The role of reader-inclusive authorial voice in the process of academic socialization of management and English philology students

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Abstract

Our purpose in this paper is to argue that the socialization process of Anglophone- and non-Anglophone, tertiary-level students into their disciplinary communities involves challenging the rhetorical conventions of their disciplines to create a space for the development of their unique authorial voice when writing in English. With this goal in mind, we designed and conducted the study to gain insights into the perceptions Management and English Philology[1] students have as to what constitutes a convincing authorial voice and the discourse-level features employed to realize this. Twenty-six study participants created a diverse group concerning nationality, gender, study level, disciplinary affiliation, and cultural and linguistic background. Their evaluations of voice were first analyzed from their responses to a questionnaire and then expanded through interviews. The findings reveal that a reader-inclusive voice, which requires the use of de-jargonized language, clear purpose, and structure, and creates room for the reader's interpretation, is crucial for a text to be convincing. We also argue that students' preference for reader-sensitive academic writing should be supported and encouraged through the provision of strategic academic writing pedagogy.

Keywords: authorial voice, reader perception, reader-inclusion, transformative writing pedagogy, socialization.

Resumen

El papel de la voz autoral inclusiva del lector en el proceso de socialización académica de estudiantes de gestión y de filología inglesa

El objetivo de este artículo es argumentar que el proceso de socialización de los estudiantes universitarios angloparlantes y no angloparlantes en sus comunidades disciplinarias conlleva desafiar las convenciones retóricas de sus disciplinas para crear un espacio que permita el desarrollo de su voz autoral única al escribir en inglés. Con este objetivo diseñamos y llevamos a cabo un estudio para obtener información sobre las percepciones que tienen los estudiantes de Gestión y de Filología Inglesa sobre lo que constituye una voz autoral convincente y las características discursivas empleadas para ello. En esta investigación participó un grupo de 26 estudiantes heterogéneo en cuanto a su nacionalidad, género, nivel de estudio, afiliación disciplinaria y contexto cultural y lingüístico. Sus valoraciones sobre la voz autoral se analizaron primero a partir de sus respuestas en un cuestionario y luego se ampliaron a través de entrevistas. Los resultados revelan que una voz inclusiva del lector es crucial para que un texto sea convincente, y ello requiere el uso de un lenguaje sin jerga, con un propósito y una estructura clara, y debe dejar espacio para la interpretación del lector. También argumentamos que la preferencia de los estudiantes por una escritura académica orientada hacia el lector debería apoyarse y fomentarse mediante una pedagogía de la escritura académica estratégica.

Palabras clave: voz del autor, percepción del lector, inclusión del lector, pedagogía de escritura transformadora, socialización.

1. Introduction

Socialization into a disciplinary community and participation in its discourses and practices is a lengthy process requiring explicit exposure of students to what is written about in their disciplines and how that content is presented (Darvin & Norton, 2019). Such exposure is critical as "we need to keep up to date with the way professionals are writing in the disciplines" (Breeze & Kuteeva, 2023, p. 1). Ideally, this comes about through the program content and the socialization process students encounter during their academic education. It is hoped that in this way, students acquire knowledge of a toolkit of rhetorical devices they can draw on to successfully access scholarly publications and subsequently, use this knowledge to develop and support their academic outputs. However, in light of the criticism leveled at the quality of a great deal of scholarly writing, particularly in the field of

Management Studies (Grey & Sinclair, 2006; Kiriakos & Tienari, 2018; Gilmore et al., 2019; Pullen et al., 2020; Aguinis et al., 2020; Tourish, 2020), it has been shown that this fundamental aspect of academic socialization is hampered as reading academic articles has become a challenging and discouraging activity for many students.

To investigate how to best facilitate the successful socialization of Management and English Philology students into their academic community, we set out to gain insights into their perceptions of a convincing authorial voice. The common understanding of academic socialization has been captured in Morita's definition which describes this phenomenon as "learning how to participate competently and appropriately in the discursive practices of a given academic community" (Morita, 2009, p. 444). However, we have extended this definition to discuss the essential role these novices' agency plays in empowering them to contest and resist the dominant disciplinary discourses (see also Lehman & Sułkowski, 2023). Our purpose in this paper is to argue that the socialization process of Anglophone and non-Anglophone, tertiary-level students in their disciplinary communities involves creating a space where they can challenge the rhetorical conventions of their disciplines and through this increased agency strive to develop unique authorial voice when writing in English.

Knowledge production is a social endeavor and takes place within disciplinary communities which form to exchange and promote specific knowledge and disseminate it in specific forms and writing styles. Molinari notes that when scholars report their work they are constrained to use standardized forms of writing that require abstracts, introductions, main bodies, and conclusions which can lead to a narrowing of epistemic representation (Molinari, 2022, p. 3). The prevalence of these ways of reporting research means that other ways of expression, such as dialogues, chronicles, manifestos, blogs, and comics are excluded. This along with the disciplinarily privileged writing conventions are the products of geopolitical, sociocultural, and historical practices and tend to marginalize other ways of presenting knowledge. The privileged forms of academic writing employ a rhetorical style that draws mainly on the discursive norms of the English language which is a contributing factor to the perpetuation of inequalities in academia. These linguistic inequalities often lead to the marginalization and exclusion of those academic writers (both experienced and novices) who do not belong to the Anglophone disciplinary center of their fields. This concern is particularly important to Polish scholars like us who, to be

published in English language journals, have to adopt an authorial voice aligned with the requirements of Anglo-American academic writing standards. The consequential outcome of this accommodation has been captured in Lehman's testimony of her linguistic border crossing from Polish to English academic writing as follows.

To avoid stigmatization for poor competence in English, I had to make profound changes in my writer identity and how I wanted to communicate with the reader. To do so, I had to relinquish writing strategies that constituted my unique authorial voice and which originated in the German scholarly tradition and spread to such languages as Polish, Russian, Czech, and Slovakian. These rhetorical standards require inductive ways of argumentation and intellectual effort on the part of the reader to interpret the intended meaning (Duszak, 1997; Golebiowski, 1998, 2006; Lehman et al., 2024). I also had to abandon the branching style of developing an argument, referred to somewhat derogatorily as digressiveness, but which for Polish audiences, is evidence of an inquiring and learned mind (Duszak, 1997) (see Lehman & Tienari, 2024).

The power and prestige of dominant discourses over alternative orientations in intellectual inquiry have been challenged by several critical approaches that seek to create space for other possibilities in authorial self-representation. These anti-essentialist frameworks include postcolonial theory, such as diaspora (Hall, 1995), hybridity (Bhabha, 1994), language crossing (Rampton, 1995), queer theory (Butler, 1990), raciolinguistic (Rosa & Flores, 2020) and social constructionist perspectives with their focus on power (Foucault, 2002; Bourdieu, 1998). Adding to the discussion of the role of power in academic discourse, Pennycook (2022) proposes a more complex view of the concept. He contends that power in academic discourse cannot be restricted to its oppressive aspect, but needs to be approached as a multidimensional phenomenon that includes "domination (contingent and contextual effects of power), disparity (inequitable access to material and cultural goods), discrimination (ideological and discursive frames of exclusion), difference (constructions and realities of social and cultural distinction), and desire (operations of ideology, agency, identity, and transformation)" (Pennycook, 2022, p. 15).

We believe that central to our problematization of the construction of a unique authorial voice are the last two facets of power proposed by Pennycook (2022), namely, the issues of difference and desire. After all,

writing about scholarship does not have to be one way or another. An academic text should be a space where rhetorical variation is accepted and differences reconciled. This approach links directly to the version of criticality proposed by Kubota and Miller (2017), following Freire (1970), that is praxis. Praxis is an ongoing process of moving between theory and practice where reality is transformed through reflection and action, and a consideration of the specific context of discourse production, be it linguistic, social, situational, historical, or disciplinary. Praxis then requires the adoption of reflexive practices whereby consideration of the needs and expectations of the reader is fundamental in the process of text production. As Lehman notes elsewhere, reflexivity stems from the desire of the writer to project a convincing *persona* and reader-inclusive authorial voice. To achieve this, writers employ ethos-based (moralizing) and pathos-based (emotion-evoking) language (also see Brown et al., 2012, p. 298) in which the centrality of the reader is accentuated (see Lehman et al., 2024).

We argue that the point of departure in the necessary challenge to the dominant rhetorical patterns of privileging[2] that exist in our disciplinary communities is the bestowing of agency on our students through the construction of their authorial voice. This process involves not only drawing from rhetorical resources made available in the disciplinary communities but also from their life histories and the less powerful discourses of other community members. In doing so, students both develop a greater sense of ownership of their intellectual output and redefine and extend the possibilities for self-representation for future authors. Pennycook endorses this point stating that critical applied linguistics needs "an *activist* agenda that urges not just advocacy on behalf of others but works with others toward change" (2022, p. 16). This approach is also argued for by Lillis (2019) for whom an academic text provides an important space for critically exploring taken-for-granted assumptions underlying disciplinarily sanctioned writing conventions, and how they, assumptions and conventions, enable and restrict opportunities for participation in a knowledge-making process.

The implementation of such transformative practices is certainly a welcome development as Duf and Doherty (2015) report that students increasingly refuse to be passive reproducers of the rhetorical norms of their disciplines and venture to use their agentive resources to participate in more self-directed socialization. Thus, as educators, we need to foster and develop this approach to academic writing and provide opportunities for students' agentive participation to thrive (see also Lillis, 2019; Lillis & Scott, 2007). It

is obvious to us that for such a transformative approach to academic writing to bear fruit, we need to implement appropriate pedagogical strategies at graduate and undergraduate level programs. An example of such transformative practice has been offered by Canagarajah (2024) who conceives of the writing process as 'entextualization'. This entails drawing insights from Indigenous pedagogical practices to create space for renegotiation of the dominant norms of expression. Specifically, he refers to situated learning through apprenticeship which was valued in his community in the Global South. This approach avails itself of the resources present in the context and is instructive and pertinent to the current discussion as it shows how, "Both the expert and the apprentice collaborated in generating the product, with the gradual expansion of responsibilities, as in legitimate peripheral participation" (Canagarajah, 2024, p. 300).

Disciplines vary in terms of the writing style employed to report scientific work. Our choice of the cohort and text corpus for the study was dictated by Hyland's (2005) finding that Social Sciences (including Management Studies) usually produce texts that are not reader- considerate while the more discursive 'soft' disciplines, such as Applied Linguistics, are more reader-sensitive. This opinion prevails although there have been no definitive studies into this. Support, however, can be lent by other inquiries into cross-disciplinary variation in research publications which, for example, include Giltrow's (2005) study into the use of moral responsibility expressions in three social disciplines, Lafuente Millán's (2008) research on the use of hedges, boosters and approximators in medical and social sectors or Sahragard and Yazdanpanahi's (2017) analysis of the use of English engagement markers across eight disciplines in Humanities and Science. The overarching and generalized finding is that research writing in social domains continues to be known for, putting it in Giltrow's (2005) words, its impersonal neutrality and facelessness. Lafuente Millán (2008) attributes this to the fact that in certain disciplines (i.e., Business Management) researchers take more care to limit their commitment to their assertions.

Motivated by Hyland's (2005) premise and previous, albeit not exhaustive studies, we set out to analyze whether students were able to identify any significant difference in how writers communicate with their readers in the two separate disciplines and whether this has consequences for the socialization process of students into the discourse communities. To address this research problem, we designed a study that explored the effect of voice, as manifested in conclusions to four articles published in top-tier

Management and Applied Linguistics journals, on the student-readers. Specifically, we aimed to gain insights into students' perceptions of a convincing authorial voice, and the discourse-level features they identify with that voice.

With this study, we add to research by Ismail et al. (2020) and Lehman and Sułkowski (2023) into the ways of supporting the efforts of tertiary-level students in finding and developing their unique authorial voice when writing in English. The findings of this study will better inform the design of writing programs in higher education which mostly require students to reproduce the existing writing conventions and do not create opportunities for student writers to exercise their agentive power and resist dominant disciplinary discourses (Darvin & Norton, 2019). The provision of reader-sensitive writing instruction is key in supporting students' efforts to find their authorial voice and will also contribute to a more nurturing institutional environment in which novices are socialized into their disciplinary community.

Keeping in mind such a potential benefit, the research questions posed for this study are:

1. *Do Management students differ from English Philology students in how they recognize and evaluate authorial voice?*

2. *What specific discourse-level voice components do students find important in the creation of their convincing and engaging authorial voice?*

2. Study

2.1. Study purpose

The purpose of the study was to explore how graduate (master's level) and undergraduate (bachelor's level) students of Management and English Philology from Southern, Central, and Western Europe identify and evaluate authorial voice in top-tier academic journals in these two respective disciplines. We treat voice (the textual representation of writer identity) as a phenomenological concept (Hyland, 2008; Matsuda 2015) which is achieved through the ways writers negotiate their textual self-image. The phenomenological aspect of the notion brings into focus the individual's mental processes which are activated in a specific context in the creation of

a writer's authorial voice. This turns our attention to the potential inner tensions writers, and especially aspiring scholars, may experience when they seek to reconcile their unique writer identity to the accepted rhetorical norms of their discipline (Kuteeva, 2023). A consequential assumption of this approach is that voice situates writers culturally, socially, and institutionally and is achieved through the ways authors negotiate their textual representations within a particular discursive context of the text production (Lehman et al., 2022). This orientation enables us to consider both the dynamic nature of authorial voice and the social and contextual nature of disciplinary-based writing. It also illuminates the tension, or even internal conflict, students experience as they develop their notions of what their academic authorial voice is and does within the boundaries of the writing norms established in their disciplinary communities. The negotiations, compromises, and evolutions in their textual self-representations are necessary in the process of successful academic socialization (e.g., Canagarajah, 2015; Prior & Bilbro, 2012).

Employing a heterogeneous group of participants who differed in terms of cultural, linguistic, and disciplinary backgrounds, we aimed to determine whether: (1) there are differences in perception of voice between Management and English Philology students and (2) what specific discourse-level voice components these students recognize as being necessary in the creation of a convincing and engaging authorial voice.

2.2. Participants

Twenty-six full-time Management and English Philology students, who were enrolled in graduate and undergraduate courses at the University of Social Sciences in the academic year 2022/2023, were recruited for the study with the help of the Erasmus organization. At the time of the study, the English Philology students were enrolled in a writing-intensive course called Scientific Writing which is a specialized program that introduces students to expository and argumentative writing as well as how to organize a research paper. As for the Management students, their course required them to produce short pieces of academic writing in English (i.e., descriptive, comparison-contrast, cause-effect, or for-against paragraphs) as part of their preparation for the business English exam for the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI). All these courses were mandatory and lasted two semesters. The first author, although working at the same university at the time of the study, did not teach the students who

participated in the study, and the other two authors were employed at different universities and did not know the students before they entered this research project.

The study participants constituted a diverse group with regard to nationality, gender, study level, disciplinary affiliation, and cultural and linguistic background (see Tables 2 and 4). The student participants' linguistic competence in English varied between B2-C2 levels according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (see Table 3) and there were two British students in the group.
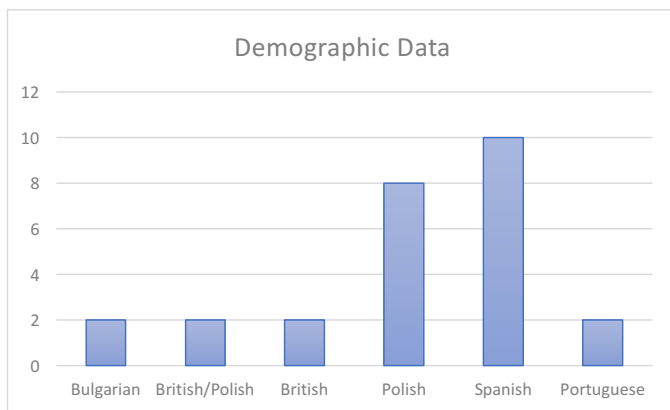

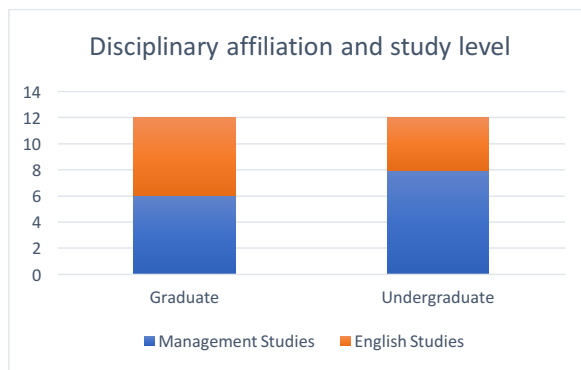Table 1. Participant's country of origin.

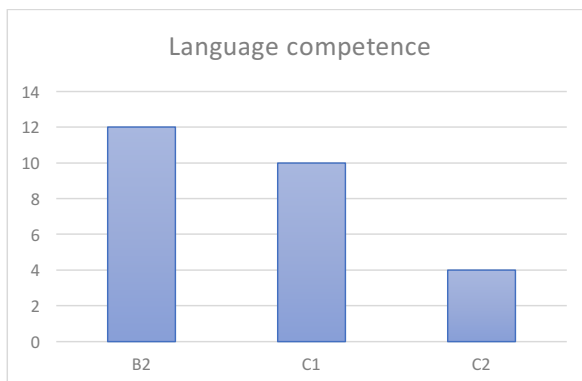Table 2. Affiliation and study level of the participants.

Table 3. Participants language competence in accordance with Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

A relatively low number of subjects in the cohort (n=26) was deemed acceptable because the study used a mixed methodology approach. The statistical analysis of students' perceptions of authorial voice was expanded through interviews. Such research design enabled us to comprehensively explore (1) possible differences between Management and English Philology students in how they recognize and evaluate authorial voice, and (2) the specific discourse-level voice components students find important in the creation of their own convincing and engaging authorial voice.

2.3. Corpus

The text corpus was composed of four conclusions taken from research articles published in *Journal of Management Education, Academy of Management Learning and Education, Journal of English for Academic Purposes,* and *English for Specific Purposes,* all of which are ranked highly by the Scimago Journal Rank Indicator. The choice of these four conclusions was dictated by the accessibility of the content (texts did not require a deep background of disciplinary knowledge). This was more appropriate than asking students to read discipline-specific topics because the propositional content was expressed with a minimum of technical language which facilitated comprehension for non-linguists (Management students) and non-managers (English Philology students).

The rationale for the choice of conclusions to research articles for the text corpus was the specific function they play in the text. A concluding

paragraph (1) provides the reader with a compact summary of research findings; (2) presents the author's treatment of, attitude to, and argumentation around the research problem; and finally, (3) is a space where the writer makes their final attempt to convince the reader of the veracity of their argumentation (see also Lehman & Sułkowski, 2023).

2.4. Method

2.4.1. Data collection instruments

A mixed-method study approach was used to provide a more complete understanding of the research problem. In phase I, we conducted a quantitative analysis of both the questionnaire and interview data with the help of Chat GPT-3.5 (the most advanced artificial intelligence (AI) system available at the time of the study) which uses a natural language processing method allowing for the interaction between human language and computers. Specifically, Chat GPT-3.5 performed statistical counts of the Likert scale data from the online questionnaires and sentiment analysis of the interview data. Sentiment analysis (also known as opinion mining or emotion AI) is used to systematically identify, extract, and quantify subjective and affective information (Kannapan, 2023). In the present study, it was used to analyze the students' subjective (and sometimes affective) opinions about the nature of authorial voice, the rhetorical functions associated with this voice, and specific words/expressions that enable writers to convey disciplinary knowledge and belief claims in a clear, confident and engaging manner.

The quantitative insights gained from the first phase of the study (i.e., the students' responses to the online questionnaire) provided input for the second phase involving qualitative inquiry conducted through interviews. To analyze the interview data, we employed the interpretative approach, known as thematic analysis (Blakeslee & Fleicher, 2007). The analysis was inductive, i.e., themes, codes, and categories emerged from the data. First, we marked the transcribed interviews for any comments related to the students' experiences with reading scholarly articles in English and their understanding of what the writer's voice is and does. Next, we looked for and noted the recurrence of these notions. Such an approach allowed for consideration of students' lived experiences in different social and educational contexts and the use of a small sample of participants (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022).

2.4.2. Procedures of data analysis

Phase I: Online questionnaires

A three-part questionnaire loaded to Docs was sent to twenty-six study participants with a request to fill it out within sixty minutes and return it after completion. The questionnaire comprised: 1) questions related to the students' profiles, 2) the corpus and the grid to record their initial evaluations of writer's voice, and 3) the voice rubric designed to gain more detailed information about the students' perceptions of writer's voice, focusing them more specifically on the lexico-grammatical and rhetorical features of the four conclusions. The voice rubric used in this study was designed by Lehman and used in Lehman and Sułkowski's previous study (2023) into reader perceptions of voice. The rubric breaks the concept of voice down into nine descriptors which are captured in three dimensions. The participants' degree of agreement with these descriptors is measured by a Likert scale from 1-5 (with 1 being the lowest) (see Table 4).

Dimension 1: Presence and clarity of ideas in the content	
The conclusion provides a clear and brief review of the previous sections of the paper.	5 4 3 2 1
The conclusion satisfactorily connects the study findings with the research objective.	5 4 3 2 1
The conclusion provides resolutions to the issues raised in the paper and/or recommendations for further action.	5 4 3 2 1
Dimension 2: The way the content is presented	
The writer presents the ideas and arguments in a way that shows their confidence, authority, and knowledge of the topic.	5 4 3 2 1
The writer has a clear and firm opinion on the topic.	5 4 3 2 1
The writer's choice of words and use of language is appropriate and comprehensive to you.	5 4 3 2 1
Dimension 3: Writer and reader interaction	
The writer reveals their thinking about the topic uniquely and interestingly.	5 4 3 2 1
You feel that you are being guided through the stages of the study in a clear and logical way.	5 4 3 2 1
The writer refers to shared knowledge and experiences with you.	5 4 3 2 1

Table 4. Voice rubric (revised from source: Lehman & Sułkowski, 2023).

Part I of the questionnaire, regarding participants' demographic and linguistic backgrounds, revealed differences in both their English language competence and demographic characteristics, such as sex, age, and nationality. However, these variables were not explored in the present study. This enabled us to focus exclusively on research questions concerning potential differences in voice perceptions among the two groups of students and the discourse-level features associated with this. In part II, the students were invited to intuitively (without any prompt) categorize the four conclusions as convincing, less convincing, or not convincing. In part III, employing the voice rubric, the students responded on a Likert scale to

statements about such aspects of each conclusion as (1) the presence and clarity of ideas in the content, (2) the way the content is presented, and (3) writer and reader interaction, indicating the degree to which they agree with each statement.

Phase II: Interviews

Following the quantitative phase of the study, we set up individual interviews with the students which were conducted via online communication platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet. The choice of an online interview format (as opposed to face-to-face interviews) was dictated by the students' busy schedules and the unavailability of interviewers who lived in three different towns in Poland. The interview questions were constructed with a specific focus on the student's experiences with academic writing, reading scholarly articles in their disciplines in English, their understanding of the concept of the writer's voice, and their ideas as to what rhetorical strategies authors need to employ to present their views convincingly and engagingly to the reader (see Appendix 1). The interviews took between 40-50 minutes. The students' responses were recorded, transcribed, analyzed, and coded.

3. Findings

3.1. Findings from Phase I

The quantitative analysis yielded the following results:

(i) Management students differ from English Philology students in how they recognize and evaluate authorial voice in that Management students' ratings exhibit more variation and inconsistency compared to English Philology students.

(ii) Both Management and English Philology students consider the same discourse-level voice components important in creating a convincing and engaging authorial voice.

Sentiment analysis revealed that discourse-level voice components which students found important in the creation of a convincing and engaging authorial voice include:

(i) Clarity and Coherence: both Management and English Philology students prioritize clear and coherent writing, ensuring that the ideas are presented logically and are easy to understand.

(ii) Confidence and Authority: English Philology students value a writer's confidence and authority in expressing their ideas, which contributes to the persuasiveness and engagement of the authorial voice.

(iii) Appropriateness of Language: both groups recognize the importance of using appropriate and comprehensive language that suits the intended audience and the subject matter.

(iv) Unique and Interesting Perspective: English Philology students appreciate a writer's ability to present a unique and interesting perspective on the topic, which can enhance the authorial voice and make it more compelling.

3.2. Findings from Phase II

Coding procedure

From the data obtained, we identified eight coding categories which we grouped according to their relationship to the three voice dimensions from the rubric (see Table 5). Consequently, categories 1, 4, and 6 come under dimension 1: 'Presence and clarity of ideas in the content'; categories 5 and 7 under dimension 2: 'The way content is presented', and categories 2, 3, and 8 under dimension 3: 'Writer-reader interaction'.

No.	Category	Example
Dimension 1: Presence and clarity of ideas in the content		
1	The overuse of jargon	"Some articles in my field use too technical words which I don't know. So I have to look for their meaning and that prevents me from concentrating on the subject" (Management, MA student, Spain). "For me, the language used in conclusion 3 was rather complex and less easy to understand, perhaps because this is not my area" (Management, BA student, Spain).
4	Characteristics of a convincing and interesting academic article	"Through the use of multiple questions, it [conclusion 2] has an effect which invites the reader to consider these ideas on their own" (English Philology, MA student, UK). "In conclusion 4, though the author's opinion is there, the reader also has the opportunity to consider the discussion since it is quite open" (English Philology, BA student, Poland).
6	Characteristics of clarity in argumentation	"The argument is clear when the conclusion presents the findings and a rationale for how they can be used in the future" (English Philology, MA student, UK). "The argument is clear when the author uses words easy to understand and expresses a clear solution to the research problem" (Management, BA student, Portugal).
Dimension 2: The way content is presented		
5	Words/expressions that convey authorial confidence	'crucial', 'robust', 'under-emphasis', 'emphasis', 'We found that…', 'We believe….' 'future research should...', 'In this article, we argue that...,' 'We emphasize the importance of …', 'We believe that…', This is the key question', 'It is also important to address…', 'This study provided…'.
7	How ideas are presented in the text	"Conclusion 1 provided me with a clear view of the matter and ways to solve it" (English Philology, MA student, UK). "In conclusion 4, the opening and the conclusions correlate to each other well, and throughout the conclusion, it is clear what is being discussed" (Management, MA student, Spain).
Dimension 3: Writer and reader interaction		
2	Meaning of 'writer's voice'	"A writer's voice refers to the unique style, tone, and perspective that the author brings to their work. It encompasses the author's personality, beliefs, values, and experiences, which are reflected in the way they choose their words, structure their sentences, and develop their characters and plots" (Management, MA student, Bulgaria). "For me, a writer's voice is the way the writer chooses words to construct sentences, and uses punctuation for the reader to understand his message and feelings" (Management, BA student, Portugal).
3	Meaning of 'writer's voice' in academic texts	"It seems more impersonal and detached than other types of writing" (Management, BA student, Spain). "Academic writing frequently requires a more formal and objective tone; therefore writers may need to refrain from using subjective language such as personal experiences, anecdotes, and opinions" (English Philology, MA student, Poland).
8	Reader inclusion	At the word level 'crucial', 'robust', 'in-depth learning', 'under-emphasis', 'emphasize', 'what is...?', 'so how...?', 'no satisfactory answer', at the same time', 'definition and rationale', 'effectiveness', 'future research should...', 'but', inclusive 'we'. At the discourse level "In conclusion 2, the writer involves me in thinking about the text by asking questions" (English Philology, BA student, Poland). "Conclusion 3 is informative but not easy to follow, therefore seems cold" (Management, MA student, Bulgaria). "Conclusion 4, despite the opinion stated, leaves room for discussion" (English Philology, MA student, Poland). "In conclusion 1, the author provides definitions of terms used and supports them with convincing examples" (Management, BA student, Spain). "In conclusion 3, if the language were simpler it would be easier to follow and I'd feel engaged" (Management, BA student, Spain).

Table 5. Coding categories.

4. Results and discussion

Combining quantitative and qualitative methods enabled us to balance out the limitations of each method and consequently, provide stronger evidence for our findings. This approach made it possible to identify recurring themes

and make generalizations in relation to how the phenomenon of authorial voice, as manifested in top-tier Management and Applied Linguistics journals, is perceived and experienced by the student-readers. Consequently, it enabled us to provide meaningful answers to the two research questions.

RQ1: Management students differed from English Philology students in demonstrating more variation and inconsistency in voice recognition and evaluation than English Philology students. This can be attributed to the fact that English Philology students, being exposed to a variety of academic genres and formal academic writing instruction, are more aware of what authorial voice is and does than Management students. As revealed in the interviews, Management students did not receive any structured writing instruction in English either at undergraduate or graduate levels and practiced only short expository forms of writing for the LCCI exam preparation. Of course, even the structured writing programs may not necessarily meet the expectations of novices in terms of quantity and quality (Habibie, 2015), but they surely facilitate their socialization into the discursive practices of their disciplinary communities. When constructing an authorial voice, budding academic writers need to reconcile their notions of what a convincing authorial voice entails with disciplinary sanctioned writing conventions (Darvin & Norton, 2019; Lehman & Sułkowski, 2021, 2023). Therefore, academic socialization into disciplinary discourses is important in the development of awareness and the eventual use of an effective authorial voice.

RQ2: Both groups of students emphasized the importance of presenting ideas and arguments confidently, demonstrating knowledge and expertise on the topic. Expressions such as "we believe", "our evidence suggests", and "we found" were identified as confident language choices. Students mentioned that expressing a clear opinion on the topic is crucial in creating an engaging authorial voice. They emphasized the importance of dividing the text into sections or paragraphs, using language cues to help readers follow arguments, and presenting information in a structured manner.

The qualitative insights gained from the second phase of the study (i.e., the interviews with the students) replicated the results from phase I and provided the basis for the holistic interpretation of the findings. Many students explicitly voiced resistance towards complex, jargon-ridden, and labored language found in the text corpus. They expressed a preference for the rhetorical features of voice which create confidence and enable reader

involvement in a text (see examples for coding categories 5 and 8 in Table 5). This finding can be linked to the students' positive appraisal of the text function which Hyland calls 'reader engagement' and which is inscribed in his (2008) interactional model of voice. It reflects the writer's rhetorical recognition of the reader's presence and in so doing, authors actively pull their readers along with the development of their argument, "include them as discourse participants, and guide them to interpretations" (Hyland, 2008, p. 7). Hyland's interactional model of voice does not fully square with Lehman's approach who classifies hedges as 'reader engagement' devices arguing that when academic authors report their findings tentatively, they aim to forestall any criticisms from their readers (see Lehman et al., 2022). Students' preference for the use of 'engagement' markers was expressed in the following comments:

(1) "In conclusion 2, the use of **'we'** suggests a sense of reader involvement like in the questions which make the reader question their views, such as 'how do we explain...?'" (English Philology, MA student, UK).

The student points here to **reader pronouns** which are the most explicit way to address the reader (*you, your, yours*, also: *we* (inclusive), *us* (inclusive), *our* (inclusive), *ours* (inclusive)[3].

(2) "I like this sentence [It needn't, **of course,** be publication in prestigious journals, but then we need a very good argument for whatever answer we choose (conclusion 2)] because the author uses the word 'of course' which makes it sound casual and friendly" (BA student of Management, Spain).

The student indicates here that the use of **personal asides**, which usually appear in the middle of a statement and overtly express the author's personal comment or reflection, contributes to reader-friendly writing.

(3) "To me, academic articles in English, which are somehow connected with my study subjects are difficult to read when the topic, or the aspect of the topic, is new. I guess it is due to lack of references to the discipline-specific background knowledge the writer shares with the reader" (English Philology, MA student, Poland).

The student alludes here that when the writer makes **references to shared knowledge,** they make the reader believe that the reader is 'one of them', a competent member of the disciplinary community.

> (4) "In conclusion 2, I feel the writer attempts to involve me in thinking about the content of the text due to multiple questions he asks" (Management, MA student, Bulgaria).

The student refers here to **rhetorical/audience-directed questions** that explicitly invite reader engagement, awaken curiosity, and introduce readers to the writer's viewpoint(s).

> (5) "In conclusion 3, the author is presenting his main arguments confidently by, for example, saying: Finally, this evidence of interdisciplinary differences **may** raise the awareness..." (Management, BA student, Portugal).

Although this sentence contains the hedging word 'may', it was chosen by the student as an example of a confident authorial voice. It indicates that for students confident writing is authoritative, but not authoritarian, in that it may include tentative statements. These hedges allow writers to distance themselves from their claims, permitting readers to dispute or critically interpret such claims (e.g., *appear to be, certain extent, mainly, might; perhaps; possible(ly)*).

> (6) "In conclusion 1, I feel that the writer helps me follow the arguments in the text because there is a clear idea, and the logic carries through in a clear structure (with the help of words such as 'first', 'second', 'last') which rationalizes the idea and provides evidence" (English Philology, MA student, UK).

The student implies here that **directives,** which denote writers' sensitivity to the readers' processing needs (e.g., 'here is an example', 'to illustrate…', the first, the second, former), make arguments easier to follow.

Other comments concerning rhetorical items that create reader-inclusive authorial voice, included the following:

– The use of the word 'but' in conclusions 1-3 which, according to one participant, signals **contrasts** between ideas and, in this way, indicates the writer's efforts to clarify their position on the propositional content.

– The importance of **attitude markers** (e.g., *realistic, vast, emotive, difficult, satisfactory, critical*) which, for all the participants, explicitly convey the writer's attitude to what is being stated. For the

students, this indicates the writer's emotional involvement in the validation of their claims and facilitates interaction with the reader, making the text's whole argumentation more difficult to dispute.

The results of the present study support the findings of Lehman and Sułkowski's (2021, 2023) previous qualitative studies which revealed that for student-readers an audience-considerate voice is essential for a text to be convincing. This preference for reader-embracing academic writing was also replicated in Lehman et al.'s (2022) quantitative study into textual manifestations of voice. We found that the prevailing tendency in the textual self-representation of experienced Management writers was to portray themselves as self-assured and confident commentators on the propositional content of the text, adopting an authoritarian writer stance whereas the student-writers from the same field demonstrated a preference for the use of a communitarian (reader-inclusive) voice.

The process of academic text production in a given disciplinary context is complex in that it entails several individual and socio-cultural factors. Firstly, students need to see that effective writing is not simply a recycling of the rhetorical practices of their disciplines, but it also involves drawing on their life and literacy histories and exercising their agentive power through resistance, innovation, and self-determination (Darvin & Norton, 2019). Kuteeva (2023) investigates some of the tensions involved in this agentive participation embedded in three types of use of English: as a standard language, a lingua franca, and a translingual practice. Specifically, she looks at students and researchers who work in multilingual university settings outside the Anglophone center and argues that this dynamic environment can be a place for intellectual endeavor and growth which, with the appropriate pedagogical framework, can unravel "the creative potential of such tensions, rather than viewing them solely as a conflict to be solved" (Kuteeva, 2023, p. 163). Therefore, within the framework of a novice's disciplinary socialization, space must be created for the development of their individual authorial agency which will encourage and empower them to contest and resist the dominant discourses where and when necessary. This is also a recognition that, as academic writers, both established and novice, we pursue our individual and collective goals in the construction of our texts. Hyland's (2015) conceptualization of 'positioning' captures this twofold purpose of each writer accurately. For Hyland, positioning refers to the fact that while

academic authors recognize 'the ways things are done', they also recognize these as enabling conditions for individual expression.

5. Pedagogical implications

The introduction of the proposed transformative pedagogical perspective to academic writing programs can provide a way to promote equity of participation in global disciplinary communities by:

(i) developing awareness of the existing rhetorical practices that typify the literary outputs of their discipline while underlining the existence of differences in academic writing;

(ii) employing reflexivity in writing practices through which we can create space for student agency and a sense of ownership of their texts. Through the practices involved in acquiring awareness of the potential constraining nature of dominant disciplinary discourses, non-Anglophone writers in particular are given the possibility to negotiate/challenge/resist the established rhetorical norms and work towards finding and developing their unique authorial voice.

6. Limitations of the study

Although the twofold data yield robust results and enable us to make an empirical contribution to the development of tertiary-level writing pedagogy, the study has some limitations. The first of these is the size of the corpora. Further research with the use of larger corpora is necessary to defend and develop our findings. Second, the participant sample was not diverse enough concerning their disciplinary background. Third, the use of Chat GPT in the data analysis allowed us to perform quantitative counts; however, it was limited in recognizing the influences of textual and extra-textual context on meaning. For example, Chat GPT could not infer the intended meaning of a sentence or phrase based on the surrounding text.

7. Conclusion

The extant discourses of the academic communities we participate in shape our textual self-representations in the sense that constructing an identity of

a credible writer "involves an often protracted dialogic process of socialization into the expectations of a new community" (Hyland, 2015, p. 4). However, opportunities to agentively construct our authorial voice to meaningfully engage in dialogue with our readers are not available to all writers in the same way. The dominance of English in global academia is increasingly viewed as a source of marginalization of other literary styles and exclusion of those non-Anglophone scholars who do not align themselves with the rhetorical standards of the English language (Lehman et al., 2024; Lehman & Tienari, 2024). This calls for linguistic sensitivity on the part of scholars to be able to challenge the systemic inequalities that condition our writing in English and look at academic text production as an affective and relational activity. Such sensitivity is founded on the writer's desire to enter into a meaningful dialogue with the reader in which the reader's needs and expectations are considered. As the findings of this study revealed, reader consideration on the part of the writer, encoded in confident and reader-sensitive authorial voice, makes student-readers believe they are involved in processing the text's argumentation. Furthermore, the writer's consideration of the reader's needs and expectations requires the writer to leave room for an intellectual effort from the reader to interpret the meaning being conveyed. The preferences expressed and outlined in this study's findings contrast the dominant academic writing conventions which typically require the construction of an authoritative and distant writer persona, and the adoption of a monologic style to report research findings (Lehman et al., 2022; Lehman & Sułkowski, 2023). Consequently, and unfortunately, much of the academy`s contemporary scholarship is presented in "a tendentious, jargon-ridden, laboured writing style and an equally abstracted vocabulary to show that we are, after all, still serious scholars" (Grey & Sinclair, 2006, p. 445). It follows then that students are exposed to and are expected to replicate what could be described as reader-exclusive, formulaic, and bland writing. In essence, it falls short of creating the reader-writer relationship desired by students in which the centrality of what is intended to be communicated is essential, but so too is how it is communicated. Thus, we argue that students' preference for reader-sensitive academic writing should be supported and encouraged through the provision of a strategic writing pedagogy.

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NOTES

[1] English philology is a common university department in Poland which combines the study of practical language learning, linguistics, literature and culture of English-speaking countries.

² *Patterns of privileging* is the concept coined by Wertsch who argues that "Privileging refers to the fact that one meditational means, such as a social language, is viewed as being more appropriate and efficacious than others in a particular sociocultural setting" (1991, p. 124).

³ Pronouns *we, us, our, ours* are used here to more implicitly include the potential point of view of the reader into the argument.

Appendix 1. Interview Questions

1. Have you ever been explicitly taught writing skills in English?

2. What types of writing activities have you done in English? Was this work assessed/evaluated by your teachers, external examination boards, or others (specify)? If so, what grade did you receive?

3. Did you find these writing tasks interesting, or challenging?

4. Do you think you are good at writing academic tasks in English? Why? Why not?

   a. What are your strengths? b. What are your weaknesses?

5. Have you ever written in English without it being required for a course, exam, etc.? If so what? Why?

6. Do you read published articles in English about your topic of study? If yes, do you find

   them easy, relatively easy, or difficult to read? Why?

7. We often talk about a writer's 'voice', what do you think 'writer's voice' means?

8. Is the writer's voice different in academic texts than in other forms of writing? If yes, how?

9. Which of the following statements are most important when writing an academic paper? Please put them in order of importance with 1 being the most important and 5 the least important.

   An academic article needs to:

   a) inform about the subject matter

   b) persuade the reader to accept the arguments/content as true/fact

   c) have a clear structure; for example, an introduction-middle-end

   d) guide the reader to follow the structure of the text; using words like 'firstly', 'secondly'

   e) support the writer's ideas by quoting published writers in the subject area.

10. What words did the writer use to construct a convincing argument in conclusions X, X?

11. In conclusions 1-4, is the main argument of the paper clear to you?

    Very clear / not so clear / not clear. Why?

12. In conclusion 1-4, does the author present his or her main arguments –confidently, weakly, or indifferently? What elements/language in the text make you think this?

13. In conclusion 1-4, do you feel the writer attempts to involve you in thinking about the content of the text? How? Do you feel that the writer helps you follow her/his arguments in the text? How?

14. Does the writer make you feel a part of this academic community?