Authorship, place and voice in research: A transitivity analysis of selected African and Western journals

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Abstract

The concept of voice has become crucial within academic discourse, where texts constitute sites for enacting identity. In spite of the recognition that expressing authorial voice in writing constitutes a salient feature of academic writing, various studies have pointed out that there appears to be a fair amount of trepidation when it comes to the expression of authorial voice in academic texts, especially so for L2 writers. The argument has been that L2 writers are likely to suppress authorial voice in writing. This argument identifies the L2 status as the underlying cause of the lack of voice in writing. This study examines the relationship between the expression of authorial voice and the cultural location of the journals in which articles are published. It examines authorial voice in the methodology sections of research articles published in Western and African journals. Methodology sections extracted from 60 journal articles from two broad disciplines – Arts and Social Sciences constituted the corpus for the study. Using Halliday's transitivity framework, the study revealed that within the methodology section, there is a general tendency to diminish authorial voice and that this is reflected in the nature of first-person pronoun usage and in the distribution of the transitivity patterns across the corpus. The study suggests that the cultural location of journals

does play a subtle role in the expression of authorial voice and presence in the methodology sections of RAs. There are no deep divergences between the two categories.

Keywords: Authorial voice, academic discourse, research articles, transitivity, second language

Introduction

Research in academic discourse over the past two decades has led to the establishment of the view that writing constitutes a process of enacting desired identities (Canagarajah, 2014; Flowerdew & Wang, 2015; Hyland 2004). The enactment of these desired identities has been seen as a function of the interactive character of academic writing (Hyland, 2004; Thompson, 2001). It is difficult to contest the view that the interactive dimension of academic writing results in the enactment of identity because interaction implies a dialogue between the voices present in a given text. The voices of dialogue are in themselves indicative of different identities in a given text. In this context, it is clear that the foundations of the view that academic writing constitutes the enactment of identity is anchored in the argument that identity is a discursive phenomenon (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015). This is to say that identities are enacted and constructed by means of discourse and as such do not pre-exist their enactment and construction in discourse.

In spite of the recognition of the view that academic writing is a site for the enactment of identity, there is still some reluctance on the part of authors when it comes to the explicit representation of self in academic writing (Hyland, 2002a). A study by Tang and John (1999) based on student essays, for example, shows that there is a greater tendency to represent the general through the use of the first person than there is to represent the individual author of the text. This tendency is occasioned by the adamant position propagated by writing manuals that academic writing is an objective and impersonal

activity whose goal is the communication of knowledge (Hyland, 2002b). Hyland (2002b) points out that this particular instruction found in writing manuals is informed by a homogenous view of academic writing. Within the constraints of this homogenous view, academic writing in all its forms is seen as constituting a process for sharing research findings.

Although it is generally accepted in the literature that authors have a difficulty with marking their presence in their writing (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Hyland, 2002a), the greater consensus appears to be that L2 writers have a special difficulty arising from the cultural contexts and norms which shape the background of these L2 writers and students (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015; Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003). Hyland (2002a), in a study examining self-mention in L2 undergraduate writing, concludes that L2 writers deliberately "principally chose to avoid it at points where it involved making a commitment to an interpretation or claim (p. 1106)". This implies that L2 writers consciously subdue their own voices in the texts that they construct. The inescapable conclusion that ought to be drawn from this finding is that the L2 writer has a distinct problem when it comes to the expression of voice in academic writing. The current study departs from this finding and its inescapable conclusion by exploring the extent to which the cultural location of the journals in which academic writing is published influences the expression of authorial voice in academic writing. The hypothesis central to this study then is that the cultural location of the journal influences how authorial voice in research articles (RAs) is expressed. There are two reasons for this hypothesis. The first is that journals do not exist independent of their cultural location. This truth means that there is a dialectic between journals and the cultural location in which they exist. The second reason is that the processes of the production and publication of the RA is influenced by journal requirements. This influence will invariably have implications for the expression of authorial voice in the RAs. What is meant

by cultural location is properly elaborated in the methods section of the paper.

A second way through which the findings about the relationship between L2 and authorial voice creates a niche for this study is that, given that this finding relates specifically to the aspects of research that involved interpretation, can it be assumed that the same deliberate attempt to diminish authorial voice and presence marks other subsections of research writing such as the methodology section? This question is imperative because the methodology section is that part of the research process where one is reasonably expected to not have any apprehension about enacting one's presence. This position is informed by the fact that the methodology broadly constitutes a narrative that recounts the activities an individual researcher undertook during the study. Within Swale's genre theory, the methodology section of the research article is conceptualized as a genre given that it is a primary category of discourse with a defined communicative purpose (Swales, 1990).

The foregoing observations underlie the research questions and objectives of this study. Firstly, since the methodology section by its nature does not call for interpretation, which perhaps is the defining characteristic of this genre, will writers who publish in African journals still demonstrate the propensity to suppress their own voice in comparison to those who publish in Western journals, and in what manner? Secondly, given that authorial voice can be marked through a variety of linguistic resources, what specific resources are used especially within the system of the clause to repress or express authorial voice? Thirdly, the study explores the extent to which the nature of authorship (that is, the number of authors of a research article) influences authorial voice in the methodology section as a sub-genre. For instance, is a single author more or less likely to suppress his/her presence in a text?

Review of related literature on authorial voice

The concept of voice, although over two decades old, is still relatively new in research in academic writing (Canagarajah, 2014). The implication therefore is that there is still a lack of clarity with regard to some of the quintessential theoretical concepts relating to voice in academic writing. This is especially so given that voice is tied to the issue of identity in academic writing. An important implication of the lack of theoretical clarity occasioned by the newness of voice as an area of research in academic writing is that there appears to be a lack of distinction between voice and other concepts such as authorial presence and the metadiscoursal concept of stance (Çandarli, Bayyurt, & Marti, 2015; Jiang, 2015; Zhao, 2017). In spite of this state of the scholarship on voice in academic discourse, it is still important to examine the various theoretical positions on voice adopted in the literature and comment on the implications of these theoretical positions for this study. Two formulations of voice related to two sets of identities in academic discourse are presented by Ivanič (1998). In the first formulation of voice which is seen as a feature of the Discoursal self, voice is taken to mean how a writer wants to sound and not the stance being adopted by a writer in a text. Note that how one "wants to sound" does not equate to vocalization. Its meaning is more in line with the idea of constructing a unique sense of self, discoursally. This unique sense of self constitutes part of the process of constructing an identity through the voice adopted. The second definition of voice which Ivanič (1998) associates with what she terms the Self as author, is defined as the sense of the writer's position, opinions and beliefs expressed in a text. The second notion of voice can be seen as the antecedent of the metadiscoursal concept of writer stance.

The vital point that arises from the two views of voice in writing outlined above is that there is a recognition that identity in academic discourse is anchored in the idea of voice. There is an extent to which this recognition has influenced theoretical

approaches to analyzing identities in academic discourse. A notable case in point is Tang and John's (1999) typology of possible identities behind the first person pronoun in academic writing. This typology which is a continuum of authorial presence from least powerful authorial presence to most powerful authorial presence can be directly traced to Ivanič's (1998) concept of the Self as author and its characterization as the writer's voice in the sense of her or his position, opinions and beliefs. What Tang and John's (1999) typology and its relationship with Ivanič's (1998) notion of voice associated with the Self-as author helps us realise is that there is a conflation of voice and presence since the continuum of authorial presence is underpinned by the concept of Self-as author, which in turn is defined as a form of voice. This conflation allows us to think of authorial voice as an indicator of authorial presence. To this extent therefore, this review does not attempt to delineate authorial voice and authorial presence both at the theoretical level and in the analysis section of the paper.

In terms of the state of empirical research into authorial voice in academic writing, the first observation that must be made is that most of the studies have been interested in examining voice within the context of L2 classroom discourse and instruction, specifically within ESL and EAP, the implications of culture for the expression of authorial voice, comparison of authorial voice expression between student writers and more expert writers and the implications of discipline-specific norms for authorial voice expression (Aull & Lancaster, 2014; Canagarajah, 2014; Çandarli et al., 2015; Jiang, 2015; Lee & Deakin, 2016; Zhao, 2017). For instance, Bayyurt and Marti (2015) examined the indicators of authorial presence in Turkish and American students' argumentative writing. Among other things, their study concluded that first person pronouns constituted the least used resource for marking authorial presence in the argumentative essays produced by students. A finding of Bayyurt and Marti's (2015) study that is consistent with the generally accepted

position on the issue of authorial presence is that the L1 student writers in this instance used significantly more first-person pronouns in their essays as compared to the L2 Turkish students. Lee and Deakin (2016) whose study also looked at authorial presence in student writing concluded that although self-mention, which is predominantly realized in texts through first pronouns, is the least interactional metadiscourse resource used by undergraduate writers, L1 writers still used self-mention significantly more than L2 student writers.

Another interesting empirical perspective on voice in student writing is the one provided by Zhao (2017). This study interrogates the relationship between authorial voice and the quality of argumentative essays produced by L2 writers. The important conclusion drawn from this study is that there exists a positive correlation between authorial voice and quality of argumentative writing. Zhao's study therefore provides evidence in support of the position that authorial voice is an important feature of argumentative writing in particular. In spite of the relevance of the findings of this study, it ought to be pointed out that the study is not without its limitations. The most significant of which relates to the nature of the data used. Students engage in writing in a variety of genres, one of which is the argumentative essay. The study would therefore have arrived at a more definitive conclusion about the relationship between voice and quality of student writing if it had relied on essays drawn from the other genres of student writing at that level. These are the narrative, expository as well as descriptive forms.

The conclusion that can be drawn from an examination of the literature is that, the issue of voice appears to have been examined more extensively in the area of student writing than is the case in expert writing. Given the importance of voice within the post-process of academic writing within which writing is envisioned as the process of enacting identity, it is necessary that research pays attention to the issue of voice and authorial presence in more advanced genres such as the RA.

Methods

This section provides details concerning how the study was conducted. The processes used in the selection of the data and the techniques employed in processing are elaborated. The methods section also discusses the analytical approach used in analyzing the data.

Data

Data for the study was drawn from two broad sources: African journals and Western journals. The use of African and Western here needs some elaboration especially because of the historically problematic nature of the term Western. Western is used in its geopolitical sense to mean journals that are established, hosted and/or published by organisations and institutions that are geographically located in Western and Northern Europe, North America as well as Australia and New Zealand. African is used to refer to sub-Saharan Africa.

In terms of the selection of the journals, an African journal, first of all, refers to journals listed on the African journals Online database. Since the African journals online database is a collection of journals produced on the continent, it was reasonably assumed that any journal included in the database constitutes an African journal. This assumption about journals from the database, in spite of its reasonableness, only served as a useful starting point in selecting the journals included in this study. Information regarding the host institution/ organisations that own and run the journals found at each journal's homepage was examined to ascertain their classification as African journals. Western journals constitute journals that are hosted and published by Western located institutions. Most of the journals classified as Western were journals published by Western organisations such as Elsevier and de Gruyter and were drawn from the SCOPUS database. Other journals were found to have been established and run by departments in institutions of higher learning in the West.

It is important to admit here that there were journals established and run by African institutions, but which were published by or in conjunction with Western organisations. A case in point is *South African Journal of African Languages,* which, though established by the African Language Association of Southern Africa and hosted at the Department of African Languages of the University of South Africa, is published with Taylor and Francis, a Western organisation. In such cases as the *Southern Africa Journal of African Languages,* the journal was classified as an African journal. The primary criterion for establishing whether a journal is Western or African is therefore taken to be the location of the organisation that has established, hosts, or runs the journal. The location of the publisher is the secondary criterion. In instances where the primary criterion and the secondary criterion diverge, the primary criterion took precedence.

The table below provides a summary of the journals from which articles were extracted for the study. The table lists the journals and indicates the category each journal belongs to.

Table 1: Categorisation of journals

Journal Location	
Western journals	***African journals***
Journal of International Economics	Southern African Business Review
Journal of Second Language Writing	South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences
Journal of English for Academic Purposes	Ghana Journal of Linguistics
American Economic Association	South African Journal of African Languages
Language Teaching Research	Ethiopian Journal of Economics
Discourse Studies	Legon Journal of The Humanities
Economia	Nordic Journal of African Studies
European Economic Review	Nigeria Journal of Business Administration
International Journal of Applied Linguistics	Nebula
The Quarterly Journal of Economics	Africa Development
Sub-total= 10	Sub-total= 10
	Total number of journals= 20

The table above indicates that a total of twenty (20) journals were sampled as the source of the articles for this study. Ten (10) each for the two categories established. In terms of how these twenty (20) journals were selected, the first basis for selecting a journal was the criteria already discussed in the preceding paragraph. Journals that met these criteria were randomly selected as the sources of articles for the study. Each of

the journals selected provided at least two RAs for the study. The years in which journal articles were published did not constitute part of the criteria for selecting the journals and extracting the journal articles because the study was not interested in exploring any diachronic dimension of authorial voice in the methodology section of research articles. In other words, the study did not focus on the ways the realization of authorial voice through linguistic choices made in the methodology section of the RAs may have changed over time. Another factor in the selection of the journals which served as source of the articles used in this study is that of disciplinarity. The journals used in the study can be said to belong to two broad disciplines. The humanities and the social sciences. Journals that publish manuscripts in three sub-disciplines of the humanities – Linguistics, Discourse Studies and English for Academic Purposes were selected. For the social sciences, journals that publish articles in the sub-disciplines of Economics and Business were selected. Purpose and convenience determined the discipline-based selection of the journals. With regard to purpose, disciplines which mainly rely on empirical studies are chosen because they generally tend to have clearly indicated methodology sections. Convenience also played a role in the sampling process. Journals that were easily accessible during the data collection process were selected once they met the primary criteria already outlined.

In all, sixty (60) RAs were collected to form the corpus for the study. The RAs were drawn from the two broad disciplines already indicated above. Since the overriding goal of the study was to examine the expression of authorial voice and presence in the methodology section of articles published in African journals and in Western journals, the need to establish a representative sample was recognised. Thirty (30) of the articles selected were from African journals and the other thirty (30) from Western journals. This therefore ensured equal representation in terms of quantity. Table 2 below provides a summary of the distribution of RAs across journal type as well as discipline.

Table 2: Summary description of data

Journal Description	No. of Articles	Corpus Size
African	Humanities: 14 Social Sciences: 16 **Subtotal 30**	Humanities: 6,376 words Social Sciences: 8,586 words **Subtotal 14,926**
Western	Humanities= 15 Social Sciences= 15 **Subtotal 30**	Humanities: 8,127 words Social Sciences: 13,071 words **Subtotal 21,198**
Total	**60**	**36,124**

Processing of the Data

Entire articles were downloaded in portable document format (pdf) from the online versions of the journals. From these articles, the research methodology sections were extracted and first saved as Microsoft Word files. The methodology sections were then coded. The coding involved a specific nomenclature. This nomenclature provided the following details about each of the methodology sections: the number of authors of the article. SA meant the article was Single Authored (one individual author), DA meant it was co-authored (two authors) and MA meant multiple authored (more than two authors). The second category in the nomenclature was used to indicate whether the article was published in an African or Western journal. AF indicated that the article was published in an African journal whilst W indicated that it was published in a Western journal. The next category within the nomenclature indicated the specific discipline of the article. H referred to Humanities whilst S referred to Social Sciences. The last category in the nomenclature was a serial number and served as the point of distinction between individual methodology sections.

AntConc (version 3.5.8.0) corpus analysis tool was used in analyzing the data. The Microsoft Word format in which the data was therefore had to be converted to plain text, the format that the AntConc software can read. In this AntConc readable format, a word search was done using the pronouns *I* and *We* to identify all clauses in which these pronouns were used in the entire corpus. The coding of the data meant that there was a clear path indicating the specific source of each of the clauses that had the search terms. The identified clauses were then grouped based on a two-pronged criterion: the first was whether the articles came from a Western or African journal; second, was whether the first person pronoun used was singular or plural. A transitivity analysis of these clauses was then undertaken with a view to identifying the process type expressed in each of these clauses. Apart from the participants occupying the grammatical subject position in the clause, the transitivity analysis did not pay attention to other participants and elements such as the circumstance expressed in these clauses. This decision was taken in line with the objectives of the study.

A further dimension of the processing of the data which has implications for the analysis concerns the correlation between the authorial categories and the number of articles. The data did not have equal number of articles for each of the authorial categories. To make sense of the frequency of occurrence of the first person and the distribution of process types among the authorial categories, the average occurrence of any item in each of the authorial categories was therefore computed. This average value therefore formed the basis of a fair comparison across the authorial categories by normalizing the feature across the data.

Analytical framework

The theoretical thrust of this study is informed by Halliday's (1967) transitivity, an important framework within Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), which has been explored extensively in discourse and text analysis (Bloor & Bloor,

2004) . Transitivity within SFG is one of the ways in which the ideational metafunction of language is realized. At the core of the framework of transitivity is the accepted view that the clause is a representation of experience (Halliday, 1967; Halliday, 1994; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Experience here is construed as outer experience, which involves the processes of the external world or reality and internal experience, which involves consciousness (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Mehmood, Amber, Ameer, & Faiz, 2014). Further to the point, experiences within the framework more specifically means the events, actions and processes of all kinds (Mehmood et al., 2014). From the understanding of the clause as representing experience arises the formulation of the different process types which demonstrate how the clause comes to represent the full spectrum of our experiences, both internal and external. Of course, to account for the clause as a vehicle of representation, the transitivity system identifies three (3) elements within the clause – the participants, the process and the circumstance. It is these three units within the clause that allow it to fully represent experiences of various kinds.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) identify six process types that are the conduit for representing experience through the clause in the English language. These processes are material processes, mental processes, relational processes, existential processes, behavioural processes and verbal processes. Out of these six (6) processes, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) indicate that the material, mental and relational processes are the major process types whilst the other three (3) are minor processes realized within the clause. Material processes are processes that express physical experiences and as such denote action and events. The Actor and Goal are the primary Participants that occur with this process type. Mental processes, the second major process type, are processes that are indicative of the individual's consciousness. In other words, mental processes are processes of sensing involving cognition, perception

and feeling. The participants within this process type are the Senser, the conscious entity involved with the process, and the Phenomenon, that which is felt by the consciousness of the Senser. Relational processes express relationships of being and having between two participants. This process type has two distinct subtypes; attributive and identifying processes. For the attributive subtype, the participants involved are the Carrier and the Attribute whilst those for the identifying subtype are the Identified and the Identifier. The existential process is realized in clauses which indicate that something exists. This process type has only one participant known as the Existent, the thing which exists. Behavioural processes merge consciousness and physical experience of the outside world. This process type, as such, expresses physiological and psychological behaviours such as breathing, sneezing and laughing. There are two participants associated with this process type. The Behaver is the conscious entity undergoing the behaviour and the Behaviour, the entity at which the process is directed. The last process within the transitivity system is the verbal process. This process type deals with the process of saying. It usually has three (3) participants: the Sayer, the Receiver and the Verbiage (which is the thing that is said by the Sayer).

The application of the framework of transitivity in examining the issue of authorial presence in the methodology section of research articles is premised on the following assumption. Given that processes in the transitivity model are ways of representation through language, the nature of the reality and experience that is being represented should inform us about the author who is doing the representation, especially so in terms of how the author relates to the experience that is being represented in the clauses. This assumption is strengthened by the current dominant view in academic writing which argues that writing within the academe is a discoursal process for the enactment and construction of identity (Flowerdew & Wang, 2015; Hyland, 2001, 2015). It therefore stands to reason that the

different process types within the transitivity framework which constitute the media for the expression of different kinds of experiences will come to construct and enact different identities for the author. In other words, the different process types will enact different types of presence for the author of the text. This deduction is made on the premise that identity is a function of the author's presence in the text and that authorial presence is determined by the processes that authors use to convey their experiences. The application of the transitivity model in the manner that is being suggested here is not novel. Apart from Halliday's classic analysis of William Golding's *The Inheritors*, several studies of that nature exist (e.g., Adika & Denkabe, 1997; Mwinlaaru, 2014). Mwinlaaru (2014), for instance, used transitivity to trace the transformation of the identity of a fictional character, Chris in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah.* Mwinlaaru's study, though situated in literature demonstrates that a transitivity analysis of clauses in a text is an insightful way of looking at the transformation of identity. More importantly within the area of identity in academic discourse, Hyland and Tse (2012) have demonstrated how the transitivity framework can be used to examine the issue of identity. Their study therefore provides insights as regards applying the framework to analyzing authorial presence and voice in the research article.

Analysis and discussion

This section of the paper offers an analysis and discussion of the data. The focus of the analysis is on the various ways in which authorial voice and presence are expressed within the methodology section. The first sub-section examines the relationship between pronominal forms and the expression of authorial voice. The second sub-section focuses on how the system of transitivity has been used as a way of conveying authorial voice and presence in the data.

Pronominal Forms and Authorial Voice

Studies into identity enactment in writing in general and authorial presence in academic writing in particular have principally come to the consensus that the use of first person personal pronouns is perhaps the most important indicator of authorial presence in writing (Çandarli et al., 2015; Hyland, 2001, 2002a; Kuo, 1999; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999). Since the argument has been made that the use of first person pronouns in writing marks the presence of the author in texts (Tang & John, 1999) and also indicates the desire to express authorial voice in academic writing (Hyland, 2001), we can reasonably contend that the absence of these forms or their minimal usage may point to the stifling or perhaps weakening of authorial voice and presence. This is especially the case given the fact that we found only forty-nine (49) instances of nominal group items – "the author(s)" and "the researcher(s) – which mark the presence of the author in the entire data. The presence of these nominal forms, it is our contention, do not inscribe a strong authorial presence because they create a distal relationship between the author (s) and the research process in the sense that the authors are presented from a third person perspective which shifts the perceptual centre from the first person point of view which would have carried a deeper authorial involvement in the research process. In this regard, one of the imperatives of this study is to examine the extent to which first person personal pronouns are used in the methodology sections of research articles published in selected Western and African journals. The analysis of the data revealed that the first person pronouns (I, We) constitute a statistical fraction of methodology sections of research articles published in both African and Western journals. Of a 14,962-word corpus built from the methodology sections of RAs published in African journals, only 23 counts of the use of first person pronouns were identified. This figure represents 0.15% of the entire corpus. Within the 21,198-word corpus built from methodology sections of RAs published in Western

journals, only 225 uses of personal pronouns were identified. This figure means that 1.06% of the words in this corpus are personal pronouns.

The findings from the statistical analysis above supports the argument that first person pronouns are not used extensively in the methodology sections of research articles. Given the established link between the use of pronouns and authorial presence and voice(Aziz & Hashima, 2017; Tang & John, 1999), it is arguable that within the context of the methodology sections of research articles, authors, irrespective of the journals tend to minimize their presence in texts by limiting their use of the first person. This finding is in line with what is known in the literature about marking authorial presence in academic writing in general (Çandarli et al., 2015) which is that authors tend to limit their presence and voice in texts. The statistical negligibility of the use of the first person further points to an attempt to not explicitly indicate authorial voice and presence. This point is reinforced by the reasonable expectation that since the methodology section is that part in which the researcher indicates broadly how a study was conducted, we should expect the presence and voice of the researcher to be very visible within this segment of the RA. This expectation of the use of the first person falls in line with what Tang and John (1999) call *the 'I' as recounter of the research process* in their taxonomy of possible identities behind the first person. The minimal use of these forms, it is argued, is partly indicative of the suppression of authorial voice and presence. The argument is also supported by the fact that most uses of the first person occurs with material processes. This co-occurrence ascribes an *'I' as recounter of research process* presence on the author(s) that the first person pronouns refer to. The minimal usage therefore constitutes down toning of this authorial identity. This conclusion is not novel given that writing manuals as well as academic writing instruction have tended to dissuade writers from employing rhetorical strategies that foreground their presence in texts (Hyland, 2001; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999).

In addition to the findings that have been provided by the overview of the proportion of pronouns used in the two corpora, a more detailed analysis is pertinent to the concerns of this study. A core objective is to examine the relationship between first person pronoun usage and article authorship. Here, article authorship refers to the number of authors of particular RAs and how that number influences the propensity to either use or avoid first person personal pronouns. As mentioned earlier, three (3) authorial categories were created, namely, single-authored (SA), co-authored (two authors; DA) and multi-authored (this refers to articles with at least three (3) authors; MA). Table 3 presents the relationship between the authorial categories and the use of the first person in articles published in both African and Western journals.

Table 3: Authorial categories and first-person pronouns across the data

African journals				Western journals			
Authorial category	Number of RAs	Pronoun count	Average number of Pronouns	**Authorial category**	Number of RAs	Pronoun count	Average number of Pronouns
SA	12	12	1.00	**SA**	7	20	2.85
DA	12	4	0.33	**DA**	11	28	2.54
MA	6	7	1.17	**MA**	12	177	14.75

The first thing that has to be pointed out from the results presented in Table 3 is that the methodology sections of single-authored articles published in African journals, with an average first person pronoun occurrence of 1.0 is almost twice lower than the Western journal occurrence of 2.85. Taken as a marker of authorial voice and presence, this finding means that

single-authors of RAs published in African journals do have a tendency to diminish their voice and presence in comparison to single-authors whose RAs are published in Western journals. This finding offers some evidence that does not contravene the widely accepted view that L2 writers have an aversion towards the use of the first person. This study does not, of course, make a distinction between L1 and L2 authors publishing in the two journal categories. What the finding does point to is a possible correlation in the expression of voice between L1 and L2 authors on the one hand, and Western Journals and African journals on the other. The argument can therefore be made that single-authors who publish in Western journals tend to explicitly state their agency in the methodology sections as compared to the single authors who publish in African journals. In this regard, we can begin to formulate the point that authorial presence in the methodology sections of research articles published in Western journals is more pronounced.

The results as presented in Table 3 also indicate that multiple-authored methodology sections of RAs accounted for the clear majority (14.75) of the use of first person personal pronouns for Western journals and a relatively high of 1.17 for African journals. What is also clear from the table is that irrespective of the journal location, MA constitutes the category with the highest average of first person usage. This statistical fact suggests strongly that there is greater authorial presence and visibility in multiple-authored methodology sections than for the two other author categories since these two other categories account for less than half of first-person pronoun usage. This is especially the case for multiple-authored RAs published in Western journals.

Further, whereas it is the case that the first person is disproportionately (almost 8 times more for both the SA and DA categories) used more by multiple authors who publish in Western journals, it is not the case for African journals. For African journals, we see that MA is marginally higher than SA and only

a little more than twice the average for DA. Therefore, it can be argued that authors who publish in both African and Western journals prefer expressing a collective authorial presence than for expressing individual authorial presence through the use of the first person. If this argument is plausible largely for the Western journal articles, to what extent does it hold for articles published in African journals, despite the close similarities for all authorial categories in the data? The evidence, as already indicated in this section, is that it is multiple-authored articles published in African journals that account for the highest use of the first person. Moreover, the data shows clearly that of the twelve (12) instances of use of the first person by single authors in African journals, seven (7) involved the use of the first person plural (we). Since it is grammatically incongruent for the first person plural to have a singular referent within the discourse, we cannot argue that the use of this pronoun by single authors constitutes the expression of an individual authorial presence. A possible inference from the use of the first person plural here is that it reveals a reluctance to express the individual authorial presence. This suppression of the individual authorial presence is demonstrated by the transitivity patterns for clauses in which the Actor is the first person plural. We find that for all the seven (7) clauses, the processes are material. This means that even for instances in which the individual author is performing actions that are at the core of the research activity, there is still a proclivity not to individuate the authorial presence. Rather the inclination is to collectivise voice and presence. The analysis therefore reveals that in the case of single-authored methodology sections of research articles published in African journals, there is a deliberate pluralization of the singular actor. This constitutes a strategy by which individual authorial presence and voice is suppressed in texts while the expression of the collective presence and voice is promoted simultaneously.

Secondly, the comparison of the results shows a divergence (0.33 and 2.54) for African and Western journals

respectively for the co-author category. The use of the first person within this category is just like for the MA authorial category. Unlike the single-author where we find instances of use of both the singular and plural first person, only the first person plural is used in this authorial category without variability. From both grammatical and discoursal points of view, this is expected since it is ungrammatical for the first person singular to be used in any circumstance for a plural nominal referent. From the discoursal perspective, the first person singular unlike the first person plural, does not have the ability of drawing the audience into the discourse. Another perspective from which the results, in terms of the use of the first person within this authorial category have to be examined is the implication of the statistical results for authorial presence. The comparatively low usage of the first person here is evidence in support of the observation that the co-authors tend to not indicate their authorial presence through the use of the first person. This observation is in relation to the two other authorial categories. From this perspective, the argument has to be made that in comparison with the other two authorial categories, co-authors prefer not to indicate their authorial presence and voice through the first person.

Perhaps a more wholistic view in terms of the relationship between the three authorial categories and the signaling of authorial presence and voice through the first person is demonstrated by an analysis of the use of the first person plural within the three categories and across the entire data. Table 4 provides a summary of the distribution of the use of the first person plural across the three authorial categories.

Table 4: Distribution of WE across the three authorial categories

Authorial category	Number of RAs	Frequency			Average occurrence of WE
		African journals	Western journals	Total count	
Single-authored	**19**	7	1	8	0.42
Co-authored	**23**	4	28	32	1.39
Multiple-authored	**18**	7	177	184	10.22
Total	**60**	18	206	224	

Table 4 indicates clearly that the multi-authored category accounts for a disproportionate amount with respect to the use of the first person plural. It would have made sense to simply put forth the argument that since the referent of 'we' in the multiple-authored methodology sections is plural, the pronoun used ought to express that plurality. This argument cannot be convincing given the fact that the same grammatical circumstance holds for the co-author category. In view of these two contrasting results, the conclusion that has to be drawn is that the results indicate a preference for the expression of authorial presence and voice through the use of 'we' by multiple authors. In the case of co-authors, the findings indicate that there is a reluctance for the expression of authorial presence and voice through the use of 'we'.

Transitivity and authorial voice and presence

In this section, we proceed to examine the kinds of processes involved in clauses in which there is the use of the first person and how these processes and, of course, participants relate to the expression or otherwise of authorial presence and voice. Especially in relation to the processes, the argument from a theoretical perspective is that the nature of experience of the reality as expressed in the clauses has implications for authorial presence and voice.

Five process types were identified from the data, namely, material, mental, relational, verbal and behavioural; and the analysis indicates variation in terms of the occurrence and distribution of these process types. For the data taken from articles published in both the African and Western journals, the following results were obtained as indicated in Table 5.

Table 5: Process types across the data

Journal Location					
African			**Western**		
Processes	Freq	Average occurrence in the corpus	Processes	Freq	Average occurrence in the corpus
Verbal	1	0.00006	Verbal	20	0.00094
Material	17	0.0011	Material	138	0.0065
Behavioural	0	0	Behavioural	1	0.00004
Mental	5	0.00033	Mental	40	0.0018
Relational	0	0	Relational	26	0.0012

The results indicate that the material process clause type is most used in the methodology section of research articles in both sets of data (African journals and Western journals). The frequency of use of this process in the African and Western

journals is similar as can be seen in the average occurrence of this process for both the African and Western journals from the table. The material process type is followed by the mental process clause type for both sets of data with difference in frequency of occurrence. The relational which is not used in the African journal RAs constitutes the third frequently used clause type for both sets, the verbal process clause type ranks fourth for both sets of data; with the behavioural clause type constituting the least used. The table indicates that comparatively, there are fewer uses of all the process types in the African journal articles than in the Western.

As Simpson (1993) has pointed out, "transitivity offers systematic choice, and any particular textual configuration is only one, perhaps strategically motivated, option from a pool of possible textual configurations" (p. 26). The implication of this argument is that the choices of clausal configurations within the transitivity system is clearly motivated and driven by an established purpose. From this perspective, this paper examines the relationship between clausal choices and the communication of authorial voice and presence in the methodology section of the research articles. Halliday (1994), in discussing the different processes in the transitivity system, notes that material processes are processes that relate physical experience and that this physical experience involves usually the expression of action.

In view of the observations above, it is understandable that the material process type accounts for a higher proportion of the processes used in the methodology section of the research articles. If the material process types indicate physical experience, within the context of this study, it ought to be argued strongly that these physical experiences relate directly to the expression of authorial presence and voice within the articles. This is especially the case because all the material process clauses in the study have the first person pronoun as the Actor within the clause. In each of these processes, therefore, we find that it is the author whose physical experience(s) is being expressed within

the clause. The following clauses (4-6) extracted from the data provide instances of the material clauses.

1. SOURCES OF DATA In total   I[ACTOR] have worked [MATERIAL] with some 241 tokens of NPs
    SA-AF-H-30.txt 29

2.   E. Mwandambo (aged 36) and A. Isakwisa (aged 76). I[ACTOR] used [MATERIAL] 30 tokens from Felberg (1996) and Biblia Um   SA-AF-H-30.txt   29

3.   in Tanzania, between February and November 2008, I[ACTOR] collected [MATERIAL] 67 tokens from the Nyakyusa constructi   SA-AF-H-30.txt   29

Our parsing of the clauses (1-3) above does not take into account every aspect of the clause but is focused on the I-participant and the process itself. This limited focus is not arbitrary but is informed by the fact that the analysis is primarily interested in establishing how the first person participant and the process that defines the clause combine to enact an authorial presence and voice in the methodology section of the RAs. In each of the clauses above, we find that the combination of the first person and the material process enacts a strong presence for the author. This is because the Actor and the material process construct the author as a visible agent within the clause. It is through this agency that the author is infused into the text to the extent that the physical experience expressed within the clauses in particular and the entire text broadly is physical experience that originates from the author. The explicit authorial presence enacted through the material process clause type has implications for authorial identity. In this circumstance therefore, a greater presence and a stronger voice are created through the material process. This interpretation of the relationship between the first person and the material process is supported by Tang and John's (1999) argument that their category of the *I-as recounter of*

research process within their continuum of authorial presence does indicate a high authorial presence.

Mental processes are processes of sensing (Halliday, 1994: Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014) and more vitally within the context of this study, they include perception and cognition. Within the framework of transitivity, two types of participants are associated with mental process clauses. These are the Senser and the Phenomenon. From the explanation of the mental process clause type, we can postulate that mental process clauses are the primary clause type for the expression of the intellectualized identity of the academic in academic writing. This theoretical position explains why the results for both sets of journals indicate that mental process clauses constitute the second highest category of clauses occurring with the first person in the data. They constitute 0.0018 and 0.00033 of all processes in clauses in which the first person is used in articles published in Western and African journals respectively. An intellectualized authorial presence is best expressed with clauses whose loci is cognition since cognition implies a disposition to use the mind in reasoning about any given phenomenon. Clause 4 from the data will help make this point clearer.

4.   we [SENSER] knew [MENTAL] that all three were struggling with   DA-W-S-15.txt   10   2

In clause 4, the mental process is expressed in the cognitive verb *knew* with the Senser being the first person plural *we.* Within this clause we can see that the agency which is expressed in the Senser is one that is centred on the cognitive state of the participant. The participant's presence in this clause is therefore marked by an experience defined by mental activity to the extent that we cannot disassociate the participant from his representation as a cognitive agent. The authorial presence within this clause is therefore seen as a cognitive presence. This cognitive presence enacts for the author an identity that is defined by the use of the intellect, that is, the capacity to think

and rationalise. In this way, the author succeeds in creating a presence that is in tune with his/ her identity as an academic. A closely related observation to the argument that is being made about mental process clauses is that the mental process clause indicates that within the methodology section, the author is processing and analyzing the data at a cognitive level. This cognitive processing of the data is further evidence in support of the view that mental process clauses are means of conveying an authorial presence that is defined by mental activity and as such leads to the enactment of an intellectualized presence and voice.

Halliday (1994) formulates verbal processes as processes of saying. This process has four participants which are Sayer, Target, Receiver and Verbiage. It is the first process type that produces contrasting results in terms of articles published in African journals and those published in Western journals. Verbal process clauses constitute the third largest category with an average occurrence of 0.00006 in articles published in African journals. This process however is the fourth, with an average occurrence of 0.00094 in terms of articles published in Western journals. In spite of this contrast, a further examination of the way the verbal process is applied produces converging results regarding how authors who publish in African journals and those who publish in Western journals use this process. All verbal process clauses identified had the first person plural as the Sayer. Furthermore, the data reveals that all verbal processes identified were used in either co-authored methodology sections or multiple authored methodology sections. The conclusion that can be drawn from this observation is that where authorial presence is tied to a collective referent, there is no hesitation in being seen to be communicating directly. In other words, co-authors and multiple authors have no disinclination about being seen to be 'saying' and communicating directly within the methodology section. Given the evidence, the reverse will appear to be the case for single authors. The absence of verbal process clauses with grammatically singular Sayers from the

data at least suggests strongly that there is disinclination on the part of individual authors to be seen to be saying or 'speaking' directly within texts.

The second stark contrast to be drawn as regards the clause type distribution across the two sets of data is the relational process type. Relational processes are processes of being and focus on the relationship between entities in a given clause (Halliday 1994). There were no relational process clauses in articles published in the African journals. However, relational process clauses constitute the third largest category in the Western journals. A further point that ought to be made about the relational process clause is that it occurs only with the first person plural functioning as participant as can be seen from the example clauses 5-7.

5. We [CARRIER] also have [RELATIONAL] badge data
    [ATTRIBUTE]: the precise times   MA-W-S-04.txt
    12   7

6. We [CARRIER] also have [RELATIONAL] daily
    worker performance data [ATTRIBUTE, most
    MA-W-S-04.txt   12   9

7. we [CARRIER] have [RELATIONAL] data on 51
    promotions from the 34 stores [ATTRIBUTE]
    MA-W-S-04.txt   12   14

What needs to be accounted for here is the implication of the relational clause for authorial voice and presence in the RAs. In clause 5 above, the clause is made of a carrier, the relational process and the attribute of the carrier. In each of the clauses above, we see that the attribute extends the scope of the carrier by making an anaphoric reference to it. In clause 5, "badge data" indicates something that is possessed by the carrier, "We". The same grammatical relationship obtains between the carriers and their attributes in clauses 6 and 7. This internal structure of the

relational clause ought to be seen as leading to the appropriation of authorial voice and presence because it allows the resources of the clause to be combined to elaborate the author(s) who is/ are represented in the first person. The absence of the relational clause in the RAs published in African journals therefore goes to support the argument that the authors are less likely to assume a strong authorial voice and presence.

Conclusion

Premised on Hyland's view of the social interactive nature of academic writing and drawing from the Hallidayan transitivity framework, this study set out to investigate the construction of authorial presence or voice in the methodology sections of research articles published in selected African and Western journals. The specific objectives were to determine how the authors exploited the pronominal forms _I/We_ and choices within English clausal configurations to signal authorial presence and thereby construct an identity for themselves, and to find out the inter-relationships between the African and Western journals in this respect.

One of the key findings was that first person pronouns (singular and plural forms) do not feature prominently in the methodology sections of both the African and Western journals even though that is the segment where the author, as researcher, provides information on the research acts or procedures. Arguably therefore and with first person pronoun usage as the criterion, there is a general attempt at suppressing authorial presence in order to perhaps underscore the integrity of the research process and diminish the fallibility of human agency. This notwithstanding, the study also investigated the relationship between nature of authorship (characterized as single-, co-, or multiple- authorship) and extent of pronoun usage.

The study also analyzed the process types that dominated the methodology sections in relation to the choice of pronouns in participant-actor positions using the Hallidayan

transitivity framework in order to determine how they relate to the expression or otherwise of authorial presence and voice. One of the key findings was that for both African and Western journals, material process verbs were the most preferred in the methodology sections. This is not surprising given that the methodology sections are by their very nature communicating research acts or procedures which are mostly action oriented or experiential in nature requiring the presence of an actor. In other words, the nature of the communicative situation in this sub-genre requires the researcher to report "real-world activities" (Hyland, 2004, p. 27), which would consequentially invoke the use of material process verbs with the researcher as -Actor. Also, worth mentioning here is the category of mental process verbs. It constituted the second highest category of clauses used with the first person pronoun in the data, suggesting that in reporting the research activity or procedure, the authors also construct themselves as participants in a cognitive process in which they exercise intellectual perceptiveness as they recount the mundane acts of "doing".

This study has revealed subtle convergences rather than deep differences between African and Western journals in the construction of authorial voice in the methodology sections of research articles. This most likely points to the moderating functions of editors and reviewers as reflected in Hyland's (2004, p. 139) assertion that "published texts … have completed professional and institutional rites of passage and gained legitimacy in the eyes of community gatekeepers". Such moderating functions privilege certain stylistic preferences or proclivities in the competitive world of research article publication. The subtle convergences between the African and Western journals have pedagogical implications. First, instruction in academic writing in ESL contexts has to proceed from the position that writing in both first language and second language contexts bear a lot of similarities. This therefore means moving away from the deficit model which has largely been the

framework for teaching academic writing in second language contexts. Secondly, in looking at the subtle convergences, ESL writers will have to be encouraged to become more comfortable with the idea that expressing authorial presence and voice in academic texts is a virtue and not necessarily a vice.

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