摘 要

在二语习得的过程中，写作能力的提高尤为重要。作者声音作为作者在文章中体现个人身份和观点的重要方式，受到国内外二语写作研究的广泛关注。越来越多的专家和学者开始注重探究文章中作者声音的强度与作者写作水平之间的关系。在全球化发展日趋加速的今天，国际间的交流日益加深。随着各类国际学术活动的开展，有更多的学者希望在国际舞台上展现个人的学术成果，研究生群体也不例外。越来越多的中国学生渴望在国际舞台上表达个人观点，展现个人立场。这就要求学生具备较高的英语写作水平，懂得用何种方式在英语写作中清晰且准确地表达个人想法，提升作者声音强度。与本科生相比，研究生有更高的英语水平，并且需要撰写更多的英语文章，而研究生如何在英语文章中更好地展现个人观点，阐明自身立场，表明自身态度是研究生自身需要关注的问题之一。

本研究以社会建构主义知识观及学习观为理论基础，采用定量分析和定性分析相结合的研究方法，探究了非英语专业研究生英语议论文写作中的作者声音及其与写作水平的相关性。研究随机选取了中国东北某大学 85 名非英语专业研究生为研究对象，并要求其按照指令完成一篇议论文体裁的命题作文；研究借助作者声音测量量表对研究对象所撰写的语篇分别进行了写作水平及作者声音的评判和测量，之后通过对评分者及部分学生的半结构化访谈获得质性研究数据，来分析非英语专业研究生在英语议论文写作中的作者声音。研究旨在回答三个问题：（1）非英语专业研究生在英语议论文写作中的作者声音强度如何？（2）非英语专业研究生英语写作中的作者声音总强度与写作水平有多大程度的相关性？（3）哪些有关作者声音的语言要素会影响学生的英语写作水平？

研究发现，非英语专业研究生英语议论文写作中存在着较强的作者声音。从数据分析结果及半结构化访谈可以得出，中心思想阐述、语气加强词及态度标记词对作者声音总强度影响较大，而模糊限制语对作者声音强度的影响较小。这与学生在文章中个人观点的表述方法密切相关。其次，在研究对象所撰写的英语议论文中，作者声音的总强度与写作水平显著相关。其中，与 7 项语言要素得分相加得到的作者声音总强度相比，通过评分者主观印象评定的写作声音总强度与写作水平的相关性更强。访谈数据显示在依据主观印象对写作声音进行评定时，作者的语法使用情况，词汇使用的丰富程度，以及书写工整度等其他非语言要素会

被评分者纳入评价的范围。研究同时发现，一些模板化的作文，虽涵盖了增强声音的语言要素，但并未真实体现作者对声音的构建，其作者声音强度与作者的写作水平不相关。最后，在构成作者声音的 7 项语言要素中，中心思想阐述、语气加强词、态度标记词，以及依据评分者印象评定的作者声音总强度与写作水平显著相关。通过多元回归分析得出，这 4 项要素对写作者写作水平的合力解释度为 87.8% (调整 R 方= 0.878)。这表明坚定的语气、鲜明的态度、以及对中心思想的合理表述不但增强了文章中作者声音的强度，也体现出了作者的写作水平。通过半结构化访谈得知，无论是写作水平较强或是写作水平较差的同学，都对写作内容的丰富程度十分注重，且希望通过多种语言要素表达个人立场及主观态度，充实文章内容。但学生对于如何在英语写作中合理使用模糊限制语了解甚少，主要原因一是受中文写作思维的影响，二是学生缺乏合理使用模糊限制语来增强个人观点的相关教学与训练。

在总结研究结果的基础上，本研究对非英语专业研究生的英语写作教学提出了一些建议。首先，应提高对作者声音重要性的认识。写作教学中，教师不能单纯强调语法使用是否准确、用词是否得当、语句间的衔接是否得体，应加强对声音的认识，强化对作者声音的输出，已达到有效提高学生写作水平的目的。其次，应加强对模糊限制语正确输出的训练，通过中英对比、样本学习等方式提高学生模糊限制语使用的认识，扭转中文写作模式带来的负面影响。最后，要避免学生运用模板化词句或表达进行写作，模板式写作会使学生写作思维受限，阻碍个人观点的合理展示，削弱作者声音强度的同时，无法真实体现其写作水平。对于非英语专业研究生来讲，在写作中更应重视个人观点的展现而非套路化的表达方式。英语写作教师应促使学生合理学习他人在英语写作中的表达方式，而非完全照搬照抄。本研究的研究结果丰富了中国语境下关于作者声音的实证研究，并为非英语专业研究生的英语写作教学提供了一定的参考依据。

关键字：

作者声音，非英语专业研究生，英语议论文写作，写作水平

Abstract

In the process of second language acquisition, the improvement of writing proficiency is particularly important. Authorial voice, as an important way for an author to present his writing proficiency in an article, has attracted wide attention in the academic circle. More and more experts and scholars begin to focus on how to improve the writing proficiency of the author by increasing the overall strength of authorial voice in the article. Today, with the accelerating development of globalization, international exchanges are deepening day by day. With the development of various international academic activities, more and more scholars hope to show their academic achievements on the international stage, and graduate students are no exception. More and more students are eager to stand on the international stage to express their personal views and show their personal positions. This requires students to have a high English writing proficiency, and know how to express their personal ideas clearly and accurately in English writing. Compared with undergraduates, graduate students have the higher English writing proficiency, and they need to write more English essays. It is one of the issues that graduate students need to pay attention to how to better present their personal views, clarify their own positions and show their own attitudes in English essays.

Based on the knowledge and learning notion of social constructivism, this study used a combination of quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis to explore the relationship between authorial voice and non-English major graduate students' English writing proficiency in English argumentative writing. This study selected 85 non-English major graduate students from a university in Northeast China as research subjects, research subjects were required to complete the propositional composition according to the instructions. With the help of the analysis rubric, this research rates and measures the writing proficiency and authorial voice of the essays written by the research subjects. Then, qualitative research data are obtained through semi-structured interviews with raters and some students in order to analyze authorial voice of non-English major graduate students in English argumentative writing. Specifically,

this research attempted to answer the following three questions:

1.How strong is the authorial voice of non-English major graduate students in their English argumentative writing?

2.What is the relevance between the overall strength of authorial voice of non-English major graduate students in their English argumentative writing and their English writing proficiency?

3.What elements of authorial voice will effect non-English major graduate students' English writing proficiency?

This research find that there is a strong authorial voice in non-English major graduate students' argumentative writing. From the results of data analysis and semi-structured interviews, it can be concluded that central point articulation, boosters, and attitude markers have a greater impact on the overall strength authorial voice, while hedges have little impact on authorial voice strength. This is closely related to the way students express their personal views in the essay. Secondly, in the argumentative essays written by research subjects, the overall strength of authorial voice is significantly correlated with the writing ability. Compared with the overall strength of authorial voice obtained from the total score of the seven linguistic elements, the overall strength of authorial voice rated by the raters' impression has a stronger correlation with writing proficiency. This is because in the rating of authorial voice based on raters' impression, non-linguistic elements related to writing proficiency, such as the use of grammar, the richness of vocabulary and the neat handwriting, will be included in the rating scope. At the same time, for some templated compositions, although they contain linguistic elements related to authorial voice enhancement, they do not reflect the author's construction of authorial voice and cannot reflect the author's writing proficiency. Finally, among seven linguistic elements that construct authorial voice, the central point articulation, boosters, attitude markers, and the overall strength of authorial voice which rating according to subjective impression are significantly related to writing proficiency. The results of multiple regression analysis show that the combined explanatory degree of these four linguistic elements to the author's writing proficiency is 87.8% (adjusted R squared =

0.878). This shows that the firm tone, clear attitude, and the reasonable expression of the main idea not only enhance the strength of authorial voice in the article, but also reflect authors' writing proficiency. According to the results of the semi-structured interview, whether students with good writing proficiency or poor proficiency all attach great importance to the richness of the writing content, and hope to express their personal positions and subjective attitudes through multiple linguistic elements to enrich the content of essays. However, students have little understanding of how to use hedges reasonably in English writing. The reasons are mainly as follows: One is due to the restriction of Chinese writing thinking, the other is about the lack of relevant knowledge learning. In the process of English acquisition, students have not received relevant teaching and training on how to use hedges reasonably to enhance their personal opinions.

On the basis of summarizing the results of this study, some suggestions are put forward for the teaching of English writing for non-English major graduate students. First of all, English writing teaching should raise the awareness of the importance of authorial voice. In college English writing teaching, teachers should not pay more attention to the accuracy of grammar, the appropriateness of words and the appropriateness of cohesion between sentences in English writing. College English writing teachers should strengthen the recognition of authorial voice and strengthen the output of authorial voice, so as to achieve the goal of improving students' writing proficiency. Secondly, in the teaching of English writing for non-English major graduate students, teachers should pay more attention to the output of relevant training about how to correctly use hedges in English writing. Teachers can raise students' awareness about the use of hedges through comparison between Chinese and English and writing sample learning, so as to reverse the negative effects of Chinese writing mode. Finally, the use of template should be avoid in non-English major graduate students' English writing. The use of templates will restrict students' writing thinking, make it impossible for students to reasonably present their personal views in English writing, and even affect the overall strength of authorial voice, which cannot truly reflect students' real English writing proficiency. For graduate students, they

should pay more attention to the presentation of personal views rather than the routine expression in English writing. English writing teachers should urge students to reasonably learn other people's expressions in English writing, rather than copying them completely. The results of this study enrich empirical research of authorial voice in the Chinese context and provide some reference for the teaching of English writing for non-English major graduate students.

Key Words:

authorial voice，non-English major graduate students，English argumentative writing，writing proficiency

Contents

Chapter One Introduction

1.1   Research Background

Since writing has always been a difficult aspect in language learning, the teaching of second language writing is usually regarded as the most challenging part in teaching of second language. In the past four decades, research on the second language writing at home and abroad has increased significantly, which gradually led second language writing research out of its marginal position and became an independent discipline. As increasing attention has been paid to second language writing, more and more experts and scholars are trying to find effective ways to improve students' writing ability by studying the multiple factors affecting second language writing, application of writing theory, teaching model of second language writing, multimedia writing, etc.

Although various teaching methods have been adopted in the present college English writing teaching to improve student's English writing ability, there are still many problems. Teachers often devote lots of energy and time on training students to use complex sentence structures in English writing and even propose writing samples for students to memorize. In addition, reading is often combined in the teaching of English writing. This can help with the cultivation of students' ability in discourse analysis and summarizing, but is not conductive to the presentation of their own ideas. As the core of an English argumentative essay, the author's own opinion not only reflects the author's understanding and thoughts, but also represents the writer's English writing proficiency. Especially for graduate students, mastering the skills of expressing their own opinions is not only beneficial to increase their English writing proficiency, but also conducive to meeting their wishes of presenting academic achievements on the international stage and communicate with scholars from other countries. But as far as graduate students themselves are concerned, even though they have a large vocabulary in English, they still feel confused about how to choose the

right words in order to accurately express their views. Especially when non-English major graduate students write academic papers in English, some of them even are used to write papers in Chinese and then translate them into English. The difference between English and Chinese determines that such a translation method obviously cannot enable the author to express his personal views accurately in the English paper.

As experts and scholars are trying to find more effective ways to improve non-English major graduate students' English writing proficiency, Voice, a comprehensive concept, which is used to describe the degree to which an author presents his or her own point of view in writing, has attracted the attention of many experts and scholars. It has rapidly become an important topic in second language research and pedagogy (Zhang & Zhan, 2020). However, there are few empirical research on authorial voice. Most of these empirical studies choose English majors and undergraduates as research subjects, ignoring the relationship between the intensity of authorial voice and English writing proficiency of non-English major graduate students. Meanwhile, the desire of these students to express their own views in English writing is increasingly strong. so how to guide non-English major graduate students to show authorial voice in English writing is particularly important. Therefore, the introduction of authorial voice into college English writing teaching can change current situation, thus gradually improve the traditional English writing teaching mode. When students understand the composition of the linguistic elements of authorial voice, they can better express their personal opinions in English writing.

1.2 Objective of the Research

On the basis of this background, this research tends to explore how non-English major graduate students in China construct their authorial voice in their English argumentative writing. The purpose of this research is to explore the characteristics of authorial voice construction and the total intensity of authorial voice in non-English major graduate students' argumentative writing. This research will focus on analyzing the effect of various relevant linguistic elements on the strength of authorial voice in English argumentative writing. And based on the data obtained through the

experimental research, this research will compare and analyze the correlation between the authorial voice strength of students and the students' writing proficiency in English argumentative writing. In the end, based on the final results of the research, the research will put forward some suggestions for the teaching of English writing for non-English major graduate students in order to achieve the purpose of improving students' English writing proficiency.

1.3 Significance of the Research

By choosing non-English major graduate students as the research subject, this study tends to explore their total strength of authorial voice through principal components analysis, multiple regression method, and semi-structured interviews. The results of the study will be conducive to enriching relevant research on authorial voice, and provide a reference for the detection method of authorial voice. Meanwhile the results of the research can also be taken as evidence to prove the relationship between graduate students' authorial voice and English writing proficiency, and consequently the importance of authorial voice in the study of English writing, so as to arouse attention from experts and scholars to authorial voice research, and verify the value and feasibility of authorial voice in English teaching.

With more attention has been paid to English writing, it is of great significance to explore teaching methods to improve students' writing proficiency. The exploration of students' authorial voice is of great practical significance to English writing teaching. However, there are relatively few empirical studies on the strength of authorial voice in students' English argumentative writing. Through studying authorial voice in English argumentative writing of non-English major graduate students, this thesis provide reference for the development of more effective college English writing teaching, especially of the non-English major graduate students, so as to improve students' English writing proficiency, evoke both students and teachers awareness of the significance in presenting writers' own opinions in English writing in order to be recognized internationally.

1.4   Organization of the Thesis

This paper is composed of six chapters, including introduction, literature review, theoretical basis, research methodology, results and discussion, and conclusion. Detailed content of each chapter is given as follows:

Chapter One briefly introduces the background of the present study, the objectives and significance of the study as well as the organization of the whole paper.

Chapter Two provides a comprehensive literature review of previous research relevant to authorial voice in writing from the start of voice research to the general research tendencies. The main sections include the original of the voice concept, relevant research about voice in second language writing both at home and aboard, and measuring the voice strength in second language writing.

Chapter Three focuses on the theoretical basis of voice research. The different perspectives of defining voice will be explained at first. After that the theory of learning notion and the knowledge notion of social constructivism will be talked about as well.

Chapter Four presents the methodology and procedure of the research. Research questions are claimed at first, and then the detailed information of the research instruments is introduced which is followed by the data analysis.

Chapter Five is the core section of this thesis which reports the results of the data analysis from the empirical study of authorial voice strength and the graduate students' writing proficiency in EFL writing. And based on the research questions mentioned previously the statistical results and findings will be discussed.

Chapter Six makes a conclusion by summarizing the major findings, providing teaching implications and discussing the limitations of the present study. In the end, some suggestions are also put forward for future studies.

Chapter Two Literature Review

The term "voice" is often used to refer to the way writers express their personal views, authoritativeness, and presence (Hyland, 2008). In 2001, the international authoritative journal *Journal of Second Language Writing* released a special issue of the research on voice. The publication of this special issue marks the significance for the study of voice. In this special issue Paul Matsuda presented an empirical research on voice and together with it a definition of voice. This definition has been widely recognized by the academia. The release of this special issue indicates the enthusiasm of the academia to the research of voice and the diverse research perspectives of it. Generally speaking, relevant researches of voice mainly focus on the following three aspects: the construction of voice in writing in the process of second language writing, the elements that make up voice in second language writing, and the exploration of the correlation between voice in writing and text quality.

2.1 Relevant Studies of Authorial Voice Abroad

Voice has aroused considerable attention in second language writing (SLW) research in recent years. Relevant studies abroad mainly focus on the following aspects: measuring of authorial voice in writing, linguistic features of voice identified, study of the writer's role in the text, the relationship between voice and writing proficiency, and the impact of sociocultural environment on voice construction. Following is a detailed review of the above aspects.

2.1.1 Measuring of Authorial Voice in Writing

How to measure authorial voice in writing? In this regard, scholars have divergent opinions about it, and there were no uniform and effective criteria for a long time. The research of Helms-Park and Stapleton broke the deadlock. They were the first to use empirical research methods to test the correlation between authorial voice and the quality of the text in the second language argumentation writing of

undergraduates in a Canadian college. In their research, they found that students generally prefer to use assertiveness to show their firmer stand, and they like using different expressions in the text to reiterate their main points. Based on the related theory of voice in writing and the results obtained through empirical research, they formulated the "intensity criteria of the voice in writing." The criteria mainly measure the strength of authorial voice in the text from five dimensions: "Assertiveness", "Self-identification", "Central Point", "Authorial Presence", "Overall Voice Intensity" (Helms-Park & Stapleton, 2003). Their "Writing Sound Intensity Measurement Criteria" composed of these five dimensions once became authoritative measurement criteria for testing voice in writing. Despite the fact that their theory was widely recognized in academia at that time, their theory also has some limitation in emphasizing the effect of the author's personal expression in the text on voice in writing, while the effect of readers' feedback and author's personal background on voice in writing are not taken into account.

In order to remedy the limitation of Helms-Park and Stapleton's theory, Hyland (2008) proposed a set of more comprehensive criteria. He believed that authorial voice can be the essential interaction factor between writers and readers in academic writing. Based on this thinking, he raised an interactional model of voice in writing. This interactional model of voice in writing comprises two major dimensions One is "stance", i.e. the way in which the author presents himself, expresses his position and views. Hedges, tone intensifiers, attitude markers and self-mention are included in this dimension. The second dimension is "reader engagement", which refers to the author's invitation to readers to participate in the construction of a discourse, which is embodied in readers' personal pronouns, personal comments, consensus citations, direction-oriented words and rhetorical questions. Obviously, Hyland's interactional model of voice in writing recognized the individual side of voice through the author's position. At the same time, through the reader's participation, the relationship between voice in writing and the readers' response has also been emphasized. In addition, the relationship between the author's social participation and the strength of voice is shown. The proposal of this model resolves to some extent the debate between the

expressionist school and the social constructivist school about the individualization and socialization of "voice". Hyland pointed out that individualized voice and socialized voice are two sides of the same coin, and the relationship between the two is inseparable (Hyland, 2012). Hyland's interactional model gives learners and teachers a deeper understanding of the issues of voice in writing. However, the model does not address how to detect the relationship between linguistic elements that constitute voice and the writer's writing proficiency and the intensity of voice is not clearly defined either.

In order to test whether linguistic elements in Hyland's interactional model can provide a reliable and valid measure of the strength of an authorial voice in second language argumentative writing, Zhao (2013) carried out an empirical research. She developed and validated the analytic rubric that measures voice strength in second language writing based on categories from Hyland's interactional model. For validation purposes, a total of 480 argumentative writing samples were selected for the research. According to the frequency of each linguistic element in writing samples, authorial voice strength reflected by each linguistic element was evaluated. In this new analytic voice rubric, linguistic elements like questions, knowledge reference, and personal asides were excluded because of their rate and skewed occurrences. Subsequently, by using quantitative (factor analysis) and qualitative research methods (think-aloud and interview sessions), three dimensions of this new analytic voice rubric was established. They are (1) presence and clarity of ideas (ideational dimension), (2) manner of idea presentation (affective dimension), and (3) writer and reader presence (presence dimension). Through the qualitative ratings of voice strength from this new three-dimensional rubric, the validity of the new analytic rubric was confirmed. The proposed new analytic voice rubric highlighted the effect of linguistic elements on authorial voice strength. The validity of Hyland's interactional model was verified, and the impact of linguistic elements on authorial voice strength was also distinguished. The three dimensions of this new analytic voice rubric were elicited to represent distinctive aspects of voice, and shared construct of voice strength. However, the relationship between the total intensity of authorial voice

7

and text quality is not further clarified. More empirical studies are needed to verify the reliability of the three dimensions of this new rubric and to explore the relationship between total intensity of authorial voice and the writer's writing proficiency.

To verify the reliability of the new analytic voice rubric for measuring authorial voice strength and to explore the salience of authorial voice in English argumentative discourse, Zhao (2017) used the new voice analytic rubric in another research to analyse 212 official TOEFL IBT independent English argumentative essays. As a result, she found that each of the three voice dimensions was significantly and positively correlated with text quality (the three voice dimensions together were able to predict 25% of the variance in independent English argumentative writing scores). Voice measured by the ideational dimension was most strongly interrelated with L2 argumentative essay quality. The ideational dimension functions as the significant predictor of text quality. On the basis of these findings, she argued that the construction of authorial voice should not be limited to the quantity of textual voice element. Students should also be given more opportunities to learn how to strengthen the expression of personal views in English argumentative essays for strong authorial voice construction.

Zhao's (2017) research further confirms that the importance of voice in L2 writing. The significant relationship between voice and text quality was highlighted. At the same time, the reliability of the new analytic voice rubric was determined. A new research instrument can be used for further empirical study of authorial voice strength detection. The finding of Zhao's (2017) research offer valuable insight into the concept of voice that puts idea development as the central dimension of voice strength. It also makes the uniqueness of a central point and the clarity of an overall message   important signs of strong voice, and provides a reference for the future study of voice strength.

To sum up, the importance of voice in second language writing has been highlighted with the updating of the measurement standards of voice strength. The measurement standards of voice strength are gradually standardized, and the

dimensions of voice are gradually broadened. The new analytic voice rubric proposed by Zhao (2013) provides a reference for future empirical research on voice strength. It has prompted more experts and scholars to use this new analytic voice rubric as a reference to explore the intensity of voice displayed by different subjects in different texts.

2.1.2　Linguistic Features of Voice Identified

Researches on linguistic features of voice identified are mainly focused on the following three aspects: the relationship between stance and voice, the effect of the first person pronoun on the strength of voice, and the identifying of hedges in the analysis of voice.

The terms stance and voice seem closely related. Stotesbury (2006) first defined the relationship between stance and voice in his research. He explored the relationship between personal stance and voice by comparing the explicit presence of authors in abstracts of papers in *Economic Sciences*. As a result, he found that in the writing of the abstract, voice is expressed by the use of first person pronouns. To some extent, voice is regarded as personal stance. In Stotesbury's (2006) research, the relationship between stance and voice is tentatively revealed, but it is not rigorous to equate the nature of these two linguistic elements. In 2008, based on 30 abstracts from three journals, Pho (2008) explored the linguistic realizations of moves and authorial stance in different abstract moves. He used both the term "authorial voice" and "authorial stance" to make a distinction between these two linguistic elements. The results also indicated that authorial voice and authorial stance remained relatively independent, but the combination of certain linguistic features can help distinguish moves in the abstract. His research makes up for the deficiency of Stotesbury's (2006) research, and makes the combined effect of voice and stance prominent but separates the connection between them. Thompson (2012) furthered the research in this direction by proposing a three-level model of stance and voice when examining PhD theses. In his research, he described stance as an aspect of voice, and the effect of the stance was also emphasized. Stance contributed to the impression of the writer in the text. On the

basis of his research, Hyland (2012) further clarified the relationship between voice and stance. Hyland (2012) pointed out that voice is broader than stance. "Voice concerned the control of stance which readers recognize as legitimate and authoritative." Hyland's views on voice and stance have been widely accepted by the academic community. It also provides a reference for future research, by directing more experts and scholars to explore the total intensity of voice through author's personal stance.

The focus on first person pronouns as a feature of voice seems to have contributed to the confusion about the concept of voice and reducing voice to debates about the use of "I" (Stock & Eik-Nes, 2016). Stapleton (2002) has been critical of writing researches for overemphasizing the first person pronoun "I" as the key to voice expression. However, he also pointed out the importance of using the first person pronoun "I" correctly and as a powerful tool to express voice. Although Stapleton (2002) highlights the role of "I" in expressing voice, he ignores the synergistic effects of other factors on the use of "I". Hewings & Coffin (2007) believed that the simultaneous use of the first person pronoun "I" and psychological verbs such as "think" and "believe" can effectively invite readers to participate in the discussion about the content of the article and give readers the possibility of holding different opinions. In general, first person pronouns have some strengthening effect on voice strength. But the effect of first person pronouns on voice should not be overemphasized. As an important linguistic element to show voice strength, first person pronouns should be used reasonably with other linguistic elements to enhance the total intensity of voice.

However, the identifying of hedges has caused problems in the analysis of voice. Helms-Park and Stapleton (2003) took hedges as a sign of weakness of voice. Pho (2008) found that hedges play different functions in different steps of the abstract. Gross & Chesley (2012) believed that the use of hedges is a way for paper writers to comply with the norms of scientific conduct, and that researchers can use them to present research results with caution and to demonstrate the skepticism emphasized by the scientific community. Zhao (2012) also found that in the empirical study,

article reviewers believed that the less use of hedges was a sign of authorial voice indicating the author's confidence in his/her arguments. As the mentioned above, the relationship between the use of hedges and voice construction is unclear. Therefore, more empirical studies are needed to verify the impact of hedges on voice strength.

Other linguistic elements have also attracted the attention of experts and scholars in measuring authorial voice in writing. In an empirical research, Fløttum (2010) explored how writers construct voice explicitly or implicitly through the use of referential expression and "not", "but" in writing. Hewings & Coffin (2007) believes that the author uses the impersonal construct like "it" in the article to express an objective position. This expression is a manifestation of authoritative voice output. Castelló et al (2012) took the dialogue between the author and the cited, the author's explicit position in writing and the tone intensifier as indicators to measure the quality of the text. Thompson (2012) explained the hierarchical nature of voice, describing how doctoral students interactively used averral and attribution at the propositional level, and explored how doctoral students use metalanguage to build authoritative voices in their papers. The above studies have enriched the studies on linguistic features of voice identified and explored other linguistic elements that impact voice. This also broadens the impact of different linguistic elements on voice strength.

In general, different understandings of the concept of voice lead researchers to focus on different linguistic elements. But it must be admitted that this kind of research helps writers to realize the function of each linguistic element in constructing different voice in different contexts, and also helps to answer the long-standing discussion about teachability and learnability of voice in the field of voice research. At the same time, the analysis of voice construction in texts through linguistic elements is also conducive to exploring which elements affect voice construction in articles.

2.1.3 Study of the Writer's Role in the Text

By studying writer's role in the text, this group of researchers aims to explore how authors represent their own views in text for different purposes. According to

different writing content, the writer will adjust the vocabulary and grammar used in the writing, so as to better present his personal point. While the author is presenting his own opinion, he is also shaping the role he plays in the article. Different viewpoints expressed by authors in different identities are also conducive to exploring the strength of their voices reflected in the article.

In his research of 2010, Fløttum (2010) studied the author's usage of first-person pronouns and verbs in the text and concluded that they determine the roles of the writer in the article, such as an author, a researcher, a debater, and a critic. He found that when representational structures such as *I summarize* and *I describe* appear, the writer identifies himself as the "author" of the article. However, when *I argue*, *I claim* representation structure appears, the author identifies himself as a "debater" of the article. Positioning the author's identity through similar representational structure is conducive to accurately catching the author's personal views expressed in the article. Fløttum (2010) was the first to combine first-person pronouns with the use of verb to explore the construction of the writer's role in articles. But Fløttum (2010) just took the first-person pronouns as the marker for the author to build the role in the article, which limited the construction of the author's role in the article. In the different sections, the author had the selectivity on the use of first-person pronouns. Therefore, when analyzing the construction of the author's role in the article, the author's expression in different sections should be combined to carry out the analysis.

In consistence with Fløttum, Bondi (2012) also found that in humanities and social science academic writing, writers portray the roles of "narrator", "interpreter" and "academic debater" to convey different voices. For different modules of academic writing, the writer will use different narratives and express different voices. The role created by the writer cannot be defined solely in terms of the different representational structures used. The shaping of the writer's role needs to be determined by combining different expressions in different modules of the writer's article. Base on the research of Bondi (2012), Dontcheva-Navratilova (2012) broadened his research into the field of natural science. According to different degrees of authority he proposed the

following roles of writers: "representative" of the academic field, "discourse organizer" to guide readers, "narrator", "viewpoint holder" and "viewpoint initiator" of the research process. He also pointed out that that in different situations the author constructs different characters, resulting in different voice expressed by the author.

By exploring the different roles created by the author in the article which serve for clarifying the author's central idea, this group of researchers further the study on voice in writing. Through different forms of expression in the text showing different characteristics, readers can make an accurate positioning of the writers according to their expressions. Based on the role created by the writer in the article, readers can more accurately capture voice of the writer in the article, and better grasp the main idea of the whole article. In general, by shaping the role of the author in the article, the authorial voice will have a certain special attribute. It also allows readers to more intuitively capture the characteristics of authorial voice.

2.1.4   The Relationship Between Voice and Writing Proficiency

The importance of authorial voice is widely recognized in writing tests in the United States (Zhao, 2013). But the relationship between authorial voice and writing proficiency is unclear. In this regard, many experts and scholars have made many positive and beneficial explorations.

Zhao & Llosa (2008) found that the overall strength of voice in the text was significantly correlated with the quality of the text. Taking the scale designed by Helms-Park & Stapleton (2003) as the reference, they designed their own voice strength scale, which also included four dimensions. Among the four dimensions, only the degree of self-identification is not significantly related to writing proficiency. The overall strength of voice could predict 38.2% of the difference in the score of texts, and the four dimensions explained 61% of the variance in the score of texts. However, only the number of restatements of major ideas was significant. This indicated that a high-quality argumentative essay needs to have a clear point of view, and the use of the other three dimensions of linguistic elements should be based on the specific writing context. The research of Zhao & Llosa (2008) served as an important step in

the study of the relationship between authorial voice and writing proficiency. However, as far as the study itself was concerned, the correlation between the four dimensions was not determined. The definition of the number of repetitions of the central idea is not very accurate either. The repetition of a central idea using the same expression can also be seen as an enhancement of the intensity of authorial voice, and should be further discussed.

In order to make up the deficiencies in the above research, Zhao conducted a further study on the relationship between voice strength and writing proficiency. Based on the interaction model of Hyland (2008), Zhao (2013) developed and verified the itemized scoring criteria for the intensity of voice. This criterion involves nine language elements, such as hedges, boosters, attitude markers, author self-mention, and the expression of central ideas. The results show that voice is mainly represented by the clarity of the idea, the way of the idea presented, and the interaction between the author and the reader. The result of validity test shows that the revised score criterion has a high validity and can explain 90% of the overall intensity of voice. Zhao's research makes the relationship between voice strength and writing proficiency clearer. This new analytic rubric is accepted by many researchers to measure the total strength of authorial voice.

In consistence with Zhao, Yoon (2017) also made innovations in research instrument. He designed an automated processing tool, the Authorial Voice Analyzer (AVA), which was developed based on categories from Hyland's voice model. He used AVA to analyze the quantitative characteristics of each sound element in L2 argumentative essays. The results show that there is a weak to moderate positive correlation between the quantized value and the overall strength of voice. Booster attitude markers and self-mention accounted for 26% of the overall strength of voice. Only hedges were weakly correlated with article quality, while other linguistic elements were not significantly correlated with text quality. However, this study only focused on the time-restricted argumentative writing of advanced L2 learners. Whether its conclusions can be widely generalized remains to be discussed. In addition, Although the AVA test method is convenient and quick, it may be different

from artificial cognition, which needs to be further verified by future researchers.

As the result of these researches, the correlation between voice and writing proficiency has gradually been recognized. Voice, which is composed of multiple language elements is closely related to the writer's writing proficiency. Exploring the relationship between voice and writing proficiency from multiple dimensions not only enriches previous relevant studies about writing, but also offers the reference for the further research about relationship between voice and writing ability in different dimensions. The selection of different research subjects is conducive to exploring the universality of the existence of voice strength and its effect on the quality of writing.

2.1.5   The Impact of Sociocultural Environment on Voice Construction

As the focus of the debate between expressionism and social constructivism, an author's social background has always been regarded as an important factor in the construction of voice in writing. Some experts and scholars believe that the writer's social and cultural background is an important factor in determining voice, and even affects the expression of the writer's personal opinions in the text. L2 learners will be greatly influenced by the cultural background of their mother tongue in their second language writing. However, some experts believe that L2 learners' social and cultural background is not the determinate factor of voice. No matter what cultural background the writer comes from, it does not affect the expression of the writer's personal point of view in the text. In order to verify the rationality of this statement, many scholars have conducted empirical studies to confirm the influence of social and cultural background on voice.

Matsuda & Tardy (2007, 2009) emphasized the importance of reader in the process of constructing voice. In the research in 2007, they found that the reviewers' attention to voice and the author's personal identity obviously existed in the whole reviewing process, and the author's identity would be constructed through a variety of verbal and non-verbal factors. Moreover, voice would directly impact the readers' positioning of the author's identity and characteristics, and then impact the evaluation of the quality of the manuscript. However, the scale of this study is small, and the data

source is only limited to a periodical manuscript review process in the research field of rhetoric and the writing of high-level L1 writers. The generalization of the theory is not strong. Later in another empirical study, they found that the authors' identity, (such as industry experience, academic background, language background, nationality, gender, membership, education level, ethnic background and age), manuscript of discourse characteristics (e.g., sentence structure, the degree of careful editing and writing style) and the discourse characteristics (such as the breadth and depth of knowledge, topic selection, field characterization, the description of the research background, theoretical framework and research methods, etc.) all of these were identified by members of the editorial board of an international journal as important aspects of voice. However, the reviewers will also project their own different experiences into the feedback discourse, presenting individual differences in voice construction. Matsuda and Tardy's research reveals that the construction of voice is not limited to the author, the bilateral interaction between the author and the reader contributes to the construction of voice. These two researches verify the significance of the bilateral interaction between writer and reader which is emphasized by the social constructivist school for the construction of voice.

The impact of other social factors on voice construction is also catching the attention of the researchers of voice. The case study of Canagarajah (2015) reflected that in the process of voice construction, subjects would combine their multiple identities and classroom resources (such as classroom environment, teachers, etc.). The results showed that the classroom resources and dialogue interaction enhanced the students' awareness of voice, promoted the teachers' understanding of voice construction, and made the subjects more aware of the conflict and possibility of different components in their voice. Jwa (2018) chose the papers of American college students as the research material and explored the complex process of constructing voice of novices in second language writing through text analysis and semi-structured interviews. In the study, the researchers compared voice that the writer wanted to make in the paper with voice that two readers felt when they read the paper anonymously. The results show that there is a wide gap between writers' goals and

readers' responses which stem from different people's views of voice, the specific language they use, and different social and cultural backgrounds. Zhao (2019) analyzed the influence of variables related to the social background of L2 writers (such as age, gender, cultural background, L1, and the writer's exposure time to the target language and culture) on the strength of voice. The results show that although the coefficients between some of the relevant variables and sound intensity are statistically significant, the values are low and have a limited effect on voice construction. In general, learners whose mother tongue belongs to the Indo-European language family and who have been exposed to English and culture for a long time show more confidence in their writing, and are relatively more individualized and reader-aware.

To sum up, different experts and scholars have drawn different conclusions through different empirical studies, but they all prove the influence of writers' social and cultural background on voice construction. Detailed analysis from the perspective of multiple linguistic elements also provides a reference for in-depth exploration of the relationship between social environment background and voice.

2.2   Relevant Studies of Authorial Voice at Home

Compared with research abroad, domestic research on authorial voice just started recently. Although the amount is relatively small, it is attracting more researchers' interest. Some of the researches are empirical research on authorial voice of second language writing (Liu & Liang, 2019). Based on the current development of Chinese second language writing, some Chinese experts and scholars devote themselves to do theoretical researches on the authorial voice.

The empirical researches of authorial voice at home

In China, researches on authorial voice mainly focus on linguistic elements that constitute authorial voice.Through the combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis, researchers explore the composition of authorial voice in research subjects' written texts. Ouyang and Tang (2006) took the use of personal pronouns, "I" and "you" in Chinese college students' English argumentation essays as examples.

Through quantitative and qualitative instruments, they explored the embodiment of "authorship" in Chinese college students' English argumentative writing from a cultural perspective. The author pointed out that from the perspective of the textual function and semantic meaning of the two pronouns "you" and "I", Chinese students tend to use the "hidden me" to present their personal opinions in order to meet the requirements. Chinese students are accustomed to using the "inclusive you" to align and empathize their views with others, showing a strong "collective voice". This is in contrast to the "voice" propagated under the mainstream Western ideology. Although the research is aimed at Chinese college students' use of specific pronouns in argumentative essays and analyzes their authorship in English argumentative essay writing, it mainly focuses on cultural speculations in the general sense, and does not affect the language elements of Chinese college students' authorial voice in writing. In summary, the results of the study are more general. As the first group of scholars to explore authorial voice in China, Ouyang and Tang (2006) first analyzed the strength and weakness of authorial voice in English writing from the perspective of language elements. In this study, they identified that self-mention in English writing is a key factor effecting the strength of authorial voice. This study lays the foundation for future research on the related linguistic elements that impact the strength of authorial voice. However, the study only uses the frequency of the author's self-mention in English articles to represent the overall strength of authorial voice, which makes authorial voice not comprehensive enough.

In order to explore the linguistic elements of authorial voice more comprehensively, Liu (2007) based on the "Measurement Standards of Voice Intensity" proposed by Helms-Park and Stapleton, refined the concept of "voice" into four linguistic features. They were namely certainty, self-dominance, quotation of idioms and directness. She established a small-scale comparative corpus of Chinese and Western argumentative essays, and conducted a comparative analysis of various variables. The statistical results of the research confirm that there were significant differences between Chinese EFL college students and English-speaking authors in many aspects of "voice" in the argument; while the level of students' English

proficiency has little effect on the quality of voice. She claimed that the difference between Chinese and Western cultures has an impact on the author's self-construction in their texts; and "voice" has cultural attributes (Liu, 2007). This research refines the linguistic representation of voice, but only retrieves the relevant variables from the corpus for analysis, which has certain limitations in research tools and data.

Yu & Cao (2015) referred to the empirical research on voice abroad and improved the research instruments. They selected 39 English argumentative essays of English major graduate students as the research subjects, and analyzed the intensity of authorial voice. They used Zhao's voice analysis rubric as a tool of measurement (Zhao, 2013), deleted the "non-individualized" voice element, and added "passive voice" and "quotation", the two types of linguistic elements that negatively affect the "individualized voice". They found that among the various language elements, central idea elaboration and hedges have the strongest interpretation of writing proficiency; intensive particle, attitude markers and self-mentioned words have the most prominent influence on individual voice (Yu & Cao, 2015). This research not only tested voice analysis rubric proposed by Zhao (2013), but also clarified the relationship between the overall strength of voice and the writing proficiency. This research provides some reference for the demonstration of voice in the future.

In general, empirical studies on authorial voice in China have proved the existence of authorial voice in English texts written by Chinese students. The study of the strength authorial voice also indirectly proves that authorial voice has a certain influence on the writing proficiency of Chinese students. Linguistic elements that have a strong impact on the strength of Chinese writers' authorial voice are also highlighted in these studies. All of these provide reference for the follow-up studies on authorial voice of Chinese second language learners.

The theoretical researches of authorial voice at home

There are also some theoretical researches on the authorial voice in China, which mainly focus on the composition of authorial voice and the impact of authorial voice on ESL writing. Wu (2010) pointed out that there were obvious differences in attitude markers, hedges and authors' self-mention in English and Chinese papers. Xu (2013)

found that in general, the use of interventional markers in student papers was significantly fewer than those in journal papers, while the use of directive markers was just the opposite. Xu and Gong (2014) pointed out that the number of sensory evidences (such as "It can be seen that" or "X said…") and repetitors (such as "X argued that") used in student papers were significantly more than those in journal papers, while the use of belief evidences (such as "I believe") and inferential evidences (such as modal verbs or "It is possible that…") was completely opposite. Xu (2015) found that the elements of expressing the author's position in the dissertations of English majors at all stages were significantly fewer than those in international journal papers.

To sum up, domestic research on voice in writing has just started and empirical research on authorial voice of writing is still lacking. Among the limited empirical research, less attention is paid to the expression of authorial voice of non-English major graduate students. Authorial voice is an important way for writers to express their own identity. The lack of relevant domestic research and the differences in conclusions make further research necessary. Therefore, this research will take one step further by carrying out empirical research on the basis of previous research, and enrich the research of authorial voice in English writing from the perspective of non-English majored graduate students' ESL argumentative writing

Chapter Three Theoretical Basis

3.1　The Origin of Voice Concept

The concept of voice originated in literary criticism. Bakhtin, the representative of the field of literary criticism, was the first to point out the effect of voice on text. Bakhtin believed that there are no voiceless words that belong to no one. Each word contains voices that are sometimes infinitely distant, unnamed, almost impersonal (voices of lexical shadings, of styles, and so forth), almost undetectable, and voices resounding nearby and simultaneously. In the dialogic relation, voice always retains its value and its meaning (Bakthin, 1986). To certain extent, Bakhin identified the existence of voice in text. But his claim on the existence of voice is on the theoretical level, and is not measured through the empirical research. In addition, he did not define voice strength in his research.

In 1990, Holquist further developed Bakthin's research and his findings. He explored voice in the text in much more depth based on Bakthin's researches on voice in the text. Holquist argued that the selection of the words is one of the important factors that effects voice strength in the text. The factors that affect the word selection mainly come from the following two aspects: the author's personal social status and the particular circumstances of the author. Among them, culture background has the greatest impact. Inheriting and developing Bakthin's research on voice in the text, Holpuist put forward his own views on the presentation of voice in the text by combing the relevant text analysis. Compared with Bakthin, Holpuist combined voice in the text with the author's personal conditions, and he also gave a brief introduction of the factors that affect the strength of voice in the text.

In 1994, Elbow did a systemic research on voice in the text. He pointed out that voice is an individual trait and that voice strength is closely related not only to the social environment in which the author lives, but also to the communication relationship between the author and the reader. In Elbow's research, he argued that

internal feature of voice in the text can be unearthed from the writer's practice of expressive writing. Voice is a representation of the author's personal views in the text (Elbow, 1994).

To sum up, Bakhtin (1986) first raised the concept of voice in the research of literary criticism. In his research, he affirmed that voice exist in the text. Subsequently, Holquist (1990) inherited and developed Bakthin's research, he pointed out that the selection of the words is one of the important factors that affect voice strength in the text. He also emphasized the effect of the author's cultural background on his the selection of the words. Elbow (1994) was the first to take the voice concept into the study of writing. In his research, he emphasized the relationship between the author's personal expression and voice in the text. By pointing out that voice is an individual trait, Elbow laid a foundation for the future research of voice in second language writing.

3.2   Different Perspectives of Defining Voice in SLW

The concept of voice originated from the dialogue theory represented by Bakhtin. As a basic concept of this theory, voice refers to the speaker's presence in a certain utterance or text (Mei, 2012). Since 1990s, the study of voice and identity in the field of second language writing has attracted the attention and discussion of scholars. However, there are still great controversies about the definition of voice since the production of voice is closely related to personal character factors, and is also inseparable from the effect of the social environment.

Although the complexity of voice makes it difficult to be defined, there are still many valuable attempts. According to their different theoretical focuses, it can be roughly divided into two camps: Expressivism and Social Constructivism.

Under the influence of Western mainstream ideology, the Expressivism believes that voice is the embodiment of personal ideology. Under the writing environment, the author will use a variety of skills in his writing to clarify his own writing intentions, explain his personal opinions, and express his own thoughts. Authorial voice in writing is what the author wants to express in writing. The strength of voice in writing

is a comprehensive manifestation of the author's expressive ability and writing techniques (Elbow, 1968). A good writing idea should fully reflect the writer's way of thinking, show his or her basic personality qualities, and allow readers to understand the author's writing intentions and listen to authorial voice in writing by reading articles (Stewart, 1972). The Expressivism believes that voice is a metaphorical concept, referring to the personal existence that readers can perceive when reading the text (Bowden, 1999). Personal existence is a broad concept. This sense of existence includes the expression of the author's personal emotions in the article as well as the character image created by the author in the writing process.

On the other hand, the social constructivism has different standards for defining voice in writing. The social constructivism believes that language itself is a product of society and culture, so the concept of voice is usually a social summary and cannot exist independently. In 1992, Ede, a representative of social constructivism, put forward the concept of "situational voice". In his research, he pointed out that the different writing structures selected by the authors are due to the different situations in which the authors are located. In the article, different character needs different situational atmosphere to set off. Authorial voice of writing also relies on different situations to show (Ede, 1992).

In response to the above two viewpoints, some scholars have also put forward a relatively neutral viewpoint. Voice is not only a manifestation of personal characteristics, but also a product of socialization (Prior, 2001). Authorial voice in writing is not only an expression of the author's own views, but also an expression that conforms to a specific social situation. In 1994, Yancy proposed the concept of "multiple voices". He claimed that human personality is inherently complex and changeable, and according to different social environments, people will have different verbal expressions. It is impossible for the author to make only one voice in his writing (Yancy, 1994). This theory is quite similar to "Polyphonic theory", which was proposed by Bakhtin in 1929, that voice is the product of multiple factors (Bakhtin, 1929).

Other scholars have defined voice from the perspective of development. In a

given social background, the author uses language that is consistent with social conditions and cultural background. But even under such conditions, language has always been developing and changing. Therefore, the presentation of authorial voice intensity in writing is not only related to the author's personal writing ability, but also closely related to the developing and changing language (Cummins, 1994). Further complicating the definition of voice, Prior drew on socio-historic theory (particularly that of Voloshinov and Bakhhtin), and argued for a third view in which voice is simultaneously personal and social because discourse is understood as fundamentally historical, situated, and indexical (Prior, 2001). In particular, he explored three key ways that voice may be understood: "voice as a typification linked to social identities; voice as the reen-voicing of others' words in texts through processes of repetotion of persons presupposition, and voice as linked to the situated production of presons' and social formations". (Prior, 2001). Prior highlights the properties of voice from a sociolinguistic perspective, and also laid a foundation for later studies on the definition of voice from the perspective of sociolinguistics.

Based on different theoretical perspective, researchers offered various definitions of voice in SLW with each a solid and rational ground. However, the definition of voice presented by Matsuda (2001) is the most widely accepted in academia. Taking Bowden's words as an important sign of the appearance of voice that voice carries with it connotations of an authentic and unitary self in Individualism, Academic Writing, and ESL Writers (Bowden, 1999), he emphasized the existence of a coherent and autonomous self.: "Meanwhile, Matsuda argued that the unified and coherent self cannot valorize individualism in L2 writing. As a second language learner, in the process of expressing self, he/she will use normative expression in the second language, but they will also be influenced by their mother tongue. Matsuda also made a supplementary explanation through his own experience studying in the United States. To him "being yourself" in L2 writing means his Japanese self. But he needs to use certain expressions in English to express his Japanese self. "The expression of self was not granted in a particular communicative ideology such as Western individualism. The existence of unified and coherent self in L2 writing is a

demonstration of comprehensive effect that the author combines his personal background and the expression of second language" Matsuda (2001) said.

Concerning voice construction, he holds that it is not only impacted by social environment, but also by individual ideology. Under different social and cultural backgrounds, the authors are affected differently and will construct different voice. In writing, the writer will consciously or unconsciously use expressions in the familiar social context to construct voice. In order to test the accuracy of the above viewpoints, Matsuda chose Japanese electronic texts as the research subject and explored the voice construction in these texts. He took self-referential pronouns and sentence-final particles as the dimensions to explore the construction of voice. The results indicated that the Japanese writers constructed voice in written discourse by combing various discursive features that were socially available to them (Matsuda, 2001). This not only verified the view of voice construction above, but also showed that the construction of sound still exists in the context of collectivist cultural background. For individual ideology, Matsuda pointed out that the reproduction of ideology of individualism in second language was problematic to second language writers. He built his argument on Johnstone (1996) 's ideas of individualism. As Johnstone (1996) put "while ideological individualism is not universal, human individuality is." For the second language writers, the construction of voice in the second language writing should start from their own stance, combined with their own social background for reasonable construction of voice.

Based on his interpretation of the nature of self and the empirical research of the construction of voice, Matsuda defined voice as follows: "Voice is the amalgamative effect of the use of discursive and non-discursive feature that language users choose, deliberately or otherwise, from socially available, yet ever changing repertoires." Matsuda (2001) said. This definition of voice has been widely recognized by the academia, and has been taken by many experts and scholars as the basis for their research. The proposal of the interactional model of voice is also based on Matsuda's definition of voice. By emphasizing the importance of author's stance and the interaction between the author and the reader in the construction of voice, Hyland's

(2008) interaction model, which provided a testing basis for the empirical research on voice, and promoted the increase of the number of studies on voice.

3.3   Social Constructivism Theory

Social constructivism is a basic position of epistemology, and it aims to eliminate the binary opposition between individual and social culture. From the perspective of social constructivism, people are influenced in sociocultural situations and construct their own opinions and knowledge through direct interaction with others. Social constructivism is mainly supported by two theories. One was put forward by social psychologist K . J . Degren (1994). He claimed "I communicate, therefore I am." In short, this view emphasizes that individual does not exist independently of the society, but is restricted by the reality. At the same time, social construction should not be analyzed only from the aspect of social structure, but from the aspect of social behavior of the individuals who constitute the society.

The other is the development theory of Vygotsky (1962). This theory aims to integrate the two processes of "interaction" and "internalization". That is, the guiding role of social environment for individuals and the process of personal internalization of experience (J . Valiaenr, 2000). From the above two aspects, experts and scholars continue to develop and enrich the theory of social constructivism. Bakthin (1986) regarded social constructivism as a combination of learning notion and knowledge notion, and took social constructivism as the theoretical basis of his research. He regarded voice as a collective subject and emphasized that "There are no voiceless words that belong to no one." (Bakthin, 1986). Since then, many researches on voice have chosen social constructivism as the theoretical framework and analyzed the construction of voice from two dimensions: knowledge notion and learning notion which also forms the theoretical basis of present research.

Learning Notion

According to Vygotsky (1978), the construction of knowledge first takes place in the sociocultural context before it can be internalized and used by individuals, and the acquisition of knowledge and the development of intelligence are prescribed by

society and culture. Vygotsky (1962) also proposed that learning is a continuous movement from the present level of intelligence to a higher level close to the learner's potential. This movement occurs in the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and is the result of social interaction. Vygotsky believed that there are two levels of learner development. One is the learner's current level, which refers to the level of problem solving that learners can achieve when carrying out independent activities. The other is the level of development that students are likely to achieve in the future, i.e., the potential that learners can achieve through the guidance of teachers or the cooperation with peers to solve problems. The difference between these two levels is ZPD. That is to say, students cannot easily reach or exceed their ZPD，unless they have a chance in the key point to communicate and interact with the teacher and students. Learners can promote their potential development areas into reality and create greater development possibilities through negotiation and communication with peers who are slightly higher than their current level. This is the importance of cooperative learning. In the process of cooperation, two points need to be paid attention to, first, the nature of the learning task. The task of cooperative learning should preferably be a group task. It is best for the task to require things that a single learner cannot have all. The other is the way and frequency of cooperation between learners. Cooperation between learners needs to be guided by cooperation and participation, which can help learners internalize their own intellectual, emotional and social values, and this cooperation needs to be moderate. To have more does not necessarily mean better.

Brown (1989) argued that learning is an active process and learners should take the initiative to discover principles, concepts and facts. In addition, Brown (1989) supported the ecological view of learning that learning is the process and result of the interaction between students and society, and that the peripheral environment has a profound influence on learning. Willians & Burden (1997) believed that social constructivism emphasizes the sociality and situationality nature of learning, and learning is closely linked to situational social practice. Learners' subjective construction of knowledge is bound to be influenced by the external environment. Only by learning knowledge in its social and cultural background can learners truly

understand and master it. In addition, while social constructivism emphasizes the learning environment, it also emphasizes that the most critical role in learning is not the environment itself, but students' perception and understanding of the environment.

The learning notion of social constructivism theory is the theoretical basis for second language learners to learn voice construction. First of all, voice is the result of the interaction between learners and the society, and the construction of voice will inevitably be affected by the external social environment. At the same time, students' perception of the external society is also important for the construction of voice. Secondly, for voice construction, learners start from their own social background, and in the process of learning voice construction, they gradually get closer to the voice construction mode in second language writing. Finally, social constructivism also emphasizes the importance of cooperative learning, which is a point worth learning for second language learners.

Knowledge Notion

Social constructivism believes that knowledge cannot exist within the individual and that because knowledge belongs to the society, it will be in the form of text presented to everyone. Different people take different ways of interpretation of the text, and in the process, will come up from the basis of the whole society to explore how social interactions affect the individual study (Gergen, 1985). According to social constructivism, the generation of knowledge is not a simple internal event of the individual, and the main activity of its formation is the communication of language. Cognition is generated by the interaction with others on the basis of the individual's cognitive construction activities. Sociological constructivism holds that the creation of knowledge is not an event within a single body. That is to say, knowledge is constructed through the dialectical interaction of a large number of minds. In this respect, social constructivism draws a clear line from individual constructivism, which also values the active construction of knowledge by the subject. J. Shotter (1989) pointed out that personal constructivism and social constructivism also maintain that knowledge is not passively accepted, but actively constructed by the cognitive subject. However, social constructivism is different from individual

constructivism in the following aspects: (1) It attaches importance to the interactive process of dialogue; (2) The interaction between human cognition and social cultural variables is sometimes formed by the restriction of these variables. Especially the second point, our cognitive activities are mainly maintained with the help of language, which is developed in the living habit. Therefore, from the perspective of social constructivism, the main activities that promote the formation of knowledge are language and the mutual communication through language and speech.

Harris (1977) emphasized that voice, as the embodiment of knowledge, is formed in the author's personal interaction with society. On the basis of this theory, Prior (2001) pointed out that under the social background, the author's connection with various social elements and interaction with others are the key factors that impact the construction of voice. This theory emphasizes that voice, as a kind of knowledge, needs to be constructed in the context of society. In general, knowledge notion of social constructivism theory can give the writer and the reader a clear understanding of voice, and guides writer to contract authorial voice more effectively in writing.

Chapter Four Research Methodology

This research explored authorial voice in English argumentative writing of non-English major graduate students by integrating quantitative analysis with qualitative analysis. This chapter is concerned with the research methodology of the study, which contains five aspects: research questions, research subjects, research instruments, research procedures and data analysis.

4.1   Research Questions

The purpose of this research is to explore how non-English major graduate students in China construct their authorial voice in English argumentative writing, and analyze the relationship between the strength of authorial voice and writing proficiency. Based on the data obtained from the empirical research, some suggestions will be made for the instruction of the non-English major graduate students' English writing course. Specifically, this research attempts to answer the following three questions:

1. How strong is the authorial voice of non-English major graduate students in their English argumentative writing?

2. What is the relevance between the overall strength of authorial voice of non-English major graduate students in their English argumentative writing and their English writing proficiency?

3. What elements of authorial voice will affect non-English major graduate students' English writing proficiency?

4.2   Research Subjects

This research randomly selected 85 full-time non-English major graduate students from various departments of a university in Northeast China as the research subjects. There is no restriction on the gender of the subjects. The reasons why these graduate students were chosen as research subjects are as follows. Firstly, most

previous research of voice took either English majored students or undergraduate students as the research subjects while rarely focus on graduate students. However, compared with the undergraduates, graduate students are more mature in their understanding of issues thus have more ideas to present when asked to write articles. Besides that, non-English majored graduate students have stronger desire to present their opinion in their writing since they have more opportunities to publish in their studying process for graduation. The most important is that graduate students have passed the national postgraduate entrance examination, which means their English language proficiency is high enough for them to explain and elaborate their opinions in writing. Moreover, these students come from different disciplines, which ensures the data collected rich enough and reliable to be analyzed.

Before the research began, subjects were informed that the purpose of the research was to test the strength of the authorial voice in their English argumentative writing, so as to make students objectively present authorial voice in the essay and thus ensure the reliability of the research. The researchers prepared gifts as a small reward for completing the task to motivate students complete the task seriously.

Two experienced raters of CET-6 writing were recruited to participate in both the grading of the essays and the rating work for voice elements in the essays. Since raters play a crucial role in the authenticity of research data, sufficient time, enough patience and professional skills to complete the rating task are the main concerns when recruiting them.

The two raters were also interviewees to supplement the details of the rating. The selection of student interviewees was carried out in the following steps: First, students were ranked in descending order according to their score of writing proficiency. Student A, Student B ,and Student C were the students who with the highest score and Student D and Student E were the students who with the lowest score were selected as interviewees in order to cover a wide range of the subjects' writing proficiency. Secondly, according to the sum score of A1 to C2, Student F and Student G with the highest scores were chosen. These two students also scored full marks on dimension D--- the overall strength of authorial voice which was rated based on raters' subjective