

# Navigating Scientific Discourse: The Co-Construction Of Voice In Second Language Academic Writing

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**Abstract:** This literature review examines authorial voice construction in academic writing, focusing on challenges faced by second language (L2) writers, particularly Uzbek students. Voice, a multidimensional concept encompassing individual, social, and dialogic aspects, remains crucial yet problematic in academic discourse. The study addresses two research questions: identifying features contributing to voice construction and factors influencing voice presentation. Through critical analysis of empirical studies, the review examines Hyland's (2008) interaction model, which identifies stance and engagement as voice components realized through linguistic features including hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mention, reader pronouns, and directives. However, findings reveal limitations of sentence-level approaches, highlighting the importance of broader discursive features such as rhetorical moves, citations, and content knowledge. The dialogic perspective demonstrates that voice is co-constructed between writers and readers, with readers' interpretations playing crucial roles. Voice presentation is influenced by disciplinary conventions, genre expectations, and cultural-linguistic backgrounds. Soft sciences employ more interactional markers than hard sciences. L2 writers face unique challenges due to different rhetorical traditions between their L1 and English. The relationship between voice and writing quality remains contested, with studies showing mixed results. The review concludes with pedagogical implications, recommending explicit voice instruction through audience awareness activities, comparative text analysis, and reflective journaling, while acknowledging voice development as a complex, time-dependent process requiring disciplinary experience.

**Keywords:** Authorial voice, academic writing, L2 writers, stance and engagement, discourse community, Uzbek students, writing pedagogy.

**Introduction:** Academic knowledge results from the process of convincing people (Hyland & Jiang, 2018). Social interactions within a discipline occur through different modes, with academic writing being one of them (Mur-Duenas, 2011). Academic writing plays a crucial role in students' successful performance at universities, as it is one of the most commonly used assessment types to determine students' knowledge and understanding of a subject. However, it can be a challenging skill to acquire since tacit knowledge is involved (Elton, 2010). Academic writing may be even more challenging for writers who use English as a second language (L2). As L2 students typically have different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, they might lack confidence in presenting an appropriate

voice in their texts. Since academic writing is often considered impersonal and formal, L2 students tend to decrease their voice (Hyland, 2002). This tendency partially stems from teachers' warnings against using voice features such as personal pronouns, which may convey unwelcome impressions of the writer in academic discourse.

Furthermore, most L2 writing courses considered voice beyond the grasp of L2 writers; therefore, voice was excluded from their curricula and writing instructions altogether (Zhao, 2017). Research has found that L2 students tend to hide their voice in their writings (Le Ha, 2009; Jiang, 2015; Hyland, 2002). Consequently, their writing generally sounds impersonal and contains only the ideas of others. However, academic writing is

not exclusively about presenting others' ideas but also about self-representation (Hyland, 2002). Readers are interested not only in what others believe but also in what the authors believe and why authors make specific claims. Recent studies have shown that these factors provide greater credibility to academic papers (Hyland, 2008). Furthermore, the presentation of voice may have a positive impact on the overall quality of writing (Zhao, 2017).

However, developing voice in academic writing is typically a challenging task (John, 2012; Ryanti, 2015), particularly for writers who use English as a second language (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Jwa, 2018; Peng, 2012; Zhao, 2013). Research has found that L2 writers have vague ideas about the role of voice in academic writing, as they have not been taught how to present it appropriately. While they are usually warned about negative consequences of using some voice features such as self-mention (Mur-Duenas, 2011), they are highly unlikely to be aware of other features of voice (Javdan, 2014; Morton & Storch, 2018; Ryanti, 2015).

Over recent years, the number of Uzbek students who want to pursue degrees in English-speaking countries has significantly grown (Ruziev & Burkhanov, 2018). Most of them have not been taught how to present voice in academic writings. Therefore, they are more likely to receive lower grades at foreign universities (Ruziev & Burkhanov, 2018). While L2 Uzbek students may have problems with fluency and accuracy, this does not mean they lack voice. As Matsuda (2001) stated, different languages might have different voice features. Since the syntactical and lexical systems of the Uzbek language differ from English, Uzbek L2 students may not be aware of which features contribute to their voice in academic writing. Since voice is highly valued in academic writing, it is significant for Uzbek students to identify which linguistic features may contribute to the construction of voice in academic writing.

Thus, this review attempts to identify which linguistic features may construct an authorial voice in academic writing. The identification of voice markers may be useful for L2 students who typically struggle to present appropriate voice in academic texts. Moreover, it may be helpful for L2 teachers to recognize how certain linguistic features contribute to the construction of the author's voice in texts. This will be beneficial for providing specific suggestions on the voice presentation practices of their students. Furthermore, this study gains a better understanding of voice in academic writing by demonstrating the factors that may influence the presentation of voice in academic writing. Finally, it will offer pedagogical implications for teaching voice in the L2 classroom.

This study is a literature review of existing empirical studies on voice, and it aims to identify which linguistic and discursive features contribute to or have a role in the construction of voice in academic writing. The current review will critically analyze the studies concerned with voice in academic writing. The linguistic and discursive features that the reviewed studies found as elements of voice will be presented and discussed in this review. Furthermore, it will attempt to identify the factors that may have an influence on the construction of voice in academic writing.

The research questions are as follows:

What are the features that may contribute to the construction of authorial voice in academic writing?

What factors may influence the presentation of an authorial voice in academic writing?

### **Definition of voice**

Over the last three decades, the notion of voice has received increasing academic interest in academic writing. Although the construction of voice in academic texts is deemed crucial (Hyland & Guinda, 2012; Matsuda, 2001; Peng, 2019; Stock & Eik-Nes, 2016), there has not been consensus on the definition of voice. Atkinson (2001) stated that "voice is a devilishly difficult term to define" (p.110). Generally, voice is regarded as the presentation of one's opinions in the text (Bakhtin, 1986; Javdan, 2014; Hyland & Guinda, 2012; Stock & Eik-Nes, 2016), the construction of one's identity through dialogue between readers and the writer (Jwa, 2018; Matsuda, 2001; Peng, 2019; Tardy, 2012b), an author's visibility in the text (John, 2012), or an individual and authentic point of an author (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999). A key reason for the different opinions is that voice has attracted academic interest from different perspectives and different disciplines (Stock & Eik-Nes, 2016). According to Hirvela and Belcher (2001), voice has become an umbrella term meaning different things.

Early definitions of voice emphasized the unique and individual aspects of voice, which were subsequently challenged by many researchers (Matsuda, 2001). Initially, voice was regarded as an author's personality, which existed outside of a discourse (Coles, 1988, as cited in Matsuda, 2015). Therefore, voice research was sometimes limited to the analysis of first-person pronouns in the text (Javdan, 2014; Hyland & Guinda, 2012; Stock & Eik-Nes, 2016). Writers' voice was regarded as the projected self, which reflected honesty and accuracy of self-representation, and some researchers emphasized the authenticity of voice as a sine qua non of successful writing (Coles & Vopat, 1985, as cited in Matsuda, 2015). Early definitions of voice

continued to have significant influence on studies, probably due to their intuitive appeal (Matsuda, 2015; Matsuda & Jeffery, 2012; Stock & Eik-Nes, 2016). However, observers have noticed a gradual shift away from individualized to social and dialogic dimensions of voice, which is regarded as more than a representation of one's personality (Hyland & Sancho-Guinda, 2012; Stock & Eik-Nes, 2016; Tardy, 2012a).

Voice has been shown to have three dimensions: individual, social, and dialogic (Javdan, 2014; Canagarajah, 2015; Stock & Eik-Nes, 2016; Tardy, 2012a). Depending on these dimensions, scholars have viewed the notion of voice variously, making the sophisticated nature of voice difficult to understand and present. In the next sections of the paper, each view will be briefly presented.

From the first dimension, voice is referred to as a portrayal of an author's self in the text (Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999; Elbow, 1994). Based on the western ideology of individualism, Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999) highlighted that every writer has a unique voice that distinguishes the author's own opinions from voices used as evidence in the text. More specifically, voice can vary depending on different situations and different goals (Elbow, 1994). From this perspective, voice is referred to as the representation of one's personality in the text, which is mainly shown by using first-person pronouns (Tardy, 2012a).

From the second dimension, voice is regarded as bounded within its discipline (Hyland, 2002, 2008; Pho, 2008). Hyland (2008) stated that a writer would choose different self-representations from their language repertoire that align with their discourse community. Furthermore, Hyland (2008) claims that voice is more social than personal. However, this does not indicate that these studies remove the specific dimension of voice; rather, they identify some boundaries of voice within disciplines (Hyland, 2012). From this dimension, voice is viewed as the writer's position on the topic associated with stance and engagement, which will be discussed in this paper in more detail later. Voice, then, is not merely the use of personal pronouns; instead, it is an attempt to establish a conversation with readers.

From the third dimension, voice is described as dialogic and is co-constructed between a writer and a reader (Jwa, 2018; Matsuda & Tardy, 2012a; Zhao, 2017). Matsuda (2001) defines voice as the integrated result of "the use of discursive and non-discursive features" which language users select intentionally from their stable or developing "repertoire" (p. 40). However, those deliberately chosen discursive features for presenting voice may be interpreted by the reader in an unpredictable way (Zhao, 2017). In other words, the

identity the writer intends to project may sometimes be received differently by the reader. It is, therefore, connected with concepts like autobiographic self, identity, and sometimes culture.

### Hyland's (2008) Interaction Model

Voice in academic writing can be identified by several linguistic features that have a high possibility of co-occurrence. Studies have found different linguistic features that may contribute to voice construction. However, a significant number of studies attempted to shed light on the construction of voice in academic writing by using Hyland's (2008) interaction model as an analytical tool. Therefore, it may be useful to describe this model first.

Hyland's (2008) interaction model emphasizes social aspects of voice, which indicates voice as authors' representation in the text as members of a particular discourse community. Hyland states that authors achieve voice through the ways they position themselves in their discourse community. According to this model, voice is constructed between writers and readers, and therefore, interaction between writers and readers is significant for voice construction. Interaction is achieved by employing stance and engagement in academic writing; both are determining factors of voice in academic writing (Hyland, 2008). Stance indicates the writer's opinions and judgments, whereas engagement refers to the interaction of the writer with the readers (Hyland, 2008). The former is writer-oriented, whereas the latter is reader-oriented (Hyland, 2008).

### Stance

Stance is regarded as the writer's textual voice, which demonstrates how writers position themselves toward members of their discourse community through their evaluations and opinions. Stance may illustrate what authors believe, what they value, and how they position themselves toward the information (Lancaster, 2016). Besides, it may demonstrate the author's level of confidence or uncertainty over their claims (Hyland, 2008; Jiang, 2015). Although stance is regarded as one component of voice (Hyland & Guinda, 2012; Thompson, 2012), these two terms are often used interchangeably in studies (Jiang, 2015, 2017; Pho, 2008; Stock & Eik-Nes, 2016).

Stance can be seen through the following linguistic features in the text: hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mention (Hyland, 2008). Hedges are lexical devices that allow writers to express their ideas not as facts, but rather as opinions (Hyland, 2008; Thompson, 2012). They may indicate that claims are based on particular reasons rather than academic knowledge. Unlike hedges, boosters demonstrate the

authors' confidence and authority in what they stated (Lancaster, 2016). Sometimes, boosters may reveal an author's lack of experience in the discourse community. Also, they may sometimes indicate authors as overconfident and even dogmatic (Hyland, 2008; Jiang, 2017). Attitude markers are tools that demonstrate an author's emotional attitude to the information, projecting surprise, disagreement, significance, or dissatisfaction (Hyland, 2008; Jiang, 2017). Self-mention usually refers to authors mentioning themselves by using first-person pronouns or possessive adjectives to demonstrate information (Hyland, 2002).

### Engagement

Engagement represents how writers engage their readers in the text as participants of the discourse community (Hyland, 2008). Engagement is realized by reader pronouns, directives, questions, and personal asides (Hyland, 2008). Questions allow readers to feel a sense of closeness with an author (Hyland, 2008). Questions may play a significant role in engagement with readers by enabling them to act as participants, not just readers (Hyland, 2008). Directives are frequently presented through the use of imperatives and obligatory modals to guide or instruct the readers. Also, the author's engagement with readers may be achieved by using reader pronouns.

As mentioned above, various linguistic features were identified as elements of voice in academic writing. The majority of studies used Hyland's (2008) interaction model as a framework (Yoon, 2017; Pho, 2008; Flottum, 2006; Hyland, 2012). Some of the reviewed studies attempted to investigate all linguistic features mentioned in Hyland's (2008) interaction model (Zhao, 2013; Fogal, 2019), while others examined certain linguistic features of the model (Flottum, 2006; Hyland, 2012). A surprisingly large amount of research on voice concerned only first-person pronouns and hedges. In the next sections, these two features of voice will be discussed as studies interpreted their findings more comprehensively concerning these features.

### Self-mention

There are different views on the relationship between authorial voice and the use of first-person pronouns. On the one hand, Lores-Sanz (2011) claimed that first-person pronouns could help authors develop a "credible image" (p.174). Similarly, Stotesbury (2006) also considered these pronouns as an indication of a strong voice. Pho (2008) also stated that authors use first-person pronouns for self-promotion and to take responsibility for their claims. On the other hand, Hewings and Coffin (2007) believed that using personal pronouns shapes a less powerful, authoritative voice,

as it may invite readers to disagree and have discussions with an author. According to Hewings and Coffin (2007), using personal pronouns would invite readers to argue with writers, whereas avoiding personal pronouns allows writers to present ideas as the ideas of other authoritative members of the community.

According to Tang and John (1999), writers may play different roles by using first-person pronouns in the text. Tang and John (1999) analyzed 27 first-year undergraduate students' writings in Singapore. The study was interested in how first-year students create an identity for themselves by using first-person pronouns. The study distinguished five types of voice (representative, guide, architect, recounter, and originator). It was found that students used first-person pronouns for guiding in the introductions of their essays. Students did use personal pronouns for creating representative, guide, and architect identity. However, they did not use them for recounter or originator identity. Similarly, Ramoroka (2017) also found that students might use first-person pronouns in their assignments for guiding the reader. These results demonstrate that self-mention is an essential feature of voice in the text. However, members of the discourse community may use self-mention for different purposes. For example, Gillaerts et al. (2010) stated that first-person pronouns might be used in the discussion part of research articles to increase the presence of the author as an originator and arguer of ideas.

First-person pronouns are shown to be the most investigated features of voice in academic writing. As Hyland (2002) stated, these types of pronouns are the most obvious linguistic features that represent the author's presence in the text. While some researchers focused exclusively on the use of personal pronouns in academic writing (Nunn, 2008; Stotesbury, 2006), others investigated them along with other linguistic features (Flottum, 2006; Hyland, 2008; Zhao, 2013). Nevertheless, concluding voice in academic writing based on its one feature may result in misconceptions and misunderstanding about the importance of the concept. Furthermore, it may confuse new members of academic discourse about whether to use personal pronouns in their academic texts.

### Hedges

Similar to first-person pronouns, the influence of hedges in the construction of authorial voice has caused confusion in academic writing. On the one hand, some studies found the lack of hedges as an indicator of a powerful authorial voice. For example, Pho (2008), who compared voice construction in



research articles in two different disciplines, mentioned that hedges and modal verbs might weaken the author's voice and present the authors as far less confident about their research findings. On the other hand, some studies regarded the scarcity of hedges as an indicator of assertiveness and overconfidence. For example, Jwa (2018) claimed that lack of hedges would demonstrate authors as too confident and assertive. Examining L2 Korean students' voice construction in a US college writing context, the study compared the voice that the student wanted to project in the text to the voice that readers received from the text. It was found that the student's insufficient use of hedges made readers identify her voice as too assertive. It can be concluded that hedges may indicate both weak and strong authorial voice in texts depending on the level of experience of the authors in the discourse community.

Similarly, Thompson (2012) found that hedging may serve different functions in different situations. On the one hand, he argued that hedging reduces the strength of voice and mitigates claims. However, on the other hand, hedging is a useful way for writers to acknowledge the contribution of researchers to the field and show respect toward those members (Thompson, 2012). He investigated doctoral students' constructions of voice and found that hedging might be considered differently in the text. When researchers stated their contributions to the field, the abundance of hedging demonstrated the authors as less confident. However, when researchers stated previous research, the abundance of hedging demonstrated the authors as respectful to the works of other researchers (Thompson, 2012).

#### **Limitations of Hyland's Interaction Model**

So far, we have illustrated studies that used Hyland's interaction model or set predefined linguistic features of voice. While this model has significantly contributed to obtaining insights into the sentence-level linguistic features of voice, it failed to take into account other features of voice that may be embedded in a broader scope of the text (Zhao, 2012). As Matsuda and Tardy (2007) claimed, voice cannot only be manifested by identifying sentence-level linguistic features of the text. Voice can be understood by analyzing the whole structure of the text (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007). Some studies, therefore, aimed to identify features of voice by analyzing the whole structure of texts (Dressen-Hammouda, 2014; Fogal, 2019; Jwa, 2018; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007, 2009; Morton & Storch, 2018; Tardy, 2012b). These studies did not use frameworks that offer pre-defined features of voice. Based on the dialogic aspect of voice, some of these studies found the discursive and non-discursive features of voice

(Matsuda & Tardy, 2007, 2009), while others identified linguistic features of voice (Dressen-Hammouda, 2014; Morton & Storch, 2018). In the next two sections of the review, the results of these studies will be presented.

#### **The Significance of the Reader in the Construction of Voice**

From the dialogic perspective, voice is viewed as a co-constructed notion that happens between readers and writers (Jwa, 2018; Matsuda & Tardy, 2012a; Zhao, 2017). The voice of the writers should be negotiated by the readers (Jwa, 2018; Matsuda & Tardy, 2012a; Zhao, 2017). As Matsuda (2001) explains, voice is generated through the synthesis of different features that writers draw from their existing though continually evolving linguistic resources. However, what those features are and how they contribute to voice construction between readers and writers are not easy questions to answer (Peng, 2019). Matsuda and Tardy (2007) pioneered investigations into the dialogic dimension of voice. Focusing on the influence of readers in the establishment of voice, the researchers examined how readers develop the voice of a manuscript's author in a blind peer review. Two reviewers were asked to evaluate the manuscript without knowing the identity of the author. The reviewers identified the author's experience in the discourse community, gender, and race. The researchers were interested in what features helped the readers develop the voice of the author. It was found that the reviewers were influenced by the author's breadth of knowledge, syntax, the scope of the manuscript, rhetorical moves/representation of the field, citations, and other discursual features of voice while evaluating the manuscript. The study concluded that both content and language were necessary for the negotiation of the author's voice (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007). However, the results of the study may not be generalizable as the study was a case study based on interviews with only two reviewers.

Matsuda and Tardy (2009) surveyed which discursive and non-discursive features help readers develop the writer's voice. Seventy editors from six journals in the fields of applied linguistics and rhetoric and composition participated. By sending online close-ended questions to editors, the study found that self-citation, references, and an author's stance helped develop a writer's identity. Also, the reviewers were concerned with whether writers follow conventions of the discourse. The study concluded that linguistic features might be less significant than rhetorical and content features for constructions of the author's voice (Matsuda & Tardy, 2009). The study suggested that readers establish the author's voice through rhetorical task, the position of the readers, and following the values in their discourse community (Matsuda & Tardy,

2009). However, the survey contained close-ended questions, which may have directed the reviewers or controlled their answers.

Another research that focused on the reader's perspective on the construction of voice was conducted by Morton and Storch (2018). The researchers investigated how readers constructed the writers' voice from the text. The study involved the following process: First, three L2 writers' initial and final drafts of PhD theses were evaluated by five reviewers, then followed by interviews with supervisors. The study found that the readers' linguistic background affected their construction of students' voice (Morton & Storch, 2018). The research found the following features of voice: first-person pronouns, linguistic background and specialization, and individual creativity of the authors.

From the findings of these studies, it can be seen that the context and discipline where the text is unfolded has a vital role in the construction of voice in academic writing (Hyland, 2002, 2008; Pho, 2008; Morton & Storch, 2018). Hyland (2008) states that just as one's clothes and speech may indicate their social class, similarly, a writer chooses different self-representations from their language repertoire that align with their discourse community (Hyland, 2008). In the next parts of the paper, the factors that may influence the writer's voice will be discussed.

### Disciplinary Voices

A significant number of studies endeavored to explore why writers present their voice differently in texts. It was found that the genre and discipline of the texts, linguistic and cultural background of writers, and other social dimensions of voice may contribute to different presentations of voice. These differences will be analyzed in the next sections.

There is a link between the writer's voice and their engagement with the discourse community. As one learns more about the conventions of their discourse community, they start presenting a more acceptable voice (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007). Both Hyland (2005) and Flottum (2006) investigated the role of discipline in the construction of a writer's voice in the text. Flottum (2006) investigated how voice is constructed in scientific articles from three different disciplines written in three different languages. He found that the impact of discipline was stronger than language. Hyland (2005) examined 240 research articles from eight different fields by utilizing the interactional model as a framework. It was found that linguistic features of voice were used differently in different fields. Interactional markers, such as hedging, were more frequent in soft sciences than hard sciences. Hyland

(2005) explained that the differences were due to the different nature and audience of the disciplines. For example, owing to the cumulative nature of Economics, research articles in Economics focused on making new knowledge. Therefore, they tended to avoid hedging to make strong claims. However, scientists interpreted previous findings in their discipline. To follow the ethics of academia and to be accepted safely by their colleagues, they used hedging extensively (Hyland, 2005).

Similarly, by using Hyland's (2004) interaction model for analysis, Ramoroka (2017) investigated corpus-based research on 40 student essays in Media Studies and Primary Education in Botswana. It was found that students in Media Studies used interactional features in their essays more than students in Primary Education. The study conducted interviews with the students and their lecturers to understand why students used linguistic features of voice differently in their essays. The reason for these variations was different expectations, values, and beliefs of the members of their discourse community (Ramoroka, 2017). In other words, the students followed their lecturers' instructions on the use of interactional markers of voice, such as the use of personal pronouns. The lecturers of Media Studies did not discourage their students from using personal pronouns. They encouraged them to present their opinions and views on issues in their field. However, using personal pronouns was considered unacceptable and unprofessional in academic writing by the lecturers of Primary Education (Ramoroka, 2017).

Both Stotesbury (2006) and Pho (2008) investigated writers' voice in research abstracts in different disciplines. Stotesbury (2006) focused on the authorial voice in research article abstracts in humanities and natural sciences. The study found more linguistic features of voice in humanities than natural sciences. Based on Swales's (1990) move analysis as a framework, Pho (2008) conducted a corpus-based textual analysis of 30 research article abstracts in applied linguistics and educational technology. However, the study found little difference in the use of linguistic features of voice in these fields (Pho, 2008). This may be because the study considered only personal pronouns as voice markers.

To sum up, discipline is one of the factors for different presentations of authorial voice. The discipline may recognize and encourage its members to present a specific kind of voice. To be acceptable and recognizable by their discourse community, writers may present voice that aligns with their discourse community (Hyland & Jiang, 2018; Le Ha, 2009). However, the studies usually examined differences in

research articles in different fields; the differences would be more distinguishable if they focused on disciplinary voices of other genres too. Even though these findings show that discipline may influence the presentation of voice, there may be other factors that may change the authors' voice in academic writing.

### Genre and Voice

The genre of a text may be another factor that influences how authors present their voice in academic writing (Stock & Eik-Nes, 2016). As genre concerns the purpose of the text, it may have an impact on the writer's voice (Stock & Eik-Nes, 2016). Surprisingly, fewer studies investigated the relationship between genre and voice. Bondi (2012) examined writers' voice in different genres to identify how different genres can influence voice. He compared the authors' voice in textbooks and journal articles. It was found that writers presented voice differently in two different genres. In textbooks, authors projected the voice of recounter and interpreter, whereas in journal articles, writers showed the voice of arguer. Academic arguer's voice was missing in textbooks. The reason for these differences was the different purposes and audiences of the two genres. Textbooks are usually written for students to guide them and interpret difficult concepts, whereas journal articles are written for members of the discourse community for positioning new knowledge in the field (Bondi, 2012). Kuhl and Behnam (2011) also examined voice in two different genres. They found different presentations of voice in research articles and textbooks (Kuhl & Behnam, 2011). However, how the genre influences the voice of the author was not explained in this study. This may be due to the different primary purpose of the study.

### The Influence of Language and Culture on the Construction of Voice

Even in the same discipline and genre, voice may be developed differently because of the linguistic and cultural background of writers. The values of culture will be reflected in the language. For example, Western cultures may value individualism, while Asian cultures value collectivism. Moreover, the linguistic features that identify the writer's voice may be different in different languages. Several studies investigated the relationship between cultural and linguistic background of writers and their construction of voice in academic writing (Çandarlı et al., 2015; Lores-Sanz, 2011; Matsuda, 2001; Mur-Duenas, 2007; Shen, 1998).

Whether a language of the text is the writer's native or non-native language also has influence on the level of authorial voice in texts. For example, Lores-Sanz (2011), who investigated whether the same writers show the same voice in their first and second language,

found that in the same discipline, voice can be different because of the different linguistic background of the authors. The study examined research articles in the field of Business Management written by native and non-native writers of English and Spanish. It was found that authorial presence was more visible in the articles written by native writers in both languages (Lores-Sanz, 2011). Similarly, Matsuda (2001) claimed that voice is hard to be projected by L2 writers, not because they present their voice differently in their first language (L1).

Matsuda (2001) contends that the evidence that L2 writers have difficulties presenting their voice in the text does not mean they do not show voice in their first language. She argues that Japanese learners have difficulties projecting their voice because the linguistic features that project voice in Japanese are absent in English. However, Shen (1998) believes that sometimes voice can be cross-culturally different. He investigated Chinese and English readers' expectations from writers. He found that writers are required to be more straightforward in English. However, Chinese writers are valued if they sound more vague and mysterious.

Also, Mur-Duenas (2007) investigated the cross-cultural voice construction of researchers from the same discipline. She compared research articles in Business Management written in Spanish and English. Within the same discipline, the researchers presented different authorial voices. More use of self-citations and personal pronouns was found in English articles than Spanish. The use of these features was considered an authority of writers over their research in English. However, in Spanish, it was considered negative politeness toward the academic audience (Mur-Duenas, 2007). The study concluded that voice might vary because of the linguistic and cultural context where the text unfolded (Mur-Duenas, 2007). One limitation of the study was that it did not take into account whether writers were novice researchers or experienced. Like many other studies, it measured authorial voice only by the use of self-citation and personal pronouns.

Similar research was conducted by Çandarlı et al. (2015), who examined how L1 and L2 may influence the construction of students' voice in their essays. The study conducted a corpus-based textual analysis of argumentative essays written by monolingual English writers and Turkish writers. Furthermore, the study compared Turkish writers' essays on the same topic in Turkish. The study found that Turkish essays included substantially more authorial presence markers than other essays (Çandarlı et al., 2015). As can be concluded from the results of these studies, the social context of text has a significant influence on the writer's voice.

### The Influence of Voice on the Quality of Writing

Both Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) and Yoon (2019) found a limited relationship between the quality of writing and authorial voice. Criticizing the overemphasis on voice in L2 writing, Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) examined whether L2 writers' successful performance was connected with their establishment of voice in the text. They invited 65 participants (48 Chinese and 15 other than Chinese undergraduate students) who enrolled in the same course at a Canadian university to participate in their study. The participants were asked to write an argumentative essay, and then the students' voices were measured by Voice Intensity Rating Scale. The findings demonstrated no correlation between voice and high-quality writings (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003). These results cannot be generalized as the voice intensity scale was not created to measure voice (Matsuda & Jeffery, 2012).

However, similar results were found by Yoon (2017), who examined the relationship between textual voice elements and academic writing quality. By using Hyland's (2008) interaction model as a framework, this study analyzed undergraduate argumentative essays and found a limited relationship between voice and quality of essays. Both Yoon (2017) and Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) suggested that L2 writers should focus on their fluency and accuracy first. Once they achieve an advanced level of proficiency, then they may need discursive knowledge such as voice (Yoon, 2017). Though it was considered an essential feature in academic writing, both studies found that voice has no correlation with successful writing and greater numbers of voice elements in the text (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Yoon, 2019). The findings of these studies are meaningful when teaching L2 learners with low proficiency.

Zhao (2017), on the other hand, found that voice is a significant factor in academic writing quality. She endeavored to investigate the relationship between the presentation of voice and overall scores in the TOEFL test. The research found that voice was a considerable predictor of high TOEFL test scores. While individual voice had a moderate impact on the score when each essay was analyzed in isolation, it was found that framing ideas was the most significant factor for success (Zhao, 2017). Similarly, Tardy and Matsuda (2007) investigated the importance of voice in manuscripts, which were regarded as high-stakes writing. It was shown that voice played a significant role in the reviewers' overall assessment (Tardy & Matsuda, 2007).

### L2 Writers' Struggles with Presenting Voice

Both Canagarajah (2015) and Le Ha (2009) investigated Master students' struggles with presenting community-acceptable and recognizable voice in academic writing. Both studies used narrative inquiry tradition. While Canagarajah (2015) focused on how he dealt with issues of his student, Le Ha (2009) tried not to victimize her student's individualized identity for traditions of the discourse community. The researcher was the supervisor of an L2 master student (Arianto) who had a Chinese background and grew up in Indonesia. Arianto had vague ideas about the ways of presenting his voice in academic writing. Holding different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, Arianto wanted to feel ownership of his ideas in writing; at the same time, he was ashamed of his cultural background. He considered that academic writing was about the presentation of professional knowledge in an impersonal and objective way. Thus, he tried to hide his opinions and beliefs in academic writing. By talking with his student about how voice is presented in academic writing, the researcher suggested that his student should respect the rules of the conventions of the discourse community but should not victimize his cultural values to be accepted by the members of the discourse community (Le Ha, 2009). While she encouraged the writer to respect the rules of the discourse, she also called on readers to respect the divergences of writers. In other words, the researcher considered writing as a site where there is a balance in power relations between one's identity and the rules of the discourse community (Le Ha, 2009).

Canagarajah (2015) focused on how to teach voice to a multilingual student from Japan. His student (Kyoto) was taking a second language writing course in the US context. He first found her voice less critical based on his stereotypes of Asian students. She struggled to criticize ideas because of her cultural background. Canagarajah (2015) viewed voice as the negotiation between readers and writers. He investigated research on himself by viewing himself as a reader of Kyoto's literacy autobiography. Through the help of the course and raising genre awareness, collaborative writing with peers, and getting feedback from the teacher (the researcher), Kyoto developed a voice over time. She developed a critical voice that was contradictory to her heritage identity (Canagarajah, 2015). The research showed that voice could be taught through carefully designed courses and step-by-step instructions from teachers.

The struggle in learning how to conceive voice in L2 writing is further emphasized by the study conducted



by Escobar and Fernández (2017), who tried to investigate how teaching voice explicitly may reduce tensions and struggles of writers and how it may increase their confidence in their writing. The researchers designed a course for helping students develop a stronger voice. The study involved 23 second-year students who enrolled in composition courses in an EFL context in Costa Rica. The participants of the research were taught lexical bundles, using hedges and boosters, and stance-taking strategies. After five months of exposure, the researchers surveyed the effectiveness of the course from the students and also analyzed the students' argumentative essays. The students found the course helpful, as the majority of them received higher grades from the subjects after this course. Although the students showed successful performance using these features in their essays, they still did not know how these features may be related to their voice in the essays (Escobar & Fernández, 2017).

### **Voice and L2 Writing**

There have been controversial debates on whether voice should be included in L2 writing pedagogy. One school of thought believes that voice is a significant part of writing; thus, it should be taught in the L2 classroom (Escobar & Fernández, 2017; Hyland, 2002; Matsuda, 2001; Zhao, 2017). In his study on L2 learners, Ivanic (2001) concluded that L2 learners need to be taught how to present their voice in academic writing. Similarly, Matsuda (2001) suggested that L2 learners' awareness of the writer's voice should be raised; they should be taught or familiarized with particular devices that enhance their author voice. However, another school of thought argues that voice is not necessary for L2 students, as they first need to learn how to deal with grammar and lexical competence (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Stapleton, 2002; Yoon, 2019).

Furthermore, acknowledging the importance of voice in academic writing, some researchers concluded that voice is not easily teachable and measurable (Morton & Storch, 2018; Sperling & Appleman, 2014). The voice of writers will develop over time as they gain more experience and knowledge of their discourse community (Morton & Storch, 2018; Sperling & Appleman, 2014). Cheung et al. (2016) considered authorial identity as a skill that one can develop over time rather than knowledge. Morton and Storch (2018) claimed that the authorial voice of writers evolves as students gain more knowledge of their discipline and expectations of their discourse community.

### **Implications for Teaching**

Although the complicated nature of voice may cause difficulties in teaching, this review believes that voice is

one of the missing aspects that writing teachers should consider in the L2 classroom in Uzbekistan. There are several cultural, linguistic, and other reasons for teaching voice in Uzbekistan. Like many Asian students, Uzbek students are likely to hide their voice in academic writing. Apart from that, Uzbek and English languages have different syntactic and grammatical systems; it may be challenging for L2 Uzbek students until they are explicitly taught how to present an appropriate voice in academic writing.

However, before teaching voice in academic writing, teachers themselves should gain insights into voice. Both Jeffery's (2010) survey of teachers and Mur-Duenas' (2007) interviews demonstrate that teachers still have different beliefs about voice. Most teachers are likely to believe that voice has to be authentic and original, which represents only individual aspects of voice (Jeffery, 2010). This causes many challenges for students. It is important for the higher education system of Uzbekistan to include the notion of voice in the syllabus of courses for future teachers of English language.

Teachers should raise learners' awareness of how to control their voice in the text (Tardy, 2012b). To this end, teachers may practice some classroom activities for raising students' awareness of the audience. For example, teachers may ask students to compare their impressions of the author by reading different texts (the texts may be both published or learners' texts). However, they should know about the author beforehand. After practicing this activity several times, they may be asked to compare their impressions about anonymous authors. Such activities may enable students to understand the role of readers in constructing voice. Additionally, teachers may encourage writing for different readers. This can be followed by anticipating the reactions of the audience.

The writing games suggested by Casanave (2002) may also be useful for teaching voice to L2 Uzbek students. For example, teachers may ask students to write a letter for different readers (such as to their friend, parents, teacher). This can be followed by anticipating the reactions of the audience. Students may be asked to write essays on the same topic and, after finishing, exchange their writings. In the following step, the students should evaluate each other's texts as a teacher. This role-play activity may encourage students to adopt feedback from teachers into their evolving awareness of voice (Tardy, 2012b). It will further help them understand the dialogic nature of voice and how it may impact their writings (Tardy, 2012b). This practice was useful for increasing L2 writers' awareness of the audience (Canagarajah, 2015). However, teachers should implement this practice cautiously, as

Tardy (2012) stated that every context has unique ecology, and therefore, any actions can be taken based on the context and needs of students.

In addition to this activity, teachers may encourage students to keep journals about the challenges of writing and their own writing development (Canagarajah, 2015). As Canagarajah (2015) suggested, an online platform where students may give feedback on each other's writings and discuss their problems may enable students to be aware of different writing trajectories, and teachers may also become aware of their students' difficulties.

Since many studies found that the context, discipline, genre, rules of discourse community, and other factors may influence the notion of voice in academic writing, considering that many Uzbek students would like to study in English-speaking countries, teachers should also raise students' awareness of the expectations of their future discourse communities.

## CONCLUSION

Academic writing relates to social interactions of writers and readers in different discourse communities of academia. L2 writers generally tend to believe that academic writing is impersonal and dry, and therefore, voiceless. According to Ivanic (1998), writing is not only being objective and impersonal in the points but also about presenting voice. Hyland (2002) claimed that writers gain more trustworthiness from readers if they write with authority and confidence in their evaluations. However, the construction of voice takes a considerable amount of time and experience from writers.

By reviewing the current literature on the notion of voice in academic writing, it was clear that a considerable amount of research investigated authorial voice in academic writing. Some researchers tried to explore the linguistic features of language (Flottum, 2006; Hyland, 2002, 2008; Jiang, 2015; Yoon, 2017; Pho, 2008). While Hyland's (2008) Interaction model was a useful tool for analyzing voice in texts, which allowed researchers to conduct corpus-based research and compare voice in different texts, it also restricted the understanding of voice with pre-defined sentence-level linguistic features. Therefore, many studies did not attempt to find other linguistic features of voice. Besides, some studies focused on only certain features in the model, such as personal pronouns and hedges (Çandarlı et al., 2015; Lores-Sanz, 2011; Matsuda, 2001; Mur-Duenas, 2007; Pho, 2008). Furthermore, corpus-based research findings cannot give more insights into such a complex phenomenon as voice, as the results of the corpus cannot explain why some features were used more than others in the text. It will give only the

numbers of features. As Thompson (2012) stated, voice features such as hedges could serve different functions in different situations. Corpus analysis cannot determine which function of hedges occurs more in the text.

Apart from that, only a few studies tried to explain why the writer presented voice differently in different genres (e.g., Bondi, 2012). Remaining questions are: How do different genres impact the writer's voice? Also, future research should consider to what extent students have ownership over their claims (Cheung et al., 2016). What changes can be seen in the process of developing voice? How can teachers help students develop a stronger and recognizable voice in their discipline?

To sum up, this review focused on how authorial voice is constructed in academic writing. The aim of the study was twofold. First, it aimed to identify features of voice in the text. It was found that there are linguistic and discursive features of voice. Linguistic features include self-mention, hedging, boosters, attitude markers, reader pronouns, modal verbs, and other elements. Discursive features include the author's breadth of knowledge, syntax, the scope of the manuscript, rhetorical moves/representation of the field, and citations. Second, the study aimed to identify the factors that may influence the construction of voice. The following factors were found to influence the construction of voice: the discipline and genre of the text, and the linguistic and cultural background of an author. The review further analyzed the struggles of L2 writers due to their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Finally, the study suggested implications for teaching voice in the L2 writing classroom.

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