EXPLORING THE CONSTRUCTION OF ACADEMIC AUTHORIAL PRESENCE WITHIN DIVERSE DISCIPLINARY AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS

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Abstract

This study explores how academic authorial presence is constructed across disciplines and cultural contexts, focusing on differences between Arab Academic English Authors (AAEAs) and Academic English Authors (AEAs). Despite previous studies examining authorial roles and self-representation in academic writing, there still is a gap in comparisons between AAEAs and AEAs. This study investigates the authorial roles assumed by AAEAs and AEAs and how these roles intertwine to construct authorial presence. A taxonomy of authorial representation developed by Tang and John (1999) was employed, with further additions of new authorial roles due to the nature of the genre of research articles (RAs). Thus, authorial roles were analyzed in terms of their functional distribution in order to determine how they shape authorial presence. The analysis showed that AEAs had a higher authorial presence than AAEAs across disciplines, with political science exhibiting the most authoritative presence, followed by law and journalism. There was a difference in authorial presence based on cultural background, disciplinary norms, and the argumentative nature of the RA genre, with roles such as recounter of procedures and originator being more prevalent, while claimers and asserters were less prevalent. This study sheds light on the complex interrelationship between culture, discipline, and conventions of academic writing. In this way, we gain a deeper understanding of how authors establish authority and credibility in various academic contexts.

Keywords

academic writing, authorial presence, cultural influences, disciplinary conventions, Arab academic English authors, academic English authors

1 Introduction

Academic writing relies on authorial presence to establish authority, credibility, and expertise, but this presence extends beyond stylistic choices. It is shaped by academic disciplines, cultural norms, and authors' engagement with readers. There are varying expectations for authorial presence within academic communities as they become more diverse and interdisciplinary. Effective communication requires adapting writing styles to meet the demands of rigorous objectivity in the natural sciences, critical reflexivity in the humanities, and practical application in the social sciences. In addition, linguistic conventions and cultural traditions play a significant role in how authors assert their voice, identity, and influence. In this study, authorial presence is examined from a

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multifaceted perspective, emphasizing the interplay between disciplinary norms, cultural values, and sociolinguistic factors.

Ivanič (1998), Tang and John (1999), and Lillis (2003) highlighted how linguistic choices shape academic identity, forming the basis for analyzing authorial roles in this study. Throughout these studies, the functional aspects of authorial presence were highlighted, in addition to the communicative functions that authors performed through self-representation to establish their authority and credibility. These studies also indicate the importance of understanding the author's intent and purpose in their writing. Moreover, they point to the importance of recognizing the author's role in creating meaning through language.

Disciplines differ significantly in self-representation, reflecting their epistemological and rhetorical traditions. The first-person pronoun is frequently used by authors in the humanities to emphasize their role as interpreters, especially in philosophical, historical, and literary disciplines (Hyland, 2002b). Likewise, subjectivity is often integral to qualitative research in the social sciences, such as sociology, anthropology, and education, where authors convey their interpretations and evaluations through self-representation (Hyland, 2001; Fløttum et al., 2006; Starfield & Ravelli, 2006). In contrast, the natural sciences typically favor passive constructions and impersonal language to maintain objectivity and universality. Nevertheless, some subdisciplines, such as environmental science and biomedical research, increasingly emphasize authors' contributions. Similarly, engineering and technology disciplines focus on results and processes instead of self-representation. Self-representation, however, has become more prevalent in areas emphasizing innovation and personal expertise (Martín-Martín, 2003).

Across cultures, authorial presence is shaped by linguistic conventions, cultural norms, and values. In Anglophone academic contexts, self-representation is emphasized, with academic English authors (AEAs) frequently using first-person pronouns to establish authority and emphasize the novelty of their research (Hyland, 2002b). However, it is important to balance self-promotion with humility, as excessive self-representation could lead to an impression of arrogance (Harwood, 2005a). In contrast, East Asian cultures, such as those in China, Japan, and Korea, reflect values of modesty and collectivism, portray themselves in academic writing with a more reserved tone, and discourage overt self-promotion (Hu & Cao, 2011; Yang et al., 2015). Consequently, East Asian scholars often use passive constructions or refer to their work in the third person, with collaboration prioritized over individual achievements (Marginson & Yang, 2022). European academic writing varies, with southern countries like Italy and Spain adopting self-presentation patterns similar to those found in Anglophone countries, while northern countries like Finland and Sweden are more reserved

(Vassileva, 2001). Culture plays a large role in these variations, with South Europeans being more expressive and direct in their authorial presence than northerners.

Cultural values in the Arab world are highly collectivist (Hofstede, 2011), which impacts identity and decision-making. A major value of Arab cultures, according to Hofstede (2011), is collaboration and solidarity among members of the group. Cultures that place a high priority on harmony and group consensus often display a subdued authorial presence. Rather than asserting individual opinions, authors may wish to align themselves with collective norms. The use of first-person pronouns can be avoided by those who adhere to collective norms and emphasize communal knowledge over individual opinions. Authors in individualistic cultures, however, are encouraged to highlight their unique perspectives and contributions. Individualistic Anglophone cultures may emphasize authorial presence by highlighting the author's originality and acknowledgment. Academic communication and authorship are influenced by underlying cultural values that differ between the two cultural contexts.

Research on personal pronouns is often either generalized as part of other discourse features or frequency-based without a functional analysis of self-representation. It would be more useful, however, to examine how these linguistic features contribute to the construction of authorial identity and the overall rhetorical strategy of research articles (RAs). Authorial presence and self-representation in RAs authored by Arab Academic English Authors (AAEAs) are also lacking in the literature. In light of Hofstede's (2011) suggestion that Arabic academic authors may adopt an impersonal authorial presence in order to align with the cultural and academic norms of their communities, it is important to investigate self-representation strategies in both AAEA and AEA RAs.

In contrast to the common misconception that native English-speaking authors are inherently more proficient than non-native English-speaking authors in non-Anglophone countries, AlGhamdi and Alyousef (2022) argued that this dichotomy is a "myth". The present study, therefore, adopts an institutional affiliation-based categorization of authors and moves beyond the traditional native/non-native speaker (NES/NNES) binary. It employs the terms Arab Academic English Authors (AAEAs) to refer to authors working in Arab universities or organizations, and Academic English Authors (AEAs) to denote authors working in Anglophone countries, even if English may not be their first language. A common view is that academic writing proficiency is more influenced by institutional context, disciplinary engagement, and exposure to English academic discourse than just first language. Following AlGhamdi and Alyousef (2022), I investigate how authorial presence varies across different institutional

settings (e.g., Arab vs. Anglophone). This approach allows for investigating how authors negotiate disciplinary discourse through norms and expectations embedded in institutional contexts. An analysis of the functional distribution of authorial roles in the construction of authorial presence is presented in this study. This study addresses the following research questions:

1. What authorial roles do AAEAs and AEAs assume in constructing their presence in English RAs?
2. How do these roles, shaped by disciplinary and cultural backgrounds, intertwine to construct authorial presence?

2 Theoretical framework

This paper examines self-representations through personal pronouns/nouns as linguistic features. Academic authors use self-representations for some purposes —organization, guidance, and acknowledgment. Author pronouns have been classified using several taxonomies (Bernhardt, 1985; Harwood 2003, 2005a, 2005b; Hyland, 2001, 2002b; Ivanič, 1998; Kuo, 1999; Sheldon, 2009; Starfield & Ravelli, 2006; Tang & John, 1999; Tarone et al., 1998; Vassileva, 1998). A pronominal signal analysis was conducted across languages (Molino, 2010; Sheldon, 2009; Vassileva, 1998) and within research articles sections (Harwood, 2005a; Martínez, 2005; Mur-Dueñas, 2007). Ivanič's (1998) seminal works have influenced how academic authors position themselves in the text. There is a continuum of *I* usage, ranging from no *I* use at all to using *I* to describe structured text, research, and cognitive processes (Ivanič, 1998). Pronominal discourse functions in academic writing have also been classified by Tang and John (1999). They developed their framework for first-person pronoun functionality based on the Systemic Functional Linguistics tradition of "creating identities". They proposed an authorial *I* continuum and power degrees embodied in first-person pronouns. Figure 1 shows the roles.

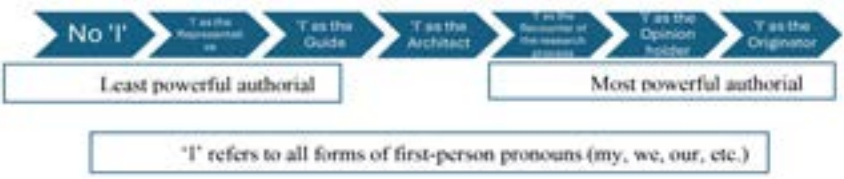


Figure 1: Tang and John's (1999) continuum of authorial presence in academic writing

Tang and Jones (1999) identified and ranked authorial roles based on their authorial power in academic essays. A strong authorial presence reflects both

the ability to control the text and demonstrate specialized knowledge. Their taxonomy ranges from least to most authoritative: (1) the representative, (2) the guide, (3) the architect, (4) the recounter of research procedures, (5) the opinion holder, and (6) the originator. Researchers have adapted Tang and John's (1999) taxonomy to create distinct authorial role categories. Starfield and Ravelli (2006) revised this by removing the "Representative" role and combining the "Guide" and "Architect" roles, making them the least authoritative. They also introduced the "Reflexive" role. Sheldon (2009) further refined this taxonomy, drawing on Ivanič's (1998) typologies and incorporating modifications from Tang and John (1999) and Starfield and Ravelli (2006). Sheldon's contribution was to introduce the concepts of narrativity and reflexivity within the Reflexive role. These taxonomies highlight how authorial presence varies across genres and disciplines.

In this paper, I explore patterns of authorial presence in research articles by AAEAs and AEAs across three disciplines—journalism, law, and political science —focusing on their use of first-person pronouns and author self-references. Based on this analysis, I propose the expansion of Tang and John's (1999) framework by introducing additional authorial roles, positioned between the opinion holder and the originator. These roles, ranked from least to most authoritative, are: advisor, evaluator, claimer, and asserter. The advisor role is characterized by offering suggestions and recommendations based on expertise, with a moderately authoritative presence, higher than the opinion holder but lower than the evaluator. The evaluator critically analyzes research, acknowledging its limitations and uncertainties, which gives their role a moderate to high level of authority, placing it above the advisor's but below the claimer's. Claimers, by contrast, present their findings or arguments with poise and ownership, but they remain open to further discussion and alternative viewpoints. This openness reflects a desire to participate in academic debate, and positions the claimer role as more authoritative than the evaluator but less so than the asserter. Asserters use assertive language to present their claims with confidence and conviction, implying that their conclusions cannot be disputed. This rhetorical stance conveys a higher degree of epistemic authority than that of claimers but lower than the originators. While the roles of claimer and asserter may seem similar, the key difference lies in the authority they project: claimers invite dialogue, while asserters make their claims seem indisputable. The two independent coders who participated in the data analysis addressed potential overlap by relying on contextual and linguistic cues (e.g., modality, stance markers) and discussing ambiguous cases collaboratively. The expanded framework contributes to our understanding of authorial presence in academic writing (Table 1).

	Authorial Role	Definition	Example
Least authoritative	The representative	The author is portrayed as a member of the broader community rather than as a prominent figure.	*The policy decisions that **we** have today reflect many years of strategic planning*. (L.-AAEA10)
	The guide	The author positions the reader in the context of the RA and highlights key landmarks.	*In Figure 5, **we can see** how the estimated effects of access are statistically indistinguishable from zero in 2000.* (J-AAEA12)
	The architect	The author structures the RA content and shapes the narrative.	***Next, I discuss** the factors in relation to government regulations as proposed in our research framework.* (L.-AAEA5)
	The recounter of research procedure	The author describes the stages of research, such as reading source materials, conducting interviews, and collecting data.	*To answer the second research question, **I examined** a larger corpus in the second level of analysis in relation to the Canadian press coverage of Somali Canadians using computational methods*. (J.-AAEA5)
	The opinion holder	The author expresses a personal viewpoint or attitude towards research findings or established facts.	***I think** that voter behavior and public opinion have been significantly influenced by the polarization of political parties.* (P.S.-AEA11)
	The advisor	The authors provide recommendations based on their findings, knowledge, and understanding of a particular research topic.	*Though these trends in television programming do not bode well for immigrant incorporation and participation, **I recommend** that future research continue to assess this vital resource.* (J.-AEA9)
	The evaluator	The author assesses or appraises previous research and makes evaluations based on findings, evidence, or standards.	***I use** a more robust dataset than Smith's (2015) findings, which rely heavily on small, non-representative samples*. (J.-AEA)
	The claimer	The author presents their argument with ownership while remaining open to alternative views.	***I argue** that the single-issue nature of most survey experiments masks systematic variation in elite cue effects across international issues.* (L.-AEA9)
	The asserter	The author presents their claim with strong conviction, signaling certainty and finality.	***I** thus **find strong** support for the notion that reputations can adhere to individual leaders as well as to states.* (P.S.-AEA4)
Most authoritative	The originator	The author claims authority over the content and positions themselves as a key contributor.	***I provide** the first comparative evidence to support the hypothesis, taking a wide variety of confounding.* (P.S.-AEA10)

Table 1: Authorial roles in RAs: Definitions and examples from least to most authoritative

3 Methodology

3.1 Research design

This contrastive corpus-based study aimed to pragmatically explore how self-representations indicate the authorial presence in English research articles written by AAEAs and AEAs. It focused on the distribution tendencies of these self-representations within their disciplinary contexts (law, journalism, and political science) and cultural contexts (AAEAs and AEAs). Using a mixed-methods research design, a comprehensive analysis was conducted by combining quantitative data, which provided statistical insight into self-representations, as well as qualitative and quantitative analyses of authorial roles, which led to a deeper understanding of these patterns in light of context and culture. This approach ensured a more robust and holistic understanding of authorial presence in the analyzed research articles.

3.2 Data collection

A corpus of 90 research articles (RAs) was created based on selected disciplines and cultural groups, following a multi-stage process that involved 1) choosing academic disciplines, 2) selecting academic journals from those disciplines, and 3) identifying RAs from the chosen journals. The first stage used purposeful sampling to select disciplines, with law, journalism, and political science chosen for their relevance to cross-disciplinary rhetorical features and their under-researched status in ESP/EAP research, which are crucial for ESP/EAP instruction. These disciplines, all focused on empirical research through observations and measurements, were selected due to their distinctive rhetorical conventions. Journalism focuses on the subject rather than the writer in narratives. Law arguments emphasize deductive reasoning, commitment to objectivity, and reliance on institutional authority. Political science involves complex and ideologically charged issues, so authors usually make argumentative claims and take an explicit authoritative presence. Comparing these three disciplines allows for analysis of how various types of argumentation shape the construction of authorial presence in academic writing. Discipline-specific approaches to reasoning and argumentation can shape academic discourse through these contrasting disciplinary conventions.

In the second stage (Table 2), a two-step sampling procedure was used: quota sampling to select 30 journals from each discipline, followed by purposive sampling to ensure journal quality and representativeness using Clarivate Analytics' Journal Citation Reports (JCR).

Disciplines	Authors	Journals	Impact Factor
Journalism	AEAs	Journalism Practice	2.537 (2022)
		Journalism Studies	3.741 (2022)
	AAEAs	International Journal of Communication	1.802 (2022)
		Digital Journalism	7.986 (2022)
Law	AEAs	Journal of Empirical Legal Studies	1.610 (2022)
		Journal of Law and Society	1.029 (2022)
	AAEAs	International Journal of Law Psychiatry	1.851 (2022)
		European Journal of Law Economics	1.108 (2022)
Political Science	AEAs	British Journal of Political Science	5.174 (2022)
		American Journal of Political Science	6.081 (2022)
	AAEAs	Political Research Quarterly	2.556 (2022)
		Mediterranean Politics	2.588 (2022)

Table 2: A list of selected journals from each discipline

A probability sampling method combining random and stratified sampling was employed in the third stage of selecting research articles (RAs). To ensure a representative sample of the entire population, random RAs were chosen from different volumes and issues (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). The selected RAs were single-authored to control the use of *we* instead of *I.* RAs published between 2012 and 2022 were extracted from their respective journals and included in the sampling pool, with the focus solely on the results and discussion sections. Using Gotti's (2012) methodology and the Web of Science Core Collection, 90 RAs by AAEAs and AEAs were selected, with the authors' affiliations and social media presence confirmed. The total word count for the results and discussion sections across these articles was 163,443 (see Table 3).

Corpus	Disciplines	No. of Articles	No. of Words	Publication Date
AEAs	Journalism	15	28,999	2012–2022
	Law	15	24,602	
	Political Science	15	28,259	
AAEAs	Journalism	15	24,724	
	Law	15	25,077	
	Political Science	15	31,782	
Total		90	163,443	

Table 3: Summary of key features of the data

The Results and Discussion section was selected because it provides an opportunity for authors to demonstrate their scholarly voice, interpreting findings, placing themselves within existing research, and explaining their contribution. Authors primarily use these sections to establish their identities as researchers and to interact with the academic community. Since this study focuses on authorial presence, examining these sections offers insight into how authors deal with institutional influences and disciplinary expectations. Although other sections add to a research article's rhetorical structure, my focus allows for a more thorough and targeted examination of the instances in which authorial presence is most actively negotiated. This focused approach lays the foundation for a significant, nuanced understanding, though future research may broaden this scope.

3.3 Data analysis

In this contrastive corpus-based study, the data analysis procedure involved four main phases: indexing and categorization, functional analysis, second coder analysis, and statistical analysis.

First, instances of authorial presence were identified and categorized. Using QSR NVivo, a text search query was conducted to locate self-representations in the 90 Results and Discussion sections, with clause-by-clause annotations to thoroughly document the target features. Self-representation, encompassing both first-person and third-person references, includes pronouns (e.g., *I, my, we*) and nouns referring to the author. Although the first-person singular pronoun typically clearly identifies the writer, the first-person plural pronoun may be ambiguous, potentially referring to various entities (Biber, 2006). Second, a rhetorical analysis was employed, adapting Tang and John's (1999) framework to categorize self-representations into ten authorial roles: (1) the representative, (2) the guide, (3) the architect, (4) the recounter of research procedures, (5) the opinion holder, (6) the advisor, (7) the evaluator, (8) the claimer, (9) the asserter, and (10) the originator. Third, to ensure reliability, two samples from each discipline were coded by two independent coders using clause-by-clause annotations in QSR NVivo. The coders identified self-representation features and their functions, achieving an inter-coder agreement of 88.6%. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion and consensual coding (Kuckartz, 2014). A systematic coding scheme was applied to the corpus, achieving high intra-coder reliability (98.7%). Finally, the frequencies of self-representations were normalized per 10,000 words for each sub-corpus. A two-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effects of disciplinary and cultural contexts on these frequencies. To address significant results and avoid false positives, a Bonferroni post hoc test was performed to assess differences in self-representation strategies between writers.

4 Results and discussion

This section presents the results of quantitative and qualitative analyses of the use of self-representations. Overall, the AEAs showed a higher frequency of self-representational features across all disciplines than the AAEAs. After analyzing total token counts and normalized frequency data, the authorial roles are explored in depth.

4.1 Frequency patterns of authorial representation in the corpus

Table 4 shows that AEAs generally exhibited higher use of authorial presences than AAEAs across disciplines. Political science had the highest authorial presence in both cultural groups, especially AEAs (T = 149, M = 10.73), followed by law and journalism. AAEAs were less prevalent, with their authorial presence mostly found in Political Science (T = 56.39, M = 2.10). Such results show how discipline and cultural context have a combined effect on authorial presence (Figure 2). See Appendix for article-level frequency data.

	Journalism			**Law**			**Political Science**			
	T	M	SD	T	M	SD	T	M	SD	Total T
AEAs	34	1.26	2.12	55	4.03	3.77	149	10.73	8.17	238
AAEAs	11.7	0.78	1.11	18.92	2.1	2.08	56.39	2.1	4.02	87.01

(Note: T = Raw Total Tokens (unadjusted count), M = Mean frequency per 10,000 words, SD = Standard Deviation)

Table 4: Frequency counts and dispersion of authorial presence for AAEAs and AEAs in journalism, law, and political science

These differences align with expectations based on both disciplinary conventions and cultural norms. The AAEAs exhibited significantly less authorial presence, likely because academic papers are traditionally expected to be objective representations of an independent and external reality (Hyland, 2001). Among Arab academic circles, academic writing textbooks and academic writing instructors suggest the convention of impersonal reporting because any explicit author presence would defeat objectivity. Another possible explanation for their shunning of authorial presence is face-saving. As a result of avoiding self-representation, they made their writing appear objective and impersonal, thereby avoiding criticism or refutation from the audience (Hyland, 2001; Mur-Dueñas, 2007).

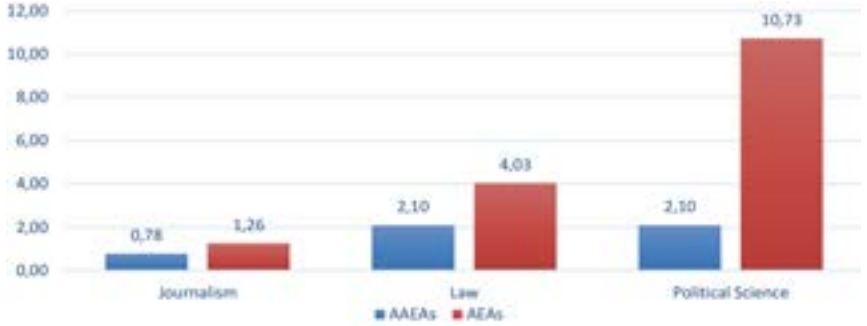


Figure 2: Authorial presence by the AAEAs and the AEAs in journalism, law, and political science

The two-way ANOVA result for self-representation strategies showed a statistically significant difference between the AAEAs and the AEAs ($F(1, 84) = 17.082$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.169$), with small effect (partial eta squared = $0.169 < 0.20$) according to Cohen (1988) who defined effects as small at (0.2), medium at (0.5), and large at (0.8 or more). There was a statistically significant difference in self-representation strategies across journalism, law and political science RAs ($F(2, 84) = 12.431$, $p = 0.000 > 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.228$), with medium effect (partial eta squared = 0.228). There was an interaction effect between disciplinary variation and scholars cultural background in self-representation strategies, ($F(2, 84) = 7.930$, $p = 0.001 > 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.159$), with small effect (partial eta squared = 0.159), see Table 5.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	1033.496	5	206.699	11.561	0.000	0.408
Intercept	1102.290	1	1102.290	61.653	0.000	0.423
Culture	305.404	1	305.404	17.082	0.000	0.169
Discipline	444.514	2	222.257	12.431	0.000	0.228
Culture x Discip.	283.578	2	141.789	7.930	0.001	0.159
Error	1501.834	84	17.879			
Total	3637.620	90				
Corrected Total	2535.329	89				

(Note: Dependent variable: tokens per 10,000 words)

Table 5: Statistical results for authorial presence strategies by the AAEAs and the AEAs in journalism, law, and political science

The multiple comparisons Bonferroni test was used to determine the difference between pairwise groups in self-representation strategies. The results revealed a significant difference between the AAEAs and the AEAs, with a value of (3.684) in favor of the AEAs with the highest mean score. Political science had a significant difference with a (5.392) against Journalism and (3.346) against law, in favor of political science having the most tokens per 10,000 words (see Table 6).

Group (I)	Group (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
AAEAs	AEAs	-3.684-*	0.891	0.000	-5.457	-1.912
AEAs	AAEAs	3.684*	0.891	0.000	1.912	5.457
Journalism	Law	-2.045	1.092	0.193	-4.712	0.622
	Political Science	-5.392-*	1.092	0.000	-8.059	-2.725
Law	Journalism	2.045	1.092	0.193	-0.622	4.712
	Political Science	-3.346-*	1.092	0.009	-6.013	-0.679
Political Science	Journalism	5.392*	1.092	0.000	2.725	8.059
	Law	3.346*	1.092	0.009	0.679	6.013

(Note: *. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.)

Table 6: Multiple pairwise comparisons Bonferroni for authorial presence strategies by the AAEAs and the AEAs in journalism, law, and political science

4.2 Exploring authorial roles in the corpus

The frequencies and distributions of referential pronouns and authorial roles in RAs by AAEAs and AEAs revealed varying levels of authorial presence, influenced by cultural background and disciplinary norms. These distributions (Figure 3) show that political science had the highest overall authorial presence, followed by law and journalism. This trend reflects the inherently argumentative nature of political science. It also highlights a broader tendency for AEAs to assert stronger authorial presence through roles associated with argumentation and epistemic commitment, while AAEAs are more frequently engaged in procedural narration and cautious positioning.

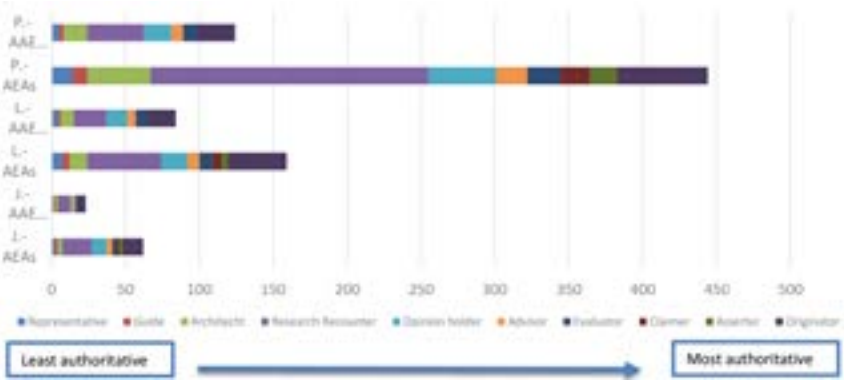


Figure 3: The authorial roles assumed by the AAEAs and the AEAs in journalism, law, and political science

Specifically, Table 7 shows that AEAs assumed more authorial roles than AAEAs regardless of discipline. The most common role among all roles was the research recounter (326), followed by originator (165), and architect (85). The opinion holder role was also relatively common (109) in comparisons to the other roles; the least common roles were claimer (28) and asserter (25), but these roles only appeared in AEAs and mostly notably in political science (P.-AEAs: claimer = 20, asserter = 19). Neither of these roles were included in the journalism and law subcorpora of AAEAs.

	Journalism		Law		Political Science		Total
	J.-AEAs	J.-AAEAs	L.-AEAs	L.-AAEAs	P.-AEAs	P.-AAEAs	
Representative	2	1	7	4	14	5	33
Guide	2	1	5	2	10	3	23
Architecht	3	2	12	9	43	16	85
Research Recounter	20	8	50	22	188	38	326
Opinion Holder	10	2	18	14	46	19	109
Advisor	4	2	8	6	21	8	49
Evaluator	3	1	9	8	22	10	53
Claimer	2	0	6	0	20	0	28
Asserter	2	0	4	0	19	0	25
Originator	14	6	40	19	61	25	165

(Note: J. = Journalism, L. = Law, P. = Political Science; AEA = Academic English Author, AAEA = Arab Academic English Author)

Table 7: Frequencies of authorial roles assumed by the AAEAs and the AEAs in journalism, law and political science

Authorial roles led to varied uses of pronouns and referential forms. Table 8 showcases a breakdown of singular pronouns (e.g., *I, my*), plural pronoun referential forms (e.g., *we, our*), and noun-based referential forms (e.g., *the author, the researcher*). Notably, the first-person singular pronoun, particularly *I,* was more often used by the originator, asserter, and claimer, which indicates a strong authorial presence and personal ownership. To illustrate epistemic authority and display reliability, the originator used *I* 99 times, and *my* 13 times. In contrast, roles such as representative and guide, which signal a more collective, less authoritative position, relied heavily on *we* (e.g., representative = 23; guide = 14), and referential nouns to denote lower authority (e.g., representative = 3). Notably, the recounter of research procedures showed a high frequency of *I* (130), which indicates author involvement in research during results interoperation. From these subtle distributions, it is evident that referential choices are closely connected to authorial roles, disciplinary conventions, and cultural positioning in academic discourse.

Referential Form	*I*	*We*	*My*	*Our*	Author/ Researcher	Total
Representative	1	23	0	4	3	33
Guide	2	14	0	3	2	23
Architecht	21	42	1	8	11	85
Research Recounter	130	114	16	32	32	326
Opinion Holder	49	32	10	5	10	109
Advisor	17	19	2	4	4	49
Evaluator	15	18	4	5	9	53
Claimer	14	7	2	1	2	28
Asserter	13	5	2	1	2	25
Originator	99	33	13	8	11	165

Table 8: Distribution of referential forms across authorial roles in the corpus

4.2.1 The representative

This authorial role emphasizes a general state of affairs rather than personal insight, minimizing the author's role by presenting them as part of a broader entity. As a result, this form of self-representation, using the first-person pronoun *we* carries the least authoritative presence. Figure 3 shows that political science RAs used the representative authorial role more frequently than those in law and journalism, with subtle cultural differences between AAEAs and AEAs. In Example 1, the pronoun *we* is used to refer to the general public. In Example 2,

we might denote a smaller, more specific group, such as policymakers or experts within the legislative field.

(1) *It resulted in the journalistic practices and ethical standards* ***we*** *adhere to today.* (J-AEA4)

(2) *For the legislative reforms,* ***we*** *recognize that they are crucial to the advancement of our legal framework*. (L-AEA13)

Similarly, in Example 3, the use of *we* implies a sense of collective ownership over these outcomes. The use of *we* often stresses the author's solidarity with disciplinary readers, stating a research gap (4), acknowledging issues and limitations of research (5), drawing practical implications (6) and anticipating further research (7).

(3) *The policy decisions that* ***we*** *have today reflect many years of strategic planning*. (L.-AEA10)

(4) *At present,* ***we*** *know little about the attitudes of party members as compared to those of party elites, and even less on how members reflect on and position themselves vis-à-vis the identity and strategies of their own party.* (P.S.-AAEA15)

(5) *The fundamental limitation for cross-national analysis is the level of aggregation; peacekeepers are not homogeneously located in host-states; thus, at the country level,* ***we*** *fail to observe whether variation in homicides is related to variations in UN personnel.* (P.S.-AEA5)

(6) ***We*** *need to be increasingly aware of the broader context in which substantive law operates.* (L.-AEA14)

(7) ***We*** *also need to look beyond the state's procedural framework which, despite giving the illusion of impartiality, strongly influences the actions taken by individuals*. (L.-AEA14)

This phrasing emphasizes a general state of affairs rather than providing personal insight, diminishing the author's role by presenting them as part of a broader entity. As a result, the use of the plural first-person pronoun in this context reflects a less authoritative form of self-representation (Hyland, 2002b; Harwood, 2005a).

4.2.2 The guide

To better understand this authorial role, consider the RA as a complex, multi-layered map and the author as a navigator guiding the reader through its intricate details. With the metaphor of "RA = Map" in place, the author's role becomes similar to that of a skilled navigator who directs the reader through the RA's landscape. The author positions the reader within the context of the article, highlights key landmarks and points of interest, and uses examples from the text to clarify these points. It becomes clear that when the author takes on the role of a guide, actively engaging the reader throughout the journey, self-representation frequently appears in plural, inclusive forms such as *we*. This usage underscores the collaborative nature of the writer-reader relationship, highlighting their shared journey through the text. Figure 3 illustrates RAs authored by AEA in political science utilized the guide authorial role more often than those in law and journalism, with slight cultural variations in how the AAEAs and AEAs employed this role.

The ultimate goal is to guide the reader to a conclusion or destination that the author believes will be clearly understood. This navigational role is often signaled by verbs like *note* and *observe*, associated with mental processes of perception (Halliday, 1994), as shown in Example 8:

(8) *Figure 3 indicates a notable increase in the year 2004, and* ***we can observe*** *that the projected outcomes of access are statistically significant* (J-AAEA12)

The inclusive *we* frequently appears with frame markers (e.g., *shall, now, next*) to guide readers through the text (Harwood, 2005b), as in Examples 9 and 10:

(9) ***We*** *can* ***now*** *turn our attention to the space newspapers devoted to policy discussion in their election coverage.* (J.-AEA7)

(10) *As* ***we shall see****, the trouble here is that, rather than practitioner excellence, a different kind of habitus is rewarded in our field: one that accords with our model of rational self- interest, based upon Tucker's betraying prisoner.* (L.-AEA13)

This use also aligns readers with the author's perspective in interpreting data or arguments. Phrases like *we can see* frequently guide readers to specific observations, as illustrated in Examples 11 and 12:

(11) *In Figure 5,* ***we can see*** *how the estimated effects of access are statistically indistinguishable from zero in 2000.* (P.S.-AEA9)

(12) *Looking at both the Syrian sample and the Egyptian sample in Table 4,* ***we can see*** *that both Syrians and Egyptians are significantly more likely to be inequity averse when the opponent is a Syrian (rather than an Egyptian).* (P.S.-AAEA5)

4.2.3 The architect

The architect authorial role in RAs simply refers to the process of organizing and structuring discourse through the use of self-representation features and endophoric markers (e.g., *below, in this section*, etc.) to structure textual information, label discourse acts, organize content or state the scholars' involvement in their research. While there are similarities between this role and that of a guide, a critical distinction sets them apart. The architect, akin to the author, is deeply involved in creating and structuring the content, shaping the narrative from the ground up. In contrast, the guide primarily navigates the reader through pre-established content, without altering its structure. Given that the architect's role involves more direct manipulation of the material, I find it appropriate to keep these roles distinct in my analysis.

Figure 3 shows that RAs in political science employed the highest architect authorial role compared to their counterparts in law and journalism. There were, however, slight cultural variations in the architect authorial role between the AAEAs and the AEAs.

The results suggested that both the AAEAs and the AEAs used the first-person pronoun to emphasize the organization of the text to the same extent. The similarity may be explained by the generic conventions imposed by the RA writing since the architect's role seems to be associated with various aspects of academic discourse rather than with differences or similarities among cultures. However, there was a slight difference in how the academic authors organized their texts retrospectively. The AEAs tended to refer to specific points in the text (e.g., *In figures 2 and 3*, *in the SI (Section A11, 21)*) to signal its organization (Examples 13 and 14) more often than the AAEAs (Examples 15 and 16).

(13) ***In this part of the article, I*** *discuss the findings of the empirical case study presented above and draw a number of conclusions about the value of using participation as an analytic framework for understanding consumer ADR.* (L.-AEA12)

(14) ***In Figures 2 and 3, I*** *display orthogonalized impulse response plots from the VAR results reported in Columns 1 and 2 of Table 1.* (P.S.-AEA1)

(15) ***Below I*** *present some problems included in the survey results.* (J.-AAEA1)

(16) *Therefore,* ***in this section I*** *discuss whether the results obtained for the full sample are influenced by this event.* (L.-AAEA13)

Hyland (2002b) considered this role low-risk, aiding readers' navigation of the text. Both AAEAs and AEAs use it across disciplines, with variations linked more to RA conventions than cultural differences. Clear signposting (Walková, 2019) is necessary to state a purpose, and authors must use dynamic discourse to engage readers in the competitive academic environment (Seoane, 2013).

4.2.4 The recounter of research procedure

Authors use first-person pronouns or noun references (e.g., *the researcher*) to describe stages of the research process, such as reviewing materials, conducting interviews, and gathering data. This role is often paired with material process verbs (Halliday, 1994), such as *examined* or *investigated*, typically in the past tense. Figure 3 shows that the recounter of research procedure role is the most frequently used in RAs, with AEAs in political science using it more than those in law and journalism, reflecting notable cultural differences between AAEAs and AEAs. Nonetheless, RAs written by the AEAs exhibited this specific authorial role more than those written by the AAEAs, as shown in Examples 17–20.

(17) *To determine whether these relationships survive more rigorous analysis* ***I investigated*** *them using regression models containing the same variables as in the state appeal models.* (L.-AEA7)

(18) *First,* ***I examined*** *the degree to which partisans had optimistic or pessimistic appraisals about the United States' standing in the world.* (J.-AEA11)

(19) *To answer the second research question,* ***the researcher examined*** *a larger corpus in the second level of analysis in relation to the Canadian press coverage of Somali Canadians using computational methods.* (J.-AAEA5)

(20) *To address the issue of selection bias,* ***I implemented*** *a design-based approach using station reception boundaries*. (P.S.-AEA9)

These examples show how AEAs present themselves as competent researchers, enhancing the credibility of their claims. AEAs are more persuasive in explaining their methods than AAEAs, systematically demonstrating their credentials (Sheldon, 2009). Cross-disciplinary variations revealed that AEAs in political science were more likely to use this discourse function, frequently pairing first-person pronouns with verbs such as *ask* and *inquire* to describe research acts (Hyland, 2002a), as shown in Examples 21–22:

(21) *For this reason, at the end of our survey, **I** also **asked** respondents to gauge the importance of acting in each of the same policy areas for which we assessed confidence*. (P.S.-AEA8)

(22) *For each of these potential period effects, **I inquired** as to whether the respondent had experienced a change in his or her work setting over the past decade.* (P.S.-AEA4)

AEAs in political science use meticulous procedures to demonstrate their commitment to gathering evidence, portraying themselves as thorough and diligent researchers (Harwood, 2003). The recounter role, often used for its low-risk nature (Hyland, 2002b), involves presenting research procedures chronologically with first-person pronouns and verbs like *investigate* or *examine*. AEAs appear more invested in detailing their methods than AAEAs, emphasizing their research skills and active role in the process (Swales, 1990).

4.2.5 The opinion holder

The opinion holder is a higher authorial role used to present arguments, often realized through first-person pronouns with cognitive or attitude verbs such as *think*, *believe*, *agree*, or *disagree* (Hyland, 2002b). Figure 3 shows that political science RAs ranked highest in this role, followed by law and journalism, likely due to the explicit nature of political discourse. Journalism, by contrast, tends to reinforce public opinions. Cross-cultural variations are evident, with AEAs more frequently assuming the opinion holder role, indicating a greater willingness to own their arguments (Examples 23–24). AAEAs, however, avoid explicit first-person pronouns to downplay their opinions and avoid reader conflict, as seen in Example 25.

(23) ***I think** that on easy issues, participants would have more crystalized opinions less likely influenced by party cues*. (P.S.-AEA5)

(24) *In sum, **I think** moral disengagement is a useful framework that may yield a rich and interesting line of research on how the mechanisms proposed by Bandura operate in Political contexts.* (P.S.-AEA2)

(25) *While no figures are available, **it seems reasonable to believe** – based on the confession statements of a few adherents—that there were few individuals who drifted into Salafi-jihadi violence from Al-Takfir al Hijra, Asbat al Ansar, Islamic Jihad, Al Qaeda, and a wide variety of Palestinian formations.* (P.S.-AAEA4)

AAEAs often use first-person determiners with terms like *findings*, *results*, or *theory* followed by the verb *align* to express opinions on theories or methods,

signaling that their arguments are grounded in established knowledge rather than personal views (Examples 26 and 27).

(26) ***My results*** *also* ***align*** *with neuroscientific evidence indicating that the brain continues to develop during the early 20s.* (L.-AAEA14)

(27) *Moreover,* ***my findings are aligned*** *with Levine (2005), Nili and Rastad (2007) and Bhattacharyya and Hodler (2014) in the view that a lack of financing is a leading constraint for private sector, while financial development can play a significant role in diversifying the economy*. **(**L.-AAEA11)

Compared to the recounter and originator, the frequency of the opinion holder role is rather low. This could be due to the fact elaborating arguments or sharing opinions requires subjectivity. Thus, hedges enabled the academic authors to present their knowledge claims as "provisional and subject to current objections and future revisions" (Hyland & Jiang, 2018, p. 26).

4.2.6 The advisor

The advisor authorial role involves offering suggestions or recommendations based on research findings, typically using first-person pronouns with verbs like *recommend*, *suggest*, or *hope*. This role encourages a dialogue with the reader, inviting them to consider or apply the author's advice and aiming to influence future research or practice. Figure 3 shows that political science RAs employed this role more frequently than those in law and journalism, with subtle cultural differences between AAEAs and AEAs. Examples 28 and 29 illustrate the use of first-person pronouns with verbs like *hope* and *recommend* to propose research recommendations or practical applications. Through these recommendations, academic authors express their judgment, creating a direct dialogue with the reader and allowing for negotiation, with their authority drawn from expertise and experience in guiding future actions.

(28) ***I hope*** *that both the findings and methods introduced here can serve as a springboard for research into these and other important topics related to political representation in the future.* (P.S.-AEAA12)

(29) ***I recommend*** *converting continuous spatial boundaries into boundary points and comparing voters within each boundary point*. (J.-AEA11)

4.2.7 The evaluator

The evaluator role critically assesses their own research process, results, and predictions. In academic contexts, evaluators might be seen as more authoritative

because their judgments are often considered final or conclusive, based on rigorous analysis. AEAs in political science used this role more than in law and journalism, with slight cultural differences (Figure 3). Authors in this role use first-person pronouns with verbs like *expect* or *anticipate* to assess whether results confirm or disconfirm their predictions (Examples 30 and 31). They also address research issues and limitations using verbs like *fail* and *failure* (Examples 32 and 33), positioning themselves as thorough and transparent researchers, which enhances credibility while protecting against criticism.

(30) *Given this context**, I predicted** that partisans will process political information and political elites will talk about the United States in a way that either upholds or undermines American exceptionalism, depending on which party currently holds the White House.* (J.-AEA11)

(31) *Drawing on psychological reactance theory, **I anticipated** that, for these targeted individuals, attacking their voting right would raise the value attached to that freedom and heighten the interest in engaging in it, ultimately increasing their propensity to turn out*. (P.S.-AEA2)

(32) *Since some media scholarship argues that Spanish- language media conglomerates are driven by the goal of profit maximization rather than voter mobilization (Len- Ríos 2017), this might explain why **I fail** to find mobilization effects for SLTV.* (P.S.-AEA12)

(33) ***We** need to be **careful** here though - descriptions can be functional too.* (L.-AAEA9)

AAEAs also prefer terms like *writer*, *author*, or *researcher* over *I* to avoid face-threatening situations, as *I* is seen as more intrusive (Mur-Dueñas, 2007). Thus, the use of the plural first-person *we* and *researcher* indicates AAEAs' intention to lessen personal attribution. The greater authorial presence in AEA-written RAs reflects their aim to establish solidarity and authority within their disciplinary community (Hyland, 2001; Mur-Dueñas, 2007).

4.2.8 The claimer

The claimer authorial role involves the author explicitly presenting their ideas or findings with ownership, using first-person pronouns to emphasize their contribution. This role positions the author as an authority, confident in defending their claims. Figure 3 shows the claimer role is most prominent in political science, where AEAs tend to make bold claims, reflecting the discipline's focus on debate. The absence of this role among AAEAs suggests a cultural preference for more neutral or cautious stances, likely reflecting norms of modesty or caution

in their writing. The academic authors used first-person pronouns in their RAs with verbs such as *argue*, *believe*, or *conclude* to convey their authorial presence when stating their results or making knowledge claims (Hyland, 2002a). AEAs often make explicit claims, using first-person pronouns and determiners to take full responsibility for their statements (Examples 34 and 35). In contrast, AAEAs tend to use the plural *we* for strong claims (Example 36), similar to patterns in multi-authored RAs (Mur-Dueñas, 2007), where first-person plural pronouns help minimize personal intrusion in knowledge claims (Hyland, 2001).

(34) ***I believe*** *that* ***my theory*** *applies to any subgroups that do not hold compatible views of their superordinate identity, but additional work can test this theory in new contexts.* (P.S.-AEA3)

(35) *In sum, the measurement challenge* ***I argue*** *affects survey roll-call measures seems to arise in the judicial realm as well.* (P.S.-AEA8)

(36) ***We conclude*** *with some observations about how* ***the findings****, especially those concerning the role of ideological disagreement in shaping institutional support, relate to the emerging conventional wisdom that the court today.* (L.-AAEA1)

Coffin and Hewings (2003) argue that using verbs like *believe* and *argue* with first-person pronouns allows authors to emphasize personal claims. Results showed that AEAs used the claimer role more frequently than AAEAs, indicating a greater willingness to take ownership of their arguments, while AAEAs downplayed their claims to avoid conflict with readers. Political science RAs had the highest frequency of this role, followed by law and journalism, likely due to the emphasis on sharing beliefs and attitudes in political discourse, while journalism reinforces public beliefs, reflecting similar patterns in academic writing.

4.2.9 The asserter

The asserter role involves expressing claims with strong conviction, using first-person pronouns and boosters (e.g., *certain, confident, strongly*) to emphasize the certainty of the claims. The asserter role is used sparingly across disciplines, with a stronger preference among political science AEAs, suggesting they are more likely to take firm stances. Its rarity among AAEAs may reflect cultural or stylistic differences in authorial presence (Figure 3). AEAs use this assertive voice to highlight their contributions and accountability (Examples 37 and 38), establishing themselves as competent knowledge contributors. AAEAs, however, demonstrate a more implicit assertive voice, relying on facts to assert their authority (Example 39).

(37) *As such, **I** am **confident** that the citizenship challenge, and reminder of that challenge, was the sole motivation for subsequent electoral participation.* (P.S.-AEA2)

(38) ***I** am **certain** that the measures we put forth in this article could benefit from considerable additional psychometric improvement.* (L.-AEA1)

(39) ***The results can strongly** confirm the multinational composition of FI, which resembles Al Qaeda. More than three quarters of the adherents are non-Lebanese.* (P.S.-AAEA4)

4.2.10 The originator

The originator role, the most authoritative in Tang and John's (1999) continuum, is used by academic authors to present research results and knowledge claims with first-person pronouns. Findings revealed cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural differences in its use (Figure 3). AAEAs used the originator role less frequently than AEAs, especially in political science. AEAs, particularly in law and political science, more often presented themselves as pioneers of new ideas, indicating a stronger emphasis on asserting their authority and contributions to the field.

Results are often presented using first-person pronouns and research verbs like *present*, *provide*, or *identify* (Hyland, 2002a). AEAs explicitly identified themselves as originators of ideas, especially in political science, where this role was more prominent than in law and journalism, and almost absent in the AAEAs subcorpus. AEAs portrayed themselves as independent researchers or theory creators (Examples 40 and 41), suggesting a focus on promoting their individual ideas rather than following community ideologies. In contrast, AAEAs preferred to let the facts speak for themselves, using the plural first-person pronoun less frequently to avoid explicit self-promotion (Example 42).

(40) ***I present** compelling evidence supporting the strong notion that reputations can adhere to individual leaders as well as to states.* (P.S.-AEA4)

(41) ***I provide** the first comparative evidence to support the hypothesis, taking a wide variety of potentially confounding factors into account.* (P.S.-AEA10)

(42) ***We can identify** eight recidivism risk factors which are specific to patients with schizophrenia independently of the offense's type.* (L.-AAEA2)

AAEAs often used the first-person determiner *our* paired with terms like *study*, *theory*, *results*, or *findings*, to tie propositions to a personal source, thus

weakening their commitment to the claim (Hyland, 1998). Examples 43 and 44 show how this use minimized their authorial presence, framing the claims as statements of truth rather than personal interpretations (Hyland, 1998).

(43) ***Our*** *study provides insights into the attitudes of the American people at only a snapshot in time.* (L.-AEAA1)

(44) ***Our*** *innovative findings not only confirm that overbroad copyright undermines artistic contributions (e.g., Aufderheide et al., 2016), but also reveal that copyright impairs health and wellness contributions.* (J.-AEAA15)

The originator role, the most authoritative in Tang and John's (1999) continuum, allows authors to project themselves into their claims using first-person pronouns and boosters like *find* and *provide* (Hyland, 2002b). Authors across all disciplines used this role to describe research results and make knowledge claims, supporting previous studies that show authors add new knowledge rather than present new arguments (Crosthwaite et al., 2017; Hyland, 2002b). However, cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural differences were observed. AEAs more explicitly presented themselves as originators, while AAEAs favored an implicit presentation, aligning with traditional academic conventions and relying on facts to state their claims.

5 Conclusion

The findings of this study showed how cultural values and disciplinary contexts affect authorial presence and reader engagement in RA writing. The political science RAs assumed the highest authorial presence across disciplines. Cross-culturally, the AEAs projected themselves in their texts, showing a higher authorial presence than the AAEAs. This study highlights how cultural and disciplinary norms shape authorial presence, with AEAs displaying higher engagement and AAEAs prioritizing objectivity. They sought to show their authorial presence in the text and cast readers into an active role; they underscored their personal fulfilment and value so that it becomes easier to convince readers of the validity of their research. Comparatively speaking, the AAEAs authorial presence was not outstanding in their texts. It seems they would make themselves absent from the text to let the fact speak for itself. As a result of this contrast, each group adopted a distinct authorial role: AEAs were more likely to assume authoritative roles such as originators, asserters, and claimers, while AAEAs tended to assume less assertive roles like architects, representatives, and recounters. As a result of these roles-based distinctions, we gain a deeper understanding of how presence is performed and perceived.

Authorial presence is key to establishing credibility and authority in academic discourse. Novice researchers often struggle with writing and publishing RAs, making it crucial to understand how varying levels of authorial presence shape academic communication. By using the authorial continuum in this study, ESP/EAP instructors can help students navigate academic conventions and develop their authorship skills. Besides using the role classification as a pedagogical tool, instructors can also use the findings of this study, such as the impact of discipline and culture, to create writing tasks and feedback strategies that consider learners' rhetorical positioning. As the concept of authorial presence evolves, further exploration is needed, especially as global academic collaboration grows increasingly vital.

Appendix

The frequency of authorial presence strategies by AEAs and AAEAs in the fields of law, journalism, and political science per 10,000 words (ptw)

No	Authorial Presence											
	Journalism				Law				Political Science			
	AEAs		AAEAs		AEAs		AAEAs		AEAs		AAEAs	
	Tokens	ptw	Tokens	ptw	Tokens	ptw	Tokens	ptw	Tokens	ptw	Tokens	ptw
1	0	0	2	0.8	32	13	4	1.59	47	16.63	31	9.75
2	0	0	5	2.02	19	7.72	9	3.58	35	12.38	0	0
3	2	0.68	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	6.72	0	0
4	20	6.89	0	0	16	6.5	0	0	76	26.89	1	0.31
5	0	0	8	3.23	16	6.5	0	0	4	1.41	41	12.89
6	2	0.68	0	0	19	7.72	7	2.79	40	14.15	0	0
7	4	1.38	0	0	13	5.28	10	3.98	21	7.43	0	0
8	0	0	1	0.4	0	0	0	0	37	13.09	2	0.63
9	1	0.34	0	0	8	3.25	5	1.99	79	27.95	17	5.34
10	1	0.34	3	1.21	0	0	0	0	19	6.72	2	0.63
11	15	5.17	0	0	0	0	6	2.39	31	10.96	3	0.94
12	1	0.34	7	2.83	9	3.65	11	4.38	15	5.3	0	0
13	0	0	3	1.21	3	1.22	15	5.98	11	3.89	0	0
14	0	0	0	0	9	3.65	12	4.78	19	6.72	3	0.94
15	9	3.1	0	0	5	2.03	0	0	2	0.7	0	0

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