

Investigating Researcher Identity in Qualitative Research Articles in Applied Linguistics Journals Through the Lens of CDA¹

Sepideh Rahimpour², Elaheh Sotoudehnama³, & Farhad Sasani⁴

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Abstract

Recently, constructing professional identity has received an increasing attention. By adopting and adapting analytical tools of critical discourse analysis (CDA), this study explored the ways through which identities of the qualitative researchers had been projected in 4 applied linguistics articles. This study intended to find out whether the authors of qualitative research articles in applied linguistics tended to prioritize particular linguistic elements in representing their identities. Detailed descriptive analyses based on 4 CDA and discourse analysis taxonomies revealed that the qualitative researchers had a particular pattern to show human and nonhuman social actors in their writings. Human social actors (teachers and learners) were preferred to nonhuman social actors (textbooks), and teachers were the focus of attention more frequently than learners. Also, human social actors were considered as individuals, rather than groups in the majority of cases. In addition, mental processes were found to be employed more than material processes in order to contribute to the subjective interpretation and greater visibility for the researchers. Although the linguistic devices which help human social actors to be seen more vividly like inclusion and activation were used more than other devices, elements like transition, self-mentions, hedges, and code glosses were also employed. Findings may be considered useful for teachers and educators and may help them become more self-conscious about identity issues embedded in research articles.

Keywords: Applied Linguistics Research Articles; Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA); Qualitative Researchers; Researcher Identity; Teacher Education

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²Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran; sepidehrahimpour@gmail.com

³Corresponding author; Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran; esotoude@alzahra.ac.ir

⁴Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Literature, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran; fsasani49@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

According to Kaplan and Flum (2012), one of the main objectives of educators in this century is to pay attention to identity and identity formation in various educational contexts in which culture, language, literacy, and identity are interwoven (Foster, 1992; Gee, 1992; Rosaldo, 1984). The process of identity formation is affected by what a person wants to become (Smeby, 2007). It is also a part of researcher's self, through which the researcher explains his or her experiences, and includes a person's self-perception of being a researcher, and being recognized as a researcher (Coldron & Smith, 1999).

Whereas there has been an explosion of research on language and identity with respect to learners, teachers, and teacher educators (Adler, 1982; Block, 2006b; Duff & Uchida, 1997; Llamas, & Watt, 2010; Riley, 2007), research into researcher identity has been underrated; recently, some scholars have focused on professional identity as a key aspect of the identity of a person (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Gee, 2000; Geijsel & Meijers, 2005).

Research articles are considered to demonstrate the researchers' efforts, achievements, and abilities upon which job opportunities, research grants, and so forth would be awarded; therefore, it is crucial to create a situation for the researchers to be aware of the ways they project their identities in their writings. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to dive into the world of researcher identity, and to investigate the patterns of researcher identity projection in academic writing.

2. Literature Review

Although the discourse of academic writing has been addressed in different studies (Breivega & Fløttum, 2002; Bunton, 1999; Hyland, 1999, 2001a, 2002a, 2002b; Lafuente Millán, 2010; Lillis, 2011; Molino, 2010; Thompson, 2001), little attention seems to have been paid to the identity of the researcher in his or her academic writing. Moreover, despite great interest in identity (Block, 2006a; Gao & Wen, 2007; Hall, 1996; Ivanič, 1998; Jackson, 2008; Jenkins, 2007; Kanno, 2003; Norton, 2000; Omoniyi & White, 2006; Tang & John, 1999; Virkkula & Nikula, 2010), it is not simple to find a comprehensive definition that encompasses its various meanings.

Gee (2014) views identity as "different ways of being in the world at different times and places for different purposes" (2014, p. 5). He also puts four perspectives to show how identity is functioning for a certain person in a specific context (2000). The first one is the nature perspective (or N-identities) that refers to an identity a person cannot influence, and has been forced by nature (Gee, 2000). The second one is "the institutional perspective (or I-identities)" (Gee, 2000, p. 102) that represents identities determined by authorities and organizations, such as a position

of being a college professor. “Discursive perspective (or D-identities)” (p.103) is the third perspective which refers to an individual characteristic determined by “the discourse or dialogue of other people” (p. 103). Finally, Gee (2000) describes “affinity perspective (or A-identities)” (p. 105) as identity determined by distinctive practices as part of an affinity group. In this group, people share “allegiance to, access to, and participation in specific practices” (p. 105). Because N-identity represents an identity which people cannot control, this study excludes it and focuses on A-identity, D-identity, and I-identity.

In order to investigate these three views of identity, the current study employed critical discourse analysis (CDA). According to Rogers (2004), CDA is both a theory and a method; therefore, different researchers who focus on the relationship between language and society benefit from a variety of its tools to achieve their goals. Accordingly, this study used CDA as a tool to explore how researchers project their identities onto their academic writings.

A good number of studies have been conducted in the field of identity, but most of them have mainly put emphasis on textbooks rather than research papers (Hyland, 2005; Norton & Early, 2011; Sahragard & Davatgarzadeh, 2010; Yen, 2000). Employing the taxonomies in CDA and discourse analysis suggested by van Leeuwen (2008), Gee (2014), Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), and Hyland (2004), this study was an attempt to find out specific ways through which qualitative researchers represent their identities in their research articles. Given that usually qualitative studies cover rich and detailed descriptions of data, the ways through which qualitative researchers represent their identities in their research articles are of particular concern. In this regard, this study raises the following research question:

- How do qualitative researchers in applied linguistics project their identities in their English qualitative research articles from the CDA point of view?

3. Methodology

3.1. Corpus

The corpus consisted of four qualitative research articles. Because an in-depth qualitative method was used, the study was limited to small-scale analysis to delve into the corpus more carefully. As Dörnyei (2007) argues, whereas in quantitative research a sizeable sample is required to determine individual differences, the goal of qualitative research is “describing, understanding and clarifying a human experience and therefore qualitative studies are directed at describing the aspects that make up an idiosyncratic experience rather than determining the most likely, or mean experience, within a group” (p. 126). Also, to make the articles comparable and to limit the scope of the corpus, only qualitative-based papers with the theme of “teacher education,” as a site of identity creation, were

selected. Moreover, only papers published after 2005 were included in order to capture the current views of the researchers. Also, to the best knowledge of the researchers, there was an increase in the theme of teacher education in TEFL after 2005. The papers selected were written by scholars of applied linguistics who had published, at least, four academic papers in different leading applied linguistics journals so that the researchers were provided with high quality papers. Finally, the articles were selected from two highly-ranked journals which primarily publish qualitative-based papers on teacher education topics including *Journal of Teacher Education* and *Teaching and Teacher Education*. In addition, the Methodology section of the articles was also studied to check whether the studies fell in the scope of qualitative research.

3.2. Instrumentation

Because no standard instrument has, thus, far been constructed for the analysis of researcher identity, we followed the guidelines suggested by the previous discourse analysis taxonomies. Careful consideration of the merits/demerits of them, and the preanalysis of the data, as well as over one and a half years of experience working with the data helped us in deciding the eclectic selection of the most appropriate and applicable elements. The models include van Leeuwen's framework (2008), Gee's model of discourse analysis (2014), Halliday and Matthiessen's transitivity model (2004), and Hyland's taxonomy (2004). The major elements, then, include inclusion/exclusion, activation/passivation, individualization/assimilation (van Leeuwen, 2008), transitivity (Halliday, 2004), the why this way and not that way tool, the significance building tool, the relationships building tool, the connections building tool, the intertextuality tool (Gee, 2014), the code glosses tool, and the self-mentions tool (Hyland, 2004). The consistency of coding (i.e., intracoder reliability) increased considerably when the analysis was done based on the eclectic selection of the elements of the four models ($r = 0.82$) in comparison with van Leeuwen's (2008) model ($r = 0.61$), Hyland's taxonomy ($r = 0.59$), Gee's (2014) model ($r = 0.72$), and Halliday's (2004) transitivity pattern ($r = 0.52$). As Farhady, Jafarpour, and Birjandi (1994) suggested, "reliability coefficients below .50 are considered low, .50 to .75 are considered moderate, and .75 to .90 or above are considered high" (p. 154). Therefore, the instruments used in this study had a high reliability ($r = 0.82$) that was estimated through Cronbach's alpha.

The first three elements were employed from van Leeuwen's framework (2008). He introduces the dichotomy of inclusion/exclusion. Exclusion, "an important aspect of Critical Discourse Analysis" (p. 28), is divided into radical and less radical. The first subcategory "leaves no traces in the representation, excluding both the social actors and their activities" (p. 29). Partial exclusion includes suppression in which "there is no reference to the social actor(s) in question anywhere

in the text" (p. 29), and backgrounding in which "the excluded social actors may not be mentioned in relation to a given action, but they are mentioned else-where in the text" (p. 29). Another dichotomy in van Leeuwen's (2008) model is activation/passivation. Activation happens when "social actors are represented as the active, dynamic forces in an activity" (p. 33). On the other hand, in passivation social actors are undergone an activity. Passivation includes subjection and beneficialization. In the former "social actors are treated as objects in the representation" (p. 33); in latter, beneficialized social actors cover those people who benefit from an activity. Also, social actors can be treated as individuals (individualization) or as groups (assimilation). Assimilation can be aggregation and collectivization. "The former quantifies groups of participants, treating them as 'statistics,' the latter does not" (p.37).

Halliday's (1989) transitivity pattern concerns the social actors, and different processes in which the social actors are engaged. These processes include material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, and existential. Material processes deal with "doing-and-happening" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 179), such as writing. Mental processes "are concerned with our experience of the world of our own consciousness" (p 197). Verbs such as think, hate, and love are in this category. Relational processes "serve to characterize and to identify" (p. 210), and they are usually recognized by the verbs be, seem, like, and so on. The verbal processes include "the clauses of saying" (p. 252). The processes dealing with the "physiological and psychological behavior" (p. 248) are behavioral. Finally, those clauses representing that "something exists or happens" are called existential clauses (p. 256). As Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) maintain, there are two different aspects of our experience: outer and inner. The former is what can be experienced as happening "out there, in the world around us" (p. 170) that can be represented as actions and events, and is realized in material and behavioral processes, whereas the latter refers to what can be experienced as happening inside ourselves, in the world of consciousness that can be represented as reaction and reflection, and is realized in mental and verbal processes. In addition, there is a third component, generalization, which is the relationship between the abovementioned experiences and can be realized in relational and existential processes.

Furthermore, the 28 tools suggested by Gee (2014) were studied, and five categories were found to be applicable and appropriate for the purpose of the study. These categories include the why this way and not that way tool, the significance building tool, the relationships building tool, the connections building tool, and the intertextuality tool.

Besides, code glosses and first-mentions tools were selected from the taxonomy of Hyland (2004) because these devices can be helpful in showing the way

researchers project their identities in their writings. The rest of the model will be explained in the data analysis process.

3.3. Procedure

The data were critically analyzed using the four models. Also, in order to find the particular words and to count the frequencies, AntConc software was used. In this study, we employed different categories explained above because Gee (2014) argues that “no one theory is universally right or universally applicable. Each theory offers tools, which work better for some kinds of data than they do for others” (p. 4). Furthermore, he emphasizes that anyone engaged in her or his own discourse analysis must adapt the devices he or she has taken from a given theory to the needs of his or her own study. Inevitably, there was overlap between few categories of the model as the researchers attempted to identify the patterns; for example, inclusion and activation could overlap in one sentence. Both categories were taken into account in data analysis.

In this analysis, the main social actors (i.e., denominators) were identified by the researchers. Those actors included teacher, learner, (with all their synonyms, cognates, proper names, and pronouns), and textbooks (any kind of textbook, material and/ or activity that can be used in the class). van Leeuwen (2008) writes, “it is necessary to bring the various ways in which each category of social actor is represented under a common denominator” (p. 31). Therefore, the aforementioned words were chosen as denominators, because the focus of the writers of the articles was on academic setting including teachers, learners, and textbooks. Besides, the most frequently used words in these articles were teacher, learner, and textbook. Also, textbook was used as a nonhuman denominator as opposed to teacher and learner as human denominators. This means that this study investigated *when* and *how* the qualitative researchers employed human and nonhuman social actors in their writings.

Finally, to establish the dependability of the study, 20% of the corpus was randomly and purposively extracted and analyzed by the first author and then by a TEFL Ph.D. holder who was familiar with discourse analysis and had sufficient experience in conducting qualitative research. Consistency was checked manually through Cohen’s Kappa coefficient by means of percent agreement index. Cohen’s Kappa coefficient is a statistic that measures intercoder agreement for qualitative items (Gwet, 2010). According to de Wever, Schellens, Valcke, and van Keer (2006), percent agreement is the result of the ratio between the number of frequency that is agreed upon and the total number (agree + disagree) of frequencies. The intercoder reliability was 0.76, which means that in 24% of cases, disagreements were seen in the recognition of hedges, backgrounding, and suppression. These devices are

recognized more subjectively than the rest of the categories. Two coders discussed their disagreements and decided to exclude them from further data coding.

Also, the study utilized the software program named AntConc developed by Anthony (2013), which is a freeware, multiplatform, multipurpose corpus analysis toolkit, used to analyze the papers. Its easy-to-use interface has made it a convenient tool for doing corpus analysis. This tool is helpful in data analysis because it is an easy way to count frequencies and all the words in the corpus, and can show them in an ordered list in order to quickly find those words which are the most frequent ones in a corpus. It also helps researchers identify patterns and particular words in the corpus.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

We examined the data based on the four models with an attempt to find the answer to the research question. As mentioned earlier, the models include the 11 sets of categories of inclusion/exclusion, activation/passivation, individualization/assimilation, six transitivity processes, relative clauses/frame markers/hedges, attitude markers, engagement markers, transitions, evidentials, code glosses, and self-mentions. The detailed analysis of each set was presented one by one.

4.1. Inclusion/Exclusion Pattern

To analyze the way qualitative researchers project their identities onto their writings, the first step was to examine the inclusion/exclusion pattern that is a central concern for CDA. According to van Leeuwen (1996), “representations include or exclude social actors to suit their interests and purposes in relation to the readers for whom they are intended” (p. 38). He also argues that some exclusions “may be innocent, details which readers assume to know already or which are deemed irrelevant to them” (2008, p. 28); others impose certain ideologies on the readers. Therefore, researchers can employ this process to project their professional identities in their academic writings. The data were analyzed using AntConc. The pattern is put in Table 1:

Table 1. Inclusion/Exclusion in Four Qualitative Research Articles

Inclusion/Exclusion	Teacher	Learner	Textbook
Inclusion	147 (90.8%)	96 (86%)	13 (32 %)
Exclusion	15 (9.2%)	16 (14%)	28 (68%)
Total	162 (100 %)	112 (100 %)	41 (100 %)

Table 1 shows that ‘teacher’ and ‘learner’ were nearly totally included in the texts to show their significant roles in educational systems. ‘Teacher’ was used most frequently followed by ‘learner’ and ‘textbook,’ respectively.

The example from the corpus displays ‘teacher’ as the included social actor:

- *Teachers A and B taught grade 6 and Teacher C taught grade 5.*

‘Learner’ had the second position and, in 86%, the writers included them in the texts. This shows that although learners are considered as important factors in education, they were not regarded as the key concept. The focus of these articles was on teachers and their roles in the educational systems; however, the writers tried to include other main actors such as learners as the second main social actor in different parts of the articles. For instance:

- *Students are not customers of their teachers.*

Furthermore, the least frequently main social actor was ‘textbook’ that was included only in 32% of the cases. For example:

- *Digital textbooks, Cyber Home Education and Virtual University are some examples of this means of communication.*

The writers in these four articles mostly tried not to include textbooks because they intended to focus more on human social actors rather than nonhuman ones. Whenever the writers included textbooks in their writings, their goal was to describe more the educational system in which teachers were working. So, they included textbooks to help the readers realize the context in which teachers played important roles.

Also, the subdivisions of exclusion can be seen in Table 2. The writers did not employ the exclusion of ‘teacher’ and ‘learner’ radically; rather, they left traces in representation, and these social actors were deemphasized rather than being so much excluded. So, they were put in the background rather than being suppressed (see Table 2):

Table 2. *Exclusion Pattern in Four Qualitative Research Articles*

Exclusion	Teacher	Learner	Textbook
Backgrounded	12 (80 %)	12 (75%)	9 (32 %)
Suppressed	3 (20 %)	4 (25%)	19 (68 %)
Total	15 (100 %)	16 (100 %)	28 (100 %)

In the case of the exclusion of ‘teacher,’ 20% were suppressed. For ‘learner,’ this was 25%. For example:

- *To maintain this policy in the classroom may not be easy. However, usually, the teachers know how to do that.*

In this example, the nonfinite clause *to maintain this policy in the classroom* functions as a grammatical participant. We, therefore, do not know for whom it may not be easy, and the social actor responsible for ‘maintenance’ is excluded. But van Leeuwen (1996) argues that the excluded social actor can pop up later in the text. So, in this example, the reader can easily infer that ‘teachers’ can be the excluded social actor of the ‘maintenance.’ This shows that whenever the writers decided to exclude

the main focus of the articles, they nearly placed it in the background. It is possible for the reader to identify the backgrounded social actor, whereas the identification of suppressed social actors is not easy, if not impossible.

In suppression of teacher and learner, the writers did not show any reference to the social actor. For example:

- *Observing the classes provided insights into the challenge.*

In this example, the writers did not refer to teachers as social actors directly, so this kind of exclusion is considered as suppression, but the reader realizes that the suppressed social actor is teacher because the whole paragraph is related to the way teachers get experience in their classes.

- *To understand the whole process was not easy.*

Likewise, in this sentence the reader knows that the suppressed social actor is learner because the paragraph explains the reason why learners were not successful.

Comparing ‘textbook’ as a nonhuman social actor with human social actors, we found that it was nearly excluded from the text rather than being included because the writers tried to focus on human social actors rather than nonhuman ones, and in their texts, they made an attempt to deemphasize the role of nonhuman social actors.

- *The level of support for learners was not satisfactory.*

Here, the writer did not discuss who or what the level of support refers to, and did not mention the actor of the support throughout the paragraph. The only way that the reader can guess the social actor can be textbooks is that in this paragraph the writer explains that teacher is not the only factor of a useful education; and to have a satisfactory education, all other factors must be taken into account. Therefore, the reader may guess that other factors such as textbooks can help the learners.

As the aforementioned discussion reveal, ‘textbook,’ as nonhuman social actor, in general, was deemphasized if not radically excluded throughout the qualitative articles. On the contrary, ‘teacher’ and ‘learner,’ as human actors, were included in the articles more than being excluded to show their importance in education. In exclusion, they were mostly sent to background rather than being suppressed.

4.2. Activation/Passivation Pattern (Role Allocation)

Role allocation was another important tool to examine the way researchers project their identities onto their research articles. Social actors can be signified as active, dynamic forces in an activity or characterized as undergoing the activity. Researchers make use of active and/or passive voice in their writings so that they can

explain their experiences, and being recognized as researchers. This study, using AntConc, explores which social actors are activated and passivated with regard to their actions. Table 3 shows how roles were allocated to the main social actors:

Table 3. Activation/Passivation in Four Qualitative Research Articles

Activation/Passivation	Teacher	Learner	Textbook	Total Occurrence of Activation/Passivation
Activation	131 (87%)	80 (82%)	21 (64 %)	293 (73%)
Subjection	14 (9.2%)	13 (13%)	9 (27%)	69 (17.2%)
Beneficialization	6 (3.8 %)	5 (5 %)	3 (9 %)	39 (9.8%)
Total	151 (100%)	98 (100%)	33 (100%)	401 (100%)

The analysis shows that activation was used in about 73% of times, given the total occurrence of the activation of different social actors altogether. This can be attributed to the fact that the use of the active voice may encourage clearer and livelier writing. In addition, qualitative researchers often stress the need for researchers to reveal the values, interests, and influences associated with their own experiences and/or with any other social actors' experiences (Pope & Mays, 1995). For example:

- *In a normative English language teaching and learning environment, the teacher is responsible for espousing effective teaching practices.*
- *The students have learnt enough basic vocabulary and grammar in English to communicate meaningfully on a daily-life topic.*

Regarding 'textbook' as the nonhuman social actor, the researchers also employed active voice to make the text more reader-friendly in which the occurrence of ambiguity was tried to be the least.

- *The books considered here represent different tendencies and different educational and political affiliations.*

Also, among the most commonly represented social actors, 'teacher' was more activated than passivated. For example, 'teacher' was activated in activities such as utilizing materials, encouraging students, handling, manipulating, interacting, motivating, preparing, experimenting, reflecting, anticipating, teaching, analyzing, discussing, supporting, and so forth.

- *In my opinion, teachers should have Facebook relationships with students.*
- *Teachers adapt different techniques and strategies to relate to the students based upon their cognitive, affective and behavioral perspectives.*

'Learner' also occupied the second position in activation (82%). In other words, learners were assigned active roles where they were represented as performing

actions. For example, they had active roles in learning, communicating, memorizing, recognizing, sharing ideas, getting actively involved, reviewing lessons, engaging in their activities, increasing their abilities, analyzing, gaining success and so on.

- *Students can perform well in written examinations.*

‘Textbook’ had the third position with 64% of cases being activated. It was activated in a limited number of actions such as providing, covering, including, examining, and focusing.

- *Textbooks provide students with a solid foundation in the scientific discipline of language.*

Lastly, both of the social actors (i.e., ‘teacher’ and ‘learner’) are frequently activated (87% & 82%, respectively) and in a few cases passivated (13% & 18%). This may be due to the fact that the qualitative researchers tried to show teachers and learners as active and dynamic forces in the society, and the writers revealed the teachers’ and learners’ values, actions, interests, beliefs, and opinions. Furthermore, whenever the researchers used the nonhuman social actor ‘textbook,’ they intended to represent it as an active rather than passive social actor, but it was activated less than human social actors.

A comparison of ‘teacher,’ ‘learner,’ and ‘textbook’ activation (87%, 82%, & 64%, respectively) demonstrates that in the analyzed articles, teachers were more frequently represented as the active and dynamic forces in the society. This indicates the authors’ inclination for generating texts in which teachers were active and dynamic forces. Generally speaking, the qualitative articles studied used activation in about 73% of times. In the case of passivation, teachers have been passivated in only 13% of cases for being target to actions such as showing, observing, and training.

- *Since 2004, more than 300,000 teachers have been trained in GPE developing countries.*

All the three social actors were subjected more than beneficialized. This indicates that, in passivation, the qualitative researchers tried to treat the social actors as objects rather than beneficialized from a third party.

Also, ‘textbook’ was the most subjected and the most beneficialized social actor. ‘Teacher’ was the least subjected social actor and the least beneficialized one. As van Leeuwen (2008) argues, the subjected social actor is “treated as objects in the representation” (p. 33). Beneficialized social actors can “form a third party which, positively or negatively, benefits from the action” (p. 33). This indicates that whenever teachers were passivated, the researchers tried to show them as the objects rather than those who wanted to benefit from the action. For instance, the teachers

were subjected to the action *bring together*. Also, *textbook markets* were beneficialized in relation to *bring advantages*:

- *In another program, preservice teacher education brought teachers together from different states.*
- *This can bring another advantage to the textbook markets.*

4.3. Individualization/Acculturation Pattern

To find out the identities of the researchers through their writings, the individualization/assimilation pattern can also be helpful. Van Leeuwen (2008) argues that social actors may be referred to as individuals, or they can be referred to as groups. We analyzed individualization/assimilation pattern in these articles via AntConc to find out how qualitative researchers refer to ‘teacher’ and ‘learner’ as main human social actors (see Table 4).

Here, ‘teacher’ was individualized in the majority of cases. This means that the research articles tended to represent teachers as individuals, rather than groups. This can be due to the fact that they tried to give an image of teacher as a person who can be autonomous. They also tried to focus on the differences among teachers by individualizing them. Here, is an example of individualization of ‘teacher’:

- *Teacher B produced 789 phrases and sentences in a total of 94 min, of which 25.5% were in English.*

Also, you can see examples of collectivization and aggregation, respectively:

- *The group consisted of preservice teachers and in-service teachers who were pursuing their first degree.*

In this example, the writer considers different teachers as a group, rather than individuals.

- *Sixty-two percent of teachers were successful.*

Here, aggregation is realized by the presence of the quantifier *sixty-two percent*. However, it was rare in the corpus (1.2%) and the researchers tried not to focus on statistics.

Table 4. Assimilation/Individualization in Four Qualitative Research Articles

Assimilation/Individualization	Teacher	Learner
n Assimilatio	Collectivization	32 (20.5%)
	Aggregation	2 (1.2%)
	Individualization	124 (78.3%)
Total	158 (100%)	87 (100%)

As shown in Table 4.4, the individuality of ‘teacher’ was emphasized, and it was individualized more than ‘learner.’ This shows the tendency of the writers of qualitative research articles to focus more on teachers rather than learners, and learners were put in a second position in their writings. However, learners, like teachers, were individualized more than being assimilated that again shows that these researchers intended to show the main social actors as independent, and tried to place great value on individuality. In assimilation, both teachers and learners were collectivized more than being aggregated, which shows that qualitative researchers did not treat teachers and learners as statistics. Examples of collectivization, aggregation, and individualization of ‘learner’ are given respectively:

- *And under this kind of logic, one might say that educational institutions are simply toasters with students.*
- *At the end of the semester, an open-ended questionnaire was distributed to a number of students.*
- *An example of a student response which highlights the strength of feeling over this issue is provided below.*

As van Leeuwen (2008) mentions, aggregation “quantifies groups of participants, treating them as statistics” (p. 37), so the reason why qualitative researchers tended to use more collectivization than aggregation lies in the fact that they did not tend to use mechanisms such as statistics in their research articles but to focus on the groups of people whenever they tried to show assimilation. Even in the cases of aggregation, they did not use statistics frequently, but they employed words such as *survey*.

4.4. Transitivity Pattern

Another useful tool whereby we can analyze the identities of researchers is transitivity pattern. This study dealt with transitivity with regard to the main social actors (i.e., ‘teacher,’ ‘learner,’ and ‘textbook’) to see how researchers take advantage of different processes to explain their perceptions as researchers. Analysis was done via AntConc.

As Table 5 shows, the writers employed material processes in about 2.5% of the time when ‘teacher’ was the social actor, and 3.8% of the time on the whole. In other words, researchers employed verbs such as *giving, making, changing*, and so forth less frequently. For example:

- *For it to be successful, our common sense must be changed so that we see the world only as individual consumers.*
- *The teacher listed all the major procedures.*

On the other hand, they used mental processes in about 42% of the time when ‘teacher’ was the social actor, and 41% of the time on the whole. For instance, teachers were social actors of verbs such as *thinking, considering, determining, feeling, understanding, seeing, knowing, realizing*, and so forth. The following examples illustrate the point further:

- *I think Facebook allows students to see a more human and accessible side of their teachers.*

In this example, the social actor *I* (the researcher) has been used in relation to the verb *think* that is a mental process.

- *What we all know are needed reforms, impediments that are shared by the widely accepted ways we educate teachers.*

Here, the mental process *know* was employed for the social actor *we*.

- *How will teachers determine which students need more intensive instruction?*

In this example, the writer employed the mental process *determine* for the social actor ‘teacher’.

Table 5. Transitivity in Four Qualitative Research Articles

Transitivity	Teacher	Learner	Textbook	Total
Material Process	4 (2.5%)	4 (3.4%)	3 (15%)	11 (3.8%)
Mental Process	68 (42%)	54 (46%)	-----	122 (41%)
Verbal Process	27 (16.5%)	36 (30%)	-----	63 (21%)
Relational Process	52 (32%)	27 (23%)	4 (21%)	83 (28%)
Behavioral Process	11 (7%)	5 (4.2%)	-----	16 (5.2%)
Existential Process	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (15%)	3 (1%)
Total	162 (100%)	117	19	298 (100%)

As displayed by Table 5, mental processes were by far the most frequent process (41%), followed by relational (28%), verbal (21%), behavioral (5.2%), material (3.8%), and existential (1%). Also, among the different processes, mental, relational, and verbal had the highest frequency. Comparing them in relation with ‘teacher’ and ‘learner,’ it was found that the three most frequently used processes

were mental, relational, and verbal, respectively. The pattern for ‘learner’ was mental, verbal, and relational.

The examples show the use of verbal, relational, behavioral, and existential processes, respectively:

- *These teachers say the following about the overall impact on their teaching and their classroom work.*
- *Teachers are human-beings like the students and that they are not inaccessible.*
- *Dominant groups often listen very carefully to the worries and demands that come from below.*
- *There are few more important mechanisms of cultural selection and distribution than schools and universities.*

Because different transitivity choices achieve different communicative effects (Charles, Pecorari, & Hunston, 2009), various distributions of processes are expected according to the methodology of the research articles. In the qualitative research papers, the overall frequency of mental processes was found to be nearly twice as much as verbal processes. In addition, the material processes were the least frequently used processes in these articles. Also, behavioral processes were used more than material but less than mental processes. It seems that the qualitative researchers used mental more frequently than material processes because material processes are concerned with our experience of the material world (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), and they do not intend to focus on the material world. Furthermore, mental processes are concerned with our experience of the world of our consciousness (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). So, it seems attempts were made to show the flow of events taking place in the consciousness of people, rather than in their material world. This, of course, cannot be shown by material processes. In addition, mental processes involve subjective interpretation and result in better visibility for the author.

Likewise, relational processes were used by the qualitative researchers to identify nonmaterial concepts because this process is similar to mental processes. Furthermore, the researchers used clauses of saying (i.e., verbal processes) because these clauses are important resources in discourse through which the writers can create narration. The writers used relational processes more than verbal ones for teachers to enrich the relations of the teachers to mental and intellectual concepts. On the other hand, a relatively large number of verbal processes for learners might be explained by the fact that the qualitative researchers tried to show the opportunity of the dialogic exchange the learners had. It was also found that the writers did not use

behavioral processes very frequently because they are similar to material processes and concern the physiological behavior that was not the focus of qualitative researchers. They also used existential processes the least frequently. This can be due to the fact that they represent the existence or happening of something, and it is not very common in discourse (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

The transitivity pattern for ‘teacher’ and ‘learner’ was not exactly the same. Verbal processes were used more than relational when the social actor was ‘learner’; however, relational processes were used more than verbal when the social actor was ‘teacher.’ This can be due to the fact that the focus of the research articles was ‘teacher,’ and the writers tried to relate teacher to different concepts by employing relational processes. Furthermore, the results show that transitivity was not meaningful to nonhuman being social actors (here, textbooks), and it was meaningful when the social actor is human being.

4.5. The Why This Way and Not That Way Tool

As Gee (2014) argues, for any communication, it is important to “ask why the speaker/writer built and designed with grammar in the way in which he or she did and not in some other way” (p. 358). This can be valuable in analyzing the ways through which researchers project their identities in their academic texts. Because according to Gee (2014), to find answer to the abovementioned question, we need to analyze devices which connect different concepts (i.e., relative clauses), devices which indicate the purposes of the discourse (i.e., frame markers) and devices which show the commitment of the writer to the statements (i.e., hedges); therefore, we tried to focus on these three elements in the writings of the researchers through AntConc. The term *frame markers* and *hedges* were borrowed from Hyland’s (2004) taxonomy.

Relative clauses start with the relative pronouns entailing *who*, *that*, *which*, *whose*, *where*, and *when* (Malmakjar, 2004). Writers can employ them in order to add details. Besides, relative clauses can be useful stylistically. When writers use these devices properly, they allow them to combine connected ideas in the same sentence rather than breaking them down into multiple ones. For example:

- *People, who join these groups, gain social approval, express their opinions, self-disclose themselves and in some instances, they even influence others.*

In this example, the writer elaborated more on people by adding a relative clause immediately after the subject *people* and explained more who these people he meant.

According to Hyland (2004), frame markers are those devices that draw attention to the writer’s discourse goals (*I argue here*), label stages in the text

structure (*to conclude*), or indicate topic or argument shifts (*now, well*). So, writers can use them to help the reader understand the text better. For example:

- *First, I have had an interest in integrating communicational language skills into my students' language practice for some time. Secondly, Facebook is a vehicle that can aid the formation of social relations.*

In this example, the writer tried to mention the goals of his research by using discourse shifts and text stages *first* and *secondly*. By using this device, the writer managed his goals in a more comprehensible manner.

By employing hedging devices such as *might, perhaps, possible, about*, writers can show their commitment to statements (Hyland, 2004), as noted in the following example:

Perhaps, these teachers were not specifically selected in the research design.

Here, the writer used hedges to show that he was not certain about the statements he argued and to show that his decision to the information was tentative. In other words, the qualitative researchers preferred to use hedges in their writings because they may have a desire to be modest; they also wanted to show deference for the reader's opinion and to respect the reader's right to disagree.

The results showed that although the use of hedges and frame markers are less than 0.3% in academic discourse (Hyland, 1996, 2004), and according to Tse and Hyland (2010), the use of relative clauses are less than (0.5%): Hedges showing certainty were used most frequently (5%), followed by relative clauses (3.4%) and frame markers (3.2%), respectively, in the corpus. It is worth mentioning that the frequency of the use of relative clauses in academic writing is 5%. The qualitative researchers employed this pattern so that they could assist their readers to grasp the concepts presented in the texts better and tried their best to create reader-friendly texts.

4.6. The Significance Building Tool

Here, it is important to ask how words and grammatical devices are being used to gain or minimize significance for certain things and not others (Gee, 2014). In other words, the writers can employ *attitude markers* (borrowed from Hyland's, 2004, taxonomy) as the significance building tool not only to show the significance of the concepts but also to show their appraisal of propositional information. This can help us understand better the way they project their identities onto their texts. Because Gee (2014) explained this tool generally and did not clarify the specific linguistic devices for analysis of the way words and grammatical devices were used to show

the significance of certain concepts, it was decided to borrow attitude markers from Hyland's (2004) taxonomy that indicate the appraisal of propositional information.

Attitude markers are those words and clauses that allow the writer to reveal his or her attitude toward the content (Hyland, 2004). Examples from the corpus illustrate the issue:

- *I strongly agree that teachers' content knowledge influences student performance.*
- *Fortunately, the learners were successful in comprehending the texts.*

Although according to Hyland (1996, 1998, 2001b) the use of attitude markers in academic writing is less than 0.3%, the data analysis using AntConc showed that the qualitative researchers used them frequently (3%) to show their real affective values, to establish a close writer-reader relationship, and to make the text more reader-friendly. In addition, they might also employ attitude markers a lot in their research articles when they were relying greatly on their personal opinions in order to influence the reader.

4.7. The Relationships Building Tool

According to Gee (2014), another factor that shows the identity of the researcher in his or her writing is the way he or she tries to make an explicit relationship with the reader. Writers can make this relationship through the use of engagement markers (Hyland, 2004) such as *you see, imagine, consider, recall, or so*. We borrowed the term *engagement markers* from Hyland's taxonomy (2004) to analyze the way the writers made an explicit relationship with the reader and it was necessary to find out how words and various grammatical tools were used to build and sustain this kind of relationship. The analysis showed that the qualitative researchers tried to build a direct relationship with readers through the use of engagement markers, for example:

- *You can see it in the figure below.*

The use of engagement markers in academic discourse is less than 0.3% (Hyland, 2004), but the data analysis using AntConc revealed that the researchers employed them frequently in these qualitative research articles (3.1%). This shows that the researchers tried their best to make an explicit relationship with their readers by talking to them directly and addressing them explicitly. In other words, they intended to show that the reader was considered as an essential factor in their writings; therefore, they acknowledged the presence of the reader by building the writer-reader relationship.

4.8. The Connections Building Tool

Another device that sheds light on the way researchers project their identities onto their writings is the way they connect and/or disconnect concepts (Gee, 2014). Therefore, to analyze how the qualitative researchers connect to or disconnect from different concepts in their writings, the connections building tool was employed. These devices indicate additive, contrastive, and sequential steps in the discourse. Some examples are *in addition, furthermore, but, therefore*, and so on. However, because Gee (2014) did not mention any specific linguistic device to check the connections among different concepts in the texts, we decided to borrow Hyland's (2004) taxonomy. The corpus analysis via AntConc showed that the qualitative researchers used transitions in their articles to express semantic relation between main clauses. For example:

- *In addition to the technical knowledge and skills teachers have to use in their daily practice, they must also be aware of the ethical dimensions of their profession.*
- *Teacher education thus has its own hidden curriculum.*

The results confirmed that although the use of transitions in academic writing is less than 0.5% (Hyland, 2000, 2004), transitions were used in 7% of the corpus. Therefore, the qualitative researchers employed transitions very frequently in their writings, so that they could link the ideas in their writings so that the reader can comprehend the concepts in their research articles easily. Also, this tool can help the reader move smoothly from one point to the next. In other words, this tool, like other mentioned tools, is employed to create a user-friendly text.

4.9. The Intertextuality Tool

The other tool employed to analyze the researcher identity projection, according to Gee (2014), is intertextuality. The intertextuality tool can help us to show how words and grammatical structures such as direct or indirect quotations are used to quote, refer to, or allude to other texts. Again, Gee did not clarify any specific linguistic device to check the intertextuality, so we decided to borrow evidentials from Hyland's (2004) taxonomy. We found that the qualitative researchers used evidentials to refer to source of information from other texts and other writers. Few examples can clarify the point:

- *Nunan (1989) characterizes the underlying philosophy of a learner-centered curriculum as one in which the goals, materials, and implementation are driven.*
- *American activists have not totally rejected the idea of vouchers, for example (Apple & Pedroni, 2005).*

The results indicated that although it is believed that the employment of evidentials in academic writing is more than 0.3% (Hyland, 2000, 2004), the qualitative researchers did not employ evidentials frequently (0.1%) in their writings. Writers might choose to cite infrequently for different reasons. One reason can be the fact that in qualitative research there is an attempt to show the idea of the writer/researcher rather than referring to various evidences. This means that the writers of such kind of articles might feel that their personal opinions are more important to the development of their writing than citing others; therefore, they try to take credit for their own ideas. Whenever they refer to source of information from other texts, they refer to other qualitative sources more than they rely on quantitative or mixed method ones.

4.10. The Code Glosses Tool

Code glosses tool is another useful tool through which we can analyze the way researchers project their identities in their writings. Whether it is important for the researchers to clarify the various concepts in their writings for their readers and give explanations so that they can understand the meanings of different parts of the text can be related to their identities. Therefore, code glosses provide additional information to assist interpretation, and ensure the writer's intention is understood by explaining, comparing, or expanding what has been said (Hyland, 2004). They are introduced by phrases like *namely*, *in other words*, *for example*, *such as*, and *the like*.

The findings indicated that the writers employed code glosses in 3.5% of the corpus, though the frequency of these devices in academic discourse is less than 0.3% (Hyland, 2004). This shows that creating a situation for the readers in which they can realize the writer's intended meaning better by clarifying the concepts were important for the qualitative researchers. Some examples illustrate the point further:

- *For example, to market something such as education, it must first be transformed into a commodity, a “product.”*
- *What I mean is that Students mostly see their teachers as authoritarian figures with which they have no desire to be intimate or share feelings or emotions.*

In these two examples, the writers tried to elaborate the concepts by providing example and using the term *what I mean* so that the reader can grasp the intended meaning of the elements in texts.

4.11. Self-Mentions Tool

The last tool that can shed light on the way researchers project their identities in their writings is whether they use self-mentions. In other words, the way they refer to themselves explicitly in their articles, and through which they construct their

professional identity is of importance. This device refers to the extent of author presence in terms of first person pronouns and possessives. According to Hyland (2000), the frequency of personal pronouns can show the degree of explicit author presence in the scientific discourse. Although the traditional view of academic discourse is regarded to be impersonal and objective (Karahan, 2013) and the frequency of the employment of self-mentions in academic discourse is less than 0.3% according to Hyland (2001b), the corpus analysis based on AntConc revealed that the qualitative researchers used impersonal language and self-mention devices frequently in their articles (5.5%). For example:

- *To these, we add recommendations for participation by all levels of the system in the establishment of policy.*
- *According to my observation and direct interaction with a cohort of future teachers, they seem to lack certain important qualities.*

In these examples, they preferred to use the first person pronouns in their writings to give voice to themselves. This would also lead to the prominence of the qualitative researchers in their writings. In other words, the qualitative researchers tried to represent themselves as independent and expressive social actors. Furthermore, the authors used the personal pronouns to create an effective and friendly atmosphere. The choice of personal pronoun for a given context and the presence of a personal pronoun in academic discourse can reveal how writers view themselves, their relationship with their readers, and their relationship with the discourse community they belong to. This means that the writers tried to display a high level of authority in the context to show their right to control or command others and also their knowledge in their field.

Surprisingly, however, the qualitative researchers did differently in these four research articles. The writer of the second article used self-mentions the most frequently. And, the writers of the first article used this device the least frequently, although they used self-mentions frequently on the whole. This shows that different qualitative researchers might have different perspectives regarding the use of self-mentions but, generally speaking, they employ it frequently.

The findings revealed that although the researchers employed all the subdivisions of these 11 sets of the categories of the employed models, they used some of them more frequently than the rest. In other words, they had a pattern. From a general point of view, inclusion was the most frequently linguistic device followed by activation, individualization, assimilation, mental processes, relational processes, passivation, verbal processes, exclusion, transitions, self-mentions, behavioral processes, hedges, material processes, code glosses, relative clauses, frame markers, engagement markers, attitude markers, existential processes, and evidentials. From

another point of view, they had a special pattern for employing the first three binary sets of the model, borrowed from van Leeuwen's (2008) model. Again, the most frequently used linguistic device was inclusion, followed by activation and individualization. Exclusion was the least frequently used linguistic device followed by passivation and assimilation. Also, among the discourse markers, transitions were the most frequently used elements, followed by self-mentions, hedges, code glosses, relative clauses, frame markers, engagement markers, attitude markers, and evidentials. The results also showed that although there is a popular belief that professional academic writing requires writers to use hedges, self-mentions, attitude markers, and engagement markers less than 0.3% (Hyland, 1996, 1998, 2001b), these elements were employed in these research articles more than 3%.

5. Conclusion

The connection between writing and the creation of an author's identity has been emphasized in different studies (Hamilton, Barton, & Ivanič, 1994; Hyland, 2010, 2011; Ivanič, 1998). Similarly, this study aimed at exploring the ways applied linguistics researchers project their identities in their academic writings. It was seen that the qualitative researchers employed particular patterns by using specific linguistic devices. In other words, they employed all the subdivisions of the 11 sets of the categories, though they used some of them more frequently than the rest. More specifically, human social actors were considered more important than nonhumans, and the researchers highlighted the importance of the roles of teachers rather than the positions of learners; therefore, any instrument such as inclusion, activation, and individualization which could be used to highlight the role of teachers was used more frequently. Moreover, the results seem to imply that qualitative researchers rely more on their personal opinions than on the citations, but they hedge strongly to compensate for this. These findings are in line with the results of the study conducted by Hyland (2011) that suggests that identity is "created from the texts we engage in and the linguistic choices we make" (p. 9). This study also was consistent with previous studies conducted in the field of identity and CDA, both in frequency and priority of the social actors (Hyland, 2005; Norton & Early, 2011; Sahragard & Davatgarzadeh, 2010; Yen, 2000).

Although this research is definitely open to a number of shortcomings, yet we hope that by shining a spotlight on the ways researchers project their identities in their academic writing, researcher identity awareness would be increased. In this regard, we hope that the four CDA and discourse analysis models employed in this study may be also applied as appropriate tools to investigate the researcher identity in quantitative and mixed method research articles in order to compare the ways they represent their identities in their writings and the probable differences in using

patterns. Further research is needed to analyze the way quantitative and/or mixed method researchers project their identities in their research articles and particular patterns they employ in their academic writings.

In addition to helping teachers, students and educators to be aware of the possible outcomes of representing their identities in their writings, this study revealed the patterns involved in researcher identity construction as well as the discourse choice as a means of constructing identity. Besides, our findings would be helpful in teaching/learning writing. As Pennycook (1994) claims, critical educators need to enhance their self-attentiveness to the cultures, knowledge, and voice of others. Based on the findings of this study, they can be aware of the ways their identities are shown in their research writings. Language teachers are critical educators for their students. They need to be sensitive and conscious to help students question and challenge their own and other researchers' writings.

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