

**STANCE-TAKING AND SELF-MENTIONS: THE
INFLUENCE OF ACADEMIC COMMUNITY**

Yazar Duruşu ve Kendini Anma Sözcükleri: Akademik

Toplumun Etkisi

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Abstract

A basic tenet of academic writing is the construction of authorial stance through the use of a variety of linguistic devices one of which is metadiscourse. Broadly speaking, it is a framework for linguistic devices that academic writers employ to get a credible in their discipline by manifesting their stance and interacting with their readers. It is widely accepted that the most effective manifestation of stance is conveyed through self-mentions. While they are a powerful source of the representation of self, they are not frequently applied by nonnative academic authors of English due to cultural conventions of disciplines, the influence of readers, and the lack of knowledge of the pragmatic role of these linguistic devices. This study looked at the employment of self-mentions in three corpora consisting of PhD dissertations written by American academic writers, Turkish-speaking academic writers of English who did their PhD at Turkish universities and Turkish-speaking academic writers of English who earned their PhD in the USA. The results revealed statistical differences among three corpora, which may be explained by cultural conventions and expectations of readers. It is worth to add that Turkish-speaking academic writers of English who earned their PhD in the USA created their stance through a combination of cultural conventions of Turkish and American academic community. In addition, this study sought to explain different types of identities inhabited by the use of first person pronouns across three corpora.

Key words: Academic writing, author stance, self-mentions.

Öz

Akademik yazımın temel ilkelerinden biri yazar duruşunun bir şekli de üstsöylem öğeleri olan çeşitli dilbilimsel araçların yardımıyla sağlanmasıdır. Genellikle, üstsöylem öğeleri akademik yazarların, yazar duruşlarını ve okuyucularıyla iletişim sağlayarak disiplinlerinde güvenilir bir yer edinmek için kullandıkları dilbilimsel öğelerdir. Yazar duruşu sağlamanın en etkili yolunun kendini anma sözcükleri olduğu genel olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bu öğeler yazar benliğinin sağlanmasında güçlü bir kaynak olarak kabul edilmektedir fakat, disiplinlerdeki kültürel farklılıklardan, okuyucu etkisinden ve bu öğelerin pragmatik rolünün az bilinmesinden dolayı anadili İngilizce olmayan yazarlar tarafından sıklıkla kullanılmamaktadır. Bu çalışmada kendini anma sözcüklerinin kullanımı Amerikalı akademik yazarların, doktorasını Amerika'da tamamlamış Türk yazarların ve doktorasını Türk üniversitelerinde tamamlamış Türk yazarların doktora tezlerinden oluşan üç derlemde incelenmiştir. Bu üç derlem arasında kültürel farklar ve okuyucu etkisinden dolayı oluşan istatistiksel farklar bulunmuştur. Doktorasını Amerika'da tamamlamış Türk yazarların yazar duruşlarını Türk ve Amerikalı akademik toplumların normlarının birleşimiyle oluşturdukları gözlenmiştir. Buna ek olarak, bu çalışmada üç derlemde birinci şahıs zamirlerinin kullanımıyla sağlanan çeşitli yazar kimlikleri de araştırılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Akademik yazım, yazar duruşu ve kendini anma sözcükleri.

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Introduction

Traditionally, academic writing is considered to be objective, faceless and impersonal. Lafuente-Millán (2010) explains the reason underlying beneath this traditional view. The core of science is presenting empirical results that are not related to personal feelings or subjective opinions of individuals. Thus, academic writing is often identified as impersonal and objective. However, in recent years, there has been a shift from this traditional view to a more personal form of academic writing.

The recent debates emphasize that writers have to persuade their readers rather than simply to report the findings of studies. As claimed by Hyland (2005a), academic writing does not merely reflect an objective and impersonal form of writing. Contrarily, it is seen as “a persuasive endeavour involving interaction between writers and readers” (p. 173). Similarly, Jiang and Hyland (2015) point out that academic writing is “a persuasive endeavour” shaped by the perceptions of writers. Hyland (2011) states that “demonstration of absolute truth, empirical evidence, flawless logic” is seen as the core of academic persuasion (p. 194). This form of persuasion conveys reliable knowledge reflecting cultural norms. In fact, this persuasion depends on writers’ assumptions about reality. So, no theories can be tested on observational base. Instead, writers tend to persuade their readers by guiding them to particular interpretations.

Based on a personal form, academic writing focuses our attention to how academic writers maintain their personal reflection in their texts, which is called as stance. “Stance involves the writer’s expression of personal attitudes and assessments of the status of knowledge in a text (Hyland, 2012, p.134). Biber (2006) defines stance as the expression of “many different kinds of personal feelings and assessments, including attitudes that a speaker has about certain information, how certain they are about its veracity, how they obtained access to information, and what perspective they are taking” (p. 99).

Self-mention is a central linguistic device that allows academics to stamp their stance. A considerable amount of literature has been published on self-mentions (Çandarlı, Bayyurt & Martı, 2015; Hyland, 2001, 2002; Işık-Taş, 2018; Karahan, 2013, Mur-Duenas, 2007; McGrath, 2016; Tang and John, 1999). What is clear in the light of the literature that the employment of self-mentions can vary depending on disciplinary and cultural conventions. Furthermore, self-mentions are one of the most visible means of manifesting authorial stance. However, it is still not known whether nonnative academic writers preserve their cultural conventions of the discipline to mitigate their stance even though they are surrounded by a native academic environment. This study intended to compare three corpora consisting of doctoral dissertations written by American academic writers (AAW), Turkish academic writers of English who earned their PhD in the USA (TAWA), and Turkish academic writers of English who did their PhD in Turkey (TAWT). Specifically, it was aimed to figure out whether Turkish academic writers of English follow the cultural conventions of their discipline or adopt the conventions of American academic community when they study in the USA. The following research questions constituted the essence of this study:

1. What items of self-mentions do American academic writers, Turkish academic writers of English who earned their PhD in the USA, and Turkish academic writers of English who did their PhD in Turkey employ to build their stance in their Ph.D. dissertations?

2. Do American academic writers, Turkish academic writers of English who earned their PhD in the USA, and Turkish academic writers of English who did their PhD in Turkey significantly differ in the use of self-mentions?
3. What are the possible identities created by the use of self-mentions in doctoral dissertations?

2. Literature Review

Metadiscourse is an umbrella term in the current academic world to refer to linguistic devices that academic writers apply to organize their texts, to communicate with their readers and to stamp their stance. It has been the subject of many studies since it was first coined by Zellig Harris in 1959. Hyland (2005a) uses it as a catch-all term to refer to linguistic devices organizing the interactions between writers and readers in a text. It is also a dynamic process in which authors plan the effects of their claims on readers or listeners. He also develops the taxonomy of metadiscourse in which self-mentions are a salient category. He defines self-mentions as “the degree of explicit author presence in the text measured by the frequency of first person pronouns and possessive adjectives (*I, me, mine, exclusive we, our, ours*) (p. 53).

Hyland (2001) discusses the concept of impersonality in academic writing. The impersonal dimension of academic writing, in fact, is centered on the view that academic research should be empirical and objective, which can be best maintained by the eradication of self. Besides, this view is mostly suggested in many textbooks and style manuals to achieve academic persuasion. On the other hand, in academic communities, scholars interact with their specialist audiences who are members of their disciplines. However, academic persuasion does not simply refer to engagement of readers by following cultural or disciplinary conventions of the discipline. In getting their research taken seriously by their readers, academic writers display themselves as a competent member of their discipline. In this regard, the use of self-mentions can be considered to be an elusive way for self-representation in academic genres.

Studies of self-mentions show the prominence of these linguistic devices to communicate with readers and to construct authorial stance. Hyland contributed to the literature with his many studies. In 2001, he examined the use of first person pronouns in a corpus of 240 research articles from eight disciplines and revealed substantial differences in the employment of this pronoun in the disciplines. Regarding the pragmatic functions, he claims that self-mention is an important means of creating an interaction between writers' claims and their discourse communities. It also enables writers to manifest an authorial identity as “both disciplinary servant and persuasive originator” (p. 223). In 2005b, he divides the concept interaction into two categories as *stance* and *engagement* and consider self-mention as a subcategory of *stance*. In a corpus of 240 research articles from eight disciplines, he analyzed how academic writers in these disciplines achieved interaction in their research articles. In hard sciences, academic writers downtone their presence to emphasize the empirical findings of their studies. Contrarily, in humanities and social sciences, personal reference is a clear indication of stamping a strong stance or highlighting a particular argument. In 2002, he investigated the use of first personal pronoun in 64 Hong-Kong undergraduate theses by comparing them with research articles and observed significant underuse of this pronoun by undergraduate students who avoided authorial reference while making claims and arguments.

In another study on the use of self-mentions in different disciplines, McGrath (2016) observed that authors in anthropology employed more self-mentions than authors in

history. In this study, a specific pragmatic function of the first person pronoun as “narrative” was termed in anthropology. This function was biographical and a reflection of writers’ downtoning writers’ authorial self. Additionally, in an analysis of research articles from four disciplines, Lafuente Millan (2010) found that there were substantial disciplinary differences on the frequency and functions of first person pronoun.

Some researchers attempted to explain the use of self-mentions in a specific cultural context or in different genres. For instance, in a cross-cultural analysis of self-mentions in business management research articles, Mur-Duenas (2007) revealed that American academic writers applied self-mentions more frequently than Spanish academic writers. He also claimed that the use of self-mentions is shaped by the disciplinary and cultural context. Furthermore, the writers’ choice of taking a more or less authoritative stance depends on disciplinary norms and expectations. In addition, a study conducted by Zareva (2013) focused on the employment of self-mentions in TESOL graduate student presentations and examined the influence of written genres on academic presentations. She found specific uses of self-mentions to construct different identity roles: social identity roles, institutional roles and speech event roles. She further pointed out that genre roles of academic writing had a great influence on students’ academic presentations. In other words, students followed some conventions and expectations of their disciplines in their presentations.

Tang and John (1999) suggested six different identities inhabited with the use of first person pronouns in students’ academic essays. These identities will be mentioned in detail in methodology section. Following Tang and John (1999), Munoz (2013) examined 60 research articles written by English and Spanish academic writers and added a new identity to their categorization of self-mentions, which is *I as in the interpreter*.

There is a large volume of published studies that investigated the use of self-mentions by Turkish academic writers of English. In the analysis of 130 research articles written by Turkish and non-Turkish authors, Karahan (2013) revealed that “I” was the mostly frequently applied pronoun used by both groups of authors. This pronoun is often employed to present subjective opinions and claims. However, Turkish authors usually tended to employ depersonalization strategies such as the use of passive constructions. She further emphasized that publication context has an influence on writers’ choice of discursive devices. Işık-Taş (2018) observed how authorial identity was achieved in Sociology research articles written in Turkish and English. The results showed that native speakers of English and Turkish-speaking academic writers of English displayed similar uses in applying first person pronoun in this discipline. Both group of authors utilized this pronoun to present their opinions and to build a strong discursive self.

In an analysis of all metadiscourse categories, Akbaş (2012) examined the use of self-mentions in dissertations abstracts and found that Turkish speakers of English and native speakers of Turkish did not differ in the employment of self-mentions while native speakers of English employed them twice more frequently than these groups of writers. He suggested that Turkish L1 and L2 academic writers avoided the use of self-mentions to be more objective and to take an implicit stance. What can be inferred from this study is that Turkish academic writers followed the cultural conventions of their academic environment while writing in English. Similarly, Çandarlı, Bayyurt, and Martı (2015) reported that American students employed more first person pronoun than Turkish students who wrote their essays in English and Turkish. The interviews done by Turkish students revealed that the avoidance of the pronoun *I* in academic writing is suggested in their former education.

Collectively, these studies outline a crucial role of self-mentions on the construal of explicit authorial stance. Authorial stance is said to be created from the linguistic devices that academic writers choose to apply. On the other side of the coin it is rested on social construction. This said, academic authors not only foreground their stance through the employment of some linguistic devices but also are forced to apply the conventions and the expectations of their academic communities so that they can proclaim a position as a member of their discipline. However, there is a consensus that authors' native language can influence the creation of explicit stance, which can be mainly manifested through self-mentions. Hence, academic authors need to be aware of the universal and cultural conventions of their disciplines. This study specifically addressed this aspect of academic writing and intended to explore whether Turkish academic writers of English have the tendency of following cultural or universal conventions of their discipline based on the academic environment that they are engaged in.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

Three sets of corpora consisting of doctoral dissertations written between 2010-2016 were analyzed in this study. All the dissertations were selected randomly from many disciplines regarding English Language (English Language Teaching, English Language and Literature, Linguistics, and etc.). The doctoral dissertations were selected randomly from Thesis Center of Council of Higher Education and Proquest database. The corpus of American academic writers (CAAW) was created from 10 doctoral dissertations and comprised of 200.893 words. The corpus of Turkish academic writers of English who did their PhD in the USA (CTAWA) included 10 doctoral dissertations and 228.412 words. The last corpus (CTAWT) was collected from 13 doctoral dissertations of Turkish academic writers of English who earned their PhD at Turkish universities and had 217.035 words.

The analysis was performed through the sections "introductions, findings and discussion, conclusion and suggestions for further studies". It is assumed that writers mostly present their opinions and marshal their arguments in these sections. Additionally, all titles, tables, figures, quotations and paraphrases were excluded.

The present study adopted Hyland's taxonomy (2005a) as an instrument to analyze self-mentions in the corpus. This category included some pronouns and nouns (*I, we, me, my, our, mine, us, the author, the author's, the writer, the writer's*) which were exposed to analysis in this study.

In order to examine the identities held through the use of first person pronouns, the categorization of Tang and John (1999) was utilized. This categorization revealed six particular identities created by *I* and *we*. *I as the representative* was used when writers tend to refer to larger group with the employment of *we* or *us*. *I as the guide through the essay* labels the writers' role to help their readers to understand the text. This particular role is usually maintained with the use of *we* (inclusive) and *us*. *I as the architect of the essay* refers to the writer who writes, organizes and outlines the propositional content. *I as the recounter of the process* is used to present the writer who describes the steps of the research. *I as the opinion holder* is realized when writers share an opinion view or attitude. *I as the originator* consists of the writers' presentation of their ideas and claims in their texts.

3.2 Instruments

Wordsmith Tools 6.0, a corpus analysis toolkit, was used to observe the concordances of items of self-mentions in each corpus. “Word Smith Tools provide almost instantaneous display of word frequency lists; concordances, which allow all the uses of a given word in its contexts; and lists of keywords, words that appear more often in a corpus than chance alone would dictate” (Ghadessy et al. 2001, p. xix).

Log likelihood (LL) statistics was applied to determine whether there were significant differences in three sets of corpora regarding the use of self-mentions. Baker et al. (2006) define it as a test to calculate statistical significance that is commonly applied in corpus analysis.

3.3 Data Analysis

Initially, each set of corpus was uploaded to Wordsmith program, and the items of self-mentions were individually searched across each corpus. Each instance was also manually checked because some usages of certain items might not considered as self-mentions. For instance, the pronoun *we* can be employed both to present authorial stance and to engage readers.

After completing the contextual analysis of items of self-mentions, all the frequency counts were normalized to per 100 words. To calculate the normalized frequency of an item, raw frequency of the item was multiplied by 100 and then, the outcome was divided by the size of the corpora. The normalized frequencies enabled us to figure out how often we could come up with a particular item per 100 words.

In order to find out whether there was a statistically significant difference between the three corpora regarding the use of self-mentions, log likelihood statistics was conducted to the raw frequency counts.

4. Findings and Discussion

Wordsmith 6.0 was used to compose a frequency list of self-mentions in concern. Each occurrence of the items was also manually checked to make sure that they had been used to present authorial stance. As shown in Table 1, self-mentions were extensively used in CAAW and CTAWA, with a frequency of 0.8 and 0.4 per 100 items, respectively. They were clearly underused by Turkish academic writers who earned their PhD in Turkey (TAWT) with a frequency of 0.1 per 100 words. This finding is similar to some studies in the literature. Abdi (2009) observed that Persian authors preferred a more faceless form of stance when compared to English authors in their research articles. In the corpus of Mur-Duenas (2011), self-mentions were seen less frequent in Spanish corpora when compared to English corpora. Akbaş (2012) asserted that self-mentions were the least category of interactional metadiscourse markers used by Turkish-speaking academic authors.

Table 1. Overall Distribution of Self-mentions in Three Corpora

	CAAW	CTAWA	CTAWT
Corpus size in words	200.893	228.412	217.035
Number of self-mentions(n)	1655	1029	218
n /100	0.8	0.4	0.1

n: raw frequency of self-mentions

n /100: frequency of self-mentions per 100 words

TAWT made use of fairly low amounts of self-mentions in their doctoral dissertations. One reason for the less use self-mentions by TAWT might stem from the conventions of academic writing in Turkish context. Additionally, the avoidance of self-mentions may assist them to present the propositional content objectively. Karahan (2013) claims that Turkish education system suggests depersonalization in academic writing to achieve objectivity and modesty. Another point is that the content of academic writing courses might not focus on the universal rhetorical conventions of academic writing in these fields. Hyland 2011 claims that both native and second language students find it difficult to stamp their positions in their texts due to absence of clear pedagogical instructions and the expectations of their supervisors. On the contrary, AAW appeared to profoundly present their self with the use of self-mentions. Dontcheva-Navrotilova (2013) states that conveying high author visibility with the involvement of readers is a prominent convention of academic writing in Anglo-American culture. It was observed that TAWA applied self-mentions more often than TAWT but less frequently than AAW. It can be inferred that they demonstrated a familiarity with the rhetorical conventions of AAW in their discipline. However, their authorial stance was partly achieved by impersonality, which is a cultural convention of their discipline in Turkish context. This said, there is a clear gap between the conventions of Turkish and American academic writers regarding the demonstration of self with the use of self-mentions. Therefore, TAWA might have some difficulties in representing themselves in their dissertations due to this gap. As Abdi (2009) highlights, the forms of communication in academic discourse communities are shaped by a variety of linguistic conventions. Thus, the multilingual members of these communities have the tendency of adopting these linguistic conventions to get a place in these communities.

It is considered essential to conduct LL statistics whether the frequency counts of self-mentions in three corpora are meaningful. A rough look at the LL value of self-mentions (-238.77) in CTAWA and CAAW suggests that AAW and TAWA employed self-mentions significantly differently, which might signify that the avoidance of self-mentions is deeply rooted in Turkish culture in the fields related to English Language, so Turkish academic writers of English might not be able to leave this particular cultural convention even though they were members of American academic community while writing their doctoral dissertations.

Table 2. LL Ratio of Self-mentions in CTAWA and CAAW

	CTAWA (O1)	%1	CAAW (O2)	%2	LL Ratio (p< 0.05)	ELL
Self-mentions	1029	0.45	1655	0.82	-238.77	0.00008

O1 is observed frequency in Corpus 1

O2 is observed frequency in Corpus 2

%1 and %2 values show relative frequencies in the texts.

+ indicates overuse in O1 relative to O2

- indicates underuse in O1 relative to O2

Table 3 illustrates the LL value of self-mentions in CTAWT and CAAW. The underuse of self-mentions in CTAWT was confirmed by the LL value of -1363.06. It is crystal clear that TAWT did not prefer to project their authorial stance explicitly whereas CAAW argued vigorously for their position in their doctoral dissertations and disciplines.

Table 3. LL Ratio of Self-mentions in CTAWT and CAAW

	CTAWT		CAAW		LL Ratio	ELL
	(O1)	%1	(O2)	%2	(p< 0.05)	
Self-mentions	218	0.10	1655	0.82	-1363.06	0.00048

O1 is observed frequency in Corpus 1

O2 is observed frequency in Corpus 2

%1 and %2 values show relative frequencies in the texts.

+ indicates overuse in O1 relative to O2

- indicates underuse in O1 relative to O2

As shown in Table 4, self-mentions were underused by TAWT compared to TAWA, which was approved by the LL value of -532.25. Overall, these results indicate that there were differences between three corpora regarding the realization of self-mentions on the construal of author stance, which could be mainly explained by cultural differences and expectations of readers. The LL value shown in Table 4 may in part be indicative of assimilation of cultural linguistic conventions regarding the presentation of stance by TAWA. This said, TAWA seemed to follow the cultural linguistic conventions of their native context but at the same time they learned to incorporate the conventions of self-mentions in American academic context compared to TAWT. This result might not be surprising since TAWA attempted to get a credible place in their discipline in American context.

Table 4. LL Ratio of Self-mentions in CTAWT and CTAWA

	CTAWT		CTAWA		LL Ratio	ELL
	(O1)	%1	(O2)	%2	(p< 0.05)	
Self-mentions	218	0.10	1029	0.45	-532.25	0.00019

O1 is observed frequency in Corpus 1

O2 is observed frequency in Corpus 2

%1 and %2 values show relative frequencies in the texts.

+ indicates overuse in O1 relative to O2

- indicates underuse in O1 relative to O2

Now that we have examined the overall of distribution of self-mentions in three corpora, let us look at the distribution of the items of self-mentions in the corpora in concern. A quick look at the table enabled us to claim that the pronoun *I* was employed as the most frequent item in CAAW and CTAWA with a frequency of 1081 and 683, respectively, while the pronoun *we* was the mostly applied item in CTAWT. In a study, Hyland (2001) found that the pronouns *I* and *we* were the most frequented items of self-mentions. Apparently, AAW and TAWA employed this item to explicitly construct their stance while TAWT preferred a way of stance-taking by establishing solidarity with their supervisors with the employment of *we*. Hyland (2005b) claims, the choice of explicit form of stance-taking is a conscious choice shaped by disciplinary conventions. It seems that the disciplinary conventions of the fields related to English Language in Turkish context shows a marked preference of implicit stance-taking. Akbaş (2014) found that Turkish academic authors of English followed a more objective and distant ways of stance-taking with the employment of passive structures rather than the use of personal pronouns Another point is that *we* was applied more frequently by CTAWA (f= 192) than CAAW (f=92), which may be an indicative of following a specific cultural linguistic convention for CTAWA. The pronoun *my* was mostly preferred by CAAW with a frequency of 291 whereas it was

observed in 63 and 17 in CTAWA and CTAWT, respectively. The pronoun *our* was seen more frequently in CAAW (f= 118) compared to CTAWA (f= 39) and CTAWT (f= 55). The pronouns *mine* and *us* were the least frequented items in all corpora. The items *the author*, *the author's*, *the writer* and *the writer's* were not found in three corpora. These items may be not be considered as a powerful means of projecting authorial stance by these academic writers. Ivanic (1998) states that authors develop a discursual self to distinguish themselves from the other members of their community.

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Self-mentions in Three Corpora

Self-mentions	CAAW		CTAWA		CTAWT	
	n	n/100	n	n/100	n	n/100
I	1081	0.5	683	0.2	38	0.01
we (exclusive)	92	0.04	192	0.08	95	0.04
me	71	0.03	9	0.0	0	0.0
my	291	0.1	63	0.02	17	0.0
our	118	0.05	39	0.01	55	0.02
mine	2	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
us	0	0.0	43	0.0	13	0.0
the author	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
the author's	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
the writer	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
the writer's	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Overall, the pronoun *I* and *we* were the most frequented items that academic writers in concern utilized to manifest their stance in their doctoral dissertations. Now let us move on to examine how identities created by *I* and *we*. As mentioned in the methodology section, the categorization of first person pronouns suggested by Tang and John (1999) was utilized.

- **I as the representative:** This identity is usually achieved by the employment of *we* and *us* to communicate with a larger member of disciplines. In the examples below, we clearly witnessed the writers' attempt to present themselves as a member of their disciplines. Additionally, they reduced the risks of objection of their claims by inhabiting this role.

“As in claims about Evidence, the CCSI does not elaborate on how they determined these standards could apply equally well to all students; all **we** know is that no exemptions from the standards will be needed.” (CAAW 3).

“The reality is that the dreams of the past are the reality of today, but today **we** have dreams, too.” (CTAWT 11)

“**We** know that with pronominal possessors we get ambiguity even though the binders are not clausemate (44-45): a proper case would be to put the pronominal possessor within the object in a complement clause.” (CTAWA 3)

- **I as the guide through the essay:** This role assists writers to direct their readers to a particular proposition while remaining distant from it. Especially in doctoral dissertations which include a great deal of information, it is essential for writers to hold this role to draw their readers' attention to a specific information. By doing so, they left their readers with their dissertations to convince them about their claims and views.

“Let **us** return, in closing, to the image of Ruskin sitting in his turret at Brantwood, perceiving the “storm-cloud” on the horizon.” (CAAW 2)

“Before proceeding with the awareness and acknowledgement of the suprasegmental phenomenon by eminent linguists of later decades, **we** must first examine how this concept of “segmental vs. suprasegmental contrast” emerged from the basic schools of linguistics and their representatives.” (CTAWA 8)

“However, Maling notes, forward Gapping is possible in all four of them, where the second occurrence of fuhr is deleted. However, **we** see the opposite fact.” (CTAWA 5)

- **I as the architect of the essay:** Academic writers sometimes utilize the first person *I* to organize and to outline their texts. This role is prominent in this genre since it consists of many chapters. In our corpus, this role was mostly recognized in CAAW and CTAWA. TAWA appeared to hold this role pragmatically appropriate as AAW do. On the contrary, TAWT frequently utilized nouns (*study, research, section, chapter, etc.*) to organize their dissertations as shown in the last example. Simply put, their notion of stance in academic writing was rested on impersonality for TAWT.

“As **I** will discuss, one has only to compare the vitality of a bodega to the sterility of a big-box store to recognize that the U.S. has much to gain by considering other community models: family vs. money; art vs. money; community vs. money.” (CAAW 4)

“In Chapter 2, **I** present a set of observations regarding NN%Ns2 in Turkish and the behavior of the compound marker that is uniquely marked compound-finally.” (CTAWA 7)

“Since **this study** concerns itself with British fiction only, **I** will first give a short description of the political, economic conditions that needs to be seen in connection with the new sexual individual, that is, the female subjects, in the postmodern novel.” (CTAWT 9).

“**This section of the chapter** provides information regarding the participants’ demographic characteristics in terms of their gender, age, the universities they received their M.A. degrees, their jobs, the universities they graduated from or are still continuing their studies there, teaching experience, and types of schools they are teaching.” (CTAWT 6)

- **I as the recounter of the research process:** Writers explain the steps of research process by applying this role. This role was not frequently applied by CTAWT whereas it was seen frequently in CAAW and CTAWA. TAWT mostly disguised their presence with the use of passives to achieve objectivity as can be understood from the second example.

“After **I** have completed a research matrix with my students, I then model how I would use the information in the matrix to determine a thesis statement and an outline.” (CAAW 7)

“By utilizing the audacity programs, neospeech program, and text to speech labs, **it is also hoped that** they can create their own instructional materials by themselves.” (CTAWT 8)

“After confirming that these structures are islands (based on the average of the grades all the consultants gave), **I** asked the same consultants to judge sluicing and fragment answers out of islands.” (CTAWA 5)

- **I as the opinion holder:** This role involves sharing an opinion, view or attitude based on known information or established facts. Seemingly, writers held this role to persuade their readers about the truth of their claims with regard to accepted facts in their discipline. To illustrate, in the last example, the writer expressed his claim towards an accepted fact found by Borer. Suffice us to add that, this identity was very scarce in CTAWT. The occurrences of this identity was only found in one dissertation in CTAWT.

“However, in light of the above arguments **I** would like to reject the notion that Holmes parts the veil of fog.” (CAAW 2)

“What **I** argue, on the other hand, is that the idea that the novelistic discourse stands independent from the rest of human activity is problematic.” (CTAWT 9)

“Following Borer (2003, 2012), **I** also claim that for true synthetic compounds like (2) to be possible, certain conditions need to be met.” (CTAWA 7)

- **I as the originator:** This role is considered to be the most powerful role in this categorization since it enables writers to present their new claims or views. This role was not held frequently by TAWT. The example below was the only instance of this role that was observed in CTAWT. TAWT mostly employed passive forms which reflect an ambiguous attribution of stance as claimed by Biber et al. (1999). Contrarily, AAW and TAWA frequently inhabited this role in their dissertations. This said, they clearly signaled their stance by originating new claims. This role is quite demanding because writers clearly expose their claims to their readers. However, a doctoral dissertation must be unique. Besides, it is a key for novice academic writers to get credibility in their disciplines. Thus, they need to be the originator of new claims and to contribute to the literature.

“Though of course these three arenas encompass a variety of very specific, historically contingent challenges, **I** feel this scope is justified because there are also ample continuities through all three settings.” (CAAW 1)

“**I** see in her the overcoming of the hesitations stemming from structural ideological issues that defined the woman author in the 1970s.” (CTAWT 9)

“**It would be also possible to** comment that although physical conditions and people profiles have that tendency which will lead the world towards a postmodern era, there is some kind of resistance coming from that static understanding that forces everything to be stuck in the age of the modern.” (CTAWT 11)

“**I** claim that the genitive case is responsible for triggering agreement in a local domain (the DP).” (CTAWA 5).

Overall, this study displays some differences in the employment of self-mentions in doctoral dissertations written by TAWT, TAWA and AAW. We observed some cultural linguistic conventions inhabited by TAWT that are quite different from the linguistic conventions used by AAW. TAWT brought an impersonal and objective identity into their doctoral dissertations whereas AAW explicitly mitigated their stance by applying self-mentions frequently. TAWA seemed to adopt the conventions of their disciplines in American context but the significant underuse of self-mentions by them compared to

AAW showed us that they still held cultural linguistic conventions. The present study also figured out different kinds of identities maintained with the use of first person pronouns.

5. Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

This study intended to explore whether Turkish-speaking academic writers of English preserve their cultural conventions of the discipline to mitigate their stance even though they are surrounded by a native academic environment. Three corpora consisting of doctoral dissertations written by American academic writers (AAW), Turkish academic writers of English who earned their PhD in the USA (TAWA), and Turkish academic writers of English who did their PhD in Turkey (TAWT) were compared regarding the use of self-mentions.

Apparently, TAWT tended to avoid using self-mentions in their doctoral dissertations. CAAW showed the highest frequency of self-mentions. TAWA employed self-mentions more frequently than TAWT but less frequently than AAW. *I* and *we* were the most frequented items of self-mentions in three corpora. The results of LL statistics proved statistical differences in three corpora regarding the use of self-mentions. Overall, the results enabled us to claim that TAWA employed the linguistic conventions of AAW but sometimes they could not avoid projecting themselves by holding the cultural conventions of their discipline. As Hyland (2001) claims academic communities have different expectations and linguistic norms. Thus, it is not surprising for TAWA to adopt the conventions of AAW as they were interacting with native academic readers in their discipline. Additionally, their success in constructing themselves as competent members of this native academic community depends on how efficiently they demonstrate their individual contribution to this community.

Additionally, different kinds of identities achieved with the employment of first person pronouns were revealed in this study. Three groups of writers used *we* and *us* to direct their readers to a particular proposition. TAWA and AAW chose to apply first person pronouns to organize their dissertations, to explain the research process and to present their opinions and claims but TAWT adopted their stance on the basis of modesty and impersonality by using passive forms and nouns.

In the light of the findings of this study we can claim that the perennial source of TAWT is that they denied the ownership of their claims with the eradication of their presence in their doctoral dissertations. Their employment of self-mentions showed us that they were in disguise and created a distance from their texts and readers. However, it is widely accepted that the use of self-mentions in academic genres assists academic writers to project themselves effectively and to promote personal credibility in their discipline.

In Turkish context, academic courses are mostly dealt with at the surface level. In other words, they offer conservative cultural patterns in academic writing rather than teaching pragmatic roles of these patterns on the construction of stance and negotiation with readers. In addition, since English is the medium of instruction in academic writing, these courses should also move beyond the cultural linguistic conventions and provide the conventions of native academic community. Hyland (2001) claims that academic students need to be aware of the linguistic conventions of their disciplines. Therefore, the main focus of EAP (English for Academic Purposes) courses must be to implement methods to raise students' awareness. Hyland (2005a) suggests a particular method called *Rhetorical Consciousness Raising Method*. As for the material covered in these courses, corpus linguistics can be considered as an appropriate source. Can (2012)

suggests the use of a stance corpus compiled from the studies of scholars to enhance students' academic writing skills.

The self-mentions choice of TAWT showed that Turkish-speaking academic writers of English need to display their stance more explicitly in their academic texts to exist in the universal academic world. Simply put, our better understanding of the identity roles held by the use of self-mentions can pave the way for success in becoming competent in our disciplines. Hence, academic writing courses need to raise our rhetorical awareness of appropriate use of self-mentions to mitigate authorial stance in academic texts. To achieve this awareness, we mainly need to analyze native samples and create our own texts.

This study was limited to employment of self-mentions in doctoral dissertations. Thus, it would be wrong to generalize our claims to all Turkish-speaking academic writers of English and to all academic genres. A further study could assess the distribution of each identity role inhabited by first-person pronouns. The comparison of different genres regarding the distribution of these identities might be a fruitful area of work.

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