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Identity Construction in Learning English Academic Writing in a Japanese University

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The construction of writer identity in English L2 academic writing is not usually explicitly addressed in such writing classrooms, yet it plays a significant role for English L2 students learning to write in academic genres. This study investigates the influences on the construction of writer identity by Japanese university students in Japan learning English academic writing, with consideration given to what *selves* they exhibit in their writing, and how much those selves were shaped by their learning experiences in a required writing course. A total of sixteen students and their four teachers participated in the yearlong study, involving an analysis of students' written texts, supported by monthly student and teacher interviews and classroom observations. The text analysis was done using Clark and Ivanič's (1997) *possibilities of selfhood* as the main framework, operationalizing Martin's (2000) Appraisal framework for identifying the different selves. Findings showed that the strongest influences on identity construction were from instructors' expectations, while personal beliefs also contributed. The findings also showed that students were more likely to meet writing task expectations where instructors had more reasonable requirements in terms of voice.

Keywords: writer identity, writing, L2 academic writing, possibilities of selfhood, authorial self, discoursal self, autobiographical self, selves framework, Appraisal Theory, Appraisal framework

Introduction

Identity construction in academic writing for English L2 learners is a heavily guided process; one that, from an EFL perspective, it has been argued, begins with a fair amount of mimicry and copying. While it is understandable that student writers will bring their own 'voice' to their academic writing, there is a fair amount of stifling of that voice, in favor of 'laying the groundwork' for achieving an academic style. Japanese students' writing experiences before entering university tends to be more expressive, and therefore more along the lines of what they might find as an outlet for their own thinking and style. But as undergraduate students, they may be steered heavily away from such personal writing and toward impersonal writing that is seen as more sophisticated or professional. But seeing as these students have no experience writing in such discoursal ways, they rely on models for academic style that they can then mimic, resulting therefore in what can be described as a loss of voice.

The study was designed to investigate identity construction for learners of English academic writing in a Japanese university with consideration given to what *selves* they exhibit in their writing, and how much those selves were shaped by their learning experiences in a required writing course. In specific terms, the

study addressed the following research question: How do EFL learners construct writer identities in their English academic writing in a Japanese university?

Conceptual Background

This section provides an outline of the major theoretical considerations underpinning the study. First is a description of the pedagogical and cultural context, followed by the background of the study. Next are brief definitions of key terms, followed by the theoretical and analytical frameworks. Completing the section is the study's main research question.

Pedagogical and Cultural Context

Learning academic writing in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context presents a myriad of challenges to learners. Many of these challenges relate to the influences of their socio-cultural backgrounds on the written academic literacy they are attempting to achieve. One major issue for Japanese university students is that writing in academic English requires a writer-responsible individualistic voice or writer identity (requiring writers to defend their own position) that is different from the more reader-responsible and collectivist voice (making a claim representative of many individuals speaking as one) used more often when writing in Japanese. As Japanese university students are increasingly required to complete coursework and submit papers in English, this is a crucial consideration they need to make in order to meet the writing expectations in their university studies.

In consideration of writer identity or voice in Japanese students' English academic writing, this been debated. Certain Western (i.e., American) scholars have reported that Japanese students have no voice of their own in their writing (Atkinson, 1997; Davidson, 1995), and certain Japanese scholars (living and working outside Japan) have argued that Japanese students simply show voice differently (Kubota, 1999; Matsuda, 2001). This debate is significant in that it shapes perspectives on what happens in the construction of an academic identity for these students.

Research in EFL education in Japan has revealed writing to be the most problematic skill area for students. It has been described as "neglected" (Davies, 1999) and the least competent skill of English of university students of EFL in Japan (Kroll, 1990), particularly with regard to applying critical thinking skills to establishing *writer identity* (Casanave, 2002; Matsuda, 2001), and developing *critical argument* (Kamimura & Oi, 2006; Rabbini, 2003; Stapleton 2001; 2002a), both central elements of socio-cultural theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006) as it applies to academic writing education research. As a comprehensive theory of writing has yet to be established (Sasaki, 2005), writing education is shaped by the environment in which it is developed. Taking into consideration the social and cultural aspects of the environment, English writing education in Japan is often reduced to grammatical and lexical studies for the purposes of examinations, since there is not much further need for English writing ability beyond this level (Rabbini, 2003).

However, this level of writing education offers very little in terms of sustainability of English language skills and their practical application; it does not consider the development of thinking skills or strategies for creating logical relationships between thoughts (Shinoda, 2006). Critical arguments are often not required and therefore not developed, and no real consideration is normally given to issues surrounding writer identity (Stapleton, 2002b). In order to introduce more of a focus on critical writing, some teachers and curriculum developers are taking social constructivist positions in continuing to look toward developing students' socio-cultural awareness in EFL writing in Japan in an attempt to better connect the social and cultural relationships of students with their English writing (Rabbini, 2003; Rinnert & Kobayashi, 2001). However, such studies have not gone into great depth in exploring Japanese university students' experiences with consideration to the influence of classroom instruction and teachers' and students' philosophies about EFL writing.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore in-depth the experiences of university students in Japan developing L2 writer identity in learning to write academic English. The relevance of this study today is that Japanese higher education is currently in flux. In our age of globalization, the education ministry has sought to create more international appeal and competitiveness through an increase in English language programs and content courses (Rose & McKinley, 2017). In recent decades national universities have gone corporate and private universities are competing with them for government funding, leading to more interest in the development of globally-accepted English language education based programs.

This in-depth longitudinal qualitative study utilizes a combination of analytical frameworks in its investigation of L2 writer identity development in English academic writing education in a Japanese university. This study serves to reveal both significant strengths and limitations in students' and teachers' approaches to English writing education at a Japanese university. It has both pedagogical implications and implications for research across cultures.

Background of the Study

It is important to point out that much of the emphasis on developing students' socio-cultural awareness focuses on their development as critical thinkers. In the 1980s, as social constructivist theories were gaining credibility internationally, Japan's then Ministry of Education—now the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, and Technology (MEXT)—made steps to move away from exam-based English education, as it was not preparing Japanese graduates for successful competition in international business. More emphasis was put on *kokusaika*, or internationalization (Flowers, 2016; Kubota, 2002). The focus was more on practical communicative skills. In another move around the same time, in response to increased examination-related stress issues, the Ministry introduced *yutori kyoiku,* or 'relaxed education' (Butler, 2007). It was a challenge to make these changes at the same time, as the new style of education involved a major ideological shift, putting more emphasis on building socio-cultural awareness through internationalization, individuality, sustainable lifelong learning, and adjustment to social change.

This ideological shift led to teachers giving increased consideration to sociological factors. Each student brings his or her own social and cultural identity to the language classroom, often in great contrast to that of the teacher. The factors that affect people's socio-cultural identities are based on the classroom itself, the interpersonal contexts in the classroom, their purposes for being there, and their personal backgrounds (Duff & Uchida, 1997). These identities evolve in the classroom. Within its own social and cultural situation, a student's socio-cultural *positionality* in the classroom impacts heavily on motivations for learning. This positionality is the student's sense of self, and the social relations that are affected by this sense (Anthias, 2013). Vygotsky's (1978) concept of collaborative learning—that all learning, even learning to think, starts with interaction—leads students to create knowledge through their social relations and interactions. Wenger (1998) suggests the negotiation in these interactions is how students develop new identities in language learning. As writing is a communicative act, situated in a social, cultural setting (Casanave, 2003; Rinnert & Kobayashi, 2001), it is necessary for a student to establish an awareness of his or her own socio-cultural positionality in relation to others to be able to develop writing skills. This concept—students' establishment of an awareness of his or her own socio-cultural positionality—is the basis for the particular focus of this study on students' establishing writer identity and developing critical argument.

Theoretical and Analytical Frameworks

A theoretical framework significant in the exploration of writer identity construction in EFL writing is social constructivism. Social constructivism has held an important place in L2 writing research (McKinley, 2015). Applying the concept of social constructivism, the focus on identity construction in this study is viewed as socially co-constructed through written language use.

For English L2 students in a Japanese university, after the development of a cultural identity comes the development of an academic writer identity. Ivanič (1998) extends the Systemic Functional Linguistics model of language use described by Halliday (1994) in order to explain how academic identity is constructed in written discourse. Halliday's model of language use showed that "ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings conveyed by language all contribute towards constructing an individual's identity" (Sokol, 2005, p.324). Ideational meaning refers to the individual's formation of ideas or concepts, and the interpersonal meaning refers to the individual's understanding of her/his position in relation to others. Ivanič (1998) uses this model to explain that these are precisely the points that establish a person's academic writer identity.

An academic writer identity is made present in the writing in the form of various "selves" including autobiographical, authorial and/or discoursal (Clark & Ivanič, 1997). Figure 1 shows the three subject positions or the possibilities for selfhood or selves of a writer that are affected by a socio-cultural context.
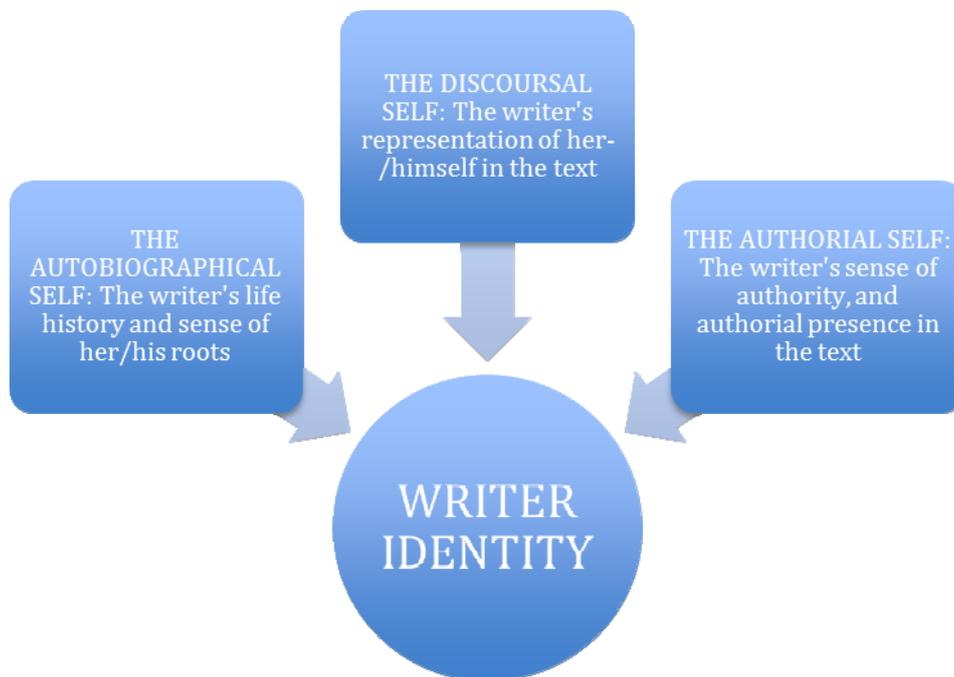

Figure 1. Subject-positions; socially available possibilities for self-hood (Clark & Ivanič, 1997, p.137)

These 'selves' are utilized according to the writer, the task, and socio-cultural or socio-political aspect (Ivanič, 1998). The autobiographical self makes use of personal language and evidence (Tang & John, 1999). The use of personal pronouns is often discouraged in academic writing (Hyland, 2002), but as there is no evidence of a link between the use of personal language and quality of writing (Troyer, 2017), teachers are left to make their own choices about teaching this point.

The authorial self makes demands on the reader by asserting either personal or substantiated claims (Hyland, 2002). Much of the research targeting authorial identity has targeted students' beliefs about the authorial self, but it is valuable to note that more recent research has questioned the ways in which academics view it (Cheung et al, 2016), drawing attention to the ways authorial identity may be encouraged in academic writing in higher education. This study builds on this thinking while maintaining a focus on students' perspectives.

The discoursal self takes an objective approach, with no personal language or claims. The selection and utilization of selves by a writer have direct implications for the ability of the writer to persuade her/his reader. The significant consideration with the discoursal self is that of writers' expression of stance, as writers are meant to relay to readers their attitude and interactional involvement (Lancaster, 2016), without emotional or personal uses of language.

In academic writing, representing ideational and interpersonal meanings is manifested in the purposeful selection of a self or selves. In English L2 writing, this has particular implications in that the cultural identity of the writer could potentially interfere with the goals of his/her academic identity. A Japanese student writing in English L2 may have to make a conscious switch from a cultural identity that expects writing to be inductive to an academic identity that expects writing to be deductive (Noor, 2001). The meanings in the writing are expected to be equally acceptable for writing teachers as those of a native writer of English; therefore, English L2 writers attempt approaches to writing that are more typical of native English writers. This is where students may attempt the Western quality of academic writing that Casanave (2002) describes as "playing the game." Ultimately, the academic L2 student writer has much to negotiate in terms of determining how to establish her or his academic writer identity. All of these directly affect the writer's attempt to critically argue a position.

The idea of a possibility of various *selves* or *writer identities* in one's writing is part of what M.A.K. Halliday (1985) referred to as "interpersonal meaning." Halliday explained that language expresses two types of meaning at the same time, namely "ideational meaning"—the topic being communicated—and interpersonal meaning—how the people who are doing the communicating (for this study, the *writers*) position themselves in relation to the discourse (Fairclough, 1992; Ivanič, 1994). Martin (2000) stresses that an expression of attitude in writing is a truly interpersonal matter, as it is the writer's attempt to establish some solidarity with the reader (Hunston & Thompson, 2000). Fairclough (1992) made the distinction between the two parts of interpersonal meaning as: 1) the representation of social relations and 2) the representation of social identities. These social identities are constructed in student writers' "discourse choices," which include students' written texts, the fact that the texts were written in the context of an assignment, and the fact that many of the decisions made were unconsciously based on the discourses available to them in their socio-cultural contexts (Ivanič, 1994).

Hyland (2002) explains that students of academic English composition are often required to follow specific style guidelines prescribed by their instructors, and this may include a particular requirement for students to write objectively and essentially *remove* any personal identification from the content of their writing. This is often done in an attempt to get students to take a more academic—and less emotional or personally motivated—approach to the argumentation in their writing by relying more on source evidence rather than personal experience. This point is contentious, however, as university instructors, even in the same program on the same courses, do not always agree that this type of requirement is necessary or helpful.

Appraisal Theory, as it is understood in the field of applied linguistics, is a system of understanding the words people use to express their evaluations (Martin, 2014). Table 1 shows the features of Appraisal Theory (White, 2015) that were used in the analysis and served as codes for the data.

TABLE 1
Features of Appraisal Theory used in Text Analysis (adapted from White, 2015)

Aspects of Appraisal Theory	Categories	Description/examples
ATTITUDE	Judgment	value of statement made (positive or negative) regarding human behavior
	Appreciation	value of statement made (positive or negative) regarding processes
	Affect	emotional/affectual response
ENGAGEMENT	Modality	modals (*can, could, may, might,* etc.)
	Reality phase	*it seems, it can be concluded,* etc.
	Attribution	credit given to source or hearsay
	Proclamation	*In fact, It is true,* etc.
	Expectation	*of course,* etc.

	Counter-expectation	*surprisingly,* etc.
GRADUATION	Force	*slightly, very, surely, obviously,* etc.
	Focus	*effectively, truly,* etc.

The Methods and Analysis

The research question for this study targets how university EFL students construct writer identities in their written output, so the main source of data collection was the students' writing. To better understand the construction of writer identities, monthly student and teacher interviews were conducted, as well as monthly classroom observations. Due to the limitations of space in this article, observation data are not included. Interview data are used to support the analysis of the students' writing. The students' written texts used for this study were collected toward the end of the academic year, after most of the interviews.

The study took place in a university in Japan with a well-established English department. First, four teachers were identified as participants through the non-probability sampling method of convenience sampling. The four instructors represented a good variety from the department, including two language education-trained instructors and two untrained in language education. In each of these categories was one Japanese and one American. The instructors also provided a variety of approaches in teaching and expectations from learners.

With permission from these four instructors, student participants were then recruited from their writing classes (identified as classes A-F) through stratified purposive sampling (Patton, 2014). A stratified sample reproduces a population in a more manageable size. The population this study deals with is Japanese university students taking English writing classes at a university in Japan. Therefore, the student participants had to be Japanese, and in the same writing classes as the teacher participants. I limited the number of student participants to 16, which according to Miles and Huberman (1994), was small enough to allow a rich examination of each case but not too "unwieldy a number of participants for a single researcher to be able to treat the study with high complexity" (p. 30). Moreover, through the examination of a small number of similar cases, it served to strengthen the precision, validity and stability of the findings (Yin, 2013).

Stratified purposeful sampling is described by Patton (2014) as not meant to produce results for generalization. The idea is that purposeful samples can be arranged or classified by selecting particular cases that provide desired variation; in the case of this study that was decided by their time spent studying immersed in English abroad. Stratified purposeful sampling was valuable for my study because enough information was known to identify the characteristics that influence how the phenomenon (i.e., Japanese university students learning EFL writing) occurs.

Student participants in the English composition classes taught by those teachers had volunteered for the study. Based on initial interviews it was discovered that the four teachers fit into two categories (two with a language education background and two without), and the students into three categories of educational backgrounds: six had never studied abroad (Aki and Saki from the C class, Ai from the E class, and Akiko, Chinami, and Hideo from the F class), four had studied abroad for just one year (Hiromi from the B class, Aya from the D class, and Nana and Yuki from the E class), and six had studied abroad for 5-7 years (Fumiko and Megumi from the A class, Miki from the B class, Yui from the C class, Satoko from the D class, and Rika from the F class). Table 2 shows the breakdown of participants was as follows (note that all names are pseudonyms, for the purposes of anonymity).

TABLE 2
Student Participants, Grouped by Teacher

Teacher	L1, position	EFL Training	Composition classes taught	Student participants
Ms. Aiba	Native Japanese, permanent	Extensive postgraduate level language teacher training in N. America	two sections of English Composition 2 (classes A and B)	class A: Fumiko and Megumi class B: Miki and Hiromi
Mr. Clark	Native English, contract	Postgraduate studies in TESOL and foreign language acquisition	several sections of English Composition 1 (only one was used in the study)	class C: Yui, Saki, and Aki
Mr. Doi	Native Japanese, permanent	None (postgraduate studies in N. America)	one section of English Composition 2 (class D)	class D: Aya and Satoko
Ms. Ellis	**Native English, contract**	**None**	**one section of English Composition 1 (class E) and one section of English Composition 1 (class F)**	**class E: Nana, Yuki, and Ai class F: Rika, Akiko, Hideo, and Chinami**

The analysis of the main data, i.e. the students' writing, was done using Clark and Ivanič's (1997) *possibilities of selfhood* as the main framework, operationalizing Martin's (2000) Appraisal framework for identifying particular words and phrases used in displaying the different selves. The organization for the sub-systems used in the Appraisal framework for this study was based on White's (2015) outline of Appraisal Theory, shown in Table 1. The features of analysis of the students' written texts follow two systems of analysis. One is Clark and Ivanič's (1997) possibilities for selfhood. And the other involves the eleven selected lexical features (as prescribed by White, 2015) found in the three aspects of attitude, engagement, and graduation as defined by Appraisal Theory. The idea of combining these two frameworks is that students displaying a particular self or selves make particular language choices.

The text analysis was supported with qualitative evidence from student and teacher interviews as well as classroom observations, which were audio recorded, transcribed, and coded using NVivo. Codes were constructed from the observation data, which were analyzed using an adapted framework from Ivanič's (2004, p.225) "Discourses of Writing" framework, along with ideas presented by Hyland (2002) about how student writers' identities are dealt with in EFL academic writing. Interview data are used in this article to provide support for the text analysis.

Findings

The findings of the study are organized by the writer selves used by the student participants. Data from students' written texts are integrated with supporting evidence from the interviews in the analysis. On the idea of explicitly addressing writer identity in class, Mr. Doi confessed, "I haven't thought about it" (May 9). Ms. Ellis rejected the idea of discussing writer identity in class, as she felt it was more important that students focus on writing tasks without concerning themselves with abstract issues such as writer identity that may confuse them. Mr. Clark explained that rather than focusing students on writer identity, he focused on academic genres, and Ms. Aiba rejected the idea of explicitly discussing writer identity in her course, as she felt it was more important that students focus on learning specifically how to complete more practical writing tasks rather than concerning themselves with the metalanguage involved in composition theory.

Discoursal Self

The *discoursal self* was most often how student writers attempted—not often successfully—to represent themselves in their writing. This was mainly due to the instruction to take an objective stance on their arguments, which has been noted as a challenge for student writers (Lancaster, 2016). The student participants' understanding of the discoursal self, based on interview discussions of impersonal and objective writing, is that the writer attributes ideas to outside sources or other authorities, developing the writer's voice as s/he wants to be heard, as opposed to developing a voice through the stance taken. Students of non-language education trained teachers Mr. Doi (Composition 2) and Ms. Ellis (Composition 1 and 2) were taught that being objective and impersonal would make their arguments more persuasive. In interviews Mr. Doi and Ms. Ellis explained that this was a result of their own language learning experiences, as Mr. Doi was a native Japanese speaker who wrote in English in his postgraduate studies in North America, and Ms. Ellis was a native English speaker who wrote in Japanese in her postgraduate studies in Japan.

Alternatively, language-trained teacher Mr. Clark (Composition 1) made no mention of writing persuasively, but did instruct that using certain personal pronouns would make the students' writing "stronger". Also trained in language education, Ms. Aiba (Composition 2) gave assignments that instigated the students to use different selves for their writing tasks, as appropriate to the purpose of the task.

Much of the dilemma for students using the discoursal self is that, as novice writers, they do not have the level of exposure or experience required to present themselves accurately in the desired discourse (in this case, argumentative essays) or to successfully attribute their ideas to other authorities. Schneider and Andre (2007) explain,

> Students may convey their lack of identification with academic discourse through their misuse of citation conventions or specialized terminology or through their failed attempts at employing complex sentence structures in order to sound more academic. (para.5)

In the classes where teachers required students to essentially take on a discoursal self in their writing (non-language education trained teachers classes D, E and F), this seemed to be where students struggled the most in terms of dealing with their thesis, and in dealing with the academic writing aspects of their writing task. Based on interview responses, it seemed they were overwhelmed by the assumed expectation of the teacher and their lack of experience required in order to meet those expectations. The result was ultimately mixed, as it seemed to depend on just how familiar the chosen topic was to the student—a point established by Stapleton (2001).

In the E class, there were dilemmas. All students were encouraged by their teacher to write objectively, but to choose argumentative topics that they had strong opinions about. Nana's approach in her paper on the jury system recently implemented in Japan managed to use language that resembled something closer to a discoursal self, although she did use the pronoun *our* twice, referring to Japanese people. Although a certain amount of Emotional language was used in her paper, the phrases used to develop her anti-jury system thesis were relatively un-emotive, including:

> should not be enforced;
> disadvantages of this new system are beyond its advantages;
> the trials will lose accuracy; etc.

This suggests that Nana was not seeking an emotional response from her audience, but rather she positioned herself as an unmovable, confrontational authority that was not open to dialogue with the dissenting voices of other authors.

For Yuki, her paper on adventure sports was focused very much on her sources, in particular a documentary that promoted adventure sport. Yuki used significantly more sources (26) in comparison to the other students—well beyond the task requirements. In doing so, there was a large number of attributive phrases, and in fact, every other aspect of ENGAGEMENT was used in varying degrees, signifying a fairly successful attempt at displaying a discoursal self. The attributive phrases included:

> according to Lowenstein;
> many people believe;
> Simon's remark; etc.

The issue with Yuki's paper was that in the emphasis of her pro-adventure sport thesis, she used a very large number of value judgment phrases, i.e. assessments of human behavior (White, 2015). Although the presence of the high number of attributive phrases in Yuki's paper would normally indicate a discoursal self, it is evident from the even higher number of Judgment and Force phrases that Yuki was displaying a primarily authorial self.

Perhaps the most successful student to display a discoursal self was in the D class. Satoko chose to write on the topic of socialized medicine, focusing on the situation in the US. Satoko had spent a number of years in the US and had done work on this topic in her classes there. Also fortunately for Satoko, her composition teacher was an American history scholar, and was able to provide insightful feedback on her drafts. Satoko chose to focus her thesis on the benefits of socialized medicine by pointing out that the US is the only wealthy, industrialized nation that does not provide universal health care. Since Japan does provide a form of socialized medicine, she used that as an example of a system that worked, and one that the US could adopt. It was a simple approach, one that seemed to work in persuading her class and her teacher that she was an exemplary student.

In the Composition 1 classes, both of which required students to write argumentative essays, it was discovered that regardless of any of the teachers' requirements regarding writer identity, there was still a slight variation of identities used by the participants in the study. In the F class, the four student participants wrote argumentative essays in which they were instructed to write objectively. In their attempt to meet this task requirement, three of the four students aimed to avoid all personal pronouns, and all four used Attribution for their sources and attempted to keep emotive language to a minimum—with varying success. In addition to the Attribution phrases, they also used a variety of other ENGAGEMENT phrases, such as reality phases including *it seems,* proclamations such as *it is/is not true*, and expectations including *probably* and *it can be expected.*

In the F class, Rika's anti-animal testing and Hideo's anti-teenage-cell-phone-use theses were both fairly well attributed, although the number of sources (Rika 6, Hideo 3) was minimal, and the reliability of the sources was not a concern, as that aspect had not been required for the task. The number of attributive phrases used by Rika and Hideo displayed an attempt at a discoursal self. Akiko's pro-capital punishment paper had the greatest number of attributive phrases even though none of her sources were actually cited (Akiko confirmed in her interview on January 24 that she never understood how in-text citations actually worked), but was filled with value judgment language such as the following, among others, showing a more authorial than discoursal self:

> falsely accused people will suffer;
> the crime victim families would not be satisfied;
> heinous criminals; etc.

But of the four, it was Chinami's paper that was most striking, since it included the pronouns *we* and *you*, even though the teacher specifically forbid the students to use them. Also, Chinami used a number of sources (6) and accordingly a number of attributive phrases. Although other ENGAGEMENT aspects were used such as Modality and a Reality phase, she showed a fairly strong subjective authorial self

through her use of a number of value judgment expressions.

In the C class, one of the three student participants, Aki, used what appeared to be at times a discoursal self, attributing her ideas to outside sources. But against this analysis, she did use the pronouns *we* and *you* in her essay.

Ultimately, although these students attempted to use the discoursal self in order to meet the expectations of their teachers, in developing their theses and attempting to persuade their readers, most students resorted to a more authorial self.

Authorial Self

The *authorial self* is generally used in situations where student writers assert their opinion on a topic through:

- evaluation (usually of source materials – showing their position on the topic in relation to those of other writers),
- the use of modality in and qualifying of ideas,
- through particular use of attributive tags, or
- through authority derived from their experience or awareness as readers (Clark & Ivanič, 1997, p. 152).

The understanding of the use of an authorial self in higher education is one of negotiation (Cheung, et al, 2016), where student writers are most notably "playing the game" (Casanave, 2002). In this study, the use of the authorial self in the students' writing was most apparent in the utilization of personal pronouns such as *we* and *you*. This is not specifically the authorial self Clark & Ivanič (1997) described, but it does suggest that these students are positioning themselves in relation to authorities on their subjects, and that they have something to say. The authorial self refers to the textual "evidence of writers' feeling of authoritativeness and sense of themselves as authors" (Clark & Ivanič, 1997, p. 152).

For the analysis of students' writing in the A and B classes, since they did not write any argumentative essays, I chose their task of writing a "response letter to the editor" on the topic of 23-year-old Japanese traveler Satoshi Nakamura's kidnapping by terrorists in south-east Iran on October 7, 2007. For this task a sense of authority was required, suggesting that an authorial self might be present in their writing for the task. Of the four students who did this task only one student, Megumi, attempted to use the authorial self, although in doing so revealed weakness in the attempt to present herself as a political commentator—ultimately the *self* she would have needed to establish if it were to be truly authorial. Megumi did not use any personal pronouns, but there was still a clear personal stance taken on the subject matter. For example, some Emotional language used included:

it is upsetting;
outrageousness;
lack of sense; etc.

However, use of the Reality phase *sounds as if*, the Counter-expectation *it is surprising,* and a number of cases of GRADUATION suggest that Megumi did have some understanding of the qualities of political commentary. When interviewed about it, Megumi explained that she wanted to write persuasively, and believed the best way to do that was from a collective Japanese position:

Jim: I noticed that you didn't personalize any of the emotional language used in your response letter
    to the editor. Can you explain why you did that?
Megumi: Yeah, like, I thought every Japanese should feel the same way as I thought. That's why I
    wrote it that way.

Jim: Ok, so you wrote it from the perspective of all Japanese people. Why didn't you just say, "*I was upset*", "*I feel this way*", or "*I think* Japanese people should feel this way"?
Megumi: Because this thing that happened in Iran was unfair. It didn't have to be him. How the Iranian government is treating the situation is like not proper…
Jim: Ok, so it goes against sensibility…?
Megumi: I thought we should have like common feeling. (December 11)

Megumi's language choices in universalizing her own sentiment in her attempt at political commentary indicated an authorial-autobiographical self that was based on assumption and relied on emotional appeal.

In the E class, although the features of a discoursal self were apparent in an attempt to write more objectively as instructed by the teacher, elements of an authorial self were present in each of the students' texts. These were longer research papers of around ten pages or 2000-2500 words, similar to those in the D class. In Satoko's paper on universal health care, she expressed some authority in addressing a significant counterargument to her thesis. She wrote:

There are many people who will be able to gain the benefit of universal health care in America since more than half of population does not have health insurance. Many people would be able to go to see the doctor without having to worry about the cost of the bill. However, some insist that it would be difficult at the moment for America to change the health care system because changing the health coverage from private to universal will add strain to the current economic situation. This argument ignores the fact that America currently spends more money than the other countries in the current health care system and as the expense is increasing more as the years go by, it is making it harder for America to change the system.

It was noted in all of the papers in the D and E classes that students successfully utilized an authorial voice in their thesis and conclusions—an indication that they all considered their readers and recognized the persuasive effect of the authorial voice. In Yuki's paper, the emphasis of her pro-adventure sport thesis was done using a number of Judgment phrases such as:

these activities…are not absurd;
they are…rational;
is not a foolish activity;
among others.

These were supported by a number of Force (GRADUATION) phrases including:

actually (x3);
it is obvious that;
even (x3); etc.

Although Yuki had attributed most of her supporting ideas to outside sources, indicative of a discoursal self, she had chosen to evaluate the ideas from those sources, adding value judgments of them, indicating an authorial self.

In the A and B students' response letters, three of the four students appeared to use an authorial self (while one student used a mix of authorial and discoursal selves), judging clearly whether they believed the Japanese government should or should not negotiate with the terrorists for Nakamura's release. However, students used a number of Emotional phrases as well, having the effect of reducing their authoritativeness and indicating an autobiographical self was present. But all four also attributed the article (provided by their teacher) in order to focus their critiques, and used various terms of Force (Fumiko: *certainly*, Miki: *obviously*, etc.) to emphasize their authority.

In the C class, the students were not required to use any outside sources to support their thesis. They were required to choose from a short list of argumentative topics and to use what they knew to support their ideas. Two of the three participants chose global warming while the other chose smoking. Both students who wrote on global warming used an authorial self, addressing the reader directly with the pronoun *you,* and using the pronoun *we* in an attempt to strengthen the argument. However, a distinct difference was that Yui did not choose to cite any source of any kind in support of her thesis, while Aki referred to "TV news and newspapers" and also provided examples such as The Kyoto Protocol and the Toyota Prius. This suggests there was reliance on the sources to support and develop her thesis. In her interview, Aki commented:

> This wasn't first time for me using references and citations. I thought they really help to make my writing more persuasive. It wasn't just "I think this"… (Aki, January 24)

Yui, on the other hand, used Reality phases in order to engage her reader and took a more direct, personal approach in encouraging her readers to agree with her thesis. In her interview, she commented:

> I was just doing what [teacher] wanted us to do. Since we didn't have to use sources, I didn't use any. When he said "persuade your reader" I just used common sense for my argument. (Yui, January 22)

Saki was the only one of the three participants in the C class to use the ENGAGEMENT aspects of Modality (*can be; it is possible*), Proclamation (*as it is well known; it cannot be denied; it is true*) and Expectation (*of course*), and along with her Judgment phrases and overuse of Force phrases clearly displays an authorial self. Like Yui, Saki also did not attribute any sources, and in her follow-up interview made similar comments in support of the decision.

Ultimately, the authorial self was the most prevalent in the students' writing, especially in the presentation of supporting evidence—either from sources or personal beliefs or common sense—in developing the thesis. Students instructed to be objective in their writing did so only to the extent that discussing the argument allowed them to. When it came to developing the thesis, the voice of the writer was clearly authorial (Hyland, 2002; Cheung, et al, 2016).

Autobiographical Self

The *autobiographical self* is used in students' writing when personal experience is the topic—such as in personal essays or personal narratives—but generally not used in argumentative academic writing (Tang, 1999; Troyer, 2017). This means that for this study, most students used the discoursal and/or authorial selves in their writing. However, in the A, B, and C classes, an autobiographical self was used. In the A and B classes the students did not write argumentative essays, and the selected writing task of a letter to the editor revealed that two of the students displayed in addition to an authorial self, certain Emotional language indicating an autobiographical self was present. The phrases were used as a sympathetic rhetorical mode (Megumi: *it is upsetting,* Hiromi: *it is unnerving*, etc.)

In Composition 1, in the C class, there were no specific instructions given on what types of evidence students should use other than that no research was necessary for any of the papers in the course. This instruction was for students to use their own personal experience as supporting evidence, which the teacher believed was a motivating factor for the students to write. In their papers, students displayed mostly an authorial self, using a number of Judgment and Force phrases. As the evidence presented was mostly personal, the autobiographical self was certainly present in Yui's and Saki's papers, as they did not use any outside sources, but less so in Aki's paper as she did use outside sources. Interestingly, only Saki used an Emotional phrase in her short essay, clearly displaying an autobiographical self. In their interviews, the student participants in the C class expressed satisfaction with the opportunity to write

about their own experiences, in support of the teacher's philosophy.

In Yui's paper on *preventing global warming*, all her evidence was based on personal experience. For example, her first main idea—to stop wasting energy—was supported by activities relevant to her own life including:

> *turn*[ing] *off the lights when leaving a room;*
> not letting water run *when washing your face or brushing your teeth*; and
> not setting the air conditioner *at an excessive temperature*.

Her second main idea—minimizing trash—included refusing plastic bags or disposable chopsticks usually provided with purchases at convenience stores in Japan. Aki's paper on *stopping global warming* was contextualized in Japan. Her supporting evidence was mostly from outside sources, but on her main idea of recycling, she used personal experience in support, including: *having a flea market* (a common event in Japan) as a *good way to reuse old things*. Saki's paper on *tobacco and nonsmokers* described situations specific to living in Japan, though Japan was not mentioned. Supporting evidence was all based on personal experience. Her first main idea—separating smoking and nonsmoking areas—was supported by the example of poorly partitioned restaurants—common in Japan.

Discussion and Conclusion

Through analysis of the data, it was evident that the strongest influences on identity construction were from instructors' expectations, while personal beliefs also contributed. Students were found to more likely meet writing task expectations where instructors had more reasonable requirements in terms of voice, i.e., Ms. Aiba and Mr. Clark's expectations of authorial and/or autobiographical selves were more achievable for students. Mr. Doi and Ms. Ellis's expectations of an objective, discoursal self were less reasonable, as they were not as achievable for English L2 student writers given their writing tasks.

In every case, the selves displayed in the students' writing corresponded with their attempts to meet the understood requirements of the task. In the non-language education trained teachers' D, E and F classes, in argumentative writing tasks that required students to cite sources to support their ideas, every student displayed an authorial-discoursal self, mixing Attribution to outside sources usually with a high number of Judgment phrases. Alternatively, in the C class, where students were not advised to use any outside sources, two students displayed an authorial-autobiographical self, using personal experience to support the thesis, while the one student who used outside sources in an attempt to make her writing more persuasive displayed an authorial-discoursal self. In the A and B classes, students in their letters to the editor all displayed an authorial self, with two students showing more of an authorial-autobiographical self through the use of Emotional language.

For these Japanese university students, the issues related to writer identity lie in the attempt to meet the expectations of the teacher while at the same time trying to establish and develop a thesis (Casanave, 2002). The non-language education trained teachers encouraged their students to write objectively, which Hyland (2002) suggests is problematic, since many students have not learned appropriate strategies for writing objectively. In the classes observed in this study, the students were taught the importance of the thesis. They were expected to establish and develop the thesis with a variety of strategies (depending on the class) without discussion of maintaining objectivity. Students ultimately used, for the most part, a relatively subjective authorial self in their attempt to meet their teachers' expectations.

It is evident that Japanese university students in this study were conscientious in learning to become academic English writers, making efforts to meet the expectations, as they understood them, of their teachers. In terms of writer identity construction, the teachers in the study did not address it directly, but it was found that students' writer identities were shaped most by their teachers' ideologies about English academic writing.

Certainly it is an oversimplification to dichotomize the students into those able to develop their own voices and those not able. There were complex interactions and struggles between teachers and students, and students and their peers, which of course were reflected in the student writing (Cheung et al, 2016; Hyland, 2002; Lancaster, 2016). However, the dichotomization serves to illustrate a valuable finding: university EFL writing teachers' need to reconsider expectations that EFL students can quickly learn to write in an objective discoursal self. It is important to recognize that that EFL students are learning the English language at the same time as learning to construct identities in that language. Therefore an expectation of objective, discoursal writing that is typified in argumentative writing is generally inappropriate and unreasonable. Before they can write substantive, comprehensive arguments, EFL students would benefit from going through a process of developing a writer identity. Learning to write from a personal point of view might be a necessary step before they can then remove themselves from their academic writing. In other words, EFL students can learn to write with an authorial self first, and then construct writer identities, as appropriate, for their future writing needs.

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