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The American University in Cairo
School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Identity Construction among L2 Writers in an Egyptian University

A Thesis Submitted to
The Department of Applied Linguistics

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Under the Supervision of

Dr. Atta Gebril

By

Duaa Zein Abousaeed

May 2020

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‘And put your trust in Allâh. Allâh is sufficient as a Disposer of affairs’

" وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا "

(Quran 21:3, p. 418)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore how students in an undergraduate language program represent their identities in L2 writing. The study investigates the effects of gender on ways of constructing identities in L2 writing and examines the relationship between overall L2 writing quality, identity features using both qualitative and quantitative research. A convenience sample of two English teaching Egyptian professors and 115 randomly-selected Egyptian male and female students in a public university participate in this study. Interviews with two professors who have different years of teaching experience are administered. The researcher also assigned students a writing task to identify different ways males' and female' constructed identities related to their writing quality. A combination of *T*-test and correlational analyses were conducted to analyze the effect of gender on identity features and to examine the relationship between identity features and overall writing quality. Hyland's model of metadiscourse in academic texts was used as a basis for this study (2005), in addition to a 'reader-based' approach, suggested by Matsuda and Tardy (2007). To meet the requirement for the 'reader-based' approach, this study necessitated adjusting the 'Voice Intensity Rating Scale' (AVIRS) of Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003). The writing samples were scored by two raters using the (AVIRS) for scaling identity and a TOEFL iBT Holistic rubric for grading the overall L2 writing quality. The analyses of the results showed that undergraduates adopted 'self-identification', 'assertiveness' and 'authorial presence' to demonstrate their writing identities. The results also demonstrated that gender had no effect on ways of constructing identities in L2 writing. The findings yielded a positive significant correlation between 'engagement markers' and the overall L2 writing quality; in addition to three positive correlations between 'authorial presence', 'central point', 'total identity feature', and the writing quality in males and females respectively. The results confirm that intensity of identity features raises the overall L2 writing quality for both males and females.

Keywords: SLW; L2; Second language writing; Academic writing; Second language learning; Authorial identity; Voice; Writer identity Gender; Writing quality; Undergraduate level; language program; Writing teachers; Writing learners

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List of Abbreviations

L2: Second Language

AVIRS: Adjusted Voice Intensity Rating Scale

ID1: Identity feature (Assertiveness)

ID2: Self-identification

ID3: Central point

ID4: Authorial presence

ID5: Engagement markers

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Introduction

L2 Academic writing has recently received substantial interest in applied linguistics research and the literature in this area has investigated a wide range of topics across different instructional contexts. In academic writing, a text is composed for particular readers and consequently this produced text should meet the rhetorical expectations and provide information needed for targeted readers. “The arguments we make, the positions we take and the ways we try to connect and fit in with others, all contribute to the presentation of ourselves and so influence how others respond to us” (Hyland et al., 2012, p. 135). In this quotation, Hyland argues that an academic writer usually attempts to show his/her side of the argument by positioning the self through conveying his/her thoughts to capture the reader’s attention and to meet their expectations. Second language writing is considered a challenging process in which writers are required to present their own perspectives about a specific topic. L2 writers are expected to express their understanding of such a topic and consequently negotiate their stances towards it. Within this context, learners should know how to express their identities effectively. The stances authors attempt to express result in an interaction between writers and readers, establishing a highly interwoven dialogue. It is important to realize that these dialogues are coupled with linguistic metadiscourse features to create an interactive link between writers and readers. Thus, writers’ identities can be seen and expressed through these linguistic features on paper. The question the researcher investigates in this study is, “Are the representations of writers’ identities related to the writing quality, and if so, to what extent?” This study highlights the metadiscourse features of identity that can be explicitly employed by learners and used in analysis by other researchers of identity construction. In addition, this research project explores how undergraduate students represent identities on paper in general, and ways that male and female students in a language

program might adopt to construct their identities in L2 writing in particular. In addition, the study looks into whether this identity representation has any gender differences may be associated with their overall writing quality.

1.2 Literature review

There has been a growing interest in academic writing research which tapped into a wide range of issues. Academic writing is still challenging for many students in different disciplines, especially those that require learners to consistently adopt new expressions (Hyland, 2009). L2 writing is an excellent way of communicating with others because through this second language writing, a writer interacts, takes positions, holds a point of view, and claims an identity to be heard/read. One of the best ways to create a channel between a writer and a reader is to express the writer identity in a text. Writers can use some metadiscourse features which Hyland discussed in his earlier studies, to freely express the authorial self, or in other words, to orient the ‘stance’ and ‘engagement’ positions in a writing. Some examples for identity textual features in Hyland’s model are references to shared knowledge, reader pronouns, engagement markers, directives, boosters and hedges (Hyland, Guinda, & Sancho Guinda, 2012).

As a matter of fact, writer identity was presented and displayed theoretically for the first time in Ivanič’s ground-breaking book: *The discorsal construction of identity in academic writing*. Ivanič’s research drew upon L1 but has had a great influence on studies in L2 writing; it presented four main facets for identity: the autobiographical self, discorsal self, self as author, and possibilities for self-hood (Ivanič, 1998). As for Matsuda, who deals with the concept of identity from a new angle, the way readers respond to L2 writing, he contends that readers compose ideas from a mixture that writers create in their L2 writing; later he highlights that identity results from L2 writers’ use of these features (Matsuda, 2001). From Hyland’s perspective of identity, a writer

situates the self for the topics under discussion between both writers and readers by using reflections that help in initiating a clear dialogue between them (Hyland, 2011).

Early results of identity studies by Ivanič (1998) and Stapleton (2002), among others, showed that a writer claims an “authorial identity” through a clear reference to the self and the repeated usage of the first-person pronoun (Ivanič, 1998). It is worth mentioning that Stapleton’s results spoke to the centrality of identity in L2 writing and criticized the belief that only the first-person pronoun reflects the construction of identity. On the contrary, Stapleton saw it as a powerful tool to express voice when he used it in his research conclusion to help readers reach the heart of his argument. Stapleton’s conclusion spoke to the importance of the ideas, quality, creativity, and originality of the work in relation to the authorial identity (Stapleton, 2002).

When identity was investigated in other studies such as Ivanič and Camps (2001) and Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003), the results of strand of research revealed that the reader was highly effective in building such a writer identity, but this approach remains briefly addressed in the literature. Later, in a study by Matsuda and Tardy (2007), the results found that a writer’s identity plays an important role from both the writer’s and the reader’s perspectives (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007).

Gender is one of the social constructs that has been less studied in published academic research in comparison to other forms of social variables used to investigate any potential relationship to writers’ identities in L2 writing. As one of the examples for gender studies that have been conducted so far, a study by Johnson (1992) investigated how L2 women writers adapted personalized mechanisms in their responses in writing peer reviews, based on the gender of their addressee (Johnson, 1992). Another example of gender studies in L2 writing is Pajares and Valiante’s study (2001) that investigated gender differences of middle school students in terms of

writing motivation, the results of which were interpreted from the perspective of a social cognitive theory (Pajares & Valiante, 2001). In the latter study, the results demonstrated that female middle school students have a stronger writing efficacy, self-concept and even higher value of writing than do their male counterparts (Pajares & Valiante, 2001). As for the first study mentioned, the findings showed that, in using an L2 in writing peer reviews, women use more positive evaluations and presentation for the self to female than to male addressees (Johnson, 1992).

To the best of this researcher's knowledge, most of these studies explored gender from different perspectives without tapping into the overall writing quality of both female and male undergrad learners. It is worth mentioning that there were few studies in which writer identity was addressed along with examining the overall quality of writing and without referencing any gender differences in L2 writing (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Zhao & Llosa, 2008). To fill this gap, this research project attempts to identify the role of text features in constructing writer identity and examines any possible influences identity may have on L2 writing quality. In addition, this study investigates any gender differences in relation to writer identity and overall L2 writing quality, which is a question addressed by only a few studies in literature. Furthermore, the study investigates these issues with a sample of Egyptian undergraduate student, a population that has not received the due attention in the literature.

1.3 Context of the Study

Data was collected from a public university in the Northern part of Egypt. Students in this setting do not usually reflect or express their self-identities in writing assignments. The university system in Egypt stresses writing for examination purposes only, as is the case in the context of this study. In addition to this reality, Egyptian students do encounter writing difficulties, and this could be affected by some socio-cultural challenges. These challenges were investigated in a study by

Ahmed (2010), who argues that learner's lack of reading habit, L1 interference in L2, memorized forms, and the highly competitive atmosphere negatively affected the Egyptians writing development (Ahmed, 2010). However, as indicated earlier, the literature has not adequately investigated the linguistic features of writer identity in relation to gender and overall L2 writing quality. On a related note, none of these studies focused on Egyptian L2 undergrads at a public university. Also, this study suggests to L2 researchers and practitioners that identity could be both learnable and teachable; the question is how research could better inform L2 writing instruction so writing teachers may help their L2 learners of writing to "show their real identities," or in other words, to "voice" themselves in their L2 writing.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

There are key questions and notions that were not discussed in the literature regarding writer identity, particularly how it influences the overall L2 writing quality and any possible associations it may have with gender. Also, with a closer look at the literature on identity, a number of gaps and shortcomings were revealed, as most of the previous studies have not investigated different angles of writer identity in a text. Most past research discussions have proven that gender is a possible variable in their studies, that it was not sufficiently investigated, and that it might significantly correlate to overall quality of L2 writing. Researchers mentioned that such a variable needs further investigation in future research papers regarding how this issue of gender could contribute to influence the overall quality of writing in L2. As a way forward, this study is a response to Zhao's call to investigate other extra-textual features such as age, exposure to L2 writing, and gender to examine their effects on writing practices (Zhao, 2019, p. 124). Hence, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining the relationship between L2 writer identity and overall

writing quality, along with effects of gender on constructing L2 writer identity in the context of Egyptian students at the university level.

1.5 Rationale for the Study

Although research on investigating writer identity in L2 writing has increased recently, similar research studies have not taken place in Egypt. Previous studies investigated the role of identity in academic writing by using either qualitative or quantitative methods (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Ivanič & Camps, 2001; Zhao & Llosa, 2008) without examining any gender effects. The current study follows a mixed-method approach in order to answer the proposed research questions. This collection of qualitative and quantitative data from different sources attempts to discover whether findings from the two sources converge as recommended in Creswell (2015) and Springer (2010). This approach had the advantage that analysis of data could be correlated for better understanding of the results. The suggested method investigated how L2 writer identity was connected to the overall L2 writing quality and examined if clear associations between gender and projecting an authorial identity existed.

1.6 Research Questions

The primary focus of this study is to investigate identity issues among Egyptian university students. More specifically, the present study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. How do undergraduate students represent their identities in L2 writing?
2. How does gender affect ways of constructing identities in L2 writing?
3. What is the relationship between the identity features, gender, and the overall L2 writing quality?

1.7 Delimitations

This researcher expects significant gaps in the social background of the participants, since the study collected data from a public university. The study stems from a high interest in investigating Egyptian students' sense of writer identity projection in males' and females' L2 writing, and a belief in its connection to the overall quality of L2 writing. Thus, investigating the writing samples in terms of task characteristics, purpose of writing, different time allotment, content and development of ideas were not addressed in this study. This study examined gender as a social variable between participants, but age, membership in a particular discourse community, cultural norms, ethnicity or social class and other variables were beyond its scope and were not discussed. It is hoped that by using a mixed methods approach, the relationship between writer identity, gender and overall L2 academic writing quality can be better understood.

1.8 Definitions of Constructs

1.8.1 Theoretical Definitions

Academic Writing:

This type of writing could be conducted through several steps or forms and in different genres. Each type of academic writing follows an approach that a writer can apply when he/she discusses a specific topic. Usually academic writing displays a dispassionate tone because it is targeted for a particular audience, but it is intended as well to challenge some arguments in which the academic writer projects his/her identity. A very broad definition of academic writing could include any writing assignment given in an academic setting. According to Paltridge, it was found that "the most common written genres were documented essays, summaries, plans/proposals and book reviews". It was also found that students were sometimes required to write short tasks

involving less than half a page of writing (Paltridge, 2004). Most types of academic texts share writing conventions, but such conventions were, and still are, a subject of debate. Many writers called for a change in academic writing in which a writer can express his/her own thoughts with a sense of identity in different texts.

Identity:

According to Ivanič and Camps (2001), researchers from different disciplines are not in agreement about distinctions between terms like 'self', 'person', and 'position'. The researchers see that the words 'person' and 'role' refer to the publicly defined aspect of identity. They argued in this recent article that "*writers position themselves as having particular perspectives on reality, as having degrees of authoritativeness and a particular relationship with the reader, and, finally, as having particular views as to how written text should be constructed*" (Ivanič & Camps, 2001, p.40). In this quotation, the researchers assert that identity is a social construct that carries all the possibilities of the self-representation, which is not fixed, but open to change in relation to social groups or categories.

Gender:

According to Eckert and Ginet, gender is regularly conceptualized as an identity someone just 'has' but researchers began viewing gender as involving what people 'do.' In this view, gender doesn't just exist, but is produced, reproduced, and indeed changed through people's performance of gendered acts, as they project their own claimed gendered identities, and challenge and negotiate others' identities (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p. 4).

1.8.2 Operational Definitions

Academic writing:

In the present study, academic writing refers to L2 writing in a public university English language program. The academic writing samples of this study are of argumentative nature, where the writer positions the self and projects his/her identity.

Overall writing quality:

In fact, there is no formula for the excellent academic writing quality to be achieved by L2 writers, but excellent writing quality could be defined as one of the various components of second language writing that is classified into more specific categories. In this study, the overall quality will be scored with a holistic rubric by two raters.

Writer Identity Features:

In general, and according to Hyland's model of metadiscourse in academic texts, textual features of identity are of interactive resources, namely frame markers, evidential, and code glosses, and of interactional resources, such as hedges, boosters, self-mentions and engagement markers (Hyland, 2018, p.40). However, this study, examined only some writing features, such as interactional resources and engagement markers, in terms of the writer's projection of identity. This researcher expects conscious choices from students in their writing to express their identities in adopting their sides in L2 writing.

Gender:

In this study, gender is known through self-reporting by students in the writing task booklet. This study follows the traditional male/female gender framework which is adopted by the context of this current study. This researcher examines the way language is used, and the association between language and linguistic elements, especially in relation to male and female language, in which any gender relationships could be illustrated to achieve the purpose of this study.

Chapter 2– Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces an overview of the themes relevant to this study by presenting the concept of identity in its entirety and then moving to other factors such as reader engagement, metadiscourse markers, and gender that might eventually influence the overall L2 writing quality. The way students constructed their identities in L2 writing from the above-mentioned factors was investigated by exploring their use of metadiscourse markers. This chapter also lays out the approaches and frameworks that combine the features of metadiscourse, L2 writing, and gender in constructing writer identity as essential elements that may affect the overall writing quality of undergraduate L2 writers. Finally, it discusses studies related to this area of research and ends by identifying a gap in the research as a basis for this study.

2.2 Approaches to the Study of Writer Identity

Writing is a way of communicating with the reader in which the writer interacts, positions, adopts a point of view in discussions, and claims an identity to be heard/read. This process of communication cannot be achieved without the highly interwoven dialogue between writers and readers through text features and engagement markers. Text features stem from the writer-oriented ‘stance’ dimension, which refers to *“how writers present themselves, their opinions, and their arguments through available linguistic elements as boosters, hedges, attitude markers, frame markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers ...”* (Hyland, Guinda, & Sancho Guinda, 2012, p.137). After all, in academic writing as Hyland argued in the following quotation, an academic writer usually attempts to show his/her side of the argument by positioning the self through conveying his/her thoughts to capture the readers’ attention and to meet their expectations. Hyland’s (2012) study suggested the following:

We do not just say what we think and get over with it but take care to design a text for particular recipients so that...it meets the rhetorical expectations, processing abilities and information needs of readers....the arguments we make, the positions we take and the ways we try to connect and fit in with others, all contribute to the presentation of ourselves and so influence how others respond to us (p. 135).

The concept of identity has been explained from many angles. Ivanič introduced the concept in 1998 in her book, *The Discoursal Construction of Identity in Academic Writing*, where she ties the concept of identity to academic writing. Although her research drew upon L1 writers as case studies in her book, her theoretical work has been influential in the L2 writing field. Ivanič introduced four aspects of writer identity in her ground-breaking book, *The Autobiographical Self, Discoursal Self, Self as Author, and Possibilities for Self-hood* (Ivanič, 1998, p.23). For Ivanič and Camps (2001), the concept of ‘writer identity’ or ‘authorial presence’ is used when a writer claims authority through a clear reference to the self or through the repeated usage of the first person pronoun, in plural or singular form; by doing this the author asserts his/her right to show writer identity (Ivanič & Camps, 2001, p. 25). Ivanič argued that in our writings we attempt to deliver an accurate message through expressing our identity clearly and vividly.

A number of concepts were suggested to refer to the writer’s self-representation in second language writing. In some studies, ‘author’s identity’ (discoursal identity) was used to refer to this idea: (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Hirst, 2007; Zhao, 2019; Zhao & Brown, 2014; Zhao & Llosa, 2008) while in others, ‘author’s voice’ was suggested as an alternative (Matsuda, 2001; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Tardy & Matsuda, 2009; Yoon, 2017; Zacharias, 2018). Some other

researchers used ‘writer identity’ such as (Hyland, 2005; Hyland & Guinda, 2016; Ivanič, 1998; Paltridge, 2013), which is the term adopted in this study.

Despite the fact that all these definitions for the concept of identity were provided by different researchers in a variety of disciplines, one worth mentioning was presented by Hyland (2018) as “the ways writers express their personal views, authoritativeness, and presence” (p.5). In Western cultures, it is very important for writers to show the self to express their authoritativeness. Hyland confirmed that writers construct their identities through using a range of possibilities along with other cultural resources. Stapleton (2002) added in his research that the concept of identity stands as a central point in L2 writing, and criticized that it is only the use of (I) that reflected voice construction in L2 writing, although he saw it as a powerful tool to express his own voice when he used it in his research conclusion to help readers reach the heart of his argument (Stapleton, 2002). He also stressed that appropriate English writing requires such projection of identity and affirmed that texts missing a real representation of writer identity may sound inferior to readers. Stapleton’s studies on voice and identity made selections deliberately on how to express such identity on the page.

One strand of research looked into the effects of academic writing on readers, readers’ responses to academic writing, and how far the writer’s presentation of the self can influence readers. Hyland adds that academic texts are intended to inform readers about a specific issue, which is why writers tend to rely on their linguistic tool set along with their identities to convey the message for each type of writing (2011). Also, he argues that academic writing is no longer only a representation of external reality but is also utilized to acquire desired knowledge through constructing and negotiating social relations between writers and readers. From Hyland’s

perspective, a writer positions the self in terms of the issues negotiated in the academic genre to eventually reach a writer-reader dialogue. And from a Bakhtinian perspective, this constructed identity goes with the dialogic nature of a sociocultural view for voice as mentioned in Bakhtin (1981). Thus, self-representation, or writer identity, is an important element of academic meaning. This reflection of writer identity helps writers start a conversation with the reader and use their own methods to create more meaningful and persuasive lines of thought. Consequently, more studies on writer identity seem to be urgently required to examine the writers' adoption of identity in L2 writing.

All of the previous definitions can be classified under the same term of identity that remains a slippery concept, complicated to define theoretically or operationalize in practice. The focus in the above-mentioned scholars has changed from the concept of self-mentioning to all other expressions of personal points of view that writers can use for expressing the self. Most of these studies show that identity is a visible feature of voice, and as Hyland confirms by taking the reader angle, identity has to do with the visibility and impression of the author in a text. Hyland adds that author identity is “the writer’s rhetorically expressed attitude to the propositions in a text” (Hyland, 2012, p.134).

2.3 Features of Writer Identity in L2 Writing

In Earlier studies, the features of writer identity were seen on a very minimal level. As for Hyland (2001), the writer identity concept was mainly for the first-person pronouns and self-citations. Hyland’s findings in this study proved that self-mentioning had a wide range of styles between different fields such as humanities and social sciences (Hyland, 2001). Stapleton argues that the use of the first person is perhaps the most discussed discursive feature associated with the

notion of voice. Also, Stapleton (2002) believes that in both qualitative and quantitative studies, the first person is the key element in establishing individual identity.

Later, in a more recent study, Hyland identified two main categories that play a vital role in building up the authorial self “writer identity.” These are ‘stance’ and ‘engagement,’ as shown in Table 1.1, extracted from Hyland’s 2005 study. By stance, Hyland means the way a writer delivers a message or a judgement through his/her writing. Engagement in sequence means the way a writer employs his style to engage readers in participative reading. Based on these definitions, Hyland argues that with the use of some metadiscourse tools from these two categories in L2 writing, a writer would be able to convey authorial identity and engage readers. What the writer needs is a set of interactional resources such as boosters or explicit self-mentioning (Hyland & Paltridge, 2011). Thus, the concept of writer identity does not lie completely in the text, but it exists in the interaction between writers and readers that is naturally negotiated by the text. Park (2013) adds to the notion that identity does not lie completely in the text with his argument that an autobiographical self can link identity with a writer’s perception of their history and the realization that the identity they carry to writing is, in itself, socially constructed and constantly changing as a result of their growing life history (Park, 2013).

Hyland (2018) proposes a highly classified taxonomy that can be used with different genres for creating and analyzing the text features of identity. This leads to the fact that writers embed themselves into their writing to pursue a good connection between their writing and their readers, and hence establish their own authorial identity. In addition, writer identity is responsible for creating a detailed image of the writer in the mind of the reader and has a powerful function in academic writing that eventually affects the author’s style of writing and consequently the overall quality of writing.

Table 2.1

A Model of Metadiscourse in Academic Texts (adapted from Hyland 2005)

Category	Function	Example
Interactive resources		
Help to guide the reader through the text		
Transitions	Express relations between main clauses	In addition, but, thus, and finally, to conclude, my purpose is
Frame markers	Refer to discourse acts, sequences or stages	
Endophoric markers	Refer to information in other parts of the text	Noted above, see Fig, in section 2
Evidentials	Refer to information from other texts	According to X, Z states
Code glosses	Elaborate propositional meanings	Namely, e.g., such as, in other words
Interactional resources		
Involve the reader in the text		
Hedges	Withhold commitment and open dialogue	Might, perhaps, possible, about in fact, definitely, it is clear that
Boosters	Emphasize certainty and close dialogue	
Attitude markers	Express writer's attitude to proposition	Unfortunately, I agree, surprisingly
Engagement markers	Explicitly build relationship with reader	Consider, note, you can see that
Self-mentions	Explicit reference to author (s)	I, we, my, me, our

Table 2.2

Engagement Features Involving the Reader in Interaction with the Text

Reader pronouns	Explicit reference to reader to engage reader by weaving potential point of view into discourse	You, your, "we"
Personal asides	Writers address readers directly by offering a comment – an intervention to connect	Using parentheses - -; (often, it is true...); (this, by the way is ...)
Appeals to shared knowledge	Notion of sharedness is invoked to shape the role of the reader	Of course, obviously, naturally,
Directives	Instruct the reader to perform an action or see things in a way determined by writer: textual acts physical acts cognitive acts	Consider, note, imagine + modals of obligation: must, should, ought, it is important to understand see, look, consult stir the mixture consider, think
Questions:	Inviting engagement, encouraging reader to become a participant to the debate with the writer	Often rhetorical questions: Why does the chemical reaction take place? To understand this, we...

2.4 The Importance of the Reader in the Construction of Identity

When Hyland divided text resources used by the writer into interactive and interactional sections with a branch for engagement markers to build his metadiscourse taxonomy, he contributed greatly to issues more closely related to the concept of identity in L2 writing (Hyland, 2005). Moreover, the dialogic nature that Hyland showed in this model had not been taken into account previously by many researchers, and such interaction can be built by both writers and readers to construct the writer identity. This ‘reader-based approach’ was supported by Matsuda and Tardy as well, who focused on the vital role of the reader in building such an identity. Matsuda and Tardy (2007) authorized the reader with the recognition of all identity or voice elements in their analyses of peer and written reviews and interviews (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007). It is highly significant to mention that in Matsuda’s (2001) definition, voice was not seen as a group of specific text features but was the reader’s feeling originating from the particular mixture of the text features chosen by the writer.

In Matsuda and Tardy’s study (2007) the readers have indicated the writer’s depth of knowledge, theoretical frames, rhetorical moves, and the positions of other researchers in the same field as textual elements that are far from the word or sentence level, but closely connected to the content of the text. For Matsuda, ‘writer identity’ can be defined as a group of particular textual features, but it is the reader’s idea that comes from a specific mixture of ways in which both discursive (e.g. sentence structures, organization, word choice, argumentative strategies) and non-discursive (e.g. presentational) tools are used by the writer. He has also highlighted identity as an effect of choices made by writers (Matsuda, 2001, p. 40).

Other studies that have implicitly investigated the reader-based approach include Ivanič and Camps (2001) and Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003). The verb ‘sound’ in Ivanič and Camps’s

article titled '*I Am how I Sound*' pointed to a reader who heard the 'sound' of the writer. Similarly, the reader was mentioned in the second study, although researchers were not investigating the reader's role in constructing writer identity. In their analyses of the samples using the Voice Intensity Rating Scale, the reader as an item has been mentioned, affirming the power a reader has in building up a writer identity in L2 writing (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003).

2.5 The Relationship between Identity and Gender

This researcher is interested in investigating any gender effects on identity representation and this L2 writer identity relationship (if any) with overall L2 writing quality. The research for any differences of gender in L2 writing can be explored through lexical choices, planning, organization, or even through the way of expressing identity, as is the case in this study. As a primary example in gender studies that have been conducted so far, a study by Johnson (1992) investigated how L2 women writers adapted personalized mechanisms in their responses due to the gender of their addressee in writing peer-reviews (Johnson, 1992). The findings of this study showed that women used more positive evaluations and presentation for the self to female than to male addressees when using L2. In another study conducted by Pajares and Valiante (2001) that investigated gender differences of middle school students in terms of writing motivation, girls proved to have a stronger writing efficacy, self-concept, and even a higher value of writing than boys (Pajares & Valiante, 2001).

The previously mentioned study (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007) was small in scale, but deep in its analysis of how two readers have created an image of author identity through a process of blind peer review. In Matsuda and Tardy's (2007) study, gender was not investigated, but it was a prominent factor in the collected data analysis; i.e. the second reviewer in this study guessed a writer's gender (male writer) because the writing sample neglected all issues of gender for the

topic under discussion, which was highly related to race in general, and gender in particular. In this paper, the researchers called for further investigation for more variables related to identity that would affect research in L2 writing, such as sex/gender and native language background.

As a response to such a call, Zhao investigated how gender, age and cultural background (extra-textual features) may influence the building of identity in L2 writing with no investigation to the overall L2 writing quality. Zhao's study can be considered a response to Matsuda and Tardy's call to examine other textual elements that might eventually affect the construction of writer identity or writer voice, as he mentioned. Later in Zhao's study, the findings showed that such a gender variable had very little impact on L2 writers in establishing their own author identities; however, the relation between identity features, gender, and overall L2 quality was not a focus in Zhao's (2019), as is the case in this study.

In Ivanič and Camps's analysis of some writing samples that were collected for their study to prove that writing always delivers a self-representation to the reader they analyzed six graduate Mexican students' L2 samples to investigate the nature of self-representation. Such analysis yielded three types of positioning: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. In their fourth example, of Evodia's dissertation on an *Med in Adult Education and Literacy for Rural Social and Community Development*, the researchers concluded that when writers choose one of the three options, he/she or they, they are positioning the self with one of these three basic social categories. This study confirmed that L2 writers eventually come to one of these categories by using particular linguistic options, and thus such selection could be recognized by engaged readers (Ivanič & Camps, 2001).

2.6 Studies of Identity and Overall L2 Writing Quality

While some researchers focused on investigating which linguistic features enhance constructing the writer's identity in L2 writing to add a concrete meaning to the concept of identity, others were also interested in investigating the identity's impact on overall L2 writing quality. For example, Zhao and Llosa showed a significant relationship between identity and writing quality in their research (Zhao & Llosa, 2008). In the same vein, Matsuda added that identity is one of the features of writing skill which may contribute to the quality of L2 writing and confirmed its importance as a valuable tool for all L2 writers in different disciplines (Matsuda, 2001). In this regard, more studies are needed to clarify any relationship between the use of these linguistic features to express identity and the overall L2 writing quality.

Previously mentioned studies explored gender from different perspectives without tapping onto the overall writing quality of both male and female L2 writers' identity in undergrad students. In this connection, the former (Ivanič & Camps, 2001) study resulted in no correlation found between the overall writing quality and the writer identity, and contradicted the latter study (Zhao & Llosa, 2008) that showed a highly positive and significant relationship between identity and writing quality. In a different study, conducted by Matsuda and Tardy (2007), the researchers investigated writer identity in academic writing and examined how such an identity was constructed in that setting. The results showed that identity plays a significant role in academic writing and suggested an urgent need for further research into the issue of identity construction from the perspectives of both writers and readers (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007). Studies such as Ivanič, (1998) and Pajares and Valiante (2001) investigated gender differences without examining the overall academic writing quality, while other scholars tested the identity of the writer without exploring any gender effects, i.e. Matsuda (2001). It is worth mentioning that there are studies in

which there was a focus on both writer identity and overall quality of writing, but without referencing any possible gender differences in constructing L2 writing identity: Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) and Zhao and Llosa (2008).

2.7 Conclusion

Although many studies have investigated the linguistic features of writer identity in L2 writing, the research that has been done in clear relation to both gender and overall quality of writing remains limited. To fill this literature gap, this paper stands as a departure point as no studies have been conducted in the same context as this one: Egyptian L2 undergrads at a public university, investigating the relation between all variables.

With a closer look at the literature, this study meets Zhao's call to investigate other extra-textual features such as age, exposure to L2 writing, and gender in his study (2019) to examine their effects on writing practices in general or overall writing quality in particular. Although studies have investigated the role of identity in academic writing by using either a qualitative or quantitative method as in Ivanič and Camps (2001) or Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) and Zhao and Llosa (2008) respectively, examining gender differences in L2 constructed identities is still insufficiently explored. This study follows a mixed-method approach to find an answer to this question. As Zhao has noted (2019), more work is still required from future studies to completely understand the key tenets of writer identity in relation to other variables not tested in this study, such as age or exposure to L2 writing.

This aspect of the research suggested that the first question, "How do undergrads construct their identities in L2 writing?" that this study seeks to answer has never been addressed previously because building an authorial/writer identity in L2 writing is not an easy task, due to different

social backgrounds and academic factors, as writers carry their own personal experiences through the text. In order to address the question previously outlined, the researcher suggests to L2 researchers and practitioners that identity could be both learnable and teachable. The question is how research could better inform L2 writing instruction so writing teachers may help their L2 learners of writing to “show their real identities,” or in other words to “voice” themselves in their L2 writing.

Previous research can only be considered a first step towards a more profound understanding of gender, one of the social constructs that has been less studied in published academic research in comparison to other forms of social interaction, as mentioned in the last section of the literature review. Thus, this paper addresses the implementations of writer identity and gender choices in L2 writing to investigate their associations with the overall writing quality of undergraduates in a language program and stands as an attempt to increase awareness of writer identity in L2 writing, which is so far lacking in the scientific literature.

This chapter has provided an overview of identity concept as the overarching theoretical framework within which this study situates itself. From this framework, L2 writing is examined, looking at the various factors that may influence overall L2 writing quality. Identity as a product of the negotiations of the writer’s different influences of gender and linguistic textual features is discussed, and Table 1.1 by Hyland is summarized as a model for identifying metadiscourse markers which can be identified as a viable tool for investigating writer identity. Other metadiscourse analyses are also discussed to provide context and background information to this study. The following chapter discusses the methodology that was used to make this study feasible.

Chapter 3– Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology employed in the current study to answer the research questions. The chapter starts by explaining the research design adopted in this study. Then, a description of the study sample and the instruments used to collect the data are provided. Following this section, a detailed explanation of the processing and analysis of data is given. The chapter concludes with a summary of the sections covered.

3.2 Research Design

The current study investigates Egyptian students' writer identities in academic writing in relation to gender and L2 writing quality. In this current study, a mixed-method approach that uses both qualitative and quantitative techniques in collecting data to answer the proposed research questions was utilized. This method has the advantage that analysis of data can be correlated for better understanding of the results. The suggested method investigated how gender possibly associated with overall L2 writing quality and examined whether a clear relationship exists between gender and projecting an authorial identity.

3.3 Participants

3.3.1 Students

The students participating in this research are undergraduates in an English program in a public university in Egypt. A group of 115 male and female students participated from sophomore and senior years. For the data collection and analysis procedures, any responses by non-Egyptians that were collected by mistake were excluded for the sake of both the reliability and validity of data. The criteria for randomly selecting students in this research project were twofold: being an Egyptian, and, at the time of responding to the proposed task, being either a sophomore or senior undergraduate. The writing task response data was analyzed to investigate writer identity in L2

writing between the two groups and to measure any relationship between gender differences on the overall L2 writing quality.

3.3.2 Professors

The two professors participating in this research have been teaching in this public university English department for over 5 years. They are full-time teaching professors and were selected for interview in this study because of their teaching experience. Based on their range of years of experience, the professors have had different perspectives about the main themes in this study of writer identity in L2 writing and gender differences in writing. In order to answer the three research questions, which explore the way in which undergrads represent their identities in L2 writing, examine if gender affects their L2 constructed identities and investigate any associations with writing quality. The researcher conducted audio recorded interviews with the professors to gain multiple perspectives on the mentioned themes; this stands as a rationale for conducting the longer, 15- to 30-minute face-to-face interviews with each professor.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Since this study involves using humans in research and analysis, the researcher submitted an AUC Institutional Review Board (IRB) application to get the approval for the audio-recorded interviews and the learners' writing task prompt for data collection purposes. The data collection process was initiated immediately after the IRB permission was granted, in the middle of the Spring 2020 semester. The purpose of this research project was explained to participating professors and students and it was also highlighted on the consent forms. Because of the large number of participants in this study, the researcher divided the data collection sessions into two, one for sophomore and the other for senior undergrads.

The data in this study was collected through a data booklet, a four-page booklet that had the Arabic consent form on its first page, the writing task on its second, and two pages for the writing response. Face-to-face interviews were used as one of the instruments in this study to link between professors' and students' responses. The data was collected from students in two different visits, one day for sophomore students and another for senior students according to their classes' schedules. Each session lasted for about one hour and a half, and extra time was given to those who needed it. Prior to carrying out the data collection process, face-to-face professors' interviews were conducted to collect some data about participants before proceeding. The researcher used different data collection methods to increase the credibility of the study.

3.4.1 Interviews

Interviewing is a good way to learn detailed information from a single individual. In this study, it was very beneficial to determine professors' opinions on the area the researcher was testing. The researcher feels comfortable talking to people. Therefore, face-to-face interviews were selected as one of the data-collecting instruments in this study. According to Hyland, researchers are recommended to interview faculty experts on their writing practices and on their reactions as readers to the students' responses in the discipline. This advice is seen in the reader-based approach this study follows (Hyland, 2001, p.224).

The researcher prepared a list of interview questions (Appendix A) to be answered by selected professors through an interview session of about fifteen to thirty minutes, administered by the researcher. Interviews investigated the professors' perspectives on the themes of the current study: writer identity, gender effects, and overall L2 writing quality. The answers for the interviews were used for exploring participant responses to the writing task, and the researcher would then modify the writing question as needed for maximum benefit. Therefore, interviews were conducted before

collecting student samples. Another reason for conducting interviews is that the researcher needed to analyze and compare what each professor had observed or noticed in students' writing, especially in terms of their identities as writers, which is why the same questions were asked to each professor.

Questions 1,2, and 3 are general questions for breaking the ice before getting into the heart of the interview. Question 4 was mainly used as an introduction to the topic and to elicit some answers about students' style of writing and any difficulties professors had faced in assessing students' responses, so that these could be avoided by the researcher. The answers for ways of motivating students to write were elicited from question 5, which guided the researcher to choose an engaging topic for the writing task. The students' probability of constructing identity on paper was focused on in question 6. Questions 7 & 9 targeted any gender differences that the professor had noticed in students' samples and any relation that could be noted between these differences and the self-representation. The last question, 10, aimed to elicit any possible relation between the three concepts of this study. The reader-based approach discussed earlier in the literature review stated a clear relation between a writer and a reader. Question 8 was sought a reaction from professors to repetitive use of identity features in students' responses.

3.4.2 The Writing task

The researcher decided on this argumentative writing task, because in an argumentative essay a writer tries to convince or persuade the reader with a specific opinion or perspective. It was also preferred because according to Jeffrey (2009), argumentative writing is common in L2 high-stakes tests and is also a common type of the academic writing that was largely identified by researchers, as mentioned in Ramanathan & Kaplan (1996).

Another reason for choosing this type of writing was Helms-Park and Stapleton's (2003) study, in which the researchers used argumentative tasks as a tool in their study and found no correlation between identity textual elements and the quality of writing. This type of writing was assumed to have motivated the writer identity feature to be used, so this researcher was able to find an answer to the first question of how students construct their identities in this type of writing through the articulation of their opinion.

Participants responded to a writing task about a controversial topic, customized to meet students' interests. Topics were elicited from the professors' interviews to achieve to the maximum benefit of this research. The researcher expected a 250-350-word essay as a valid sample response to the writing task in an hour, but time was extended as needed (Appendix B). Students were required to produce one main idea of their argument and then support it with developed sentences. These developed ideas and examples were expected to reveal the writer identity and any other gender differences as a reasonable response to the mentioned topic.

3.5 Data Analysis

The interviews were analyzed to explore the students' responses before data collection proceeded on a first level and to reinforce the quantitative analysis of students' responses on a second level. A 250- 350-word essay writing response addressed the quantitative side of this study. In spite of the fact that the writing response analysis seemed qualitative as it was analyzed using two rubrics, a holistic rubric for the overall L2 writing quality and an adjusted rubric for voice intensity writing scale, its results were quantitative in nature.

For documenting the overall writing quality scores, a spread sheet was used, and participants' frequent identity text features were coded for ease of reference, then the numbers of the high-

frequency codes in each gender were counted to help answer the first question of how students construct their identities, and also to record any existing gender differences.

The analysis part of this study was divided into two phases. The first phase included the analysis of the interview responses by the researcher. This analysis was introduced to link between professors' and students' responses, and only this phase was analyzed by the researcher. A fellow TESOL graduate student volunteered as a second rater for grading the writing task responses two times in the second phase. The first scoring process was for the overall quality of writing, while the second was devoted to grading the same responses in terms of identity features.

Two norming sessions were conducted between the researcher and the second rater to attain agreement on the two used rubrics in this study. Because of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) the norming sessions were administered through Zoom with the meeting ID: 767 306 460. Sessions were a great way to examine students' responses for data analysis because they ensured the reliability of the used analysis tools: the holistic rubric and the Adjusted Voice Rating Scale. Before conducting these sessions, raters agreed on TOEFL iBT holistic rubric, then 11 samples were selected randomly for testing the rubric to reach agreement. During norming sessions, the scores for the 11 samples were discussed, as most of them did not need to be scored again and by the end of the discussion raters reached consensus on the meaning of the used rubrics. The current study differentiates between male and female representation of L2 writing identity and investigates relationships between gender, identity features and overall L2 writing quality.

3.5.1 Interview Data

To answer the proposed research questions for this study, the researcher asked professors for all the possible ways undergrads adopted to construct their identities in L2 writing to discover what professors observe in their learners' L2 writing in terms of the main themes in this study. The

interview responses helped the researcher understand the nature of teaching style in this program: whether the professors teach their students to express their identities, and whether students know how to engage their readers or to get their readers' attention in a text. All the face-to-face interview responses assisted the researcher in personalizing the writing prompt before collecting samples to get the students' maximum engagement in the task. All the face-to-face interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed, but only the most relevant excerpts were discussed to draw conclusions from the interviews' responses. This section presents the qualitative part of the study, and no quantification was needed for these interviews.

3.5.2 The Writing Task Data

The rationale for this task is that identity feature analysis was needed for each piece of writing produced by the participants to answer the research questions. The random sample portion of the total population of 500 students and the differences between participants were the reasons behind singling out the *t*-tests that were chosen because of the comparability of the two groups, and the wide range of score variability samples (sophomore and senior students) this study includes.

The analysis for these writing samples was based on the elicited data that investigated whether the writer separated his/her own views from opposing ones, whether there was a very strong sense of individuality displayed in the response, whether the first person singular pronoun appeared, whether any reader engagement elements were negotiated, and whether any other metadiscourse elements from Hyland's model were used frequently to express this identity. This study followed Hyland's taxonomy that introduced "the writer-reader interaction," where writers establish relationships between people and ideas. As Hyland (2005) sets forth, these interactions are managed by writers in two main ways: stance and engagement (Hyland, 2005, p.178). Hyland divides the taxonomy into resources of interactive, i.e. transitions and frame markers; interactional,

i.e. hedges, boosters, and self-mentions; and engagement markers i.e., reader pronouns, directives, questions, and personal asides. The researcher adopted Hyland's framework because metadiscourse allows writers to use language to defend a side, construct identity, negotiate ideas, represent themselves and their views, and talk to their audience.

In agreement with preceding research (Matsuda, 2015; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007; Prior, 2001) showing that the perspective of writer identity threatens the development of rubrics because identity does not lie only in texts, another approach has been added to this study. Consequently, this study follows the 'reader-based approach' in which identity exists in the dialogue between writers and readers that is only negotiated by the text, and also adjusts the voice rating scale used in Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) to account for any possible interactions in students responses. The engagement marker principle was not included as one of the criteria in the voice scale used in Helms-Park Stapleton (2003) created only for that study. Voice was scaled in Stapleton's study on a self-identification basis, considering whether the writer used the first-person singular pronoun, and whether active voice instructions were preferred to passive and impersonal constructions as a way to express the writer's personal opinions. No engagement markers between writers and readers were addressed in this scale, and thus engagement markers that address any initiated dialogue from writers as a possible way to articulate their identity were included for this study.

The absence of correlation has been found in the Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) study with no testing for any gender differences, the correlation could be affected by the used rubrics that evaluated two separate structures, as Matsuda points out in a recent study (2015). In line with this, two scales were used in this study to rate the writing task. Each one was considered a tool in itself

and was targeted to score a different item. The first rating cycle aimed at grading the samples in terms of overall writing quality, and the second round was directed to score the identity features on a separate level. To analyze the participants' samples in this study and for measurement purposes of the overall L2 writing quality, the TOEFL iBT holistic rubric was considered the most practical for raters. On the other hand, for rating identity, which was more challenging for the researcher when compared to the overall quality of writing and because it includes many devices, as previously mentioned in Hyland's taxonomy for identity model, the adjusted Voice Intensity Rating Scale was used with the engagement markers criteria included. This scale has been tested and has proven its reliability in other studies, such as Helms-Park & Stapleton, (2003) and Zhao & Llosa (2008). Four categories, assertiveness, self-identification, reiteration of the central point, and authorial presence and autonomy of thought, were divided into equally-weighted scores adding up to 100 total in the existing scale. The researcher added the 'engagement markers' category to test any possible interactions between the reader and the text, including reader pronouns, personal asides, directives, and questions.

To achieve the best analysis of this research and to avoid any misreading for numbers, the final adjusted scale included five categories divided into equally-weighted scores from '1- 4' each, adding to 20 marks as a total for each sample. The first scoring process was for grading the 'quality of writing', while the second cycle for rating 'identity'. Both cycles were achieved by the researcher as a first rater and a volunteer fellow TESOL graduate student as the second rater. Raters' grades for 'quality' or for the five categories of 'identity' were calculated (the mean scores from the two raters) and then recorded in a spreadsheet for later analysis. Thus, two final grades for each sample were documented, one for the quality and the other for the identity.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research design, participants, and data collection procedures, and clarified the instruments used in conducting this research. Also, a description of face-to-face interviews and students' responses to the writing task was delineated. Hyland's model of metadiscourse was discussed with reference to other studies that have used Hyland's model in their analyses. The next chapter covers the results of the analysis for all the tools in this study, interviews, writing task responses, and any possible relationship to the overall L2 writing quality.

Chapter 4– Results

4.1 Introduction

This chapter reports both qualitative and quantitative results based on students' writing scores and interviews with professors. The results are divided into three main sections in accordance with the research questions: (1) How do undergrad students represent their identities in L2 writing? (2) How does gender affect ways of constructing identities in L2 writing? and, (3) What is the relationship between the writer identity features, gender, and the overall L2 writing quality? The results follow the research questions' ordering in relation to the interview results in which the major pertinent findings of the interview data are analyzed and highlighted, as well as the writing task results, which report the descriptive statistics part of the study received from the response analysis.

4.2 Research question 1: How do undergrad students represent their identities in L2 writing?

The first research question of this study examines how Egyptian undergraduate students represent their identity in L2 writing. To investigate Egyptian undergraduate student representations of their identity in L2 writing, the results of the writing task and professors' interview answers about their perceptions of undergrads L2 writing identity are presented in this section.

The descriptive statistics results are presented in Table 4.1 below that includes data about the means, standard deviations, and the minimum and maximum scores undergraduate students received in each of the five identity features that were analyzed. Each feature was assigned a score on a scale from 1-4. These scores were assigned by two raters as described in Chapter 3.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics of Identity Features

	Assertiveness	Self- Identification	Central Point	Authorial Presence	Engagement Markers	Total Identity
Mean	2.90	2.97	2.54	2.83	2.45	13.69
St. Dev.	0.70	1.03	0.62	0.69	0.69	2.06
MIN.	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.5	1.0	8.5
MAX.	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	18.0

The means of text features of identity, i.e., assertiveness, self-identification, central point, authorial presence, and engagement markers, were respectively, 2.90 (SD= 0.70), 2.97 (SD= 1.03), 2.54 (SD= 0.62), 2.83 (SD= 0.69), and 2.45 (SD= 0.69) out of a maximum of 4, which indicates that students used different identity features to self-identify and express themselves. Surprisingly, the same feature of ‘self-identification’ that received the highest mean also holds the largest standard deviation (SD= 1.03). This means that this feature of identity witnessed more variation between students in total. This feature is followed by assertiveness ($M=2.90$) and authorial presence ($M=2.83$). In the following section, the qualitative part, interview responses, helps answer the question of how undergrads negotiate identities in written texts.

The qualitative data collected in these interviews focuses on professors’ views on self-expression in essays, ways of engaging students into writing, and opinions about undergrads representing the self on paper. It is important to note that these interviews were analyzed to explore

the professors' views about the concepts of this study before data collection proceeded on a first level and to reinforce the quantitative analysis of students' responses on a second level.

The interviewees were two male professors who taught in the same English program as the participating students, and some of their quotes are discussed and italicized in this section. Both had the teaching experience that entitled them to answer the interview questions.

As an introduction to the interview, the researcher asked the two professors separately about their own views of students' self-expression in L2 writing as it is one of the purposes of this study. In light of students' self-representation in L2 writing, professors' comments refer to two facts; first, even when students have the chance to write on their own, they have fears of being mistaken, which widens the scope of the question to whether they fear expressing the self on paper or writing in L2 in general. Second, those students had not adequately practiced writing in their L2 to effectively negotiate identities on paper. Thus, a question about the difficulties student may confront in L2 writing is needed. When the researcher asked a question about difficulties students encountered; the first professor reported, *'the basic challenge is the students' ability to express themselves'*; while the second professor confirmed, *'they do not have enough ideas to write about... they can't express themselves ... they have to depend on set sentences or formulas.'* This highlights two essential problems: the students' lack of vocabulary and ideas, and the fact that memorized clichés could leave L2 writers stuck and unable to represent their own views, or in other words, their own identity.

Next, to discover topics that may be most engaging for students and which may provide the most benefit for the study, the researcher inquired about professors' methods of engaging their students and motivating them to write. The professors suggested topics related to '*students' personal lives and experiences*,' leading to the choice of the writing topic, "the best way of learning about life" – with the two options of defending either listening to family and friends or learning from personal experience.

Interview data revealed interesting findings referring to the ways of expressing identity in L2 writing. The two professors responded conflictingly to a question about ways undergrads adopt to express their identities. As an illustration, the first professor described students' responses as, '*everything they know about a certain issue could be just written on haphazardly*.' This refers to the fact that students just write what they know, with no attempt at all to negotiate identities on paper from their side. This writing style is opposed to his expectation that '*students to organize their ideas to take care of organization, structure, building the argument from the early beginning*.' The opposite is true from the second perspective. The second professor confirmed that students '*tend to be decisive in expressing their opinions in a sense that their personal opinions take the form of factual expressions rather than opinions and it is usual characterized by moral judgments*.' This professor sees assertiveness and authorial identities as common features in student writing to showcase their strong individuality. As Foucault (197, p.124) argues in dealing with the "author" as a 'function of discourse,' we should think of other features that support this function, as it is not always consonant. Consequently, the researcher followed other features that may affect this sense of individuality.

From the perspective of the ‘reader-based’ approach, this study follows initiating dialogues with readers of the text, which may be a way to negotiate different identities, as they could also be viewed from the reader’s point of view. It is important for a reader to recognize what stances or positions a writer takes up in the text. Another interview question aimed at examining the presence of any potential reaction from professors toward repeated identity features in students’ responses. The question yielded different answers, as writer’s self-representation was interpreted differently by the two professors. The L2 writer identity concept was found in the first-person pronoun use for the first interviewee, and in the repeated expression of ideas in an attempt to assert an opinion for the second. Regarding the use of ‘I,’ the first professor added, *‘sometimes I alert students to the mistaken use of the first-person pronoun, but I tend to be indirect ... it would be better than just saying do not use ‘I’ or this is wrong, most of the time I prefer being indirect.’* The second professor commented, *‘I sympathize with them because the lack of the vocabulary they haven’t practiced enough ... they don’t belong to a writing culture it is an oral culture that’s why their self-representation tends to be a bit conversational or just repeating the same ideas attempting to assert or underline the fact that they have an opinion of their own.’* Both answers refer to the fact that the lack of vocabulary and practice, and the repeated use of the first-person pronoun result in a students’ not expressing the self on paper.

In conclusion, professors’ answers confirmed that when students had the chance to write on their own, they feared expressing the self; and that they had not practiced writing in their L2 enough to freely negotiate identities on paper, findings which underlie this study. However, a close look at the results of Table 4.1 seemed to reveal that students did not fear expressing themselves at all, as suggested by professors. The ‘self-identification’ identity feature showed the highest mean value of ($M= 2.97$), which also contradicted the first professor’s answer that students made ‘no

attempt at all to negotiate identities on paper from their side. Interestingly, the second-highest mean was assigned to ‘assertiveness,’ indicating few hedges and more intensifiers in the written texts; this agreed with the second professor’s reply that students ‘*tend to be decisive in expressing their opinions in a sense that their personal opinions take the form of factual expressions rather than opinions*’. The same quote referred to the sense of individuality or ‘authorial presence’ in this study, which received the third-highest mean among the five categories at ($M= 2.83$) to indicate undergrads’ sense of individuality in their essays.

Most of the table results agreed with the second professors’ perceptions of the concepts of this study in the targeted sample. Also, it is important to focus on the ability of undergrad students in this sample to negotiate L2 identities on paper as shown from the relatively high mean of the total identity score of 13.69 through the identity features in general and through ‘self-identification’, ‘assertiveness’ and ‘authorial presence’ in particular. The results in the following part answers the second research question.

4.3 Research question 2: How does gender affect ways of constructing identities in L2 writing?

The second research question of this study investigates the effect of gender on identity construction among Egyptian undergraduate students. Accordingly, two questions in the professors’ interviews were dedicated to answering this question. These two questions of the interview investigated how gender (female/male in this study) affected ways undergrads approached building identity in their writing. Besides professors’ perceptions of the effect of gender on the construction of identity, the researcher used the *t*-test procedure along with the interviews to answer this question. Regarding gender addressed in this study, 20% of participants

stated their gender as male and 80% self-reported as female. Thus, the female participants outnumbered the males in this study.

The results of the *t*-tests carried-out based on scores from the writing task and the answers to the interview questions are integrated. The descriptive analysis of the data is presented in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 below. While Table 4.2 shows the means and standard deviations of male and female students' L2 writing in each of the five identity areas, Table 4.3 records the *t* and *p* values between females and males.

For the males' sample ($N= 23$) in Table 4.2, the means of both self-identification and assertiveness, which are ($M= 3.3$) and ($M= 3.1$) respectively, are higher than those of the rest of the identity features. What is surprising here is that 'central point,' 'authorial presence,' and 'engagement markers' received almost the same mean values ($M= 2.4$) ($M= 2.8$) and ($M= 2.3$), in that order. As for the females' sample, ($N= 92$) the 'self-identification' feature records the highest mean ($M= 2.9$) between the five categories of identity, but it is not as high as males' self-identification ($M= 3.3$). Also, it is noted that 'assertiveness' and 'authorial presence' in females have exactly the same mean ($M= 2.8$), while the 'central point' and 'engagement markers' means have a very slight difference in range, of ($M= 2.6$) and ($M= 2.5$), respectively. It is noted that only 'authorial presence' has an identical mean ($M= 2.8$) in the two groups of males and females.

The 'self-identification' identity feature holds the largest standard deviation in males ($SD= 0.92$) and females ($SD= 1.04$) both, meaning that this feature witnessed a wide variation in using explicit references to the self (writer) between the 23 male and 92 female undergrads in their writing. It is important to highlight the fact that the lowest standard deviation is given to the 'central

point' (SD= 0.59) between all the identity features. This low standard deviation indicates that the values tend to be close to the mean of the female data set.

Table 4.2

Means and Standard Deviations between Males and Females for the Identity Features

<i>Tests</i>	MALES (N=23)		FEMALES (N=92)	
	M	S. D	M	S.D
Assertiveness	3.1	0.67	2.8	0.70
Self-Identification	3.3	0.92	2.9	1.04
Central Point	2.4	0.70	2.6	0.59
Authorial Presence	2.8	0.68	2.8	0.69
Engagement Markers	2.3	0.68	2.5	0.69
Total Writer Identity test	13.9	1.56	13.6	2.16

It is also important to refer to the mean value of males ($N=23$) and females ($N=92$) in the 'total writer identity' test: from ($M=13.9$) to ($M=13.6$) respectively, which indicates a high agreement between the two groups. In another reference to the 'total identity,' the high standard deviation rates of females ($SD= 2.16$) and males ($SD= 1.56$) shows a large variation in negotiating identities between male and female undergrad students in total. Table 4.3 below shows male and female students' values of T, P and degrees of freedom for the five identity features.

Table 4.3

T-test results for the effect of Gender on Identity Features

<i>Males and Females (N=115)</i>	DF	T-Value	P-Value
Assertiveness	113	1.27	0.208
Self-Identification	113	1.62	0.108
Central Point	113	1.29	0.201

Authorial Presence	113	0.17	0.866
Engagement Markers	113	0.80	0.423
Total Identity	113	0.63	0.528

These t-test results show no significant difference between male and female undergrad students in constructing their L2 writing identities, across the different identity features and the overall identity score.

In Table 4.2, the mean gap between ‘assertiveness’ and ‘self-identification’ text features of identity is quite small as these features received the greatest attention of students and recorded the highest means of ($M=3.1$) and ($M=3.3$) respectively in the male sample. Surprisingly, the mean of the first runner-up, which is ‘authorial presence’ in males, coincides with females at the same exact value of ($M=2.8$). It is obvious that ‘self-identification’ was of central importance with females as it was with males to get the highest mean value of ($M=2.9$). On the opposite level, the mean value of ‘engagement markers’ in males and females ($M=2.3$) and ($M=2.5$) respectively occupied the lowest degrees of student attention.

The interview data yielded relatively different results from those of the t-test. In the following quote, the first interviewee reflected that females are much better in expressing their identities, as he says, ‘*decidedly deplorably because I am a man the thing is girls are much better than boys in the way they express themselves and this is quite known among us as teachers in the department of English ... their writing portion becomes brilliant and interesting.*’ Similarly, the other professor answered that ‘*females are more expressive and more imaginative ... males tend to be a bit short.*’ The two answers agree on the point that females are expressive and have a high sense of L2 writing identity in their essays; the first interviewee confirmed it as being a fact among professors in this department.

Another question investigated whether gender affected ways of constructing identities in L2 writing and looked for any possible relation between gender and identity features. The response revealed no relation between males and females to the features of identity in the first interview, as supported by the professor's disbelief at any difference between male and female students' use of the first-person pronoun: *'I am not sure they are conscious of themselves as boys or as girls when preferring to use the first-person pronoun ...I didn't notice any difference between boys and girls in that'*. On the contrary, the second interviewee suggested that female writers express themselves better when he said, *'the females tend to be more expressive of themselves they have opinions based on their personal experiences or experience of their families, the males ... adopt attitudes that don't belong to themselves, somehow as if they are borrowed'*.

In conclusion, the results of the last two tables, Tables 4.2 and 4.3, answer the second research question to show that both male and female undergrads construct their writer identities the same way. An agreement with this result of no difference was seen in the first interviewee's response; however, this was different from the second professor's opinion that suggested *'females tend to be more expressive.'* In essence, male and female writers chose relatively the same identity text features to construct their L2 writing identities. The results in the following part answer the third research question.

4.4 Research question 3: What is the relationship between the identity features, gender, and the overall L2 writing quality?

This question will be organized based on the analysis done to look into the relationship between identity features and both overall writing quality and gender.

4.4.1 The Relationship between L2 Writing Quality and Identity Features

The correlation coefficient between the overall L2 writing quality, the total of identity, and its five categories in the total sample is reported in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Correlations between Overall Writing Quality and Identity Features (N=115)

Tests	ID1	ID2	ID3	ID4	ID5	Total Identity
Overall L2 Quality	.086	.072	.409(**)	.415(**)	.176	.386(**)
	P = .360	P =.446	P = .000	P = .000	P = .060	P = .000

As shown in the above table, the total sample of participants ($N=115$) corresponded to a significant positive correlation coefficient ($r = .386$) between overall L2 writing quality test and the total identity test at 0.01 level of significance. Correspondingly, overall L2 writing quality correlated with two features of identity; ‘central point’ and ‘authorial presence’ also at 0.01 level of significance ($r = .409$, $r = .415$ respectively). However, the results showed no significant relationship between overall writing quality and ‘engagement markers’ ($p = .06$). The same insufficient results were obtained for ‘self-identification’ ($p = .45$). In general, the total sample results indicate that ‘central point,’ ‘authorial presence,’ the ‘total identity score’ and the overall L2 writing quality are closely related.

4.4.2 The Relationship between L2 Writing Quality, Identity features, and Gender

In this section more correlation tests were performed to investigate which identity features for the male or female portions of samples shared a higher significant correlation with L2 writing quality. Table 4.5 shows the correlation ratings for males, and Table 4.6 for females.

Table 4.5

Correlations between Overall Writing Quality and Identity Features (Male) (N=23)

Tests	ID1	ID2	ID3	ID4	ID5	Total Identity
Overall L2 Quality	-.285	-.457(*)	.348	.053	.543(**)	.022
	P =.187	P =.028	P =.104	P =.811	P =.007	.922

As seen in the table above, the total sample of male participants ($N=23$) correlated a negative significant correlation coefficient ($r = -.457$) between the overall L2 writing quality test and the test of the second feature of identity, ‘self-identification,’ at a 0.05 level of significance. Conversely, it corresponded a high positive significant correlation coefficient ($r = .543$) with ‘engagement markers’ at a 0.01 level of significance. In conclusion, the total male sample results demonstrate that ‘self-identification’ and overall L2 writing quality are not related in these texts. However, the sample results read a high positive significant correlation between the fifth feature of identity, ‘engagement markers,’ and the overall L2 writing quality.

Table 4.6

Correlations between Overall Writing Quality and Identity (Female) (N=92)

Tests	ID1	ID2	ID3	ID4	ID5	Total Identity
Overall L2 Quality	.123	.119	.482(**)	.491(**)	.138	.431(**)
	P =.244	P =.257	P =.000	P =.000	P =.189	P =.000

The total sample of females ($N=92$), as reported in the above table, corresponded a high positive significant correlation coefficient ($r = .431$) between the writing quality and the 'total identity' test at a 0.01 level of significance. Equally important, the overall L2 writing quality also correlated with the third feature of identity, which is 'central point,' at ($r = .482$) and 'authorial presence,' at ($r = .491$) at a 0.01 level of significance. Overall, the female sample results refer to a positive correlation between 'central point,' 'authorial presence,' the 'total identity' score, and the overall L2 writing quality. With regard to the identity and quality ratings, the percentage of agreement between raters ranged from 0.5544 to 0.8855 respectively, indicating a satisfactory level of inter-rater reliability.

The interview data results showed different answers for this question that looked into associations between the three variables of this study, the professors seemed unsure when asked their opinion about whether there was a clear relationship. The answers for interviewees reflected, *'No, I don't think so,'* for the first and *'my judgment wouldn't be fair but all in all the balance steps for in favor of females'* for the second. The analyses of the results of the three tables indicated that the intensity of identity representation features varied between gender, where male students showed a greater level of 'engagement markers' in their writing; female students revealed high rates in 'authorial presence' and 'central point' on the sub-category level, and 'the total identity score' in general.

Overall, the results of Tables 4.4, 4.5 & 4.6 showed high positive significant values between the variables in question. The identity features 'central point' and 'authorial presence' were highly positively recorded in a clear relation between the 'total identity score' and 'the overall writing

quality'. To clarify, this high correlation means that students' use of these identity features enhances their writing quality remarkably. In addition to these two features, in Table 4.5, 'engagement markers' feature was documented as the highest between the five of identity categories in relation to 'writing quality'. Although these three correlation tests showed positive associations between identity and the quality of L2 writing between the two groups, they contradict the two professors' answers provided in the interview. Last, the results confirm that intensity of identity features raises the overall L2 writing quality for both males and females.

The next chapter will discuss the results of this chapter and will also explain how these results may contribute to the research of L2 writer identity in the area of teaching and learning L2 writing. The implications, limitations and recommendation for further research will be included in the following chapter.

Chapter 5– Discussion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the study presented in Chapter 4 are summarized and then discussed with reference to past research studies in the same area of writer identities in L2 writing, according to the three research questions. The chapter also introduces the implications, and the limitations of the study, and ends with a section of recommendation for further research.

5.2 Discussion of Results

The current study presented three research questions; the first question explored how students in an undergraduate language program represent their identities in L2 writing. The second research question aimed to test if gender as a social variable affects ways of constructing L2 authorial identities on paper. The third research question investigated the relationship correlations between identity, gender, and writing quality. To answer the proposed questions of the study, the researcher performed interviews with professors from the program and conducted a combination of Spearman correlation coefficient and *t*-tests as well. The following is a discussion of the results of this research.

5.2.1 Research question 1: How do undergrad students represent their identities in L2 writing?

Interviews are the qualitative part in this study and focused on professors' views on learners' self-expressions in essays and ways of engaging students into writing. Based on the interview results, the challenges students face in L2 writing were memorized clichés, and the lack of vocabulary and ideas, and thus their inability to express their own identities on paper. Another question asked for topics of interest to students to help the researcher attain the maximum learner output in the writing prompt of this study. All the results referred to topics such as personal experience as being highly engaging for them. Results of questions 6 & 8 referred to a

contradiction between interviewees; as for question 6, the first professor explained that no attempt to approach identities on paper was seen from the students' side. However, the second professor confirmed the strong sense of individuality students have in their writing. As for question 8, which was asked from a 'reader-based' perspective, the results showed different interpretations of writer identity repetition between interviewees. The writer identity was in the first-person use, and the repetition of ideas in a text as an attempt to show the authorial self for the first and second professors, respectively.

On the limited data available, the results revealed that Egyptian undergrad students in this study adopted 'self-identification', 'assertiveness', and 'authorial presence' in projecting authorial representation in L2 writing rather than 'central point' and 'engagement markers'. The effect brought about by the high means shown in the sample for these three identity features caused the total identity score to reach 13.69 at the end, and to positively assure these students' practice of self-representation in L2 writing.

To sum up, the results in Table 4.1 accorded with the second professor's answers to confirm undergrads' self-representation in the targeted sample. Such an agreement between the descriptive statistics and the second professor lie in the undergrad students' ability to negotiate L2 identities on paper. This fact was proved in the rather strong mean for the 'total identity score,' which received (M= 13.69) out of 20 on the identity scale.

Opposite to earlier studies like Hyland (2001), this self-representation (writer identity) was seen on a very minimal level, in the first-person pronouns and self-citations only. According to this preliminary study, the self-representation was seen on a wider level in other words, through the three different features of identity as stated earlier. The results of this study contradicted the

results of Stapleton (2002), that showed the first-person pronoun ‘self-identification’ as the only discursive feature that was coupled with the notion of identity (voice), however; in this study, two more identity features ‘assertiveness’ and ‘authorial presence’ are coupled with the identity.

5.2.2 Research question 2: How does gender affect ways of constructing identities in L2 writing?

The results of the interviews’ analysis displayed a negative relation between identity features and gender from the perspective of the first interviewee, while demonstrating a high positive one in favor of female students from the other specialist’s on the ninth question. Results of question 7 yielded that female writers are more expressive, especially in terms of authorial presence in the two responses. As for question 8, the results showed different interpretations from a ‘reader-based approach’ to the writer identity repetition between interviewees. L2 writer identity was in the use of the first-person pronoun for the first professor, and in the repetition of ideas in a text for the second.

The results of the t-test looking into the effect of gender on identity features showed that both male and female undergrads construct their writer identities similarly. These quantitative results matched the qualitative ones in an agreement with result of no difference that was seen in the first interviewee’s comment, *‘I am not sure they are conscious of themselves as boys or as girls ... I didn’t notice any difference between boys and girls in that.’* In essence, female and male writers chose relatively the same identity text features to construct their identities on paper. The ‘self-identification’ was the focus of the two groups and received the highest mean value, but the first runner-up mean that was seen was ‘assertiveness’ for males, but ‘authorial presence’ for females, and showed that females and males employed features of identity differently.

Based on a survey of previous studies, gender is one of the social constructs that has been less studied in published academic research to investigate associations to writers' identities in L2 writing. This study was guided by Tardy's (2012) suggestion for conducting more research to find impacts of L2 writer identity on authorial presence and considering other social variables as gender along with writing quality. The *t*-tests results for identity and gender differences displayed great agreement with Zhao's (2019) findings. In Zhao's study, correlational and regression analysis results showed that gender had a very limited impact on L2 writers' textual identity construction, as was also shown in the current study. However, these results contradicted the professor's views that females are better at projecting their identities on paper. As for the identity and gender test, Tables 2 and 3 demonstrated that no significant difference existed in the five identity features or the total writer identity test between the samples of females and males.

Another agreement was found with the qualitative study by Tse and Hyland (2008) that examined gender-preferential language use to prove that there was no one-to-one relation between gender and language (Tse & Hyland, 2008). From the results revealed in this study, the interview comments and the *t*-tests analysis, the ways undergrad students adopted in projecting authorial identities was very little affected by their gender, but they employed features of identity in contrarily.

5.2.3 Research question 3: What is the relationship between the identity features, gender, and the overall L2 writing quality?

On the quantitative part of this study aimed to find correlations between identity features, gender, and the quality of the produced L2. From the qualitative perspective side, the results of question 10, which searched for any relationships between the variables, showed no relationship.

5.2.3.1 The Relationship between L2 Writing Quality and Identity features

In light of testing relations between identity features and the L2 writing quality, Helms-Park and Stapleton's (2003) study suggested that there may not be a connection between the linguistic and rhetorical devices regularly associated with voice and the quality of writing, and that such a relation is questionable. Additionally, to add a concrete meaning to the concept of identity, using correlation coefficient tests, this study investigated the identity features' association to the overall L2 writing quality. Such investigation yielded detailed results about which identity feature would eventually enhance the overall quality of learner writing.

The results of the current study showed a partial compatibility with Zhao and Llosa (2008) in confirming a high positive correlation between the intensity of voice 'features of identity' and the quality of the writing sample. The results of Zhao and Llosa's study also yielded that only reiteration of 'central point' (ID3 as referenced to in this study) was a significant predictor of writing quality in the regression analyses. In other words, of the four voice components (according to Stapleton's scale), it was the reiteration of 'central point' that mainly derived the observed significant relationship between overall voice intensity and writing quality (Zhao & Llosa, 2008).

The results of this study were inconsistent with the results of Zare-ee et al.'s (2012) study which proved that the intensity of the representation of voice only in the component of 'assertiveness' was positively related to the quality of writing; this study indicated a positive correlation between the two features 'central point' and 'authorial presence,' and with the 'total' of the identity as well. Also, an observable finding was noticed in the first correlation test in the total sample, the 'authorial presence' highly correlated at ($r = .415$), which was greater to some extent than 'central point' and the 'total' identity rates at .409 and .386 respectively.

5.2.3.2 The Association between L2 Writing Quality, Identity features, and Gender

To the best of this researcher's knowledge, past studies explored gender from different perspectives with no reference to overall writing quality of both female and male learners. It is worth mentioning that there were few studies, such as (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003; Zhao & Llosa, 2008), in which writer identity was addressed in conjunction with examining the overall quality of writing while at the same time not overlooking any gender differences in L2 writing.

Furthermore, about the studies mentioned in the last paragraph, writer identity in L2 writing remains a controversial subject, with many researchers reporting contradictory results. Also, as far as this researcher knows, no correlations between gender, writing quality, and identity (sub-categories) features have been proven as in this study. The results of the current study showed significant correlations between identity features (on the adjusted scale), gender, and the overall L2 writing quality. The following section discusses the details beyond the yielded results of these two correlations between male and female sets separately.

The results of this 'male' sample test reflected the recommendation of Matsuda and Tardy (2007) in which the significant role of identity in academic writing was presented and an urgent need for further research into the issue of identity construction from the perspectives of both writers and readers was suggested (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007). In the same line of the 'engagement markers' category that was drawn from the 'reader-based' approach by Matsuda and Tardy, Hyland (2008) agreed and confirmed that writer stance and reader engagement are essentially 'two sides of the same coin' (Hyland, 2008).

The results of the second test brought a positive association in which males positively correlated with the overall L2 writing quality. The males' writing quality was highly correlated with the 'engagement markers' 'ID5' at a rate of ($r = .543$). It must be mentioned that this rate was

the highest amongst all the features of identity in this sample and its counterpart, as well as the total. As far as this researcher knows, this positive correlation of ‘engagement markers’ that was added for the voice intensity scale for the first time in this study has not yielded such a high positive association in writing quality in any of the earlier studies. Thus, this correlation test result is likely to be considered a great contribution to this area of L2 writer identity/voice research.

If the engagement markers affected the quality in the correlation test, subsequently we could improve the overall L2 writing quality in the same way. It could be implied that the high engagement markers observed in the male samples, from a ‘reader-based approach’ perspective suggested by Matsuda, can enhance L2 writing quality (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007).

The results of the female sample foreshadowed three positive correlations between ‘central point’, ‘authorial presence’, the ‘total identity’ score in the overall L2 writing quality in Table 4.6. Although the two high ratings both ‘authorial presence’ and ‘central point’ received at .415 and .409 respectively; the association rating of ‘engagement markers’ was recorded the highest of the five categories of identity.

Highlighting these results, the overall L2 writing quality could be achieved positively from categories of identity in general, and from ‘central point’, ‘authorial presence’ and ‘engagement markers’ in particular. With these clearly identified results along with the qualitative part that supported the quantitative analysis; L2 writing teachers and students could be able to practice identity on paper not as a matter of only representing the self but also to produce better writing quality.

5.3 Implications of the Study

As shown in the current study, the total sample of students foreshadowed strong positive relation between identity features and the overall writing quality. Past studies have confirmed that all writing has ‘voice’ which is considered an integral aspect of self-representation to the writer. This leads to the fact that L2 learners are able to make their own choices for authoritativeness and presence through the available options to approach identities for two reasons: to engage their readers and produce better quality writing (Hyland, 2008; Ivanić and Camps, 2001; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007).

The correlation results reflected a relationship between identity features and the writing quality as an attempt to model how writers would convey this sense of identity to readers. Moreover, the ways male or female writers deploy identity features have been investigated to couple with what Hyland confirmed before, that writer stance and reader engagement are essentially ‘two sides of the same coin’ (Hyland, 2008). From Hyland’s perspective, the highest rate between the features of identity was for the ‘engagement markers’ category in the male sample that surprisingly received a higher correlation compared to the female set.

Although Stapleton (2003) refers to the fact that projecting individual voice through text devices may indeed establish the author’s “ownership” but does not improve the quality, the results reflected a high positive correlation between the writing quality and the total sample of students. Either way, Stapleton’s findings yielded that the average of L2 undergraduate writer’s effectiveness was not enhanced in particular relation to the ‘self-identification.’ Additionally, this study’s results showed a negative correlation to the same feature only in the male sample.

The observed significant associations between overall identity intensity and writing quality in the studied L2 writing samples counter the argument that voice is irrelevant to academic writing.

From this point, as proved, more ramifications could be suggested to be implemented in English language programs with L2 writing instructors and learners. For instance, directors of L2 writing programs discussing how to guide L2 learners through self-representation on paper is needed for two purposes: ‘to give learners’ voices a chance to be heard,’ and for better practices in writing.

It is also suggested that textbook designers could design writing modules tapping into how to improve L2 performative writing through teaching these discursive features of identity as well as initiating dialogues in written texts. It is important to shed light on the fact that such L2 writing instruction is considered a complex process. It is not about guiding learners to underuse hedges and to overuse intensifiers. Both ‘writer-identity’ and ‘reader-based’ themes discussed in this study should be cautiously and sensitively approached in ESL programs and L2 writing classes. For example, and as the results of this study revealed, the writing samples received great attention from the reader ‘raters’ by deploying ‘engagement markers,’ and this received a high overall writing score. Thus, this result could be employed as an initial step for writing courses to teach L2 writing students how to engage their readers, how to start a dialogue, and how to take a stance or a position on paper to show their inner self and to afford good quality of L2 writing.

Writing teachers could help L2 learners express their identity freely and engage their readers meaningfully through incorporating the appropriate linguistic devices available in their disciplines. As was mentioned in this study’s introduction, and according to Hyland, “*the arguments we make, the positions we take and the ways we try to connect and fit in with others, all contribute to the presentation of ourselves and so influence how others respond to us*” (Hyland et al., 2012, p. 135) this quote sheds light on the importance of authorial identity in L2 writing for both writers and engaged readers from a ‘stance and engagement’ perspective.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

Some limitations in the current study are likely to have affected its results. This study classifies the limitations into four categories: limitations of the sample, the adjusted rubric, building identities with readers, and the adopted analysis.

Firstly, from the perspective of the sample, only 115 undergrad students and two professors participated in the study. This medium size sample would make it difficult to generalize the findings to the target population of Egyptian undergrad students. Additionally, it would have been beneficial to conduct interviews with students, as it would have equipped the researcher with more data about their own ways in constructing identities on paper. Secondly, despite using an adjusted rubric in this study, writing instructors could better help students to write with a strong authorial self and use these markers appropriately in their writing; yet it cannot be generalized as it must be tested by other researchers as well. Thirdly, this researcher would argue that building an identity with the reader is in and of itself an indicator of having mastered academic writing skills. However, in reference to the limitation of this study, students may confuse the issue and try to approach identities at the cost of reliable and coherent argumentation. In addition to the previous limitations stated, the study included qualitative and quantitative analysis, however, the quantitative analysis had only multiple *t*-tests and three Correlation tests. This part of analysis could have benefitted from the addition of regression analyses to provide more concrete conceptualization for the writer identity in L2 writing and to give more detailed correlation between the investigated variables of the study.

5.5 Recommendation for Further Research

The present study was meant to open the way for a thorough insight into Egyptian males' and females' undergraduate L2 identity in a relation to the L2 writing quality. As a way forward, especially for researchers in the Middle East, future research may continue to explore how identity features can shape the writing practices of Arab writers in different contexts. Also, while this study focused specifically on L2 Egyptian writer identities along with gender and overall quality, room remains to further investigate how students would use such identity and engagement markers in their L1, Arabic in this case. Finally, a similar study could also be beneficial to determine specifically how Egyptian students may become academic writers through their use of metadiscoursal features of identity. With this study and its identified results, this researcher hopes L2 writing teachers and learners are able to learn and teach 'identity' that eventually contributes to a better quality L2 writing, as proved.

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<https://aucegypt.zoom.us/j/767306460>

List of Appendices

Appendix A

The interview questions

1. For how long you are teaching as a professor in this university?
2. What do you like most about teaching here?
3. Would you please describe the way you teach writing?
4. What are the challenges or difficulties that you might face when evaluating your undergrads' writing?
5. How do you engage or motivate students in writing?
6. In your opinion, how would the undergraduates "as writers" express their self-representation in writing?
7. Have you experienced any similarities or differences between females and males in their writing? If any, please explain.
8. How would you react to the repetitive use of the self-representation in undergrads' writing?
9. In your opinion, how would you describe the relation between self-representation of the writer and gender (female/male) in writing?
10. Do you think undergrads' self-representation elements and gender similarities, or differences might affect the L2 overall writing quality?

Appendix B

The writing Task

The topic is:

Some people believe that the best way of learning about life is by listening to the advice of family and friends. Other people believe that the best way of learning about life is through personal experience. Compare the advantages (good things) of these two different ways of learning about life. Which one is better? Use some examples to support your choice.

Your task:

- Write your answer on the mentioned topic as a way of expressing your side / opinion to the reader.
- The response should be between **250-500** words.
- Give reasons for your answer and include (use) any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.
- Don't forget to show your side / opinion.

Note: One paragraph or multi-paragraph essays are accepted.

Duration: One hour 'extended time could be given'

Appendix C

A. Adjusted identity Scale “Voice Intensity Rating Scale” extracted from (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003).

A tool for quantifying identity features in learners’ samples of writing.

Feature	Score	Criteria
Assertiveness	4	Displays strong commitment to assertions. Hedges are rarely or never used to soften the author’s claims. Intensifiers are usually used to strengthen the author’s claims.
	3	Displays fairly strong commitment to assertions. Hedges are seldom used to soften the author’s claims. Intensifiers are sometimes used to strengthen the author’s claims.
	2	Opinions are conveyed fairly mildly. Hedges are occasionally used to soften the author’s claims. Intensifiers are seldom used to strengthen the author’s claims.
	1	Opinions are conveyed very mildly. Hedges are usually used to soften the author’s claims. Intensifiers are rarely or never used to strengthen author’s claims.
Self-identification	4	First person singular is frequently used. Active voice constructions are preferred to passive and impersonal constructions to express the author’s personal opinions (e.g., “I believe . . .” rather than “It is believed . . .” or “X is believed to be . . .”).
	3	First person singular is occasionally used. Active voice constructions are generally preferred to passive and impersonal constructions to express the author’s personal opinions.
	2	First person singular is seldom, if ever, used. The author’s personal opinions are expressed mainly through passive and impersonal constructions.
	1	First person singular is never used. The author’s personal opinions are expressed only through passive and impersonal constructions.
Reiteration of the central point	4	The central point is restated frequently and clearly.
	3	The central point is stated more than once in a fairly clear to very clear manner.
	2	The central point is stated once in a fairly clear to very clear manner.
	1	The central point is either not stated or is not stated directly.
Authorial presence and autonomy of thought	4	The reader feels that the author is expressing his or her special views on the topic and separates these views from opposing ones. A very strong sense of individuality is displayed in the writing.
	3	The reader feels that the author is mostly expressing his or her special views on the topic. A fairly strong sense of individuality is displayed in the writing.
	2	The reader feels that the author often does not separate his or her own ideas from those of other people. A somewhat weak sense of individuality is displayed in the writing.
	1	The reader feels that the author generally does not separate his or her own ideas from those of other people. There is little or no sense of individuality displayed in the writing.

Engagement markers (Reader pronoun, personal asides, directives, questions)	4	Displays explicit reference to reader to engage reader by weaving potential point of view into discourse (you, your, we), addresses readers directly by offering a comment- an intervention to connect (often, it is true, this, by the way is), instructs the reader strongly to perform an action or see things in a way determined by writer textual acts as (see, look, consult) or cognitive acts (consider, think, note, imagine) and modals of obligation as must, should, ought, it is important to understand, invites engagement, and clearly encourages the reader to become a participant in the debate with the writer (often rhetorical or audience questions).
Engagement markers (Reader pronoun, personal asides, directives, questions)	3	Displays fairly explicit reference to reader to engage reader by weaving potential point of view into discourse (you, your, we), addresses readers fairly well by offering a comment- an intervention to connect (often, it is true, this, by the way is), instructs the reader fairly strong to perform an action or see things in a way determined by writer textual acts as (see, look, consult) or cognitive acts (consider, think, note, imagine) and modals of obligation as must, should, ought, it is important to understand, invites engagement, and encourages reader quite clearly to become a participant to the debate with the writer (often rhetorical or audience questions).
Engagement markers (Reader pronoun, personal asides, directives, questions)	2	Displays a mild reference to reader to engage reader by weaving potential point of view into discourse (you, your, we), addresses readers lightly by offering a comment- an intervention to connect (often, it is true, this, by the way is), instructs the reader slightly to perform an action or see things in a way determined by writer textual acts as (see, look, consult) or cognitive acts (consider, think, note, imagine) and modals of obligation as must, should, ought, it is important to understand, invites engagement, and encourages reader fairly mildly to become a participant to the debate with the writer (often rhetorical or audience questions).
Engagement markers (Reader pronoun, personal asides, directives, questions)	1	Displays a very light reference to reader to engage reader by weaving potential point of view into discourse (you, your, we), addresses readers very lightly by offering a comment- an intervention to connect (often, it is true, this, by the way is), instructs the reader very slightly to perform an action or see things in a way determined by writer textual acts as (see, look, consult) or cognitive acts (consider, think, note, imagine) and modals of obligation as must, should, ought, it is important to understand, invites engagement, and encourages reader very lightly to become a participant to the debate with the writer (often rhetorical or audience questions).
Total score	20	

B. The TOEFL iBT Test Independent Writing Rubric for the Argumentative Writing Task



In English with Confidence™

TOEFL iBT® Test Independent Writing Rubrics

SCORE	TASK DESCRIPTION
5	<p>An essay at this level largely accomplishes all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effectively addresses the topic and task Is well organized and well developed, using clearly appropriate explanations, exemplifications and/or details Displays unity, progression and coherence Displays consistent facility in the use of language, demonstrating syntactic variety, appropriate word choice and idiomaticity, though it may have minor lexical or grammatical errors
4	<p>An essay at this level largely accomplishes all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses the topic and task well, though some points may not be fully elaborated Is generally well organized and well developed, using appropriate and sufficient explanations, exemplifications and/or details Displays unity, progression and coherence, though it may contain occasional redundancy, digression, or unclear connections Displays facility in the use of language, demonstrating syntactic variety and range of vocabulary, though it will probably have occasional noticeable minor errors in structure, word form or use of idiomatic language that do not interfere with meaning
3	<p>An essay at this level is marked by one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addresses the topic and task using somewhat developed explanations, exemplifications and/or details Displays unity, progression and coherence, though connection of ideas may be occasionally obscured May demonstrate inconsistent facility in sentence formation and word choice that may result in lack of clarity and occasionally obscure meaning May display accurate but limited range of syntactic structures and vocabulary
2	<p>An essay at this level may reveal one or more of the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited development in response to the topic and task Inadequate organization or connection of ideas Inappropriate or insufficient exemplifications, explanations or details to support or illustrate generalizations in response to the task A noticeably inappropriate choice of words or word forms An accumulation of errors in sentence structure and/or usage
1	<p>An essay at this level is seriously flawed by one or more of the following weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serious disorganization or underdevelopment Little or no detail, or irrelevant specifics, or questionable responsiveness to the task Serious and frequent errors in sentence structure or usage
0	<p>An essay at this level merely copies words from the topic, rejects the topic, or is otherwise not connected to the topic, is written in a foreign language, consists of keystroke characters, or is blank.</p>

Appendix D Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

CASE #2019-2020-077



To: Duaa Zein
Cc: Sara Tarek
From: Atta Gebril, Chair of the IRB
Date: March 1, 2020
Re: IRB approval

This is to inform you that I reviewed your revised research proposal entitled “L2 academic writing identity in an undergraduate language program ” and determined that it required consultation with the IRB under the "expedited" category. As you are aware, the members of the IRB suggested certain revisions to the original proposal, but your new version addresses these concerns successfully. The revised proposal used appropriate procedures to minimize risks to human subjects and that adequate provision was made for confidentiality and data anonymity of participants in any published record. I believe you will also make adequate provision for obtaining informed consent of the participants.

This approval letter was issued under the assumption that you have not started data collection for your research project. Any data collected before receiving this letter could not be used since this is a violation of the IRB policy.

Please note that IRB approval does not automatically ensure approval by CAPMAS, an Egyptian government agency responsible for approving some types of off-campus research. CAPMAS issues are handled at AUC by the office of the University Counsellor, Dr. Ashraf Hatem. The IRB is not in a position to offer any opinion on CAPMAS issues, and takes no responsibility for obtaining CAPMAS approval.

This approval is valid for only one year. In case you have not finished data collection within a year, you need to apply for an extension.

Thank you and good luck.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Atta Gebril".

Dr. Atta Gebril
IRB chair, The American University in Cairo
2046 HUSS Building
T: 02-26151919
Email: agebril@aucegypt.edu



Institutional Review Board
The American University in Cairo
AUC Avenue, P.O. Box 74
New Cairo 11835, Egypt.
tel 20.2.2615.1000
fax 20.2.27957565
Email: aucirb@aucegypt.edu

Appendix E

A. Arabic Consent Form for Students

الجامعة الأمريكية بالقاهرة



استمارة موافقة مسبقة للمشاركة في دراسة بحثية

عنوان البحث: L2 academic writing identity in an undergraduate language program

الباحث الرئيسي: Duaa Zein

البريد الإلكتروني: duaazein@aucegypt.edu

1. يطلب منك المشاركة في دراسة بحثية. الغرض من البحث هو التحقق من هوية الكاتب للطلاب الجامعيين المصريين وقد يتم نشر النتائج أو عرضها. المدة المتوقعة لمشاركتك قد تتراوح بين الساعة أو أكثر.
2. هدف الدراسة هو دراسة استكشافية عن الهوية الكتابية للطلاب المصري الجامعي.
3. نتائج البحث قد تنشر في مؤتمرات علمية أو أبحاث أخرى أو جرائد أدبية.
4. إجراءات البحث ستكون على النحو التالي سيقوم الباحث بعرض سؤال مقالي على كل المشتركين في البحث بحيث يطلب الباحث من كل المشتركين الإجابة كتابيا باللغة الإنجليزية بحيث يكون إجمالي عدد الكلمات ما بين المائتين وخمسون الي الخمسمائة كلمة ومن ثم سيتم استخدام هذه الإجابات لغرضي جمع البيانات وتحليلها للوصول الي النتائج المنشود ايجادها في البحث.
5. لن يكون هناك اي مخاطر أو مضايقات مرتبطة بهذا البحث.
6. لن تكون هناك فوائد لك من هذا البحث.
7. المعلومات التي تقدمها لأغراض هذا البحث سرية.
8. يجب توجيه أي أسئلة حول البحث أو حقوق المشاركين إلى الباحث الرئيسي (دعاء زين) على البريد الإلكتروني المذكور أعلاه.
9. المشاركة في هذه الدراسة تطوعية ولن ينطوي رفض المشاركة على أي عقوبة وبالتالي يمكنك التوقف عن المشاركة في أي وقت دون غرامة أو فقدان أي شيء.

الامضاء:

اسم المشارك :

النوع: (ذكر / أنثي)

التاريخ :/...../.....

B. English Consent Form for Professors



Documentation of Informed Consent for Participation in Research Study

Project Title: L2 academic writing identity in an undergraduate language program

Principal Investigator: Duaa Zein Abousaeed

Email: duaazein@aucegypt.edu

1. You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of the research is to investigate the writer identity of Egyptian undergrad students, and the findings may be published or presented. The expected duration of your participation is thirty minutes.
2. The purpose of this study is investigating the L2 academic writer identity in an undergraduate language program.
3. The findings/ results of this study may be published in journal articles/ other research studies or presented in conferences.
4. The procedures of the research will be as follows, the interviewer will ask you some questions on the L2 writer identity and the answers for these questions will be used for answering the research questions.
5. There will be no risks or discomforts associated with this research.
6. There will be no benefits for you from this research.
7. The information you provide for purposes of this research is confidential.
8. Any questions about the research or participants' rights should be forwarded to the above-mentioned email.
9. Participation in this study is voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty, you may discontinue participation at any time.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____

Date _____

Appendix F

A. Samples for Writing Responses

Some people believe that the best way of learning about life is by listening to the advice of family and friends. Other people believe that the best way of learning about life is through personal experience. There are who believe that the person should be prepared from their childhood to depend on himself or herself in learning about life and making their own decisions. Other believe that they lack experience in life, so they need a guide to help them.

Learning about life by listening to other's advice is believed the best way to gain experience in life. People believe that family, friends, and old people have an important part in our life which is to support us in learning about life as they have experienced many situations in their whole life lives. There are different matters in our daily lives that can affect deeply our future, so we need to ask for their advice and what we should do. We are not living alone, so learning about life is a cooperative work. You may face situations that is serious and your parents or friends have faced before situations similar to yours.

There are people who believe that one should depend on him/herself in learning about life. They believe that it is their own lives and they have to live the whole experience from making their own decisions to the effects of them. It is only through personal experience one can learn to live and gain experience in life that helps him or her in the future. When s/he take the risk to live an experience, s/he will learn even if his or her experience affected him or her badly; they will learn what will happen if they do this or that one of

Learning about life can be done by many ways. Some people believed that it can be acquired by the family and friends. This may be true as our family are very conscious about learning us the best thing ever through their experiences in the long years during their life. Also our friends can also help us learning alot but their advices maybe correct or not.

Another people believed that the best way of learning about the life is your personal experience by doing everything in his life by him self without the helping of anyone. That method is really the best to learn about life. If anyone did anything wrong one time, he would learn from his fault and did not repeat this wrong again, by doing that, everyone could be independent on himself.

In my opinion, I support self personal experience, it made us depend on ourselves and being more strong without the helping of anyone, one should be creative in his life and believe in himself that he could do the best throughout his mistakes and experience in life. one should face many obstacles in his life to be more conscious about what he did in his life and be more confident in himself and his abilities to pass his life alone without anyone.

In conclusion, we can say that, both who believed that the best way of learning about the life by listening to the advice of family and friends, and also who supported the personal experience, are had their own point of view and all of them are correct and respect life is good and we should be patient to understand it correctly and to deal with.

While advice from dear ones may be helpful, it is our own experiences that shape the way we perceive life. Our brain filters information and only those connected with emotions that are transferred to the long memory, that means that it is not the experience that creates a life lesson, rather the emotion that comes with it that makes it unforgettable. Hence why many books of literature can be considered life-changing, a writer of fiction does not, for instance, say: "Don't fall for the trap of jealousy", instead he creates a character, makes you identify with which, thus experiencing the character's emotion and imaginatively going through its experience, as in *Othello*, and ultimately empathizing their downfall and learning the advice in a somewhat indirect way. This is why for most of the history literature has been an efficient way in order to spread ethics and teach life lessons to common man. Since infancy we were told the sheep story and the "no one believes a liar" and not given an advice to stay truthful, these stories help to connect the hearer's feeling with the antagonist, hence connecting the experience and making an advice a life lesson. Still, often times we might need an advice from someone who understands our circumstances like a family or a dear friend, someone who understands better our situation and knows our nature, either listening to a dear's advice or choosing to learn about things on your own, there will always be regrets as Bukowski said: "Do it or don't, you will regret it either way."

B. Transcribed Texts for Interviews

A. The Transcribed Text for Interview (1)

R: Dr. Abdul Gawwad do you agree to audio record this interview?

P: Yes, with pleasure of course.

R: Dr. for how long you are teaching as a professor in this university?

P: I have been teaching since 1988 so it has been over 30 years now.

R: What do you like most about teaching here Dr.?

P: Teaching in the department you mean or at college or teaching in general.

R: Teaching here I mean English dep. to undergrads

P: Actually, you can't separate the process of teaching to students in the dep. of English from teaching in general, personally I like teaching so much I consider it as one of the great jobs it has a humanitarian side of it you can benefit people you can see the change in the minds of students and the language and the culture and attitudes and behaviors of students and this is a day to day process that one enjoys on a day to day basis. For the department itself it is my own department I studied here and once I graduated I was appointed as a demonstrator here in the same year 1988, and it pays off to be working in the same workplace where you studied during your undergraduate days it is fun, pleasure and benefit of course.

R: Of course.

R: Would you please describe the way that you teach writing because we consider writing as a base for this study.

P: Writing in particular!

R: Yes writing.

P: I never taught a writing course per saying it is called here essay writing,

R: Yes yes

P: The time I taught or two times I taught essay writing I didn't like so much because of the large number of students you have in the department over 400 to 500 hundred to teach writing probably you have to work in groups fours or fives or tens or even twenties and this is not available here you are short of times, places of you need to start from the scratch with small number of students. There must be workshops there must be practical writing of sample topics that you as a teacher correct and edit and work with students and this is something we don't find all the time here.

R: Mmm it is not something easy to deal with.

P: No No I didn't like the experience, but I do consider writing one of the greatest courses that anyone can help students with because once you perfect writing then you perfect everything else.

R: Yes yes, so it is easy then to express the self. So, okay what are the challenges or even the difficulties that you might face when evaluating your undergrads writing even in your subject or the course that you teach?

P: The basic challenge is the students ability to express themselves in proper English regarding the kind of material, the material I have been teaching throughout the year or course as the novel or drama, or criticism whichever course I am teaching. How far students grasped my methodology and my course content and how far he has been able to be relevant actually not many students believe in that kind principle of relevance most of them just write and fill pages thinking that teachers don't read or don't correct properly so the more they write they think the more accurate and the more grades they have but this is not true. So, all the time I am sensitive

to language issues to self-expression to relevance the idea of relevance the idea of waffles if they just add sentences and pieces of information that doesn't help.

R: How do you usually in your lectures with your students engage them or even ask them or motivate your students into writing the way that you expect?

As far back as the 80s I think or 90s of the last century I wrote a small paper on communicative teaching as part of a grant that I obtained to travel to the states and they asked me to write something related to English language teaching so I wrote what I enjoyed so much when I read someone called Dell Hymes is let's say the disciple or the student of Noam Chomsky and his theory called communicative teaching and from that time onwards I wholeheartedly got in love with the theory itself, communicative teaching means you don't teach you monitor rather than lecture or dictate upon students certain pieces of information you engage students you draw them in you involve them in whatever kind of material you are teaching asking questions receiving answers encouraging motivating talking about funny things to draw their attention to what you are saying so communicative teaching is the best method I have adopted in my own methodology and without it a lecture of novel would be dead.

R: yes definitely

R: okay so regarding the concept as you mentioned before expressing the self in their writings, in your opinion, how would they as writers express their self- representation,

P: You mean how do they do it now or how would you improve that!

R: How would they might express themselves

P: I didn't get the question sorry please repeat it!

R: How do they express this self-representation, how would they do it? Do they express themselves!!!!

P: I expect my students to foam the kind of knowledge they have within the framework of an essay, just like they are writing an essay suppose I am teaching novel, criticism, or drama then everything they know about a certain issue could be just written on haphazardly no the best way in point of view is for students to organize their ideas to take care of organization, structure, building the argument from the early beginning providing examples and then of course all in all the ideas and everything have to be written in good English or let's say correct English that has to be edited and reedited and finally it would be presented as accurate or even as accurate as possible in an accurate way.

R: Okay, because this study is interested in gender as a variable so let me ask you (have you ever experienced any similarities or differences between the females and males in their writings)?

P: Decidedly deplorably because I am a man the thing is girls are much better than boys in their love of English and in the way they express themselves and this is quite known among us as teachers in the department of English perhaps because the larger number of students in the department is girls if we have 400 students for example in the first year you find 350 of them girls and among the 350 you have at least 50 writing beautifully or in love with the English language and consequently their writing portion becomes brilliant and interesting .

R: So, the differences between females and males will go to..

P: To the direction of girls of course

R: Yes, for the female, I mean will go on a level of good quality you mean!!

P: Yes yes of course

R: Okay how would you react to the repetitive use of, I mean if you find some repetitive use of the self-representation in the undergrad writing, how do you react toward this?

P: In marking or in teaching, it makes a difference.

R: I am not talking about assessment perspective how do you react to it as a reader I mean

P: As a reader or teacher!!

R: As a reader or even teacher but not assigning grades your reaction to this piece of writing as a response, a reader response

P: I have enough experience not to let students down not to suppress them whenever they repeat themselves, if you are not talking about grades you are talking then about teaching about just reading for fun, you can't put them off by saying this is off this is wrong don not repeat yourself self-representation is bad don't do this repetition is bad this is a bad way of mentoring students or guiding students to the writing process rather than that you could simply offer them an alternative or say you mean such and such or you advise them, not to involve themselves in this kind of repetition because repetition is actually not advisable all the time, it could be there in poems or in novels for a certain purpose like refrain, certain artistic function other than that in writing you have got to avoid repetition to communicate this information to students you have to be intelligent and smart enough so that you may not put them down or off.

R: Let me add something for the self-representation, for example if you talk about the first pronoun use in a text, as a text feature I mean, if they like to use the first person pronoun too many times in the same writing, how do you react to this repetitive use of the first pronoun as I am referring to myself as a writer.

P: Sometimes I alert them to the mistaken use of the first person pronoun but I tend to be indirect I tend to make students love the way I talk so they can imitate me that would be better than just saying do not use 'I' or this is wrong, most of the time I prefer being indirect and that kind of intelligent counselling rather than being abrupt and rough in this way.

R: Yes Yes, okay, in your opinion dr., how would you describe the relation between the self-representation and female or male students, how would you describe it, do you think there is a relation! there is not! how would you describe it

P: I am not sure they are conscious of themselves as boys or as girls when preferring to use the first-person pronoun it just comes by way of habit they are used to do that without any body teaching them or correcting them. I didn't notice any difference between boys and girls in that. It is also you could say personal if a student feels high or feels so proud of himself or conceited for example they would draw attention to themselves by using that it happens on a random case not regularly actually.

R: Yes yes, okay, last question, do you think undergrads self-representation elements and gender differences might affect the English quality?

P: No, I don't think so.

R: So, you mentioned before something about the female writers are really good ..

P: They are better at making use of language, but they don't necessarily opt for that usage of the first-person pronoun.

R: What about hedges boosters engagement markers, adverbs.? and so on

P: It is not a phenomenon you can't generalize that you can't say that this takes place with females rather than males. It is personal rather than common.

R: Yes, yes so it is not about the gender it is about the writer!

P: It doesn't have to do with gender.

R: You don't think that there is a relation or even an impact on the quality.

P: No no

R: Okay thank you so much for your time

R: Dr. Do you have any questions about the study?

It is not a question as much as it is a word of praise for on behalf of the department and my colleagues we would like to thank you for undertaking this serious experiment or serious study on writing which is one the weakest points among students , it is easy to teach and easy for students to learn whatever kind of information you have but the way you can or you have to express yourself is something that we all have to work on and you are undertaking this job I do recommend it and find it interesting enough. I wish you the best of luck and before that and after that I would invite you to share with us your results when you finish your research

R: Sure, thank you.

B. The Transcribed Text for Interview (2)

R: Dr. Hany Helmy, Do you accept to audio record our interview?

P: yes sure.

R: How are you Dr?

P: Fine thanks.

R: They are only 10 interview questions I suppose they wouldn't take time, Dr. for how long you are teaching as a professor in this university?

P: I have been working here since 1986 but as an assistant professor I have been teaching since 1999 which is almost 20 years.

R: What do you like most about teaching here Dr?

P: Teaching is being all the time as a festival interacting with the students, celebrating the passing of the generations with new generations something like keeping young all the time because of the interacting with new generations.

R: Would you please describe the way you teach writing because my study is basically focus on second language writing that's why I am asking this question to describe the way you teach writing?

P: Okay actually I have taught writing courses several times I wouldn't claim that my teaching writing was based on any kind of a systemic or methodological basis but somehow I was intuitive in teaching writing first of all I instructed my students to read and analyze the way people write from newspaper for example then how to practice writing on their own and the most interesting thing for them was the issue of correcting what they wrote they all the time need somebody to correct their writing.

R: So, you tend to use reading to writing

P: Yes exactly

R: Let me ask you this have you faced any challenged or difficulties when you evaluate your undergrads writings?

P: Yes of course, because the way they learnt English depended mostly on memorizing they are not accustomed on practicing on their own I found excuses for them not having enough vocabulary not having enough ideas or ideas about how to generate ideas to write about

R: So, they are stuck they can't express themselves!!

P: They can't express themselves because they have to depend on set sentences or formulas.

R: Okay for teaching them to write or you know just to create their own writing, how do you engage them or motivate them more in writing?

P: I ask them to write about intimate things their daily experience for example they write about a day in their life, write a journal or a memo about a period in life, a year something like that

R: to personalize this writing according to their life, this is really good really good.

P: exactly

R: going back to what you mentioned earlier, you mentioned something about expressing themselves in their writing, in your opinion, how would they as undergrad writers express their self-representation in writing?

P: I think they tend to be decisive in expressing their opinions in a sense that their personal opinions take the form of factual expressions rather than opinions and it is usual characterized by moral judgments

R: so, when we talk about males and females because we have both as undergrads have you experienced any similarities or differences between them in their writings and if you come up with any of them similarities or differences how would explain it?

P: I will judge from my experience with their writings on a literally courses, females are more expressive and more imaginative in terms of their speculations about literary texts males tend to be a bit short a bit brief in expressing their ideas with few exceptions of course.

R: So, there is a difference.

P: OFCOURSE

R: according to the self-representation we are talking about, how would you react to the repetitive use of self-representation as the self-mentioning they tend to use the 'I' in their writing as a first pronoun or some reader pronouns, how do you react?

P: again I sympathize with them because the lack of the vocabulary they haven't practiced enough they somehow as if they don't belong to a writing culture it is an oral culture that's why their self-representation tends to be a bit conversational I mean so much repetitive in repeating the same ideas attempting to assert or underline the fact that they have an opinion of their own.

R: So usually you don't face some boosters or even hedges or frame markers?

P: No, they tend to be very simple and direct statements.

R: if we are testing the relation between self-representation and the gender in writing, how would you describe it?

P: again, I guess from my experience, I might be wrong in that, that the females tend to be more expressive of themselves they have opinions based on their personal experiences or experience of their families. The Males tend to be somehow be stylized or to show off or adopt attitudes that they don't belong to themselves, somehow as if they are borrowed.

R: So again, just to relate between the three things together, do you think undergrads self-representation elements and gender similarities or (differences as you mentioned earlier that it would be there) might affect the overall writing quality of English?

P: In terms of language proper I wouldn't say so, but if they are talking about or writing about their personal issues, we will notice the difference between gender.

R: So, as you mentioned earlier that you might face differences between females and males, does this affect the quality, is it going to be a good quality of writing if we have this difference?

P: Again, Because the percentage of girls or females to males in our classes are not balanced, I mean it is something like 80 to 20 percent, 80 percent for females and 20 percent for males that's why the judgment wouldn't be fair but all in all the balance steps for in favor of females.

R: So, they produce better...!

P: Yes, they produce better quality.

R: Okay this was the last question. If you have any questions about the study, you may ask me.

P: No thank you so much.