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EFL Writer Identity Construction in Academic Writings: A Systematic Review

Nengyan Wang[1]

[1] Xi'an International Studies University, Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China

Abstract

English, as the most widely used language in academic publications, poses great challenges for novice EFL researchers not only in the language competence, but also in constructing authorial identity in academic writing because the codes for the construction of writer identity is implicit. This paper reviews the research on identity construction in academic writing among EFL writers published in key applied linguistics journals between 2000 and 2024, and summarizes the current research status of writer identity construction in academic writing and delves into the characteristics and influencing factors of identity construction. Through in-depth analysis of the theoretical framework and the characteristics of the EFL writers, we have selected representative papers, including empirical studies, theoretical discussions, and case studies, to ensure the comprehensiveness and accuracy of this review. The study found that the construction of writer identity in academic writing is a complex and multifaceted process. It is not only influenced by the English language proficiency of the writer but also by a combination of factors such as individual experiences, academic background, and sociocultural factors. These factors collectively shape the writer's identity and recognition by others in the academic community, thereby affecting their status and influence in the academic field. This paper aims to provide valuable references and inspirations for future research on academic writing and writer identity construction.

Keywords

writer identity, English as Foreign Language (EFL), academic writing, identity construction

1. Introduction

Academic writing is not only an essential way for writers to establish and maintain their academic reputation, but also a significant embodiment of their scholarly identity. It is a crucial skill whose importance cannot be overstated. Moreover, academic writing is not merely a process of conveying

knowledge and information to readers; it is also a form of academic communication (French, 2019). The writer's identity plays a vital role in academic writing, influencing their perspectives, credibility, and academic reputation. Due to differences in language and cultural background (Zhao, 2019) and lack of experience in English writing (Botelho de Magalhães et al., 2018), researchers who learn English as L2 or EFL may face more challenges in constructing their writer identity in academic writings.

Ivanič (1994) considers writing is not merely about communicating information but also conveys something about the writer. This aspect of writing can lead to hesitation for any writer, perhaps especially for EFL writers. Hyland (2005b) strongly emphasizes that all writing aims to evoke a resonance with readers. Readers must be engaged and participate more actively as dialogue partners. Writing is not a one-way output, in this process, readers consider themselves as recipients of knowledge.

Given the importance of writer identity construction and few systematic reviews on EFL writers' identity construction in academic writings, this literature review synthesizes studies that investigate EFL writer identity construction in academic writing. It begins with a review of the relevant theoretical frameworks and research methods pertaining to the construction of writer identity in academic writing for EFL writers. Next, it systematically summarizes and analyzes existing research findings, including the characteristics and influencing factors of writer identity construction of EFL writers in academic writing. Finally, this paper offers a prospective outlook on the research on writer identity construction in academic writing. Simultaneously, we put forward corresponding suggestions and reflections, aiming to contribute to enhancing the academic writing abilities of EFL writers and promoting academic communication and understanding.

2. Theoretical Frameworks

This section reviews key theoretical frameworks used to analyze writer identity construction, namely social constructivism, Hyland's (2004a) metadiscourse and Ivanič's (1998; 2010) writer identity model. The construction of writer identity generally follows the theory of social constructivism. This theory not only guides learners in understanding textual content allocation and constructing appropriate texts (McKinley, 2015), but also reveals that academic identity and roles are constructed through social interaction and shared meaning. Social constructivism emphasizes that the construction of writer identity is a continuous process of development and evolution, influenced by social interaction, and in this process, it is given, adjusted, and reconstructed. Therefore, Ivanič (1998), Prior (2001), Matsuda (2015), and McKinley (2017) argue that writing is an act of writing that is socially constructed rather than socially determined. Discourse practices and social interactions become key mechanisms for writers to mediate and construct their specific academic identities in the writing process (Deng, 2012). This implies that writing is formed within a specific social and cultural context, influenced by multiple factors such as social rules, cultural customs, values, and linguistic habits.

In addition to the social constructivist perspective, Hyland (2004a) proposed the interpersonal model of metadiscourse, which provides a comprehensive and practical method for exploring interpersonal features in written discourse and is applicable to any research related to metadiscourse categories (Tan & Eng, 2014). Hyland (2005a) further subdivided metadiscourse into different categories to describe its functions in written discourse. By using interactive metadiscourse as a linguistic device, writers can effectively guide readers and construct more cohesive and coherent textual content. This theoretical framework has gained widespread recognition in the academic community, and many scholars have conducted in-depth research on stance markers with reference to this framework.

Metadiscourse was initially conducted based on corpora constructed from expert academic writing, particularly in the writing process of master's, doctoral, and academic theses, where it received extensive attention and research (Hyland, 2002; 2004). On one hand, Hyland's (1998; 2004b) research indicates that interpersonal metadiscourse is used more frequently in academic theses compared to textbooks, and the amount of metadiscourse in doctoral theses far exceeds that in master's theses. This finding not only emphasizes the importance of metadiscourse in advanced academic writing but also reflects that as academic levels increase, writers tend to use more metadiscourse to engage in deeper communication and interaction with readers. That is, metadiscourse in writing helps writers effectively utilize language to achieve their authority and communication goals, presenting, denying, and synthesizing viewpoints throughout the thesis. On the other hand, with the development of academic English teaching in the context of globalization, the research focus of metadiscourse has gradually shifted to novice and EFL writers. Negretti and Kuteeva (2011) point out that for non-native English-speaking novice writers, mastering the use of metadiscourse in academic English is particularly important because metadiscourse can help them communicate academic viewpoints more effectively, construct argumentation frameworks, and engage in smooth communication with the international academic community. This viewpoint highlights the practical value and importance of metadiscourse in enhancing academic writing ability.

Furthermore, metadiscourse plays a crucial role in constructing the writer's identity. The writer's identity is often evaluated through the metadiscourse they use in the text, which not only forms the framework and logic of the text but also exhibits the writer's academic stance and attitude. Interactive and interactional markers in metadiscourse assist writers in organizing the flow of information and constructing self-images, thereby establishing connections with readers and promoting intra-textual interaction (Hyland, 2005a). This interaction not only enhances the readability and persuasiveness of the text but also deepens readers' understanding and identification with the writer and their academic viewpoints. Notably, the research by Matsuda and Tardy (2007) also confirms the need to study from the perspective of both writers and readers. The research by Kawase (2015) and Rahimivand and Kuhi (2014) further confirms the crucial role of metadiscourse in academic writing. The former found that research writers tend to use more metadiscourse in the introductions of their papers to construct the textual structure, while the latter revealed the distribution of metadiscourse markers in different parts of

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academic papers and emphasized the key role of metadiscourse in identity construction in academic writing. These studies not only enrich our understanding of the functions of metadiscourse but also provide valuable insights on how to effectively use metadiscourse in academic writing.

Among the various theories, the writer identity model proposed by Ivanič has attracted significant attention and has become one of the crucial theories in this field. According to Ivanič's (1998) writer identity model, writer identity comprises four inseparable main components: "autobiographical self," "discoursal self," "self as an author," and "possibilities for selfhood." These components are influenced by the possibilities of self-existence within socio-cultural contexts. This model distinguishes different aspects of identity and elaborates on the relationships between these various aspects (Liu & Deng, 2019).

The autobiographical self which is defined as "the identity which people bring with them to any act of writing, shaped as it is by their prior social and discoursal history" (p. 24). It refers to the self-image crafted by a writer through their personal history, experiences, educational background, and textual practices. These elements collectively constitute the writer's inner world and personality traits, and form a unique autobiographical self through expression and presentation in writing.

The discourse self refers to the writer's construction of their own identity in a text by using different linguistic styles and strategies based on the needs, expectations, and knowledge backgrounds of the target readers. For instance, the use of hedges and boosters (Hu & Cao, 2011), stance (Hyland, 2005b), self-mentions (Zhang & Pan, 2023). It is a discourse strategy adopted by the writer in a specific context to convey their thoughts, emotions, and perspectives. The discourse self largely reflects the writer's linguistic habits, writing skills, and personal style.

The authorial self refers to the authoritative image presented by the author in the text through role positioning, creative motivation, viewpoints and stance, as well as the handling of the relationship between the reader and the text. It is not only based on the writer's personal experiences and linguistic expression, but also focuses more on the writer's identity recognition, creative purpose, and interactive relationship with the reader during the creative process.

The possibilities for self-hood refers to the potential ability of a writer to showcase their multiple identities, roles, and viewpoints in academic discourse through language and expression. The writer can demonstrate their diversity and openness in the academic field by flexibly using language, employing various academic strategies, and combining different disciplinary backgrounds.
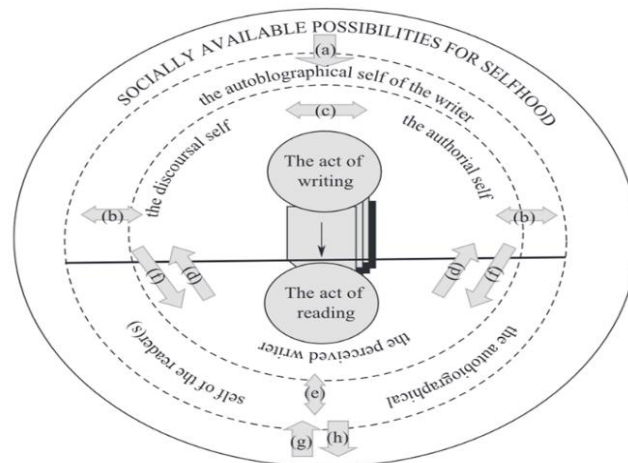
Figure 1. The Discoursal Construction of Writer Identity: Aspects and Relationships (Burgess & Ivanič, 2010, p. 235)

Based on the existing framework, Burgess and Ivanič (2010) further refined the understanding of the writer identity construction (Figure 1). Not only did they delve into the dynamic interactions and functions among the four "selves," but they also introduced a novel dimension – "the writer perceived by the reader." This dimension places the reader at the center, emphasizing the reader's substantial role in the construction of the writer's identity. As Ivanič (2005) pointed out authoritarianism often exists only as a theoretical concept before the reader's engagement. In reality, the identity presented by the writer in the text is constructed before the reader forms a specific impression. This construction is not isolated; rather, in the writing process, the writer is unconsciously influenced by readers' expectations and potential reader-writer relationships, shaping a self-identity that aligns with readers' expectations. Furthermore, once the work is completed and presented to the reader, the reader's interaction with the text creates a unique perception and impression of the writer. This process not only enriches the text's content but also provides multidimensional feedback and supplementation to the construction of the writer's identity. Therefore, the reader plays an integral role in the entire process of writer identity construction.

Within the framework of Ivanič, Li and Deng (2019) explored identity construction by examining a Chinese university student's personal statement writing. Juliaty (2019) investigated the numerous academic identities shaped by novice writers in second language academic writing. Liu and Deng (2019) explored the interaction between citation practices and identity construction in the master's thesis writing of Chinese English learners. These models provide new perspectives for us to understand how EFL writers construct and express their identities in academic writing.

3. Features of EFL Writers' Writer Identity

The theoretical framework provides us with a solid foundation for understanding the construction of writer identity. However, when applying these theories to the actual writing of EFL writers, we cannot overlook the complexity and challenges involved. This section focuses on exploring the characteristics of EFL writers' construction of writer identity in academic discourse, aiming to provide them with more specific and practical guidance.

3.1 The Use of First-Person Pronouns

In academic writing, the use of first-person pronouns is widely regarded by scholars as a significant indicator in the process of constructing the writer's identity. Many linguists have delved into the specific and comprehensive functions of first-person pronouns in academic discourse. Tang and John (1999) constructed six aspects of the writer's identity through first-person pronouns in academic writing, namely representative, guide through the essay, architect of the essay, recounter of the research process, opinion-holder and originator. These identities of the writer exhibit an ascending order in terms of authority. Compared to the study by Tang and John (1999), the research by Flotuum, Kinn and Dahl (2006) is more refined. They investigated the distribution and usage of first-person pronouns in 450 linguistic, economic, and medical papers and summarized three writer identities behind first-person pronouns (researcher, writer, and arguer). In addition to the above studies, Hyland (2002a) proposed five major discourse functions and analyzed in depth six writer identities represented by first-person pronouns. His research revealed that first-person pronouns in academic writing are not only used to express the writer's views and stances, but also to build specific relationships between the writer and the reader. Based on previous research, Lafuente (2010) refined and summarized seven key discourse functions of first-person pronouns, providing new perspectives and insights for academic writing. These studies jointly emphasize the central role of first-person pronouns in academic writing, as well as their significant functions in constructing the writer's identity, promoting research development, and communicating academic information.

3.2 The Use of Hedges and Boosters

These studies all demonstrate the enthusiasm for research on personal pronouns in English academic writing. Besides the research on personal pronouns (Martinez, 2005; Leedham & Fernandez-Parra, 2017), most of the studies have also focused on the use of metadiscourse in academic papers (Hyland, 2005a; Cao & Hu, 2014; Kawase, 2015; Lee & Deakin, 2016; El-Dakhs, 2020).

Metadiscourse is widely used in academic papers, among which the use of hedges and boosters has received widespread attention from scholars (Dontcheva-Navratilova, 2016; Akbas & Hardman, 2018; Mallaki et al., 2022), as hedges and boosters are important metadiscursive resources for writers to mark their epistemic stance and position writer–reader relations. (Hu & Cao, 2011).

Multiple researchers have conducted in-depth explorations on the use of hedges and boosters in academic papers through various research methods and standards. Some of them studied the use of hedges and boosters in graduate and doctoral thesis (Atmaca, 2016; Taymaz, 2021). Their findings

showed that doctoral students used boosters more frequently than master's students, while hedges were more frequently used in master's thesis than in doctoral thesis. Others have investigated the influencing factors of the use of hedges and boosters. They (Akbas & Hardman, 2018) believe that the use of hedges and boosters is not only influenced by the writer's cultural background and academic experience, but also changes with the academic stance and knowledge accumulation. This change not only reflects the norms and strategies of academic writing, but also reflects the growth and increased self-confidence of learners in academic writing.

Some researchers have also studied the comparison of different disciplines through the use of metadiscourse markers. Farrokhi and Emami (2008) found significant differences in the use of metadiscourse markers between electrical engineering and applied linguistics, with hedges and boosters being more frequent in applied linguistics papers. However, Rashidi and Alihosseini (2012) pointed out that there was no significant difference in the use of metadiscourse markers between sociology and engineering, challenging the common view of disciplinary differences. Takimoto's (2015) research showed that hedges generally exceeded boosters in multiple disciplines, reflecting their importance in academic writing and being constrained by disciplinary norms and rhetorical styles.

However, the research on hedges and boosters is merely one aspect of the study of writer identity construction and is not representative enough. Future research can simultaneously explore writer identity construction from multiple perspectives and aspects.

3.3 Diversity of Research Subjects

Regarding the identity construction of EFL writers, many scholars have focused on different research subjects, and the research on writer identity covers various levels and fields, from high school students to undergraduates, and from graduate students to doctoral students. These studies not only pay attention to the identity construction of individual writers, but also explore the positioning and role of writer identity in the academic community.

For high school students, scholars mainly focus on students' writing difficulties. The research by Pablo and Lasaten (2018) pointed out that high school students generally encounter difficulties in various aspects of academic writing, such as content, ideas, organization, vocabulary and word choice, formality, and citations. Roxas (2020) elaborated on different difficulties encountered by students in academic writing from three aspects: task environment, writer's long-term memory, and writing process, and formulated an academic writing teaching model. In summary, high school students face difficulties in academic writing, which may be due to their lack of systematic writing course education, and their academic writing abilities still need to be further strengthened. Future research and educational practices can pay more attention to these areas, providing students with more targeted guidance and support to help them overcome difficulties in academic writing and master the skills and strategies of academic writing.

For newly enrolled university undergraduates, especially when they begin to engage in L2 writing, they also face numerous challenges as novice writers. Scholars' attention to undergraduate academic writing

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has mostly focused on the difficulties they encounter. Burke (2010) found that Korean undergraduate students studying in the United States tend to be influenced by their native language in academic writing, resulting in deviations from academic norms in grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. In contrast, graduate students are better able to combine traditional academic writing and process writing methods to construct their own academic identity. McKinley's (2017) research focused on the construction of writer identity in English academic writing among Japanese students, emphasizing the importance of academic writing courses in building and expressing academic identity. Juliaty (2019) studied the identity construction of Indonesian undergraduates in academic writing and found that students face difficulties in integrating into the academic community, possibly due to unfamiliarity with or lack of confidence in academic norms and expectations. In summary, for undergraduates, they face multiple challenges in L2 writing and academic identity construction, including language, academic norms, and self-expression. These challenges require them to overcome through continuous learning and practice.

In the vast field of academic research, the postgraduate and doctoral stages are undoubtedly the crucial stages of exploration and innovation. Students at this stage, with solid academic foundations and professional knowledge, conduct detailed research in specific fields. Scholars have conducted detailed studies on various components of postgraduate academic papers to reveal their academic value. Hyland and Tse (2005) focused their research on abstracts, selecting 465 abstracts from published academic papers and master's and doctoral thesis to analyze the frequency, form, and function of evaluative "that," providing important insights into understanding the linguistic characteristics of the abstracts. Similarly, Zhang and Pan (2023) conducted a corpus-based comparative analysis of English agricultural abstracts written by Chinese and foreign writers, finding significant differences in the use of self-reference and writer identity between Chinese writer and international writer. Deng (2012) paid particular attention to the discussion and conclusion sections of L2 papers written by Chinese social science doctoral students, finding that these sections play a central role in the construction of doctoral students' academic identity, transforming from novice writers to authoritative members of the discourse community. Liu and Deng (2019) further analyzed the dissertation writing of master's students in English linguistics and applied linguistics at a key university in China, revealing a close relationship between citation behavior and the construction of students' multiple identities.

In addition, research has also covered other crucial parts of academic papers. For example, introduction (Samraj, 2008; Sun & Crosthwaite, 2022a), discussion (Geng & Wharton, 2016; Sun & Crosthwaite, 2022b), acknowledgments (Altakhaineh et al., 2024; Hyland & Tse, 2004), literature review (Kwan, 2006; Thompson, 2009; Xie, 2016).

These studies collectively provide a multi-faceted perspective for understanding the writing of academic papers, further enriching our cognition of postgraduate and doctoral academic papers.

3.4 Diverse Research Methods

Extensive research has explored writer identity through various methodologies, including corpus-based studies, interviews, and other quantitative and qualitative methods (Jamshidi et al., 2019).

In terms of research methods, scholars have adopted a combination of quantitative and qualitative research (e.g., Akbas & Hardman 2018; Li et al., 2023) to obtain more comprehensive and accurate data. Zhao (2012) developed an analytical rubric for assessing the strength of voice in argumentative writing based on a mixed-method approach, analyzing 400 compositions and conducting qualitative analyses of think-aloud protocols and interview data from four raters. Wu and Buripakdi (2021) employed a mixed-method design to gain a deeper understanding of the complex, multifaceted, and dynamic identities of second-language doctoral dissertation writers.

Quantitative research utilizes questionnaires, data analysis, and other techniques to quantify and statistically analyze the behaviors and attitudes of EFL writers in the process of identity construction. In Yoon's (2017) study, a quantitative analysis was conducted on 219 argumentative essays written by Greek-speaking English learners.

Besides, qualitative research (e.g., McKinley, 2015; Juliaty, 2019) delves into the underlying meanings and motivations hidden behind superficial data through in-depth interviews, case studies, and other methods. Deng (2012) adopted a multi-case study and in-depth interviews to capture the dynamic process of second-language social science doctoral students when writing the specific "Discussion and Conclusion" section of their thesis, and gained insights into their views on the construction of their academic identities throughout the writing process.

Additionally, Çandarli et al.'s (2015) research conducted a corpus-based textual analysis of authorial presence markers in argumentative essays written by Turkish and American students. Ramoroka (2017) employed a comparative corpus analysis and semi-structured interviews to compare how undergraduate students from two different disciplines at the University of Botswana used metadiscourse to construct their writer

identities in English academic writing. Zhang and Pan (2023) conducted a corpus-based comparative analysis of abstracts in agricultural research papers written by Chinese and non-Chinese writers.

This diversity in research methods not only reflects writers' in-depth thinking and exploration of EFL writers' identity construction but also provides valuable tools and perspectives for us to understand and analyze this phenomenon. The diverse research methods employed in the identity construction process of EFL writers not only offer us valuable tools and perspectives for a more comprehensive understanding and analysis of this phenomenon, but also present more possibilities and challenges for future research. With the continuous deepening and development of research, we look forward to exploring more effective research methods and theoretical frameworks to contribute more wisdom and strength to the study of EFL writers' identity construction.

4. Factors Influencing EFL Writers' Writing

In second language learning, writing, as an essential language skill, has profound implications for learners' overall ability development. However, compared to native language writers, L2 students often encounter numerous challenges in the writing process. These challenges stem from various factors, including the writer's English proficiency, individual experience, and sociocultural factors.

4.1 The Writer's English Proficiency

As for EFL writers, English proficiency is crucial for effective communication in academic and social environments. However, insufficient linguistic abilities often hinder EFL writers from constructing an effective writer identity in academic writing.

Bitchener and Basturkmen's (2006) study uncovered difficulties encountered by graduate L2 students in writing discussions of thesis, particularly emphasizing the deficiency in language proficiency (including grammar and vocabulary). Students tend to focus on linguistic issues at the sentence level, while supervisors prioritize meaning construction, rhetorical, and organizational requirements at the paragraph level. This discrepancy reflects the mismatch between students' linguistic abilities and academic writing requirements. The disparity in linguistic abilities is particularly evident in the writing of academic abstracts. Hu and Cao's (2011) research revealed that Chinese writers' language use in English abstracts may not reach the proficiency level they possess in their first language, especially in the use of hedges and boosters. This indicates that although writers with higher second language proficiency can express their academic arguments more appropriately, linguistic proficiency remains a significant factor influencing the quality of academic writing. Çandarli et al.'s (2015) study further supports this point, comparing the stance features in monolingual and L2 compositions of Turkish English learners and native English speakers through meta-discourse analysis. It was found that Turkish English learners have, to a certain extent, developed a sense of register in English academic writing, which may be attributed to their proficiency gained through EFL writing instruction. These learners are able to employ a wide range of English boosters, indicating that their English proficiency has reached a certain level. When non-native speakers' English proficiency reaches a certain threshold, their academic writing textual features may approach or even equate to those of native speakers. They discovered that when non-native speaker's English proficiency is high, there are no significant differences in their academic writing textual features compared to native speakers (Ädel & Römer, 2012; Römer, 2009). This underscores the importance of enhancing English proficiency for EFL writers to achieve a similar level to native speakers in academic writing.

In summary, English proficiency serves as the foundation for EFL learners to communicate effectively in academic and social environments. Although insufficient linguistic proficiency is one of the major challenges faced by EFL learners in academic writing, they can gradually overcome these difficulties and attain a similar level to native speakers through the enhancement of their English proficiency. The achievement of this goal requires not only the efforts of students but also effective guidance and support from teachers and supervisors.

4.2 The Writer's Individual Experiences

Individual experiences serve as unique factors in the identity construction of EFL writers. Each writer possesses their own distinctive growth experiences, life exposures, and emotional tendencies, which collectively constitute their individual characteristics.

In his study, Li (2005) explored the growth process of a Chinese doctoral student in a local academic environment. Through close communication with his supervisor, active participation in research community activities, and continuous interaction with a series of English texts, the doctoral student gradually developed and improved his L2 English academic writing ability. Frequent interactions and dynamic participation became the key to his academic growth.

Zhang and Zhou (2010) examined these from a different perspective, they focus on the writing challenges faced by international Chinese undergraduate and graduate students, especially in the fields of social sciences and humanities. They found that these students, due to their lack of sufficient academic writing training and preparation in their educational experiences in China, particularly in grasping textual language accuracy, encountered significant difficulties and challenges in the academic environment in Canada.

Wang and Parr's (2020) research further validate this view. They analyzed the four-year experience of a Chinese student pursuing a doctoral degree in education in Australia, exploring the negotiation process of her L2 English academic writing and its impact on her writing practice and academic identity. The study found that the student's exam-oriented writing education in high school and university in China, which emphasized the memorization of grammar and vocabulary while neglecting the training of thought and logic, had a significant influence on her EFL writing during her doctoral studies.

The identity construction of each EFL writer is deeply influenced by their individual experience, which collectively shapes their unique writing styles and characteristics through distinctive experiences, perceptions, and emotional orientations.

4.3 Sociocultural Factors

Sociocultural factors are important factors influencing the identity construction of EFL writers. Each society has its unique values, beliefs, customs, and traditions, which constitute the cultural background of that society together. For EFL writers, they need not only to achieve a certain level of proficiency in the language but also to deeply understand and integrate into the sociocultural environment of the target language.

In different cultural backgrounds, EFL writers will express themselves differently in their essays. Taking Greek culture and Chinese culture as examples, as they are generally considered to be collectivism-oriented, students tend to avoid using the first-person singular pronoun "I" in their writing, reflecting the relative dilution of individualism in collectivistic cultures (Koutsantoni, 2005; Leedham & Fernandez-Parra, 2017). Similarly, Ige (2010) studied students' collective identity through language in an academic learning environment and reached the same conclusion, arguing that students' collective identity hinders their autonomous learning when learning a second language. Collectivism advocates

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that personal interests should be subordinate to collective interests and emphasizes the importance of the collective or community (Hofstede, 1994, p. 51), while individualism emphasizes personal freedom, rights, and independence (Hofstede, 1994, p. 51). However, collectivism and individualism are not completely opposite; they can complement and balance each other in different situations (e.g., Green., et al., 2005). Some cultures tend to exhibit more individualistic characteristics than collectivist cultures, and vice versa.

In addition to collectivist and individualistic cultures, the cultural backgrounds of different countries also profoundly influence the way EFL writers express their identity in writing. Taking Australia as an example, the study by Li and Vandermensbrugghe (2011) revealed the discomfort of graduate writers from the East when faced with public criticism from peers or mentors initially. This embarrassment and discomfort may stem from the lack of tradition of public criticism in their cultural background, making them unfamiliar with such a direct and open communication style. In China, the cultural background is quite different. Modesty is a highly respected virtue here, representing an individual's respect for the collective and society as well as a humble attitude towards their own abilities. This value is particularly significant in the academic field, profoundly influencing the writing style of Chinese writers. As shown in the study by Chen ans Yang (2023), Chinese writers tend to avoid using the first-person singular pronoun "I" in academic writing and prefer expressions such as "we," "the author," or "this article." This choice not only demonstrates Chinese scholars' adherence to modesty but also emphasizes their identity as members of the academic community.

After in-depth research, EFL writers are able to capture the cultural psychology of the target language society accurately, thus constructing writer identity that aligns with the local cultural background in their works. Additionally, the sociocultural environment provides them with abundant materials and inspiration, contributing to the creation of unique and influential literary works.

5. Conclusion

In academic writing, the construction of writer identity is a complex and crucial process. Through a review of relevant research, we have found that the construction of writer identity involves not only linguistic aspects, such as the use of first-person pronouns and metadiscourse, but is also deeply influenced by individual experience, sociocultural factors, and English language proficiency. When EFL writers construct their writer identity, they need to overcome language barriers while adapting to and integrating into the cultural norms and academic traditions of the target academic community. In this process, the application of interdisciplinary knowledge and abilities is particularly important, as they can help writers more comprehensively understand and analyze issues, enhancing the depth and breadth of academic works (Danis, 2022).

Future research directions can focus on further exploring the dynamic process of how these learners form, maintain, and transform their academic identity in a cross-cultural context. Specifically, future research can delve deeper into how different sociocultural factors influence the construction of

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academic identity and how these factors interact with individual language proficiency and academic experience. Additionally, future research can also examine the role of technology in supporting the academic identity construction of EFL writers, for instance, through the use of artificial intelligence and data analysis tools to assist learners in better understanding and adapting to different academic cultures and communication norms. At the same time, writers can explore educational strategies and methods to help EFL writers improve their cross-cultural communication abilities, enabling them to more effectively express their views and contributions in the academic field.

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