

Authorial Presence in Academic Book Reviews: A Thai-English Comparison¹

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ABSTRACT

Authorial presence indicates the existence of authors in a text. It also suggests the authoritativeness of writers as they demonstrate their opinions. Closely similar terms are authorial voice or authorial identity and others. This paper defines the concept of authorial presence in relation to one of the marginalised disciplinary discourse – an academic book review. The author in the text here is, therefore, the reviewer. Based on a bilingual multidisciplinary corpus of contemporary academic book reviews in five fields of study, a qualitative text analysis with the use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software is carried out to elucidate exponents of authorial presence in the texts and to compare the Thai and English reviews in different disciplines. The findings reveal various exponents of authorial presence, which are categorised into overt and covert entities with various sub-categories, e.g. the first-person point of view, the third-person point of view, self-citation, inclusive we, pro-dropping, and the review. Quantified data also indicate striking differences concerning not only linguistic and/or cultural issues but also disciplinary ones. It is expected that this study can contribute to the understanding of authorial presence, which is significant for readers' comprehension of the text, including the position of the author that is portrayed in it.

Keywords: authorial presence; academic book review; disciplinary discourse; interpersonal issues; cultural differences

INTRODUCTION

It is a widely held view that academic writing is generally impersonal. As Morley (2021) indicates, one of the principal characteristics of written academic style is as follows:

In the interest of objectivity, academic writers tend to remove themselves from the writing. The focus is on 'what' happened, 'how' it was done, and 'what' was found. The 'who' (the writer) is not normally given very much attention. This is one of the reasons why personal pronouns ('I' and 'we') tend not to be used. In addition, academic texts rarely address the reader directly and the pronoun normally used for this, 'you', is avoided (p. 136).

He also mentions some exceptions. For particular fields of study, authors may employ first-person pronouns to demonstrate personal interest or take a role as participant-observer in the research, and a research team in medicine and science commonly used "we" to represent themselves (Morley, 2021, p. 136). However, Morley exaggerates, because as we have seen in reality (even with the following sentence), the use of first-person "I" is prominent (see also Davies, 2012; Taylor & Goodall, 2019; Thonney, 2013; Xia, 2017 for first-person pronoun usage in academic writing at different educational levels and areas).

¹ This topic is one of the several treated in a wider study of academic book reviews (Klaibanmai, 2022).

ACADEMIC BOOK REVIEWS

Compared to other genres of academic discourse, such as textbooks, dissertations, or research articles, the academic book review might receive less attention among academic communities (Hyland, 2004; Obeng-Odoom, 2014). A study of book reviews may appear as a chapter in academic discourse books or may not at all (Carrió-Pastor, 2020; Hyland, 2004; Martin et al., 2019). However, an academic or scholarly book review, which is usually a critical review of recently published academic books, is beneficial not only for book authors, but also reviewers, the scholarly community and the public. A book review is a way to give feedback to the author, whereas reviewers themselves can recollect ideas and sharpen their research, writing and evaluative skills. Moreover, the review represents the knowledge added to the body of literature in the field (Obeng-Odoom, 2014). With unique characteristics and benefits, therefore, an academic book review is a scholarly genre in its own right. Thus, the review is a rich source to explore interpersonal issues in academia, starting from the way reviewers present themselves in the text.

Reading both Thai and English book reviewers, I have identified substantial discrepancies between the reviews of these languages. Among those discrepancies is the presence (and/or absence) of the reviewer, who is considered a major participant in book reviews apart from the book's author and the reader. From a preliminary observation, I noticed the very existence of reviewers from one and not the other. Therefore, a test to see whether the fact persists with a larger amount of data is necessary.

For this analysis, I elucidate the presence/absence of reviewers and then determine if this phenomenon of authorial presence is due to a disciplinary trend, as claimed by Morley (2021). I will also prove that the nature of the genre, that is, book reviews, should also be taken into account since it can affect the presence of these elements, which proclaim interpersonal issues. Regarding the study's significance, its findings should shed light on various types of authorial presence from academic book reviews with disciplinary differences between Thai and English languages. This piece of knowledge emphasises the complexity of thoughts and the interpersonal relationship between people from different cultures, demonstrating pedagogical implications for those studying intercultural communications, particularly Thai learners of English or readers and writers of academic book reviews.

THEORETICAL CONCEPT

AUTHORIAL PRESENCE

In this section, I construct the notion of the authorial presence or how reviewers display themselves in book reviews. I select the term *authorial presence* despite a variety of choices. A term that frequently appears in the literature on authors and the interpretation of their involvement in the text is 'authorial voice'. The concept of voice in relation to writing has been explored by scholars such as Elbow (1973), Matsuda (2001), and Nelson and Castelló (2012). For some, voice is part of, or if not synonymous with, concepts like 'self' (Goffman, 1969 [1959]), 'persona' (Cherry, 1988), 'ethos' (Fairclough, 1992), 'identity' (Ivanič, 1998), 'stance' (Hyland, 1999, 2005), and others.

I could choose superficially familiar terms like ‘authorial voice’ or ‘authorial identity’ for this analysis. However, after exploring the meaning and scope of the terms, I decided to avoid them for fear of misleading connotations. For instance, according to Nelson and Castelló (2012), the idea of voice in writing concerns complicated elements including:

(1) voice as an interpretation by readers from textual cues in social, cultural, and historical contexts; (2) the socially adopted conventions of writing, such as metadiscourse and first-person pronouns that help make readers aware of the author guiding them through the text; (3) the practices through which students learn to write in a way that is acceptable for others in their social community; and (4) the ways in which writers appropriate the writing (and voices) of others through using extant texts, writing collaboratively, receiving and providing response, and translating from one language to another (p. 50).

On the other hand, Ivanič’s (1998) interpretation of authorial identity comprises four aspects: the ‘autobiographical self’ as the identity shaped by a writer’s life-history, the ‘discoursal self’ as the image writers convey of themselves, the ‘self as author’ as a writer’s authoritativeness, and finally prototypical possibilities for ‘self-hood’. While the first three features deal with the identity of people in their act of writing, the last point is an abstract model of identity in the writer’s socio-cultural context (Ivanič, 1998, pp. 23-27).

Each term has its nuances depending on the scholars defining it. The terms touch upon wide-ranging areas and have an association with other theories. For example, the fourth element of Nelson and Castelló’s (2012) voice can be achieved through an analysis using Martin and White’s (2005) system of engagement under Appraisal Theory or Hunston’s (2003) classification of attribution and averral. In Ivanič’s case, she claims that the autobiographical self is similar to Bourdieu’s (1977) habitus or the *writer-as-performer* in terms of Goffman’s (1969 [1959]) explanation of self and his distinction of a performer and character. (For more information on applying Goffman’s theories to authorial identity, see Ivanič (1998) pp. 19-25, 98-104, 215-219.)

With the broad range of meaning and analysis, the terms ‘authorial voice’ and ‘authorial identity’ can connote, I opt for another term which I find most suitable for this study: *authorial presence*. Dontcheva-Navrátilová (2013) is among other scholars (e.g., Chavez Munoz, 2013; Januarto & Hardijanto, 2020; Li, 2021) who employ this term. She defines it as “the degree of visibility and authoritativeness writers are prepared to project in their texts for personal support of their statements when expressing their attitudes, judgements and assessments” (p. 9). Adopting the definition, I frame the concept as a threshold for investigation of the presence of the writer of the text, in this case, the reviewer. This includes the application of not only first-person pronouns but also other terms that reviewers use to refer to themselves from both first-person and third-person points of view. Additionally, the authorial presence encompasses self-reference or self-mention, including self-citation. With *authorial presence*, I concentrate on the existence of reviewers in the text and demonstrate its significance in interpersonal relationships. Thus, the relevance of authorial presence lies in the fact that as one shows oneself in a piece of their own writing, one displays a level of commitment to it, which, in turn, affects an understanding of a reader. In addition to other empirical studies on the authorial presence (see Dobakhti & Hassan, 2017; Hartwell & Jacques, 2014; Li, 2021; Pahor et al., 2021; Seoane & Hundt, 2018), the present study aims to fulfil the following objectives:

- to elucidate the authorial presence (reviewers of books) in academic book reviews
- to compare and contrast authorial presence in Thai and English book reviews in five disciplines

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

DATA SELECTION

This qualitative data-driven text analysis is an examination of a bilingual multidisciplinary corpus of 200 book reviews published in academic journals. The journals were selected from national and international databases: the Thai Journal Citation Index (TCI) and the Scopus Index, respectively. The criterion for journal selection was the journal impact factor. Journals in the TCI are ranked in three tiers: Tier 1 – 3. Only those in Tier 1 and 2 were selected. On the other hand, only Quatile 1 and 2 in the Scopus were chosen. The journals were from five fields of study: business and economics (BE), interdisciplinary subjects in social science and humanity (IN), linguistics (L), political science and public administration (PO), and religion and philosophy (R). Initially, the plan was to include areas of study from both hard and soft science. However, because of the availability of the data, especially from the Thai journals, only these five areas were possible to collect for comparative analysis. The year of publication of these reviews ranges from 2010 – 2019. Of the two hundred reviews, half of them were written by Thai scholars (TH), and the rest was by international scholars using English (EN) as a lingua franca. International scholars publishing in the selected Scopus journals may have a first language other than English. I, then, claim the status of the use of English here as a lingua franca. Since the concept of language and culture is complex, I advocate that the grouping of TH and EN cannot represent the culture associated with a whole country, but it exemplifies a community of practice. One is Thai scholars; the other is international academia with English as a medium.

TABLE 1. A Summary of the Academic Book Review Data

Group	Number of Reviews	Number of Reviewers		Word Counts
		One	Two	
BE-EN	20	20		31,010
BE-TH	20	20		35,587
IN-EN	20	18	2	21,185
IN-TH	20	20		80,096
L-EN	20	19	1	33,641
L-TH	20	18	2	23,491
PO-EN	20	19	1	32,980
PO-TH	20	19	1	62,469
R-EN	20	20		43,460
R-TH	20	13	7	78,254
Total	200	186	14	442,173

DATA ANALYSIS

All the review files are set in order and named. With a sizeable amount of data, I use computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), called NVivo to code and quantify the data. When I present an excerpt of a Thai book review, I use a three-part format: Line 1 Thai orthography, Line 2 Thai romanisation, and Line 3 free English translation. I utilise a system of Thai romanisation of software called Plangsarn, which deploys the Grapheme-to-Phoneme (G2P) method and “the lexicon-based Thai word segmentation to tokenize the text” (Chancheewa & Haruechaiyasak, 2012). All free English translations in Line 3 are mine.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

EXPONENTS OF AUTHORIAL PRESENCE

To elucidate authorial presence in academic book reviews, I present the exponent of authors in the text. From the corpus, there is a variety of instances representing or subtly implying the presence of reviewers. I divide them into two categories: overt and covert presence. The first visually exhibits reviewers in the reviews, whereas the latter group requires more effort in interpretation or inference. Each group has sub-categories presented in Figure 1. The statistics for authorial presence are discussed in the next item, but examples of all exponents are given as follows:

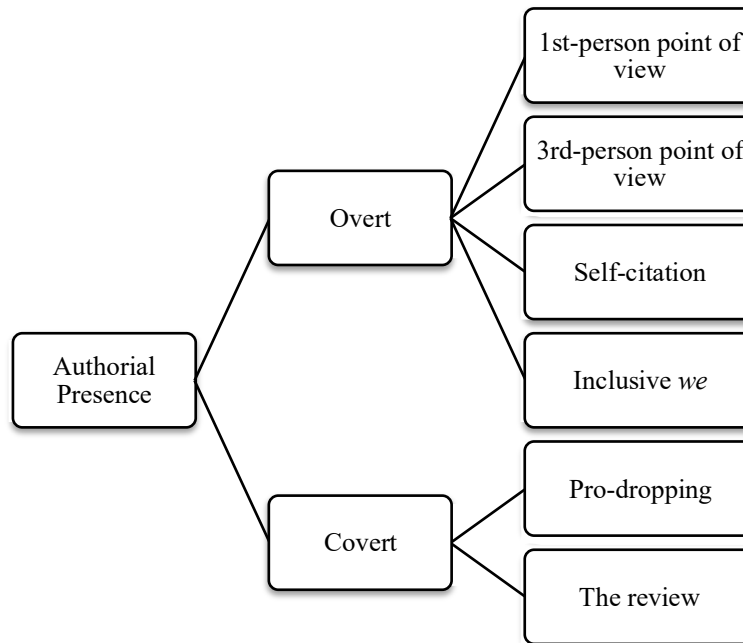


FIGURE 1. Categorisations of authorial presence

OVERT AUTHORIAL PRESENCE

FIRST-PERSON POINT OF VIEW

First-person pronouns and their relevant morphological forms are predominant in this category, like “I” and “myself” in (1), “my” in (2), and “us” in (3). While *I* and *we* are the two primary singular and plural personal pronouns of English, Thai has more.

- (1) In Calvey's own experience of covert research of bouncers, he states truthfully that the job is mostly mundane with relatively rare outbreaks of violence (something I can confirm as a bouncer myself). (IN-EN-QR-9)
- (2) My critique of this book mainly relates to notions of statistical validity. (L-EN-JPR-3)
- (3) For us, the practical issues for teaching listening suggested by the authors might not be perceived as especially brilliant by experienced teachers. (L-TH-REF-13-EN)

(4) – (8) are excerpts from the only five reviews with first-person points of view that are written in Thai. Each exemplifies distinct pronominal forms. “I” and “my” in (4) are from the same pronoun “ผม”-/phom/ for a quite formal singular masculine, whereas “I” in (5) and (6) are “ดิฉัน”-/dichan/ for a formal singular feminine and “ข้าพเจ้า”-/khāphačhao/ for a very formal singular neutral, respectively. (7) poses another divergence between Thai and English: “เรา”-/rao/, which is literally translated as *we* but is syntactically inflected as {us} in this case, substitute a singular subject – the reviewer herself. Checking her name, I am sure this is not a royal *we* (although we do have the royal *we* in Thai). It is possible that (7) is what Fløttum et al. (2006) would consider as an exclusive *we* for *I* (more information on *we* is illustrated below). However, because Thai also has a first-person singular neutral pronoun *we* I put it in this category. Still, this usage in (7) as academic writing is slightly unusual since mostly a singular *we* is more informally utilised (Phimsawat, 2011, p. 2). Apart from (1) – (8), other prepositional phrases, such as ‘in my own experience’, ‘from my perspective’, and ‘in our view’, are commonly found.

- (4) ด้วยมุมมองทางเศรษฐศาสตร์ในเชิงการพัฒนาของผม ผมเข้าใจเพียงประเภทของการเลือกปฏิบัติ ในการตั้งราคาโดยคร่าวๆ [sic] ในทางทฤษฎีเท่านั้น (BE-TH-AEJ-1)
dūai mummōng thāng sētthasāt nai chōng kānphatthanā khōng phom <s/>phom khaočhai phīang praphēt khōng kānlūk patibat nai kān tang rākā dōi khrāo khrāo <s/>nai thāng thritsadī thaonan
With my perspective in development economics, I roughly understand types of degree price discrimination in theory only.
- (5) ซึ่งในประเด็นหลังนี้ ดิฉันคิดว่าเป็นกลยุทธ์ที่ชาญฉลาดมาก (BE-TH-JBE-10)
sung nai praden lang nī <s/>dichan khit wā pen konlayut thī chān chalāt māk
as for the latter point, I think (it) is a very smart strategy
- (6) ปกและชื่อหนังสือจะต้องสื่อสารอะไรบางอย่างกับผู้อ่าน ซึ่งข้าพเจ้าเข้าใจว่า น่าจะเป็นการเล่นคำ (IN-TH-HSJ-2)
pok læ chū nangsū dū čha tōngkān sūsān ‘arai bāng yāng kap phū ‘ān <s/>sung khāphačhao khaočhai wā <s/>nā čha penkān lenkham
The cover and title of the book seem to convey particular messages to readers, which I understand that it is to play with words.
- (7) แต่หากมองลึกเข้าไปในโครงสร้างต่างๆ [sic] ของเรื่องเล่าแล้ว ยังคงเห็นได้ถึง “ความเป็นการเมือง” ที่ซ่อนไว้ในร่องรอยของความทรงจำอันหวานหอมและขมปร่าแห่งความรัก ที่สามารถสร้างความสั่นไหว ระดับเกิน 8 ริคเตอร์ให้เกิดขึ้นในหัวใจได้ เป็นความสั่นสะเทือนในระดับที่ทำให้เราสามารถอ่านนวนิยาย หนา 618 หน้าจนจบได้ภายในคืนเดียว จากการผูกเรื่องของปามุกในระดับวางไม่ลง โดยไม่มีการข้าม แม้แต่คำหนึ่งคำใดไปเลย (IN-TH-SJ-20)
tāe hāk mōng luk khaopai nai khrōngsāng tāng tāng <s/>khōng rūang lao læo <s/>yang khong hen dai thung <s/>“khwāmpen kānmūang” <s/>thī sōn wai nai rōngroī khōng khwām song čham ‘an wān hōm læ khom prā hāng khwāmrak <s/>thī sāmāt sāng khwām sanwai radap kōen <s/>pāet <s/>riktō hai kōet khun nai hūačhai dai <s/>penkhwām sansathūan nai radap thī thamhai rao sāmāt ‘ān nawaniyāi nā <s/>hokroīsippāet <s/>nā čhon čhop dai phāinai khūn dīeo <s/>čhāk kān phūk rūang khōng pāmuk nai radap wāng mai long <s/>dōi mai mī kān khām mētāe kham nung kham dai pai lōi
But if (-) look into the structures of the story, (-) still see “politicalness”, which hinders the trace of scented-sweet and strangely bitter memories of love, which can cause a magnitude of 8 on the Richter scale in the heart. (It) is a magnitude that can make us able to complete reading a 618-page thick fiction within one night because of the story embroidering of Pamuk at the level that (-) cannot put it down by not skipping any words.

- (8) ส่วนตัวเชื่อว่าการวางรากฐานทางการศึกษาที่มั่นคงตั้งแต่ระดับปฐมภูมิ หน่วยครอบครัว โรงเรียน วัด ตลอดจนผู้ที่มีส่วนเกี่ยวข้องให้ความเอาใจใส่หลักการประชาธิปไตยตั้งแต่เริ่มต้น ย่อมส่งผลต่อการพัฒนาประชาธิปไตยที่มั่นคงได้ในระดับชุมชนและในระดับชาติ (PO-TH-JPG-5)

sūantūa chūa wākān wāng rākthān thāngkān suksā thīman khong tangtæ radap pathom phūm <s/>nūai khroṅkhrūa <s/>rōngrīan <s/>wat <s/>talōt̄ chon phū thī mī sūan kīeokhōng hai khwām ‘aochaisai lakkān prachāthipatai tangtæ rōemton <s/>yōm song phon tōkānphatthanā prachāthipatai thīman khong dai nai radap chumchon læ nai radap chāt
I believe that laying a firm foundation at a primary level, family unit, school, temple, including stakeholders paying attention to the principle of democracy from the beginning can eventually have an effect on the firm development of democracy at both a community and national level.

This category is not exclusive to first-person pronouns because another group that can express the first-person point of view is the adverbial, like “โดยส่วนตัว”-/dōi sūantūa/-{personally} in (9). In (8) we see “ส่วนตัว”-/sūantūa/-{I}, once “โดย” is added to it, the word can become an adverb as in (9). “ส่วนตัว” is quite a unique pronoun: it can be both a singular and plural neutral, similar to how ‘personally’ works, such as ‘personally, I ...’ or ‘personally, we ...’.

- (9) โดยส่วนตัวคิดว่าย่อมขึ้นอยู่กับจิตสำนึกของผู้นำและปัจเจกบุคคลไป (PO-TH-JPG-5)
dōi sūantūa khit wāyōt̄ ‘om khun yū kap chitsamnuk khōng phū nam læ patchēkkabukkhon pai
Personally, (I) think (it) naturally depends on the awareness of leaders and individuals.

It might be argued that the adverbial, as in (9), detracts from authoritativeness. I include this kind of instance in this first-person-point-of-view category since we can perceive the reviewer’s presence and recognise the attitude coming from them.

THIRD-PERSON POINT OF VIEW

In the English corpus, almost all reviews employ the word “reviewer”. (15) is the only one instance in which the word “reader” was chosen. The Thai corpus has more choices, as in (10) – (16), although “ผู้วิจารณ์”-/phū wīchān/-{critic} prevails. Other words are: “ผู้วิจารณ์หนังสือ”-/phū wīchān nangsū/-{book critic}, “ผู้เขียนบทปริทัศน์หนังสือ”-/phūkhīan bot parithat nangsū/-{book review writer}, “ผู้แนะนำ”-/phū nāenam/-{recommender}, “ผู้วิจัย”-/phūwīchai/-{researcher}, “ผู้เขียนบทความนี้”-/phūkhīan botkhwām nī/-{the writer of this article}, etc.

- (10) Based on this reviewer’s professional HR background and ‘people’ research interests (BE-EN-TM-12)
(11) อย่างไรก็ตามผู้วิจารณ์เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่ง กับคำกล่าวของผู้เขียนในหน้า 85 (IN-TH-HSJ-4)
yāngrai kōtām phū wīchān hen dūai yāng ying <s/>kap kham klāo khōng phūkhīan nai nā <s/>pætsiphā
However, the critic agrees strongly with the statement of the writer on page 85
(12) ผู้วิจารณ์จะไม่ขอกล่าวถึง แต่ขอตั้งข้อสังเกตในประเด็นอื่น (PO-TH-MHR-19)
phū wīchān cha mai khōk lāo thung <s/>tæ khōtang khōsangket nai praden ‘ūn
The critic will not cover that but make some observation on other issues.

- (13) หนังสือเรื่อง *Grammaticalization* กระบวนการกลายรูปเป็นไวยากรณ์ ที่ผู้ปริทัศน์เลือกนำเสนอ ในครั้งนี้เป็นผลงานของศาสตราจารย์ ดร.กิงกานัญญา เทพกานัญญา (IN-TH-MW-17)
nangsū rūang <s/>Grammaticalization <s/>krabūankān klāi rūp pen waiyākoṅ thī phū parithat lūak nam sanōe nai khrangnī pen phonngān khōng sāttrāchān doḅktōe Kingkān Thēpkānchanā
The book titled *Grammaticalization, the process of grammaticalization* that the reviewer chose to present here, is a work of Professor Dr Kingkan Thepkanchana.
- (14) ผู้เขียนมีความสนใจด้านสังคมศาสตร์แขนงรัฐประศาสนศาสตร์ ...จึงพยายามที่จะขยายและวิเคราะห์สาระความรู้พร้อมทั้งวิจารณ์การเข้าถึงแบบทฤษฎีระบบของคาปริ่า (PO-TH-MHR-18)
thangnī phūkhīan mī khwām sonchhai dān sangkhommasāt khanāeng ratthaprasāsanasāt ...
chūng phayāyām thī čha khayāi læ wikhro sāra khwām rū phrōm thang wičhān kān khaothung bāep thritsadī rabop khōngkhāprā
The writer has an interest in a branch of social science called political and administrative science ... therefore tried to elaborate and analyse the knowledge as well as theoretically approach Capra's system.
- (15) 2 บทนี้ความเห็นของผู้อ่าน คิดว่าสามารถนำมารวมกันได้ (R-TH-JMP-16)
sōng <s/>bot nī khwāmhen khōng phū 'ān <s/>khīt wā sāmāt nam mānwō makan dai
For these two chapters, the opinion of the reader is that they can be combined.
- (16) ขอล่าวถึงงานของอาจารย์พิทยาในมุมมองของหลานศิษย์ในจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย และคนทำงานรุ่นหลานในที่ทำงาน (สถาบันวิจัยสังคม) (PO-TH-JSR-11)
khō klāo thung ngān khōng 'āchān Phattaya nai mummōng khōng lān sit nai Čhulālongkoṅmahāwitthayālai <s/>læ khon tham ngān run lān naithī tham ngān <s/>(sathāban wičhai sangkhom)
(I) would like to mention the work of Achan Phattaya in the view of a grandchild/niece-student at Chulalongkorn University and a grandchild/niece-colleague at the workplace (Social Research Institute).

As with the first-person pronouns, reviewers clarify what they think or do in the reviews. However, a variety of words the reviewers chose for this third-person point of view reflect how they perceive their role in relation to the book and the reader (*critic, reviewer, reader, recommender, etc.*), the review (*writer*), the author (*student* – like (16) or as themselves (*researcher*). At the same time, the third-person point of view enables reviewers to distance themselves and reduces the sense of subjectivity.

In the monk reviews, it is interesting to note that none use the Thai priestly first-person pronoun, “อาตมา”-/‘āttamā’- {I}, or any other first-person point of view. Some do not show authorial presence at all, or if they do, they use a third-person point of view, as in (14).

SELF-CITATION

Out of 200 reviews, there are only three cases with self-citation, shown below. From the corpus, I observe that referencing is not compulsory for book reviews. Slightly more than half of all reviews include references, and so the chances of citing themselves are even lower:

- (17) But, as I have argued elsewhere (Sugden 2006), (BE-EN-JEL-4)
- (18) Brown (2011) and Walkinshaw (2009) do address second language politeness acquisition/pedagogy, (L-EN-JPR-5)
- (19) Macedo is more persuasive in arguing that on liberal grounds the state has a role to play in securing what I describe in my own work as the fair and effective distribution of the benefits and burdens of care (Metz 2010). (PO-EN-TJP-16)

This topic is intriguing. Hyland (2001, p.207) proposes the use of self-citation as an effective rhetorical strategy to demonstrate a writer's contribution. However, with limited data, I cannot investigate further, apart from demonstrating that there is self-citation in book reviews even though it is scarce. (For more information on the topic, see also Fowler & Aksnes, 2007; Ioannidis, 2015.)

INCLUSIVE WE

This category of *we* is similar to the first-person category because it is projected from the first-person point of view. Nonetheless, I distinguish between the first-person *we* that is responsible wholly for what those people claim, defined as the exclusive *we*, and this group, which includes other people so as to observe more interpersonal issues.

The subject of *we* is complicated. Following Rounds (1987), Fløttum et al. (2006) divide the first two groups of *we* as:

- 1) the exclusive *we*, which concerns several authors alone or possibly authors with a third party but not the reader, and
- 2) the inclusive *we*, in which the reader is included, or in some cases, *we* can mean the author and many other people.

There are three more groups that are referred to as metonymic uses of *we*, in that a double reference can be inferred because the interpretation can be moved between the actual pronoun and the literal pronoun *we* as it appears. The following groups are:

- 3) the inclusive *we* for *you*,
- 4) the inclusive *we* for *I* both involve the author and reader or what Fløttum et al. (2006) call "the author-reader dyad": the former has a real or metonymic reference to the reader and the latter to the author, and
- 5) the exclusive *we* for *I*: this is when a single author refers to themselves as *we*, also called the authorial *we* (Fløttum et al., 2006, pp. 96-101).

Let us look at examples:

- (20) To answer those questions, let us ask why the book was important in the first place: (L-EN-JPR-12)
- (21) เห็นด้วยในประเด็นที่ว่า เราเกิดมาด้วยดีมหา และกรรม เพื่อสนองดีมหา และกรรมของตนเอง (R-TH-DAJ-7)
hen dūai nai praden thī wā <s/>rao kōet mādūai tanhā <s/>læ kam <s/>phūa sanōng tanhā
<s/>læ kam khōng ton'ēng

- (I) agree with the point that we were born with desires and karma to fulfil the desires and karma of our own.
- (22) In fact, if we examine the literature, it seems that scholars have given up on the state. (PO-EN-TJP-14)
- (23) ส่วนที่ 2 เตรียมการเพื่อเปิดตัวสินค้า หรือบล็อกของเรา ไม่มีใครรู้ดีไปกว่าเรา เราจึงต้องรับผิดชอบให้มาก (BE-TH-JBA-8)
sūan thī <s/>soṅg <s/>trīam kām phūa pōet tūa sinkhā <s/>rū bloḅ khōṅg rao <s/>mai mī khrai rūdī pai kwā rao <s/>rao čhung tōṅ raphhitčōp hai māk
Section 2 preparing for an opening of our product or blog. Nobody knows better than us. We, therefore, must take a lot of responsibility.
- (24) The publisher tells us that there are over 200 entries (L-EN-JPR-10)
- (25) จากโครงสร้างในการบรรยายทำให้เราเห็นถึงความรู้ความสามารถของผู้บรรยายได้เป็นอย่างดี (R-TH-DAJ-8)
čhāk khroṅgsāng nai kām banyāi thamhai rao hen thung khwāmru khwāmsāmāt khōṅg phū banyāi dai pen yāng dī
From the structure in the description, we recognise the knowledge and ability of the lecturer very well.

“let us” in (20) shows an inclusive *we* whereby readers are included with the reviewer. (21) is also a case of inclusive *we*, but here covers other people as well. In (22) and (23), “we” is *you*: in (22), the *if* clause allows the reviewer to suppose the reader has examined the literature and that the rest of the sentence is what they would find; in (23), the reviewer suggests to the reader what to do when they want to launch a product or blog, as mentioned in the book. (24) and (25) are examples of inclusive *we* for *I*: the interpretation of *we* still involves the author-reader dyad (with ‘author’ meaning ‘reviewer’). It seems both the reviewers and readers are told (24) and recognise (25) the content, but at the metonymic level, the reference is to the reviewers.

The last group is the exclusive *we* for *I*. Fløttum et al. (2006) refer to it as the “authorial *we*”. Some call it the “author’s *we*” (Kim, 2017, p. 616), not to be confused with the editorial *we* – “The first-person plural pronoun used by an editorialist in expressing the opinion or point of view of a publication’s management” (American Heritage, 2011). While the authorial *we* and editorial *we* are in the exclusive group, the latter is possibly even more exclusive as in an established institution like the royal *we*: there might be clear a distinction between the editor and readers. Because none of the writers in this corpus is an editor, I do not have an example to present, but let us observe examples of authorial *we*.

- (26) In Sharifian’s theoretical model, we find loud echoes of concepts such as indexicality and ethnomethodology (L-EN-JPR-1)
- (27) เมื่อเรามองถึงประเด็นนี้ก็พอที่จะทำได้บ้างว่าอย่างน้อยก็ไม่ใช่มีเพียงเราประเทศเดียวที่ครั้งใคร่ [sic] ประชาธิปไตย (PO-TH-JPG-5)
mūa rao mōṅg thung praden nī kō phōthī čha thamčhai daibāngwā yāng nōj kō mai chai mī phīang rao prathēt dīeo thī khrang khrai prachāthipatai
When we look at this issue, (we) may come to terms that at least there is not just us one country that is crazed with democracy.

Fløttum et al. (2006) also explain that for the authorial *we*, it is possible to substitute *I* for *we*. I maintain that “we” in (26) and (27) can be classified as ‘one’, but “us” in (26) falls under inclusive *we*. Let us consider another example:

(28) We will return to consider the implication of this point. (IN-EN-QR-2)

By itself, “we” in (28) is authorial. However, there are two reviewers. The question is whether to label it as 1) the exclusive *we* and put it in the first category of the first-person point of view. Fløttum et al. (2006) only describe the situation of a single author referring to themselves as *we* – the authorial *we*. To me, (28) still resembles an authorial *we*. Therefore, this leaves a question of whether it is also possible for the use of *we* by multiple authors to be the authorial *we*.

Another issue, which Fløttum et al. (2006) acknowledge, is that the author of the text is not the only one to decide the reference of *we*. Still, it depends on whose interpretation of the readers’ identity and whose interpretation of the text. If you are a Thai reader, the first “we” is an inclusive one, but if you are non-Thai, it is the exclusive. Similarly, for many readers of this thesis, “us” in (27) is probably not inclusive. Also, the following excerpt from the corpus does not give a sense of inclusivity for me as I am not an ethnographer like the reviewers of (29).

(29) Sadly, we ethnographers operate in an ethical culture of fear and have to sanitise our accounts or risk career suicide. (IN-EN-QR-9)

I did not classify every case of *we* in the corpus. Doing so was filled with problems, as also conceded by Fløttum et al. (2006) The instances so far clarify different types of *we* this corpus contains, demonstrating their functions and showing levels of solidarity and involvement between reviewers and readers, i.e. the interpersonal issue. At the literal level, most instances of *we* create a sense of togetherness, which promotes agreement among participants, including the reader and possibly the discipline community (Fløttum et al., 2006; Hyland 2005; Kuo, 1999; Myers, 1989). There is a lot more to be explored with the subject of *we* in future studies.

COVERT AUTHORIAL PRESENCE

PRO-DROPPING

This category is only for the texts written in Thai, which is a pro-drop language. One might argue that there is no difference from the first-person-point-of-view category, only that the subject position is dropped. A Thai person should be able to identify the missing subject. However, as pro-dropping is an intrinsic characteristic, it comes naturally. The pronoun can be dropped without being noticed, or there is no need to trace back to the antecedent. The interpretation is occasionally ambiguous:

(30) หากจะกล่าวถึงการศึกษาพัฒนาการเมืองไทยและกระบวนการเป็นประชาธิปไตยของไทย หนังสือเรื่อง “ประชาธิปไตยที่ไม่ตั้งมั่น” ของจิราภรณ์ คำจันทร์ เป็นผลงานล่าสุดที่มีความน่าสนใจอย่างมาก (PO-TH-JPG-7)
hāk čha klāo thung kānsuksā phatthanākān mūrang Thai læ krabūankān pen prachāthipatai
khōng Thai <s/>nangsū rūrang <s/>“prachāthipatai thī mai tung man” <s/>khōng
Čhirāphōn <s/>damčhan <s/>pen phonngān lā sut thī mī khwām nāsončhai yāng māk
If (-) talk about a study of development in Thai politics and the democratisation process of
Thailand, a book titled “democracy that is not established” by Chiraphon Damchan is the
latest work which is very interesting.

- (31) ในสถานการณ์โลกปัจจุบันที่สังคมลดทอนความรุนแรงในการเรียกร้องสิทธิและความเสมอภาคทางสังคม
อยากเห็นการนำเสนอพลเมืองเข้มแข็งที่มาจากภาพของความเป็นผู้นำภายใต้บริบทสังคมที่เอื้ออาทร
มากกว่าพลเมืองที่มาจากความขัดแย้งทางสังคมและการเมือง (PO-TH-MHR-19)
nai sathānakān lōk patčhuban thī sangkhom lot thoṅ khwāmrunrāng nai kān rīakrōng sithi
læ khwāmsamōphāk thāng sangkhom <s/>yāk hen kānnam sanō phonlamūang
khemkhæng thīmā čhāk phāp khōng khwāmpen phū nam phāitai bōribot sangkhom thī ‘ūa
‘āthoṅ <s/>māk kwā phonlamūang thīmā čhāk khwāmkhatyāng thāng sangkhom læ
kānmūang
In the current situation of the world in which society reduces violence in claiming rights
and social equality, (-) want to see an introduction of strong citizen from an image of
leadership under a context of harmonious society rather than a citizen from social and
political conflicts.

In (30) and (31), the subject *I* or ‘the reviewer’ can fill the gap, but ‘one’ and ‘we’ are also possible. As (30) is the first sentence of the review, there is no antecedent to refer to. With different subjects, the degree of commitment from the reviewer can be altered. From the reader’s perspective, it can be unclear who is responsible. That is why pro-dropping is categorised under covert authorial presence. I have found instances of pro-dropping in various Thai reviews, but almost all have co-occurrence with other types of authorial presence. The only review which does not is (30) above.

THE REVIEW

If a book is a product of an author, a review is a product of a reviewer. Book reviews represent their writers, in that the review is the medium and does the action. Nonetheless, the reviewer is the person producing the piece. (32) and (33) state the aims of the reviews, which are likely the objectives of the reviewers. (34) as an observation or (35) as qualified praise is written by their reviewers. (36) and (37) demonstrate limitations of the reviews, which are, to a certain degree, the reviewers’ excuses.

- (32) This review was aimed at finding “structures” within the interview transcripts, (R-EN-BCS-8)
- (33) บทความวิจารณ์หนังสือฉบับนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อเสนอความคิดเห็นหลังจากที่ได้อ่านหนังสือเรื่อง “กา” ซึ่งเขียนโดย วาณิช จรุงกิจอนันต์ (R-TH-JGS-13)
bot wičhān nangsū chabap nī mī wathuprasong phūa sanō khwāmkhithen langčhāk thī dai ‘ān nangsū rūang <s/>’kā’ <s/>sung khīan dōi <s/>wānit <s/>čharung kit ‘anan
This review has an objective to give an opinion after reading a book titled “Crow” written by Wanit Charungkitanan.
- (34) บทความวิจารณ์นี้ขอตั้งข้อสังเกตผลกระทบของหนังสือชุดนี้ต่อประวัติศาสตร์สองฝั่งโขงใน 3 ระดับ (IN-TH-HSJ-3)
bot wičhān nī khoṅ tang khoṅsangkēt phonkrathop khōng nangsū chut nī tōṅ prawattisāt sōng fang khōng nai sām radap
This review would like to make an observation about the effect of this book series on the history of the Mekong’s both riverbanks in 3 levels.
- (35) จากบทวิจารณ์ข้างต้นแสดงถึงเนื้อหาของหนังสือเล่มนี้มีความเหมาะสมและเพียงพอสำหรับผู้ต้องการอบรมหรือทดสอบหลักสูตร CISA Level I (BE-TH-KKB-16)

čhāk bot wičhān khāngton sadāeng thung nūrahā khoṅg nangsū lem nī mī khwām moṣom
læ phīangphō samrap phū tōṅkān ‘oprom rū thotsōp laksūt CISA Level I

From the review above (it) shows that the content of this book is suitable and sufficient for those who want to have training or test on CISA Level I.

- (36) Because of space constraints, only a few selective remarks about the textbook content and organisation will be made in this review, which will hardly do any justice to the wealth and breadth of material that the manual offers. (IN-EN-QR-7)
- (37) the space available in this review cannot afford a full exposition of all the nuances. (PO-EN-JPA-3)

Because of syntactic familiarity, a Thai can recognise “บทปริทัศน์หนังสือฉบับนี้”-/bot parithat nangsū chabap nī/-{This book review} in (38) below as a subject and agent (in the sense of the one performing the action) of the sentence. The excerpt is also ambiguous because it can be classified into the pro-dropping group:

- (38) บทปริทัศน์หนังสือฉบับนี้เขียนไม่ง่าย (PO-TH-JSR-11)
bot parithat nangsū chabap nī khīan mai ngāi
This book review (-) write not easy.
- (38a) This book review is not easy to write.
- (38b) It is not easy to write this book review.

Two viable versions of functional equivalence of (38) are (38a) and (38b). Both cases can be linked to the reviewer even though the level of obviousness might not be the same. In (38a), ‘this book review’ takes precedence, whereas in (38b), there is the implication of the reviewer as someone feeling the difficulty. (39) can be considered covert authorial presence.

- (39) It is refreshing and reassuring to note how even within enduring scholarly partnerships such as the one between Chen and Starosta, embedded in extensive exposure to Western thought and practice, non-Western alternatives still speak powerfully. (L-EN-JPR-9)

However, I did not thoroughly undertake this issue because structurally it is less discernible than other categories.

STATISTICS OF AUTHORIAL PRESENCE

To demonstrate a contrastive analysis of Thai and English academic book reviews in the five disciplines, I collected quantitative data on coding references. In Table 2, I have chosen significant aspects to report the number of reviews based on authorial presence. The groups are categorised under disciplines and corpora. A review may not be limited to one category: we find the use of both first- and third-person points of view and inclusive *we*, or the first- and third-person points of view together (although there are four cases). I report the number of the review files, not coding references of each word in the file, ranging from only one to as many as 40, especially with inclusive *we*. The number of coding references may signify the intensity of authorial presence. However, because each file does not contain the same word count, a longer file has more words, so here I give the representation per review for an overall picture.

TABLE 2. The number of book reviews with authorial presence

Group	1 st - person point of view	3 rd - person point of view	Inclusive <i>we</i>	The Review	No 1 st and 3 rd - person point of view	No 1 st , 3 rd - person point of view, and inclusive <i>we</i>	No 1 st , 3 rd - person point of view, inclusive <i>we</i> , and the review
BE-EN	9	2	6	1	10	8	8
BE-TH	6	4	5	3	10	8	8
IN-EN	9	0	10	2	11	7	6
IN-TH	2	8	8	5	11	6	5
L-EN	6	0	12	1	14	6	6
L-TH	8	0	7	0	12	7	7
PO-EN	11	0	14	1	9	3	3
PO-TH	1	8	11	4	11	6	5
R-EN	12	3	14	2	7	3	3
R-TH	0	15	15	7	5	1	1
EN	47	5	56	7	51	27	26
TH	17	35	46	19	49	28	26
BE	15	6	11	4	20	16	16
IN	11	8	18	7	22	13	11
L	14	0	19	1	26	13	13
PO	12	8	25	5	20	9	8
R	12	18	29	9	12	4	4

It is possible that a review by two reviewers has different types of inclusive *we*. However, I have double-checked that the reviews with only exclusive *we* were not counted.

Because of the nature of the book review genre, reviewers can legitimately make praise or criticism. In doing so, they can clearly present themselves in the text. As the data suggest, some of them did, but some did not. Most of the Thai reviewers did the latter more than their counterparts. Considering the discipline, I can identify that reviewers of the L field of both EN and TH evidently avoid the third-person point of view. I have noticed that reviewers in the R field provide a lot of opinions. Table 2 supports the idea that they not only reveal themselves, whether through the first or third-person points of view but also involve readers. These results change my perspective on the R field. It is not passive but more engaging. The outcome suggests that Thai reviewers prefer the third-person perspective. As a Thai, I speculate that because major pronouns are divided by gender, some neutral ones are either too formal or informal; the common practice of academic writing is still impersonal, so the reviewer chose not to use first-person pronouns. This is unlike Ivanič's (1998) approach to her writing:

On the whole I have tried to be as direct as possible, using 'I' wherever I am responsible for an action, a mental or verbal process. I am doing all I can to choose language which presents knowledge as subjective, and created by everyday inquiry, and so identifying myself with that view of knowledge (p. 31).

Davies (2012) also observes that “[a]s social scientists, for the most part we train ourselves and our students to think and write in this way. We take the personal and the emotional out, abstract them away” (p. 747). From the evidence of this study, the number of reviews from the English corpus whose reviewers present themselves with first-person pronouns is below half (47 from 100 reviews). Compared with other scholarly genres, a book review can be a more academically viable opportunity for scholars to make themselves visible and to express their opinions. There must be

some reason behind this phenomenon for authorial absence or avoidance of first-person pronouns, such as (im)politeness.

I have illustrated the presence of reviewers in the texts, inspecting how reviewers view and reveal themselves and what roles they think they have. How reviewers do so may depend on several factors, such as disciplinary practice, personal preference and linguistic limitations. For Thai, I speculate that if there is an agender pronoun suitable for academic use, reviewers potentially apply it as a coping mechanism. Since there is none, the situation ends up like what we observed from the data. In the future, if Thai academia can invent such an agender pronoun, it is also interesting to see if changes in pronoun usage will happen.

CONCLUSION

Using the concept of authorial presence by Dontcheva-Navrátilová (2013) (see also Chavez Munoz, 2013; Januarto & Hardijanto, 2020; Li, 2021), this paper examines authorial presence in academic book reviews written by Thai and international scholars in five disciplines. The two main objectives are to explicate the authorial presence in academic book reviews and to make a comparative analysis of Thai and English book reviews in five fields of study. For the first objective, I discussed relevant theoretical concepts and proposed categorisations of authorial presence (Figure 1). The second objective was fulfilled by a qualitative analysis of various examples to observe similarities and differences in the book reviews from the five disciplines and the two corpora coupled with the quantified figures in Table 2. Significant findings on exponents of authorial presence which are unique to this book review corpus are evidence of self-citation and complex use of inclusive *we*. The results also suggest that while the reviewers of the English corpus use the first-person perspective, their counterparts rely more on the third-person one. Reviewers in the R field show more involvement with the reader than in other disciplines, whereas people in linguistics all present themselves using the first-person point of view.

Despite its insights, the present study has some limitations. Although this study collected data from a ten-year period, it does not track a diachronic change. This study only focuses on authorial presence, but other participants in a book review like the book's authors and readers are equally interesting. Comparative data from other languages apart from Thai and English would also be fascinating. I expect this study to contribute to the understanding of authorial presence, which can promote readers' comprehension of the text and the position of its author. Specifically, Thai learners of English and readers or writers of academic book reviews of the two languages can gain more insights into the similarities and differences between the two groups of academic book reviews in order to raise awareness and develop greater abilities in writing an academic book review.

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