learners and instructors of academic writing in applied linguistics should strive to engage with the discourse community and community of practice associated with the field (Belcher, 2007; Lillis & Curry, 2010; Swales, 2004; Wenger, 1998). This includes understanding the specific texts and genres that are commonly used, as well as the activities and practices associated with the community. To produce high-quality academic writing, learners should learn the conventions governing both texts and practices in applied linguistics, such as how to structure an argument, cite sources, and use appropriate

language and tone (Candlin & Hyland, 1999; Flowerdew, 2000). Finally, learners should be aware of the communicative needs of their audience, and tailor their writing accordingly (Lillis & Curry, 2010; Swales, 1990).

Self-mention markers can clarify research direction and provide a low-risk writer role, and the use of first-person singular in international journals reflects individualistic tendencies in academic writing. By implementing these pedagogical implications, learners can generate top-notch scholarly writing that aptly conveys their meanings and research findings. In terms of the focus, the study was limited to analyzing the use of self-mention markers in Iranian and international journals of applied linguistics. Therefore, a range of factors should be considered when analyzing the use of self-mention markers in academic writing, including the researchers' personal experiences and perspectives, cultural background, disciplinary conventions, and research approach employed. Future research could address some of these limitations.

Given that the use of self-mention markers in academic writing may be influenced by various factors, including research paradigms, further research could investigate whether there are any differences in the use of self-mention markers between qualitative, mixed-method, and quantitative research paradigms in different academic contexts. For example, a comparative study could be conducted to analyze the use of self-mention markers in academic articles published in journals that prioritize qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

To better understand the influence of culture or research paradigm on the use of self-mention markers in academic writing, further research should include an examination of the mindset of authors. This can provide valuable insights into why some researchers tend to use self-mention markers more frequently than others, and how cultural factors and research paradigms interact to shape the use of self-mention markers.

Furthermore, further research can focus on the role of gatekeepers, such as editors, reviewers, and instructors, in shaping the use of self-mention markers in academic writing. Investigating how gatekeepers from different cultural and disciplinary backgrounds influence the use of self-mention markers can inform the improvement of academic writing instruction for authors from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The study relied on a quantitative analysis of self-mention markers, and did not consider the qualitative aspects of the writing, such as the content and style of the articles. The use of self-mention markers may reflect not only cultural and disciplinary norms, but also the authors' rhetorical strategies and communicative goals. Therefore, future studies could complement the quantitative analysis of self-mention markers with a qualitative analysis of the articles, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the authors' writing practices and motivations.

Acknowledgement

We would like to express our deepest appreciation to all those who have helped us in the completion of this research.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

Funding Details

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article

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