

Stance and Reader Positioning in Upper-Level Student Writing in Political Theory and
Economics

by

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To my beloved wife, Yungi Hong.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation project examines patterns of stance in essays written by high- and low-performing student writers in two upper-level undergraduate courses, one in political theory and the other in economics. It employs methods of linguistic discourse analysis, drawing largely on Appraisal Theory (a subset of systemic functional linguistics), in combination with methods from corpus linguistics and theoretical insights from rhetorical genre studies. It examines how recurring patterns of stance in students' essays correspond to the goals and assessment criteria for writing in the courses, as revealed through interviews with the instructors and analysis of selected course material. Through this robust set of analytic approaches, the study aims to make explicit patterns of stance in student writing that correlate with high- and low-graded essays and with the disciplinary contexts. The broader aim is to render explicit patterns of interpersonal meanings constructed in students' texts that construe such abstract qualities as critical reasoning, complexity and nuance in argumentation, and control of the discourse—features identified by the instructors as valued in student writing.

The study contributes to the field of composition and rhetoric by pinpointing discursive resources that enable some student writers to construct more discipline-congruent styles of argumentation than others. Specific findings show that, while the two essay assignments require different ways of using language to construct valued stances, the high-performing writers in both contexts more consistently construct a “novice academic” stance while the low-performing writers more consistently construct a “student” stance. The former is marked by the rhetorical qualities of contrastiveness, dialogic control, critical distance, and discursal alignment, or assimilation of the disciplinary discourse. In contrast, the “student” stance is marked by frequent personalizing moves, repeated references to the classroom discourse, and comparatively infrequent use of discursive resources that construe the rhetorical qualities listed above. These findings have implications for instruction in writing in the disciplines (WID)

contexts, specifically in terms of how instructors can refine their metalanguage about writing for discussing stance with students explicitly and in detail.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1. Responding to Students' Difficulties with Academic Discourse

In the past several decades, as the demographics of undergraduate studies have expanded to include students from increasingly diverse social and linguistic backgrounds, there has been a growing awareness that the genres and registers of academic discourse pose significant challenges for many students. Particularly when participating in advanced writing tasks in the disciplines, student writers are expected to take on new social roles and new ways of conceptualizing knowledge-making. They are expected in most disciplinary contexts to move from a relatively mono-vocal position in their writing, where opinions and perspectives are seen as straightforward and mostly uncontested, to a more multi-vocal position, where they begin to recognize argumentation as a layered and complex practice, requiring careful analysis, interpretation, juxtaposition, and reasoned evaluation (Coffin, 2002; Derewianka, 2009; Hood, 2004; Woodward-Kron, 2003). Taking on this critical-analytic work requires the use of specialized and, for many students, unfamiliar resources of language. As I explain shortly, these resources of language are very much related to the rhetorical purpose of constructing a novice academic stance—specifically, a stance that aligns with “the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the discourse of our community” (Bartholomae, 1985/2005, p. 60).

Growing awareness of the challenges presented by academic genres and registers has generated two general responses from writing professionals. One response has focused on supporting students as they learn to navigate the unfamiliar demands of new kinds of discourse. This response has taken shape in the development of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)/ Writing in the Disciplines (WID) programs, where writing professionals come together with faculty in the disciplines to discuss “how students can be helped to write to learn as they learn to write in a field” (Russell et al., 2009, p. 403).

It has also taken shape in the expansion of general writing courses that focus on initiating students into college level writing. These include, among others, first-year writing (FYW), technical and professional writing, and courses designed especially for second language writers, who often require special assistance in using the complex linguistic resources needed for composing in academic registers.

In contrast to this “pragmatic” response, a second more “critical” response has focused on critiquing the discourse practices of the academy. From this perspective (e.g., Benesch, 2001; Giroux, 1988; Pennycook, 2001; Shen, 1989), academic discourses are problematic because they can marginalize students who have other ways of knowing and arguing that are not valued or understood in the academy. Critiques of academic discourse have drawn attention to the ways discursive conventions work to naturalize unequal power relations in terms of race, class, and gender, as well as in terms of promoting the dominance of specific languages and prestige dialects over others (particularly English, and the use of “standard” edited American English (SEAE)). From this perspective, writing professionals have a responsibility to help students challenge and ideally transform the problematic aspects of academic discourse.

The perspective adopted in this dissertation is that neither of these general responses needs to be exclusive of the other. Recent developments in composition and rhetorical studies, particularly in Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS), point to promising goals for bringing these responses together in theoretically and pedagogically principled ways. One goal is to assist students to develop a nuanced “genre awareness” (Beaufort, 2007; Cheng, 2007; Clark & Hernandez, 2011; Devitt, 2004, 2009b; Johns, 1997, 2008) whereby they learn not just to write specific genres but also to become aware on a more abstract level of genre as a powerful force for organizing communication and shaping readers’ and writers’ responses to recurring situations. Through this awareness, it is hoped, students can learn to read genre samples with a keener eye to the social purposes of recurring textual choices; approach unfamiliar writing situations with greater confidence in their existing store of genre knowledge; and learn to make more deliberate genre choices in their own writing—which may include disrupting genre expectations in motivated ways. A second goal—a very much related one—is to foster this kind of nuanced genre awareness among faculty in the disciplines, with the purpose of assisting

them to design clear and challenging writing assignments and to discuss with students how their goals and expectations for student writing are part of larger institutional purposes and disciplinary conversations (Beaufort, 2007; Beaufort & Williams, 2005).

Despite their promise, these goals have not been developed as fully as they can be for university writing instruction due to the lack of sustained and systematic attention to the details of language use. As composition-rhetoric has distanced itself from the field of linguistics,¹ RGS has distanced itself from matters of genre form and language use, as pointed out by Devitt (2009a, 2011). As Christie (1996) discusses in her review of Freedman and Medway (1994a), RGS has tended not to foreground close analyses of individual genres, and analyses that are undertaken tend not to draw on specific language analytic constructs that help analysts move from, as Halliday (1994) puts it, “simply a running commentary on a text” (p. xvi) toward a more rigorous analysis of textual patterns. The result of this underuse of linguistic methods for analyzing genres, especially student genres,² is that students, writing instructors, and faculty in the disciplines are not receiving the support they need to develop nuanced understandings of how patterns in language (at the specific levels of phrase, clause, and text) are used to create valued meanings in discourse. In the undergraduate curriculum, these meanings include argumentative complexity, critical reasoning, authoritative stancetaking, and others that are sought-after in student writing but hard to pin down and explain in instructional settings.

Taking up this needed research, this study uses linguistic discourse analysis to examine successful and less successful student writing in two distinct disciplinary

¹ This distancing has been well documented (see, e.g., Barton & Stygall, 2002; Johnson & Pace, 2005; and MacDonald, 2007) and has to do with at least three interconnected phenomena: the shift from a product to process-oriented view of writing, which had the effect of positioning questions about textual patterns as representative of a “product” or static view of writing; the increasing awareness that the structuralist and generative linguistics of the sixties and seventies had little to offer either our teaching of writing or our study of the production and reception of actual texts; and, perhaps most importantly, the increasing use of social constructionist theories to examine texts, which had the effect of shifting attention away from the texts themselves to their larger social contexts. This latter move, referred to widely as “the social turn,” has been important for bringing about a de-centering of language and text in favor of a stronger focus on the social patterns of activity revolving around the interpretation and (re)production of texts. This dissertation argues that newer discourse-oriented work in linguistics has much to offer composition research and instruction.

² Throughout this dissertation, I use the term “student genres” to refer to undergraduate coursework genres like essays and research papers—what Johns (1995) refers to as “classroom genres.” As explained below, student genres have been contrasted with “authentic” research genres or expert genres in terms of social purpose (see, e.g., Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1993; Hüttner, 2008; Johns, 1995; Russell, 1997).

contexts, an upper-level course in economics and corresponding course in political theory. This study is motivated by a strong pedagogical intention to make the nature of student genres in the disciplines more apparent and accessible for novice academic writers. At the same time, I do not wish simply to explicate linguistic patterns so that they can be imitated or taught explicitly without critical reflection. Instead, by focusing on the instructors' goals and assessment criteria for student writing in the two courses, I aim to call attention to the ways that specialized patterns of language use in student writing may be working to achieve discipline-valued meanings, specifically those related to the construction of effective stances.

Stance has emerged as the main analytic focus of this project largely from my own experiences teaching academic writing. In working with student writers in English as a first language and second language (L1 and L2) contexts, I have become aware of the many difficulties involved in constructing an effective stance in writing, especially in contexts calling for critical discussion and evaluation of others' arguments, a problem addressed by, among others, Hood (2004) and Woodward-Kron (2003). Stance is, of course, a complex concept that I spend time explaining below. But for now I will just make the point that constructing a valued stance in academic writing requires more complex decision-making than whether or not to adopt a formal style or use the active voice or the pronoun "I." It requires making decisions about such matters as when and how to acknowledge alternative perspectives in the discourse; whether to endorse, or back away from, others' views and voices (and how); whether and how to construct a text that engages with the imagined reader; when to tune up or down one's level of commitment to assertions; whether and how to comment on the significance of evidence used to support an argument; and many other interpersonal considerations. For experienced writers, these matters are difficult to think about in a conscious and explicit way, as they tend to be deeply embedded within writers' social knowledge of genre. It can be doubly difficult, therefore, for instructors to help students to identify where and how these strategies are realized in specific genre texts, a problem noted by Thaiss and Zawacki (2006).

Stance is certainly not the only analytic lens useful for investigating students' developing writing within disciplines. However, burgeoning work in linguistics

(introduced below and reviewed in detail in Chapter 2) suggests that it is one of the most useful for understanding students' emerging awareness of academic disciplinary norms, especially those having to do with evaluation, analysis, and reasoned argumentation. As I discuss in more detail below, stance is a particularly useful concept for WAC/WID professionals because it can help bring into focus hard-to-pinpoint stylistic difficulties that students experience as they learn disciplinary "ways of knowing, doing, and writing" (Carter, 2007, p. 388). Close analysis of more and less effective stancetaking in student writing can help writing professionals to identify patterns of language use that, while operating perhaps beneath the consciousness of disciplinary faculty, work to realize such valued meanings in the undergraduate curriculum as critical reasoning, complexity and nuance in argumentation, engagement with disciplinary discourses, and other abstract goals.

1.2. Difficulties Constructing an Effective Academic Stance

The context of upper-level undergraduate courses in the disciplines represents an important site of transition from the literacy practice of reproducing knowledge to the professional academic practice of constructing knowledge. Students are expected, often for the first time in their schooling, to situate their research and argumentative goals within past and ongoing disciplinary conversations, to acknowledge voices of authority in the field (Johns, 1997, p. 66-7), and to "learn to speak with voices recognizable as legitimate, warrantable and powerful within the disciplines" (Bazerman, 2006, p. 25). Within this context, many students struggle to project into their texts stances that are recognized as authoritative, appropriately measured, and aligned with disciplinary epistemologies. Furthermore, because of its slipperiness, stance is a concept that instructors often have difficulty discussing with their students in clear terms.

As Soliday (2011) points out, students are frequently advised to "take your own position" and offer judgments, but to avoid sounding "biased" (p. 39-40). Similarly, they are expected to show commitment to their arguments and even "passion" for the topics they are discussing (Thaiss & Zawacki, 2006), but also to remain "objective" or critically distant. Other potentially contradictory messages that students may hear include: Use your own words, your own "voice," but don't be colloquial in your use of language; use

“I” in your writing, but not too frequently; write assertively and with authority, but don’t forget you’re a student and lack expertise; engage with others’ views and voices, but don’t just summarize what others have said; display understanding of the target material, but don’t just reel off facts; try new things, experiment with new ways of thinking and arguing, but be sure to write clearly and concisely.

The cumulative effect of these apparently contradictory instructions can lead students to the (not unreasonable) conclusion that every instructor wants something different: Instructors have their own idiosyncratic tastes for what counts as an effective style of stancetaking. Some like “I”; others don’t.

In her analysis of student writing and assignment prompts, Soliday (2011) draws on Bakhtin’s notion of assimilation or internalization of speech genres to argue that an effective stance in many student genres is achieved by blending together the writer’s own phrasing or point of view with the typical language features of the disciplinary context. This blending-together of languages works to display interpersonal engagement with the target discourse through “assimilation” and not just “imitation” of “the social language typical of [the discipline]” (Soliday, 2011, p. 42). As suggested by this last point, it is possible that patterns of stance in student writing can influence instructors’ judgment of their level of engagement with the course or their grasp of course material, a point made by Coffin (2002) with regard to secondary students’ patterns of evaluation in history essays. Subtle infelicities in disciplinarily-preferred forms of stancetaking, for example, may contribute to the impression that the student writer has not engaged in an expected level of critical reasoning or in-depth thinking. Lack of facility in characterizing the significance of evidence may be read as insufficient engagement with evidence-based argumentation (Soliday, 2011, p. 37). In the case of English second language (L2) writers, weak control over stancetaking norms can even be read in an unhelpfully general or inaccurate way as “grammar problems” (Feak, 2008).

An especially difficult problem related to stance in the undergraduate curriculum has to do with the high-stakes but rarely defined expectation that students assume a “critical” evaluative stance in their writing (Hood, 2004; Woodward-Kron, 2002, 2003). Sometimes this difficulty takes shape in the adoption of evaluative stances that are highly ramped up attitudinally, as seen in Example 1 below, or, in contrast, lacking in a clear

authorial position, as seen in Example 2. Both texts are from my own students' essays that were written in the context of first year writing, and both are from the concluding sections of the respective essays. My assignment prompt had asked students to "critically discuss" various perspectives on a given topic. (Phrasing that I refer to later is in **bold italics**.)

- (1) Chomsky advocates an approach to education that emphasizes critical reasoning as the best method of learning ... This concept is **brilliant**, but Chomsky takes it to an **absurd level of extremity** that is ultimately flawed. He advocates critical reasoning with **such vigor** that he **completely overlooks** one of the most important details of an education. Chomsky is **an extreme idealist**, and while he is correct in many respects, **a level head is necessary to properly understand** and apply the thoughts and concepts he developed in his book. This is why Bloom's position is **more reasonable** and ...
- (2) All three authors have very valid viewpoints in why and what the media broadcasts thinks the way they do. When looking at a situation, it is very important to look at both viewpoints. Because each author focuses on one viewpoint, their argument isn't as strong as it could be because they don't look at the other viewpoints. **Both viewpoints**—what goes on in the media companies and why media companies broadcast disproportionate coverage—**should be considered** when looking at why the media broadcasts the things that they do.

The writer of Example 1 has followed the direction to critically discuss two positions by concluding with a strongly evaluative stance driven by the goal of aligning herself (and implicitly her readers) with one of the author's perspectives. In contrast, the writer of Example 2 has concluded with a more careful evaluative stance, but one that lacks a specific argumentative position. The first author uses highly amplified evaluative language that, in addition to evaluating "things" (e.g., concepts), judges Chomsky as a person (explicitly and implicitly) in terms of his behavior and trustworthiness as a thinker (e.g., *such vigor*, *an extreme idealist*, *a level head*). The second author attempts a more impersonal stance, but falls short in terms of developing a clear argumentative position.

It might be argued that neither of the above texts indexes a high degree of analysis, that the first author is "too critical," or that the second author is "not critical enough." It might also be pointed out that neither of the texts establishes a successful balance between, on the one hand, commitment, engagement, and passion and, on the other hand, objectivity and critical distance. These points are easy to make. Far more challenging is

the task of articulating to these student writers how they can go about constructing evaluative stances that are more effective in academic discourse contexts. These and other students' texts, that is, point to the need to carefully unpack terms like *critical*, *discuss*, and *argument*, to examine how these concepts relate to valued stances, and to render explicit how stances that are recognized by readers as both committed and objective are realized through language.

Being explicit about what it means to adopt a critical stance is difficult for a variety of reasons. One of the chief ones is the lack of linguistic focus and accompanying metalanguage, both in composition-rhetoric and applied linguistics, for articulating how critical stances are constructed in particular genres and discourses. Scholars in TESOL and applied linguistics have addressed the difficulty of critical writing with regard to second language (L2) writers (e.g., Belcher, 1995; Connor and Kramer, 1995). However, in this literature L2 writers' perceived difficulties are often attributed to socio-cultural heritage and educational factors, and how these bear on language choice, rather than to genre/register challenges. Fearn and Bayne (2005), for example, argue that their Korean EFL students "are very proficient at memorization and repetition of acquired knowledge" but "less proficient or aware of the need to engage with ideas and put forward their own interpretations and viewpoints" (p. 137). While this view may hold some truth, it also underestimate the challenges that many university students experience, not just Korean EFL students, when learning to use language in ways that effectively position their own perspectives within an ongoing disciplinary conversation. While it may be that Korean EFL students are less aware of the need to "put forward their own interpretations and viewpoints" in academic writing, the potentially more troublesome problem is learning how to do so in genre appropriate ways.

Such discursive challenges may only increase when students move into upper-level writing in the disciplines. Upper-level graduate students and newly hired professors learn valued stancetaking strategies by participating in conferences, reading field-specific journals, carrying out the material demands of research, and drafting and reviewing manuscripts for publication. These activities help them learn to make decisions about such interpersonally-charged matters as when and how to evaluate others' work, how many and which names to cite in their articles, when to "boost" and when to "hedge"

their claims (Hyland, 2005a), and generally how to go about creating a research space for their work (Swales, 1990). While undergraduate students typically do not have these opportunities, their academic writing may nevertheless be evaluated by some of the same implicit criteria that inform their instructors' own community-oriented genre practices (Beaufort, 2007; Thaiss & Zawacki, 2006; Woodward-Kron, 2004). It is these tacit, disciplinary-based criteria for what counts as an effective stance that may be fueling the seemingly contradictory "teacher talk" about stance discussed above.

In terms of instructional responses, instructors in the disciplines can be supported in understanding the challenges their students face by reflecting on general constructs like discourse community and genre. Using these two constructs, they can begin to reconceptualize their learning goals, assignment prompts, and evaluative criteria in terms of the goals, values, and discursive norms of their own disciplinary associations (Beaufort, 2007). However, these general concepts are insufficient for pinpointing how it is that weaker writers may subtly and regularly miss the mark in terms of constructing stances that are effective in the target discourse. The linguistics literature on stance, introduced below, provides a wide range of analytic tools that are useful for examining these matters in detail.

1.3. Linguistic Tools for Investigating Stance

The concept of stance has drawn increased attention in recent years from writing researchers and linguists from various theoretical traditions (see, e.g., Barton, 1993; Biber & Finegan, 1989; Biber, 2006; Engelbretson, 2007; Hunston & Thompson, 2001; Hyland, 2005a; Jaffe, 2009; Martin & White, 2005; Soliday, 2004, 2011). In this work, "stance" refers to the lexical, grammatical, and textual resources that speakers/writers use to construct an authorial presence in their texts, engage with other views and voices in the discourse, and signal community-recognized knowledge and values. In academic writing, as with other written discourses, stancetaking includes moves to mark one's level of commitment to assertions, comment on the significance of evidence, build solidarity with imagined readers (for example by making concessions and marking shared knowledge), clarify anticipated misunderstandings, and other interpersonal meanings.³ As Hyland's

³ When I use the term "interpersonal meanings" in this dissertation, I am referring to Halliday's (1994)

research shows (e.g., Hyland, 2005a), these subtle interpersonal moves populate even the most formal and “objective” of disciplinary discourses, and they are guided by writers’ (likely tacit) awareness of the social dynamics that are at play in the discursual context.

As illustration of this point, consider these excerpts from published papers in sociology, philosophy, and physics journals (excerpted from Hyland, 2005a, pp. 181-184; emphases added):

(3a) *I argue that* their treatment is superficial because, *despite appearances*, it relies solely on a sociological, as opposed to an ethical, orientation to develop a response. (Sociology)

(3b) Chesterton was *of course* wrong to suppose that Islam denied ‘even souls to women’. (Philosophy)

(3c) This measurement is distinctly different from *the more familiar* NMR pulsed field gradient measurement of solvent self-diffusion. (Physics)

The italicized portions in these excerpts reveal nuanced stance moves: drawing attention to the authorial persona (*I argue that*), countering a potential challenge from the reader (*despite appearances*), concurring with the reader (*of course*), and marking a point of shared knowledge (*the more familiar*). In so doing, they illustrate how pervasively little bits of language are used across disciplinary contexts to construct an argumentative stance that is aware of and engaged with readers’ perspectives. The patterned use of these interpersonal moves both reflect and shape the values and norms of writers’ disciplinary communities (Dressen, 2003).

Examining such stancetaking choices in student writing can expose students’ developing awareness of academic writing as a process of participating in a disciplinary conversation and negotiating positions with readers. Consider by way of quick illustration this excerpt from Wu’s (2007) corpus of student essays:

explanation of meanings that are constructed in discourse through the lexicogrammar and that relate to the speaker’s or writer’s “own intrusion in the speech event: the expression of his [sic] comments, his attitudes and evaluations, and also of the relationship that he sets up between himself and the listener—in particular, the communication role that he adopts, of informing, questioning, greeting, persuading, and the like” (p. 91-2). The particular configuration of interpersonal meanings constructed in a text give rise to that text’s *stance*. In systemic functional linguistics (SFL), which follows from Halliday’s (1978;1994) theory of grammar, the “interpersonal” refers to one of the major metafunctions that language performs in social life, with the other two being the ideational and textual metafunctions.

- (4) Undoubtedly, the cultural factor is important in the process of change. However, language change stems from various phenomena rather than from just one factor. (Wu, 2007, p. 268)

This text may appear quite unremarkable, but several stance maneuvers are evident. The main proposition being forwarded—that *language change stems from various phenomena*—is realized in the second sentence. In the surrounding co-text, the writer concedes a potentially opposing view (*the cultural factor is important in the process of change*) and counters the anticipated misunderstanding that “just one factor” is responsible for language change. The writer also carefully signals this concede-counter move with the adverbial *undoubtedly* and the contrastive connector *however*. These strategies allow the author, in just a short stretch of text, to create a dialogically engaged stance, conveying awareness of alternative views.

Such a dialogically engaged stance may be increasingly expected, though doubtfully on a conscious level, as student writers move into upper-level courses in the disciplines. For this reason, the resources of language that student writers use to take a stance toward propositions can index their awareness of audience and genre expectations (Hyland, 2004; Wu, 2007). In the next section, I explain how the term stance has been used in subtly different ways in applied linguistics in order to identify the specific conceptualization of stance that guides my analysis in this study.

1.4. Stance as a Dialogic Phenomenon

In a somewhat restricted sense, stance has been used in linguistics to refer to a class of grammatical items. Biber (2006), for example, refers to stance adverbs (e.g., *certainly*, *surprisingly*, *generally*), stance verbs (e.g., *appear*, *expect*, *hope*, *worry*), and other functional categories. He also refers to “stance expressions” more generally, placing emphasis on rhetorical effects of a variety of wordings. “Expressions of stance,” he writes, “can convey many different kinds of personal feelings and assessments, including attitudes that a speaker has about certain information, how certain they are about its veracity, how they obtained access to the information, and what perspective they are taking” (Biber, 2006, 98-9). This explanation places emphasis on the speaker or writer—

his or her attitudes, evaluations, levels of epistemic certainty, and sources of knowledge.

Similarly, Hyland (2005a; 2011) conceptualizes stance as a writer-focused concept. He explains it specifically as the moves that writers make to ...

Express a textual ‘voice’ or community recognized personality. ... This can be seen as an attitudinal dimension and includes features which refer to the ways writers present themselves and convey their judgments, opinions, and commitments. It is the ways that writers intrude to stamp their personal authority onto their arguments or step back and disguise their involvement. (Hyland, 2005a, p. 176)

As modeled in Hyland (2005a), these writer-focused meanings are constructed through hedges (e.g., *perhaps, could, might*), boosters (*very, certainly, always, absolutely*), attitude markers (*important, complex, surprisingly*), and self-mentions (*I, my view*). Stance for Hyland (2005a) does work within a larger model of rhetorical strategies for interacting with the reader and engaging in intersubjective positioning, but it is the writer-focused side of the phenomenon. In contrast, he terms the reader-focused side as *engagement*, which he explains in this way:

Writers relate to their readers with respect to the positions advanced in the text ... This is an alignment dimension where writers acknowledge and connect to others, recognizing the presence of their readers, pulling them along with their argument, focusing their attention, acknowledging their uncertainties, including them as discourse participants, and guiding them to interpretations. (Hyland, 2005a, p. 176)

Hyland (2005a) models these engagement meanings through such categories as reader-pronouns (*we, our*), directives (*note that, see table 3*), questions (*But what if ...?*), shared-knowledge moves (*It is commonly recognized that ...*), and personal asides (*Incidentally, we might also consider ...*). In Hyland’s model of intersubjective positioning, then, the term stance is reserved for meanings that are writer-oriented and engagement is reserved for meanings that are reader-oriented.

However, as Hyland (2005a) notes, the boundaries between writer- and reader-oriented meanings are fluid. Illustrating this point, he explains that an additional rhetorical use of “hedging” devices like *perhaps, I think, and may*—which he categorizes as writer-oriented features—is “to open a discursive space where readers can dispute [writers’] interpretations” (p. 179). In Hyland (2005c), he further acknowledges that

hedges can work to “accommodate readers’ expectations that they will be allowed to participate in a dialogue and that their own views will be acknowledged in this discourse” (p. 68). These two explanations of “hedging” are clearly reader-oriented, and they suggest that stancetaking is a dialogic phenomenon.

White (2003, 2008, 2010) is even more explicit that stancetaking is dialogic. His goal is to identify the linguistic resources that writers use to “take a stance towards the various points-of-view and value positions being referenced by the text and *thereby align themselves vis-à-vis those who hold, or are represented as holding, these positions*” (White, 2003, p. 260; emphases added). In White’s view, there is no boundary between stance and reader-engagement: Any stance maneuver is both writer- and reader-oriented because stancetaking is an inherently dialogic process. Like Hyland (2005a, 2005c), he regards low-probability modal expressions like *perhaps*, *could*, *I think*, and *it seems to me* as wordings through which the textual voice bids for alignment with the reader by “entertaining alternative dialogic positions” (White, 2003, p. 273). It is for this reason that he explicitly distances his view of stance from the literature on hedging that emphasizes the writer’s level of epistemic certainty or state of knowledge.⁴ For White (2003), the primary purpose of low-probability modal expressions is not to “hedge” per se but “to actively open up the dialogic space to alternatives” (p. 277). Likewise, what Hyland calls “boosters” (e.g., *certainly* and *it is undoubtedly true*) can, according to White, “act to represent the textual voice as fending off or challenging actual or potential dialogic alternatives” (p. 270), and so these wordings, too, are dialogically-oriented.

The view of stance as dialogic and intersubjective in Hyland (2005a, 2005c) and White (2003) is in accord with work on stance in spoken interactions. Johnstone (2009), for instance, defines stance as “the methods, linguistic and other, by which interactants create and signal relationships with the propositions they utter and with the people they interact with” (30-1), and Du Bois (2007) similarly explains stance as “achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to

⁴ White (2003) associates this epistemic-focused view of hedging with Markkanen and Schröder (1997). This view may also be represented in some of Hyland’s earlier work. See, e.g., his explanation that hedging is used to indicate “a lack of commitment to the truth value of an accompanying proposition” (Hyland, 1998, p.1).

any salient dimension of the social cultural field” (p. 163).

In line with these dialogic conceptualizations of stance, this dissertation analyzes stancetaking in upper-level student writing as a social, intersubjective phenomenon. This orientation to stance is driven by pedagogical concerns. When instructors talk to students about taking a stance in their writing, I believe that emphasis should be placed on the interactive process of positioning and negotiating meanings with readers and not only on putting forth an opinion or projecting a certain kind of authorial presence or “voice.” Through this lens, students and instructors can more easily conceptualize stance as the rhetorical effect of linguistic choices as well as social action, as *stancetaking*.

Accordingly, I use the term stance in two closely related ways. First, on a general level, I use it to refer to the cumulative rhetorical effect of patterns in interpersonal meanings. For example, what gets recognized by readers in academic discourse contexts as an authoritative stance, as I explain below, can be seen as the effect of repeated choices in interpersonal meanings, ones that have to do with acknowledging alternative perspectives in the discourse, tuning up or down one’s level of commitment to assertions, and so on. Second, on a more localized level, I use the term to refer to the interactive process of negotiating meanings with the reader while putting forth assertions—the process of stancetaking. A given text makes a series of localized stance maneuvers as the argument unfolds, and these maneuvers will pattern together in certain ways to construct a more general stance for the text. These two uses of the term are united by a focus on the ways that authors position themselves in relationship to the readers and the other discursive participants projected in the prose, the effect of which is to construct rhetorical personae for the writer and the reader and to attempt suasive effects.

As an example of this way of talking about stance, I offer the following text from the middle section of Luis’s essay from the economics course examined in this study (Luis is a pseudonym, as are all other participants’ names in this study). As shown in the underlined wordings, Luis uses contrastive connectors and negative forms when offering assertions and counter-arguments, and he uses modal expressions, questions, and conditional formulations to entertain possible or hypothetical views. Luis’s essay is one of the most successful in a class of forty students, and its success may be correlated with these various stance maneuvers.

(5) This option is not without its merits; if Vons were allowed to keep all of its Shopping Bag stores, the benefits of merger could be even greater because the stores may have even lower costs and higher bargaining power. On the other hand, however, regulation is not free; constant oversight of grocery store prices consumes many resources of the government. The question, then, is this: which would be more significant, the additional savings passed along to customers by retaining the full merger, or the costs incurred by the government to ensure post-merger competitive behavior? While there is no precise formula to figure out this question, common sense may go a long way in shedding light on the answer. (Luis, S74-80)

Drawing on White's (2003) conceptualization of expanding and contracting dialogic space (explained below and in Chapter 3), the analysis here shows that Luis uses the underlined wordings to boost authorial commitment and construct a "contractive" stance toward propositions that are allowed into the text through the more "expansive" (lower authorial commitment) boxed wordings. Repeated use of these and related maneuvers enable Luis to project a dialogic stance, or stance in conversation with the reader, who is being positioned as involved in the unfolding reasoning.

As I have been suggesting so far, the orientation toward stance adopted in this dissertation is driven by the goal of improving writing instruction. It follows from Booth's (1963) argument that "our main goal as teachers of rhetoric" (p. 141) is to help students learn to strike a balanced rhetorical stance. Booth's "balance" is between three rhetorical elements: "the available arguments about the subject itself, the interests and peculiarities of the audience, and the voice, the implied character, of the speaker" (p. 141). This argument is appealing because it places emphasis on the dialogic nature of stance. If academic writing is understood as a process of contributing to a scholarly conversation, then the stance projected into a text can be conceptualized in terms of its dialogical or conversational functions.

1.5. Theoretical and Analytic Orientation

The dialogic orientation to stance adopted in this dissertation draws largely on Appraisal theory from Systemic Functional Linguistics, or SFL. Appraisal theory has developed relatively recently in SFL theorizing (see, for example, Coffin, 2002; Hood, 2004; Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005) as a means of extending the description of ways interpersonal meanings are realized in text, building from the clause-

level resources described in Halliday (1994). The framework makes use of three interrelated sub-systems⁵ to track speakers/writers' choices in interpersonal stancetaking: **Attitude** explores how feelings, judgments of people, and evaluations of things are built up in texts; **Graduation** explores how feelings and evaluations are subtly adjusted in terms of force and focus; and **Engagement** explores how "values are sourced and readers aligned" (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 16) through resources of modality, attribution, concession, intensification, and others. As explained in more detail in Chapter 3, my analysis of stance draws mostly on the Engagement framework to track the ways the student writers interact with other views and voices when putting forth assertions and evaluations, and it draws on the other two frameworks in more limited ways. This is because Engagement offers a comprehensive conceptual basis for analyzing how a wide variety of linguistic resources cooperate in the construction of a dialogic stance, resources that in the traditional DA literature fall under the constructs of evidentiality, attribution/averral, hedging, concession, negation, and modality.⁶

Another reason that I draw mostly on Engagement is that previous Appraisal analyses of university-level student argumentative writing (Derewianka, 2009; Swain, 2009; Wu, 2007) show that this sub-system is especially useful for identifying key differences between effective and less effective argumentative writing, as it offers means for tracking in detail the ways writers use language to position their assertions vis-à-vis their anticipated readers. In so doing, as Martin and White (2005) explain, the framework "provides the means to characterize a speaker/writer's interpersonal style and their rhetorical strategies according to what sort of heteroglossic backdrop of other voices and alternative viewpoints they construct for their text and according to the way in which they engage with that backdrop" (p. 93).

1.6. Related Terms and Concepts

There are a variety of terms used in composition-rhetoric and linguistics that are closely related to stance, including voice, ethos, style, and identity. I comment on these

⁵ These sub-systems, as they are labeled in Martin & Rose (2007) and Martin & White (2005), are in **boldface** the first time I mention them. Henceforth I refer to them in regular type with capital letters.

⁶ On attribution/averral see Sinclair (1998); on evidentiality see Chafe & Nichols (1986); on hedging see Myers (1989), Hyland (1996), Meyer (1997); on negation in argumentation see Apothetloz et al. (1993); on modality see Coates (1983) and Palmer (1986).

terms briefly in this section in order to clarify why I analyze linguistic patterns in student writing from the perspective of stance.

To begin with, this dissertation takes the position that a given term should be used when it can illuminate phenomena that are relevant to the specific context and questions under examination. Matsuda (2011), for instance, has argued convincingly that applied linguists ought to be rigorous in their theorization of “voice” because of the stubbornly vague, though high-stakes, use of this term on writing assessment rubrics in K-12 contexts. As a conceptual metaphor, the “voice” with which writers marshal evidence, construct counter-claims, or otherwise build their arguments is also relevant to undergraduate disciplinary writing. Bazerman (2006) uses the term when he suggests that college writers are expected to “learn to speak with *voices* recognizable as legitimate, warrantable and powerful within the disciplines” (p. 25; emphasis added), and Hyland (2011) simply equates stance with voice when he explains that “stance refers to the writer’s textual ‘voice’ or community recognized personality” (p. 197). Furthermore, voice is conceptualized within the Appraisal literature on student writing (Coffin, 2002; Derewianka, 2009; Swain, 2009) as the cumulative rhetorical effective of repeated configurations of Appraisal resources, including Attitude, Graduation, and Engagement resources. These configurations are interpreted as voice types, which can be tracked in terms of how they shift through phases of an unfolding text.

In this dissertation, I also track the rhetorical effects of recurring interpersonal meanings in students’ texts (the use of concessions, for example), but I interpret these meanings in terms of *stance* rather than *voice* because I am interested in how they relate to writer-reader alignment. I am, in fact, equally comfortable referring to an “authoritative voice” as I am an “authoritative stance,” but authoritativeness is just one rhetorical quality among others that I examine. Other qualities like contrastiveness and dialogic expansiveness, which I explain in my presentation of results (Chapters 4-6), are more closely related to the concept of stancetaking because they have to do with writer-reader alignment and negotiation of meanings. In this sense, the notion of a “contrastive stance” makes more intuitive sense than the notion of a “contrastive voice,” as the former suggests meanings of positioning and alignment while the latter does not.

The terms *ethos* is also used to interpret the rhetorical effects of patterns of

interpersonal meanings. McCloskey (1985/1998), for example, argues that appeals to *ethos* may be “the most persuasive of scientific arguments” (p.7), as economists regularly make moves to construct such self-representations as the “Deep Thinker” (p. 8), the “Profound Thinker” (p. 9), or the “candid, direct, practical” guide (p. 8). McCloskey’s goal is to show how ostensibly disinterested economic analyses actually comprise subtle moves to convince readers of the trustworthiness of the analyst. The goal of this dissertation, in contrast, is not to show how student writers use language to convince the reader of the trustworthiness of the author. While Luis’s text in example 5 might usefully be understood as constructing a trustworthy *ethos* because it projects engagement with points of view other than those being endorsed in the text (and thus a sense of scholarly responsibility), the focus of this study is more on how student writers like Luis manage the implicit expectation to adopt an evaluative stance towards arguments and towards their readers in disciplinary-expected ways.

Identity and style are also closely related to stance. Johnstone (2009) and Hyland (2010) explicitly link stance to “style” in order to identify how recurring stancetaking patterns selected by an individual speaker or writer can give rise to a “style associated with a particular individual” (Johnstone, 2010, p. 30) or “discoursal style” (Hyland, 2010, p. 178). Martin and White (2005) also refer to a text’s “interpersonal style” (p. 93) as the effect of recurring configurations of Appraisal resources within an individual text or an individual’s corpus of texts. As with “authorial voice,” I am comfortable referring to “interpersonal style” as the rhetorical effect of repeated patterns of stance, but individual students’ styles of stancetaking, while interesting, are not the main focus of this dissertation. Likewise, while an individual author may use stancetaking strategies in ways that portray a certain *identity* and that index resistance to, say, an academic or scholarly identity, as discussed in Ivanic (1998), this important issue is beyond this dissertation’s focus, which is on the ways that patterns of stancetaking correspond to the instructors’ stated goals and criteria for evaluating student writing.

In addition to these closely related concepts, there are also alternative cover terms for the range of linguistic resources that I refer to as related to stance, including evaluation (e.g., Hunston and Thompson, 2000, Römer, 2008) and metadiscourse (e.g., Hyland, 2005c; Vande Kopple, 1985). These terms are variously posited as synonyms for

stance or as umbrella concepts under which stance-related concepts are placed. Hunston and Thompson (2000), for example, define evaluation as “the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer’s attitude or *stance* toward, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about” (p. 5; emphasis added). And metadiscourse has been defined as “the linguistic resources used to organize a discourse or the writer’s *stance* towards either its content or the reader” (Hyland and Tse, 2004, p. 157; emphasis added).

For the analytic purposes of this dissertation, I consider how features of language described as “evaluative” and/or “metadiscoursal” (and that also fall within SFL Appraisal frameworks) operate to construct stances in student writing. For example, Luis’s use of modal expressions, conditionals, and contrastive connectors in example 5 are treated as instances of evaluative language in Hunston and Thompson’s (2000) framework, metadiscoursal in Hyland’s (2005c) framework, and Appraisal resources in Martin & White’s (2005) framework. This study investigates how these and other linguistic resources—whether we place them under the label of evaluative, metadiscoursal, or appraisal—operate together in texts to create stances that interact and negotiate meanings with the reader and that are valued in specific student genres.

I now turn to a brief explanation of the relationship between student and expert genres in order to unpack how disciplinarity is infused into questions about effective and less than effective stancetaking in student writing.

1.7. Disciplinarity and Student Genres

This study is situated in two upper-level writing required (ULWR) courses at a large university in the U.S. midwest. One is an economics course focused on the “Government Regulation of Industry” and the other is a political science focused on “20th Century Political Thought” (henceforth Econ 432 and PS 409). Both courses require that students closely examine and evaluate others’ arguments in their essays. While the broad disciplinary domains of economics and political science (both “social sciences”) might suggest similar registers and argumentative strategies, it is important to take into account the subfields represented in the courses. Econ 432 examines economic and public policy issues around government regulation of industry. The course requires that students shunt

back and forth between the discourses of economics, law, and public policy. PS 409 is an advanced course in political theory, and it requires that students take prior courses in political philosophy or history. As suggested to me by the course professor, the writing is more characteristic of the humanities than social sciences because it is not empirically based. As he put it, “the writing is the research, the writing is the thinking-through.”

In terms of the two parent disciplines, a considerable body of work has focused on the rhetorical dimensions of economics discourse (Dahl, 2009; Henderson, Dudley-Evans, & Backhouse, 1993; Klamer, 2007; McCloskey, 1985/1998). From a linguistics perspective, McCloskey’s (1985/1998) argument for the importance of *ethos* in economics discourse is supported by Dudley-Evans’s (1993) and Bloor and Bloor’s (1993) analyses of “hedging” and other interpersonally-focused patterns in economists’ argumentative practices. In contrast to this work on economics, discourse analytic work on political theory is, to my knowledge, non-existent. Related professional discourses that have been examined from a linguistic and/or rhetorical perspective include political science (Bazerman, 1981; 1988), philosophy (Bloor, 1996; Geisler, 1994), and literary studies (Fahnestock & Secor, 1991; MacDonald, 2002; Wilder, 2005).

This literature on disciplinary discourse raises the question of how, if at all, discipline-specific rhetorical patterns are expected or valued in student coursework genres. It would certainly seem that learning to write successful argumentative essays in economics and political theory requires at least tacit understanding of argumentative practices commonly used by experts in those or neighboring fields. Writing “well,” that is, would seem to require more than the capacity to construct clear and coherent prose, but also some awareness of disciplinary registers and common rhetorical strategies.

However, comparing student with expert writing in the same field must also take into account the different social purposes served by expert and student genres. It may be that an argumentative essay written by a student in a political theory course is discursively more similar to a corresponding essay written in an economics course than it is to a book chapter or journal article written by a political theorist. Working from a socio-cognitive theory of genre, Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) suggest that while student genres “contain *some* of the textual features and *some* of the conventions of disciplinary genres,” they are more immediately linked to “classroom-based activities

such as reading, writing, solving decontextualized math problems, or conducting simple experiments of the kind found in lab manuals” (p. 13; emphases in original). Quite aside from questions about mainstream and subdisciplinary discourses, there are more fundamental questions about the social purposes for writing and how these purposes give rise to recurring discursive patterns, including patterns in stance. The concept of discourse community is useful for thinking about the connections between expert and student genres in the same field.

One point that the notion of discourse community affords is to conceive of genres as sets of socially situated communicative purposes (Swales, 1990). Accordingly, research articles, book reviews, conference presentations, and other expert genres can be seen as rhetorical actions that, while not fixed in form, are at least “stabilized-for-now” (Schryer, 1993) and function to shape publicly the purposes and values of discourse participants. Student genres, in contrast, fall within Swales’ (1996) category of “occluded” genres because, as Loudermilk (2007) points out, they are rarely read by anyone other than instructors and sometimes peers for learning and assessment purposes. In terms of community belonging, student genres can usefully be placed within the discourse community of the institutional department that awards students with course credit and, on a more concrete level, within the community of the course itself, which comprises the instructor(s) and fellow students who are reading and collaborating on the work students are producing. The purposes for student writing in these communities are pedagogical: they are related to the goals of fostering and evaluating students’ learning and engagement with course material rather than to the public goals of sharing information and negotiating goals and values within a community of peers.

Such pedagogical purposes were found to be at play in Melzer’s (2009) large-scale survey of writing assignment prompts across disciplines. The majority of assignments that were labeled “research papers” or “term papers” were not designed, as might be expected, to have students report on what is known in the field and share what they found in their own research, but rather “to encourage exploration, synthesis, and creativity” (p. 254) in a particular disciplinary context. Encouraging these processes took form in a wide-variety of very specific and elaborate assignment prompts—what Wolf (2011) has recently referred to as “compound argumentative assignments” (p. 200)—that call for

modes of analysis and argumentation that do not easily map onto expert genres in the respective disciplines.

Considering, then, the lack of direct correspondence between student and expert genres in the same field, it is likely that students in Econ 432 and PS 409 are not being “apprenticed” into economics or political theory—in other words, learning to master expert genres in the fields—as much as they are being pushed to engage with and display their learning in the respective contexts. The specific social and rhetorical purposes for student writing are likely to influence the types of stances that are needed for accomplishing those purposes successfully.

Troubling this neat division between student and expert genres, however, there is some research to suggest that instructors may bring their *tacit* discourse community-based expectations to bear on their reading of student work. For example, Woodward-Kron’s (2004) study of instructor feedback on undergraduate students’ writing in a department of education revealed that, when instructors had a larger disciplinary context in mind when advising students against features like an overly formal style, students perceived these comments as reflecting simply their instructors’ idiosyncratic preferences rather than stemming from the interpersonal considerations of “a dynamic social environment” (Woodward-Kron, 2004, p. 158). What this instructor-student disconnect suggests is that, even though student genres may serve different social purposes from professional genres and therefore give rise to different discursive strategies, instructors’ affiliations with specific professional communities may give rise to tacit expectations with regard to student writing.

This is a second reason that the notion of discourse community is useful when researching student writing: the value placed on particular discursive features in student genres may derive both from the discourse communities of the classroom and institutional department as well as from the various discourse communities to which the course instructors belong.

Despite this complexity in assessment criteria, Thaiss and Zawacki’s (2006) interviews with faculty across the disciplines confirm Melzer’s (2009) finding that the purpose of many student genres is to foster engagement with the course material, critical analysis, and disciplinary ways of arguing. This dissertation study examines how these

goals may be accomplished in students' writing through their strategies for constructing a stance towards the material under analysis and toward readers' argumentative expectations.

1.8. The Study and Research Questions

Specifically, this study examines how undergraduate students in two disciplinary contexts, Econ 432 and PS 409, linguistically construct stance in their writing, as well as how their stancetaking strategies are noticed, addressed, and assessed by their instructors, perhaps below their fully conscious awareness. As described in detail in Chapter 3, the discourse analysis of students' writing draws on Appraisal Theory from Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL) in combination with language analytic constructs from other DA traditions, methods from corpus linguistics, and theoretical insights from rhetorical genre studies. By also drawing on interviews with the course instructors and analysis of selected course materials—including instructors' comments on students' essays—the study investigates how grammatical and lexical choices in students' essays correlate with valued argumentative stances in the disciplines.

In my efforts to better understand the ways language is used to construct valued patterns of stance in these two disciplinary contexts, the following research questions have guided the design, implementation, and analysis of my study. Questions one and two are addressed based on instructor interviews, comments on students' essays, and selected course material. Questions three and four are addressed based on linguistic analysis of students' essays.

1. What are the pedagogical purposes of student writing in the two courses?
 - 1.1. What genres of writing are assigned to help students achieve these purposes?
 - 1.2. How do the instructors articulate these purposes during interviews?
 - 1.3. How are these purposes presented to students through course material?
2. What characteristics of student writing do the instructors identify (either explicitly or implicitly) as valued in the context of the course?
 - 2.1. How do they articulate these valued characteristics, i.e., through what

metalinguage about writing?

3. In what ways, if any, are patterns in stance in the high-graded (HG) essays in each course different from patterns in stance in the low-graded (LG) essays?
 - 3.1. If there are no differences in stance, what other linguistic features may distinguish high- and low-performing writing in the course?
 - 3.2. Are there points of overlap in stancetaking among the high-performing writers in the two courses?
 - 3.3. Are there points of overlap in stancetaking among the low-performing writers in the two courses?
4. If there are differential patterns in stance between the HG and LG essays, and/or between the disciplinary contexts, how do these patterns correlate with the pedagogical purposes and valued features identified through questions 1 and 2?

The purpose of the first set of questions is to reveal how the courses instructors seek to foster valued modes of disciplinary thinking and writing by designing particular writing tasks. The instructors' purposes for assigning writing can provide context for interpreting textual patterns in students' essays. To answer this set of questions, I analyze the course syllabi, assignment prompts, selected course material, and transcripts of interviews that are focused on the instructors' goals and assessment criteria for student writing (see Appendix 1 for the interview protocol).

The purpose of the second set of questions is to identify the features of student writing that the instructors *consciously* value, as revealed through their interview responses and comments on students' essays, as well as their available metalinguage for articulating those features. If there are differential patterns of language use in student writing—for example between high- and low-graded essays—that do not correlate with the features identified by the instructors, then it may be that these patterns are triggering responses from the instructors (positive or negative) beneath their fully conscious awareness.

The purpose of the third set of questions is to identify whether there are patterns of stance that correlate with highly successful and less successful student writing in the two courses. I answer these questions through a detailed discourse analytic approach that

combines quantitative and qualitative examinations of whole texts, using both directed approaches (via SFL-based Appraisal theory; Martin & White, 2005) and inductive approaches, as well as computer-assisted concordance investigations and comparisons with interview data. These various analytic processes are explained in detail in Chapter 3.

Finally, the purpose of the fourth question is to put the text in conversation with the context. It is to connect differential patterns of stance in students' writing with the pedagogical purposes and assessment criteria for the course writing, as revealed in instructor interviews. As one example, the Econ 432 graduate student instructor explained in our interview that he values "counter-argumentation" in student writing (discussed in Chapter 4). Based on this one response, it is reasonable to predict that the high-performing students more frequently engage in counter-argumentation in their writing, more consistently adopting a contrastive epistemological stance.

1.9. Significance of the Study

This dissertation seeks to better understand how undergraduate writers in two distinct disciplinary contexts use language that aligns or does not align with valued stances in the discourse contexts, as well as how (if at all) their stance choices are noticed, addressed, and assessed by their instructors. The significance of this study lies in being able to pinpoint some of the more important discursive resources that are needed to write student genres successfully. On a more general level, the value is to gather linguistic evidence that informs writing assessment and instructional practices.

In terms of writing assessment, there is a growing body of research which suggests that students' lack of success in academic writing often results from unarticulated gaps in understanding between instructors and students in terms of expectations of academic literacy tasks (Lea, 1994; Lea and Street, 1997; Woodward-Kron, 2003, 2004). Identifying these gaps can be difficult without closely examining students' production of academic discourse. For example, Woodward-Kron's (2003) examination of high- and low-graded journal review essays written by undergraduate students of Education revealed key differences in language use between the respective groups of papers that indexed conceptual differences in terms of what it means to "critically analyze" a journal article. Woodward-Kron's interviews with the instructors revealed that they were not

aware of variation in the ways students understood this assignment—suggesting an implicit belief that “critical analysis” is self-evident. The value in such linguistic work, then, is to unearth patterns of language use that lie beneath instructors’ (and likely students’) conscious awareness and point to the ways students take up tasks that are not made explicit to them.

Findings from this dissertation study can also help instructors to refine their available metalanguage for discussing stance with students in detailed and coherent ways. Writing specialists working in WAC/WID contexts often lack a robust metalanguage for talking with subject specialists about disciplinary language patterns that may pose problems for students, including patterns of stance. While there is a felt need in universities across the country to help students develop literacy expertise across disciplinary boundaries (Johns, 1997), subject specialists are not always able to help their students acquire (inter)disciplinary discursive knowledge because they often view disciplinary conventions as self-evident (Lea and Street, 1999). The driving force of this dissertation, then, is to support students and faculty to develop rhetorically nuanced understandings of how language works in specific disciplinary course contexts to construe valued meanings. Specifically, it aims to pinpoint how “critical reasoning,” “complexity and nuance” in argumentation, discursal “control,” and other abstract goals for student writing—ones identified by the instructors in this study—are realized textually through students’ patterns of stancetaking

CHAPTER 2

Positioning the Study in the Composition-Rhetoric and Linguistics Landscape

Introduction

In this chapter, I position my study of stance in students' upper-level writing by bringing together work in composition and rhetorical studies (or, composition-rhetoric) and linguistics. Due to the enormity of the literature on undergraduate writing in both fields, I focus my discussion on work related to issues around students' genre awareness, faculty expectations and goals for student writing, and the construction of interpersonal meanings in student writing.

This chapter is organized in four phases. First, it reviews studies focused on students' "genre awareness." While these studies have tended not to undertake systematic textual analysis of student writing, they reveal ways that many writing scholars are now conceptualizing the goals of college-level writing instruction and articulating those goals to disciplinary faculty in WAC/WID instructional contexts. They also reveal methods that composition researchers have used to investigate students' awareness of genre expectations and their own genre-based knowledge and rhetorical strategies. The argument I develop in my review of these studies is that composition researchers need better ways to investigate students' genre- and disciplinary-based rhetorical expertise, a need exacerbated by the fact that this expertise is often tacit and therefore difficult to capture through interviews and surveys alone.

Second, this chapter reviews research from WAC/WID contexts on instructors' goals and expectations for student writing. I discuss what these studies suggest about attitudes and expectations regarding the coursework genres that are assigned at the undergraduate level and, more specifically, what they suggest about the sorts of interpersonal meanings that are valued in student writing, often implicitly. I then suggest

how particular issues regarding judgment of student texts can become blurred when researchers do not foreground close analysis of student writing.

With this problem in mind, this chapter turns to the third phase, which is a review of discourse analytic studies of interpersonal meanings in student writing (e.g., Barton, 1993; Hewings, 2004; Hyland & Milton, 1997; North, 2005). I discuss what these studies suggest about valued features in student writing from a linguistic perspective. The main argument that I advance in this section is that close linguistic analysis of student writing can reveal patterns in language use—specifically with regard to stancetaking—that are suggestive of students’ tacit genre knowledge as well as instructors’ implicit expectations toward student writing. They can also provide a specific metalanguage for discussing the details of language use in terms of their rhetorical meaning-making purposes.

Finally, I make an argument for extending discourse analytic (DA) studies of stance in student writing by drawing largely, but not exclusively, on SFL-based Appraisal theory. While Chapter 3 offers a detailed explanation of the DA approach used in this study, including a comprehensive explanation of Appraisal, this chapter shows how an approach to stance that is grounded in explicitly dialogic terms, as discussed in the previous chapter, can be used to investigate interpersonal meanings in student writing.

2.1. Investigating Students’ Genre Development and Awareness

As suggested at the beginning of Chapter 1, theorists in Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS) have had much influence in recent years on reconceptualizing the goals of college level writing instruction, both in the contexts of first year writing (FYW) instruction and upper-level writing in the disciplines. Before considering these goals, it is important to emphasize that definitions of genre from an RGS perspective are focused not on text but on social action. For Miller (1984), genres are “typified rhetorical actions based in recurrent situations” (159); for Bazerman (1994) they are “frames for social action” (p. 79); and for Bawarshi (2003) they are “sites of action.” As these definitions suggest, the research of these and other scholars has focused less on textual aspects of genres under examination and more on the social activity and individual agency/subjectivity involved in the interpretation and (re)production of texts.

This focus on social activity has led to the development of genre-focused

pedagogies that emphasize the need to raise students' awareness of genre as a conceptual tool for guiding their interpretation of rhetorical situations and for shaping their approaches to reading and writing. The main goal is to equip students with a rhetorically reflexive awareness of *genre* and not just individual *genres* (Cheng, 2007, p. 287) if they are to learn to read rhetorical scenes, take stock of their own genre knowledge, and recontextualize that knowledge to meet (and ideally transform) the expectations of new and unfamiliar writing situations. With such awareness, students can come to view particular genres as “guideposts” (Bazerman, 1997, p.19) or “keys” (Miller, 1984, p.165) that direct and open possibilities for their writing production.

This view of genre-focused instruction has given rise to several strands of empirical research in composition-rhetoric. One of these is focused on how students and instructors perceive the genres of their chosen disciplines. A second is focused on how, and the degree to which, students draw on their prior genre experiences and existing rhetorical expertise when writing in new writing situations. Findings from both strands have helped scholars in composition-rhetoric to better understand the expectations of student genres across disciplines and the ways students can learn to engage with those genres, draw upon their existing rhetorical expertise, and transfer their genre knowledge from one writing context to another. Despite these gains, I argue, important information about students' genre-based rhetorical expertise can be buried when analysis of student writing is not carried out systematically and in detail.

2.2. Investigating Students' Perceptions of Disciplinary Genres

Beaufort (2007) reports on a case study of one undergraduate writer, Tim, and his development as a writer of history over three years. This study has broad implications for the question of how undergraduate student writing within disciplinary contexts relates to the larger “discourse community” of the discipline. Using interviews, textual analysis, and consultation with disciplinary experts on history writing, Beaufort aimed to understand “how expertise in history might be characterized; what development changes occurred that were related to writing; and what factors contributed to the development of the subject's history writing skills” (2007, p. 137). One important finding from the study is that the genres and purposes for writing in history remained mostly unclear to Tim

during the three years of the study. While the genres that expert historians read and write have clear purposes for them in the discourse communities they operate within, the only discourse community that seemed to have meaning for Tim was that of the classroom in which his writing was situated. For this reason, Tim had difficulty connecting genre features in his own writing to the ways those features may operate to achieve social purposes within a discourse community of historians. Furthermore, what little Tim did learn about history writing seemed to happen inferentially rather than through explicit instruction in the genres of history.

In general terms, Beaufort's study highlights the difficulties that students often experience in understanding the underlying meanings behind generic forms and their instructors' comments on their writing. In this way, the study's findings connect up with the long and growing literature on the problem of "transfer" of writing knowledge (Bazerman, 1981; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995; Carroll, 2002; Clark & Hernandez, 2011; Dias and Paré, 2000; McCarthy, 1987; Sommers & Saltz, 2004; Walvoord and McCarthy, 1990; Wardle, 2007, 2009). These studies reveal the many challenges involved in transferring knowledge about writing from one rhetorical or disciplinary context to another, and they have raised perplexing questions about the aims of college-level writing instruction. One of these questions, of course, has to do with the relationship between "expert" and "student" genres.

Although student coursework genres like analytical essays and personal narratives are often perceived unproblematically as "related to student learning and the development of critical thinking" (Cosgrove & Barta-Smith, 2004, p. 69), the concern of RGS scholars like Wardle (2009) is that they are viewed by students as serving no other purpose than to fulfill a course requirement. Where professional research genres aim to persuade the reader of the validity of new findings, and publicly available pedagogical genres like textbooks aim to explain or instruct, student genres generally aim to demonstrate the acquisition of required skills and the articulation of accepted knowledge. Wardle's (2007) own interview-based investigation of students' attitudes towards writing assignments in FYW suggests that students rarely view their writing in FYW as a bridge to their writing in other courses or beyond. Referring to these genres as "mutt genres"—because they are a hybrid of once (but no longer) "authentic" genres—Wardle (2009) argues that writing

assignments like the position paper or personal narrative “do not respond to rhetorical situations requiring communication in order to accomplish a purpose that is meaningful to the author” (p. 777). As a result, many students do not seem to be making connections between the discursive expertise they are developing in their FYW courses and the writing demands they encounter in their disciplinary courses, or in writing situations outside the academy.

An interesting question raised by this last point, however, is whether or not close analysis of student writing would reveal genre-based rhetorical expertise that students are transferring from other contexts, like FYW, but that they are not consciously aware of or have difficulty articulating in the context of interviews. It is difficult to speculate on this question because the studies reviewed above have not foregrounded analysis of student writing.

2.3. Investigating Instructors’ Goals and Expectations for Student Writing

In addition to the problem of students’ perceptions of student genres, another problem raised by compositionists in WAC/WID research contexts is that instructors’ goals and values for student writing in upper-level writing in the disciplines courses are often not made clear and transparent to students. Importantly, this situation results from instructors’ own under-examined rhetorical knowledge with regard to their disciplinary discourses and their evaluative criteria (Thaiss & Zawacki, 2006, p. 61). One research goal arising from this problem, therefore, is the need to carefully unpack instructors’ articulated beliefs and values with regard to writing in their disciplines and their purposes for assigning student writing.

Pursuing this line of investigation, Waldo (2004) conducted surveys with faculty members across eight different departments at the University of Nevada Reno. These included criminal justice, electrical engineering, political science, accounting/computer information systems, English, biology, curriculum & instruction, and nursing. Unsurprisingly, Waldo discovered a good deal of variation in the values the faculty members listed for student writing. These ranged from the abstract goal for students to “demonstrate passionate commitment to positions” (p. 148) in the field of Curriculum and Instruction to the quite concrete goal for students in Accounting/Computer

Information Systems to “use numbers, formulae, statistics, equations, graphs, charts, and other data accurately” (p. 146). Despite the somewhat jarring variation revealed in Waldo’s study, it is possible to categorize the listed expectations and values under five broad categories. Based on my reading of Waldo’s data, these categories include clarity, coherent argumentation, critical reasoning, disciplinary engagement, and interpersonal involvement.

Values related to *clarity* were listed by faculty in six of the eight departments; the exceptions were Political Science and English.⁷ Constructing *coherent argumentation* was listed in all departments except for Electrical Engineering. Some form of *critical reasoning* (including analysis, problem-solving, or critical thinking) was also listed in all departments except for Electrical Engineering (unless writing with “creative ideas” is included as a type of critical reasoning in the context of Electrical Engineering). Some type of *disciplinary engagement* was listed in all the disciplines; this category includes such expectations as engaging with multiple points of view in the field (Political Science), defining complex issues in the field (Curriculum and Instruction), and using “appropriate formulae” (Electrical Engineering). Finally, some type of *interpersonal involvement* was listed in five departments. This broad value is related to concepts like ethos, voice, and personal engagement and commitment. This value was expressed specifically as:

- Earn the right to state an opinion ... by dealing effectively with outside sources (Political Science)
- Express voice – show the writer’s self in the piece of writing (English)
- Produce writing ... appropriate for its audience (Electrical Engineering)
- Demonstrate commitment to experiment (Biology)
- Demonstrate passionate commitment to positions (Curriculum and Instruction) (p. 143-150)

Clearly, many of these expectations would be difficult to define and pinpoint for students, perhaps especially the expectation for students in Curriculum and Instruction to “demonstrate passionate commitment to positions” or the need for students in political science to “earn the right to state an opinion ... by dealing effectively with outside

⁷ Arguably, though, the values of “not drifting off topic” in Political Science (p. 145) and “writing with vividness of detail” in English (p.147) are related to the value on clarity.

sources” (p. 147). But the recurrence of this category of values in various disciplinary contexts is important, as it shows the need for students to understand what is expected of their writing across the curriculum in terms of *interpersonal* meanings. Writing effectively in the disciplines, in other words, would seem to require realization of valued interpersonal meanings—meanings related to stance and reader positioning—and not only reproducing a certain “content” through well structured prose.

Thaiss and Zawacki (2006) found a similarly broad list of expectations for student writing in their interviews with faculty across disciplines. What they found complicated the situation even further is that “a variety of meanings and significances” (p. 89) were attached to shared terms. In their analysis of assignment prompts, grading rubrics, and interview transcripts, they found that time and again their faculty respondents were implicitly defining terms like “argument,” “evidence,” “audience,” “purpose, and “style” in subtly different ways—ways that were shaped by their tacit disciplinary experiences. Considering this situation, it is not surprising that many students would come to view academic writing, not as a process of engaging with the social purposes of specific discourse communities, but as a process of figuring out the idiosyncratic preferences of their professors. Indeed, Thaiss and Zawacki found this attitude to be pervasive among their student respondents. They did find that many students reported to be confident that they understood the varying expectations of their disciplines but, on close analysis of their interview responses, the types of features they reported as characteristic of specific disciplinary contexts were often on the simpler and more formalistic side—for example, use of APA in psychology research papers. Meanwhile, students still reported that doing well on writing assignments was largely a matter of figuring out “what my professor wants.”

One of Thaiss and Zawacki’s (2006) main hypotheses about the causes for miscommunication between students and faculty about “good writing” is that there are five largely unexamined contexts at work in instructors’ assignment designs and evaluative criteria. Writing can be considered “good” based on whether it meets criteria set by the academy at large (i.e., academic writing), the broad disciplinary context (e.g., academic writing in economics), the subdisciplinary context (e.g., economic regulation and public policy), the particular institutional context (e.g., discourse on economic

regulation in the United States), or the individual instructor and his/her personal experiences and goals. What Thaiss and Zawacki found in their interviews is that instructors often invoke “one or more, usually several, of these contexts” (p. 138) when talking about their expectations for student writing. The problem with this complexity is that rarely do their assignment prompts or grading rubrics make clear to students which of these contexts are being foregrounded and why. This is because instructors themselves are often not aware of the complex interplay between these multiple contexts. A lingering problem suggested by this study, therefore, is how to go about fostering instructors’ reflexivity about the complex contextual variables at work in their conceptualization (and thus assigning and evaluating) of student genres.

Speaking to the student side of this problem, Thaiss and Zawacki (2006) argue that writing instructors should help students move toward a mature awareness of what they refer to as “coherence-within-diversity” with regard to writing in the disciplines. By this term, the authors refer to an awareness of the underlying threads of coherence that unite seemingly disparate sub-disciplinary contexts. While individual courses in, say, political science are unique in terms of their sub-disciplinary foci and the instructors’ own disciplinary alignments and goals, the multitude of variations are not completely random, deriving solely from the instructors’ idiosyncratic personalities and tastes. Instead, the variations point to the complex nature of disciplinarity. Thaiss and Zawacki’s argument is that, with this concept, students can be assisted to move from less mature understandings of academic writing, where they see it either as a monolithic collection of formal rules (e.g., “Don’t use ‘I’ in academic writing”) or as a “radically relativistic” (p. 139) situation whereby every instructor wants something different, to a more mature awareness of the “organic sense of the structure of the discipline” (p. 139). Fostering such awareness, the authors suggest, could assist students to interpret and negotiate the complex contextual variables at play in the assigning and evaluating of disciplinary writing tasks.

A similar pedagogical goal, one also having to do with encouraging meta-reflection on writing, is to assist incoming university students to identify and draw on their own genre-based rhetorical knowledge when confronted with the unfamiliar demands of university level writing. This goal has inspired empirical research on incoming university

students' strategies for using their prior genre knowledge during their first year at university.

2.4. Analyzing Students' Use of Prior Genre Knowledge

Rounsaville et al. (2008) report on a large-scale study driven by the question of how beginning college writers draw on and make use of their prior experiences with genre. The authors collected surveys with students about their past literacy experiences and conducted discourse-based interviews with students about their strategies for composing a piece of writing during their first year of college. Their findings suggest that, although the participants came into college already experienced with a wide range of genres (from research papers and argumentative essays to blogs and personal letters), they “tended not to draw on the full range of their discursive resources when confronted with a new writing task in college” (p. 105). This finding is based on the observation that during discourse-based interviews students tended to associate the language of writing assignment prompts, e.g., “essay,” “analyze,” and “research,” with their knowledge of school-based genres only, and not with the many extra-curricular writing genres that they commanded, for example blogs. This observation led the authors to hypothesize that many students command a wide range of “discursive resources” that they do not draw on when they approach unfamiliar writing tasks.

Several things are not clear from the Rounsaville et al. (2008) write up of this study. For one, the authors do not specify the types of “discursive resources” they have in mind when they state that their interview questions “were designed to learn about how students described using their discursive resources” (p. 105). Second, it is not entirely clear how students were describing their discursive resources other than to use genre labels like “essay” and “research paper.” In one sample response, an interviewee refers to her experience writing “formal correspondence” and using a “speaking style,” but beyond these broad characterizations it is not clear how students were characterizing their discursive strategies. Third, the researchers suggest that they are interested in how students “moved from genre recognition to genre deployment” (p. 106) but it is not evident how, or the extent to which, analysis of student writing is carried out as a measure of genre deployment.

In a more recent account of this same study, Bawarshi and Reiff (2010) explain that they were inspired by Freedman's (1987) proposed methods for researching the process of genre acquisition. These steps include: "1) exploring past and current readings of genres, 2) analyzing previous writing experiences, 3) collecting assignments from instructors, 4) observing talk about writing, or 5) analyzing class discussion" (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 114). It is striking that this list does not include analysis of student writing. The rationale for this omission seems to be that the research agenda Freedman proposes, and that Bawarshi and Reiff (2010) take up, is to assess students' genre "sense" rather than their genre performance. While Bawarshi and Reiff explain that they did include student writing as part of the larger data source, they do not explain the analytic framework or process they used to analyze the writing, nor do they provide excerpts from student writing in order to illustrate points gleaned from the interview material. In contrast, the authors' lengthier discussion about the discourse-based interviews suggests that the student writing served as support for the interviews, i.e., to be considered as a point of reference for what students articulate about their discourse strategies.

In contrast to the use of student writing as a secondary data source, the suggestion I am making in this dissertation is that, in order to complete a picture of students' sense or awareness of genre, analysts need to examine students' written products in rigorous ways and as a primary data source. A similar argument for text analysis as a genre-based research method has been made recently by Tardy (2011). Her argument, one endorsed throughout this dissertation, is that much of students' genre knowledge (including strategies for drawing on their genre knowledge) is tacit and therefore not fully recoverable through research methods that rely on surveys and interviews. These methods are certainly necessary if researchers and practitioners are to understand students' conscious knowledge of genre and, as Jarratt et al. (2009) argue, their available metalanguage for articulating that knowledge. What these methods do not access very well, however, is students' tacit discourse expertise, or lack thereof.

Interestingly, Rounsaville et al. (2008) concede that the methodological challenge of researching students' prior genre knowledge "is augmented by the fact that students are often not conscious of how they use prior resources, except when explicitly prompted" (p. 98). This final point, "except when explicitly prompted," suggests that

having students articulate their discursive strategies can bring to their conscious attention the ways they have drawn on their prior genre experience. As Jarratt et al. (2009) and others (e.g., Frazier, 2010; Thaiss & Zawacki, 2006) have argued, the interview context itself provides an important opportunity for students to reflect on their rhetorical strategies and begin to make connections between various writing situations. Providing opportunities for reflection is crucially important. Nevertheless, the interview data both from Rounsaville et al. (2008) and Jarratt et al. (2009) suggest that explicit prompting does not greatly aid students' capacities to articulate their discursive choices except in very general ways. It is possible that many recurring discursive choices are inaccessible to conscious reflection and thus difficult to explain in the course of an interview, particularly without a specific metalanguage about writing.

2.5. Use of Metalanguage in Writing Reflection and Analysis

Some research on undergraduate and graduate students' academic writing suggests that students who command a specific metalanguage for talking and thinking about texts are better able to engage in reflection on their own rhetorical choices, for example their use of metadiscourse markers (Cheng & Steffensen, 1996) and rhetorical moves (Cheng, 2007). In contrast to internalized or tacit knowledge of language and discourse, it may be, as Myhill (2010) explains, that explicit knowledge of the ways specific textual features work and interrelate with socially valued meanings is "more cognitively accessible for reflection and decision-making, and may therefore be a powerful enabling tool for writers tackling the cognitively complex task of writing" (p. 141). In light of these points, it is likely that explicit prompting of students' reflections on their writing is a viable method for assessing students' genre-based rhetorical awareness only insofar as students possess a metalanguage for engaging in and articulating that reflection.

Along these lines, Bawarshi et al.'s (2008) protocol (online) for conducting discourse-based interviews with students prompts the interviewer to point to repeated patterns in the students' papers and ask them why they chose the strategy, where they learned it, and whether it reminds them of previous texts they had written. The list of example patterns for the interviewer to attend to are these:

- Opening/Closing Techniques
- Content: types of support for points; what counts as evidence (personal testimony, facts, quotations, etc.)
- Structure: pattern of organization, paragraphing, transitional techniques
- Format: layout or appearance
- Sentences: length and variety; simple or complex, passive or active
- Diction: word choice; use of any jargon or slang

It is not clear in any of the previous reports on this study (reviewed above) how students articulated their choices in, for example, “patterns of organization” or “transitional techniques.” Based on this provided list, it is likely that many college writers could explain that their experience writing Internet-based blogs has raised their awareness of the need to use “opening/closing techniques” that hook readers into the discourse and the need to support their arguments with a variety of evidence types so as to persuade multiple readers. Many students might also explain that they would *not* transfer their use of slang, informal diction, and simple sentence types to their writing of academic essays because academic contexts call for more formal wording and complex sentence types. In contrast, however, it is likely that few students could pinpoint the strategies they use to position readers as dialogic partners in their unfolding arguments or construct a certain stance by adjusting the strength and level of commitment of their claims in particular ways.

My point is not to say that student writers do not do things like position readers in particular ways when they write argumentative genres; it is only to suggest that this important element of genre awareness tends to lie below the surface of conscious awareness. One implication of this is that, counter to Rounsaville et al. (2008), many student writers may draw on a wide range of linguistic/discursive strategies acquired from their prior genre experiences when they approach new and unfamiliar scenes of writing but that these strategies are not being captured by the current methodological approach used by RGS scholars.

Research from WAC/WID contexts suggests that a refined language is needed for talking about stancetaking in disciplinary writing. As shown in findings from Waldo (2004) (reviewed above), evidence that students are somehow interpersonally engaged, or deeply invested, in their writing, seems to be valued by faculty across the disciplines. Respondents from the field of English spoke in terms of “voice” or “show[ing] the

writer's self in the piece of writing"; respondents in biology spoke in terms of "demonstrat[ing] commitment to experiments"; and respondents in curriculum and instruction spoke in terms of "demonstrat[ing] passionate commitment to positions" (p. 143-150).

The importance of interpersonal engagement across the disciplines is corroborated by Thaiss and Zawacki (2006), who report on the written reflections of a group of particularly confident college writers on the importance of balancing "reason" and "passion" in writing. As they write,

We see in these responses an understanding not only of the exigencies—disciplinary and personal—that shape writing in a discipline but also a belief in the individual writer's ability to move his or her readers. They have learned, in other words, that the academic readers they describe as their audience are persuaded not only by carefully reasoned arguments but also by a rhetorical stance that conveys their deeply felt individual passion(s). (p. 114).

Despite these students' stated confidence, however, Thaiss and Zawacki do not foreground analysis of their writing in order to ask how, or if, they use language in ways that successfully balance reason and passion or that construct a "rhetorical stance that conveys their deeply felt individual passion(s)." For many novice writers, learning to control discursive resources that work to bring together reason and passion in writing is a difficult undertaking. The process of learning to bring them together in genre appropriate ways, though, as my review of discourse analytic studies in the next section suggests, can be nurtured through close attention to the ways language works in writing to construe interpersonal meanings. By attending specifically to patterns in stance and reader positioning, students and instructors can begin to observe how abstract discursive aims are accomplished on a textual level.

The rhetorical and linguistic concept of stance (introduced in Chapter 1) is useful for revealing how abstract aims like balancing reason and passion are accomplished in various disciplinary genres. Along these lines, Soliday's (2004) analysis of the ways readers from a graduate program in anthropology evaluated student writing in a general education course revealed that readers valued not only, in their words, an "objective" stance but also a "reflective" one. As suggested by this seeming contradiction, the notion of an effective stance is not easy to pin down. Soliday also found that "when assigning

low scores to papers, readers often said the students ‘moralized,’ ‘lacked objectivity,’ or offered undesirable ‘personal opinions’” (p. 79). Therefore, it seems the challenge for many writers is one of figuring out how to intrude interpersonally into the text and construct an involved or engaged stance but without seeming to lack objectivity.

As Soliday (2011) notes, the literature on stance in linguistics offers a wide range of useful tools for tracking how textual personae are built up in texts. As discussed in Chapter 1, stance has been the focus of linguists from various theoretical traditions, including sociolinguistics, systemic functional linguistics (or SFL), and corpus linguistics because it provides a useful superordinate category for analyzing the construction of interpersonal meanings in texts. This broad concept of stance is of value for scholars in various fields—including anthropology, education, linguistics, composition-rhetoric, and others—who view meaning-making and knowledge construction in terms of dynamic social actions. Using this wide lens through which to view stance, I now turn to discourse analytic studies of student writing. The analytic constructs used in these studies point to methodological approaches for analyzing student writing that are useful for investigating questions about transfer of genre features, particularly features of student genres like “critical reasoning” and “passion” that are valued by faculty but difficult to observe in texts and discuss with students.

2.6. Discourse Analytic Studies of Stance in Student Writing

Before the “social turn” in composition studies, linguistically-oriented investigations of student writing typically focused on the construction of textual cohesion (e.g., Witte & Faigley, 1981) and control of information flow (e.g., Beaugrande, 1979; Cooper, 1988). These studies are important for understanding the textual dimensions of writing quality, but they are not as useful for investigating how student writers may encode their awareness of writing as a process of interpersonal interaction. This question has been explored in recent studies that have focused on the ways student writers use resources of language to intrude into the discourse with a particular stance. Specifically, discourse analytic studies of stance in student academic writing have focused on the ways students express attitudes toward knowledge-making (e.g., Barton, 1993); adjust degrees of doubt and certainty toward propositions (e.g., Hyland & Milton, 1997); engage with

anticipated readers (Hyland, 2005b); intrude interpersonally in the text through sentence beginnings, or theme positions (e.g., Hewings, 2004; North, 2005); and engage dialogically with other discursal voices (Coffin, 2002).

2.6.1 Evidentiality and Reader-engagement in Expert and Student Writing

An early and influential study on stance in student writing is Barton's (1993) comparative analysis of student and expert argumentative essays. Barton compared the use of evidentials, or expressions of attitude toward knowledge (Chafe & Nichols, 1986), in 100 student argumentative essays and 100 "expert" argumentative essays taken from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. She found that, while all 100 expert essays adopted a "contrastive" and "competitive" epistemological stance in the course of their argumentation, the student essays more often assume a stance toward knowledge-making as a process of "shared social agreement" (Barton, 1993, p. 765). Importantly, the student essays that did build a more contrastive stance and engage in problematization of others' ideas were found to have received higher scores. This finding suggests that academic insiders across disciplines may more highly evaluate student papers that express a critical or competitive stance toward the arguments and findings they are describing than those papers that view knowledge construction as a process of "shared social agreement."

With some interesting parallels to Barton's study, Hyland's (2005b) comparative study of expert and student reader-engagement strategies reveals striking patterns of difference with regard to use of reader references (e.g., *you*), directives (e.g., *consider that*), rhetorical questions, shared knowledge markers, and asides. Hyland's corpora were project reports written by final year Hong Kong undergraduates and a parallel corpus of published research writing. Hyland found that the student papers made more sparing use of reader engagement devices compared to the expert papers. Reader references, for example, appeared 24.8 times every 10,000 words in the expert corpus, while they appeared only 5.5 times in the student corpus. Similar patterns of difference were found with regard to directives like *Now consider*.

Hyland suggests three possibilities to account for the students' hesitance to make abundant use of engagement devices: their perception of the genre as a purely objective report used for assessment purposes; the hierarchical nature of the writer-reader

relationship (students writing to their professors and not their peers); and possible cultural preferences: Hong Kong nationals may view the educational process in more authoritative terms than their Western counterparts. Concluding, Hyland writes:

We can read these [engagement] choices, then, as displaying something of the students' perceptions that a fitting affective and disciplinary persona involves subordinating their voice to their readers' authority. Readers in another cultural context, perhaps in a less authoritarian educational setting, are likely to regard such writer choices as removing something of the authority and effectiveness from their prose. (Hyland, 2005b, p. 375)

While Barton's study demonstrates the likely possibility that student writers of argument genres are often rewarded for constructing epistemological stances that resemble their expert readers' stances as critical and competitive, Hyland's study suggests that the interpersonal dynamics of undergraduate report genres may constrain the array of possibilities for entering into interpersonal negotiation with imagined readers. Considered together, both Hyland's and Barton's studies suggest that students who are writing assessment genres (e.g., exam essays and course project reports) may be less likely than their expert counterparts, who are writing for more "authentic" community-oriented purposes, to use rhetorical strategies that position them as critical and authoritative knowledge makers, confident enough with their disciplinary persona to position their readers as peers on equal footing.

In addition to novice/expert comparisons, studies comparing various groups of student writers have helped to home in on interpersonal moves that are correlated with success on particular academic writing tasks.

2.6.2. Hedging/Boosting: Adjusting Doubt and Certainty in Student Writing

The analytic constructs of evidentiality in Barton's study and reader-engagement in Hyland's study are broadly related to discursive resources that operate to adjust degrees of doubt and certainty in argumentation, resources frequently known in the EAP/ESP literature as hedges and boosters (e.g., Hyland, 2005a). According to Hyland (1998), hedging is used to indicate either "a lack of commitment to the truth value of an accompanying proposition" or "a desire not to express that commitment categorically" (p.1). The linguistic resources of hedging are varied, including modal auxiliaries (*may*,

might, could), stance adverbs and adverbials (*possibly, likely*), nouns (*possibility, likelihood*), and others. In contrast to hedging, boosting “allow[s] writers to express their certainty in what they say and to mark involvement with the topic and solidarity with their audience” (Hyland, 2005a, p. 179). The linguistic resources of boosting are similarly diverse—e.g., adverbs like *certainly*, nouns like *significance*, and adjectives like *great*. Due to the wide umbrella offered by the concepts of hedging/boosting, there is overlap with the linguistic resources that Barton includes under evidentiality. For instance, wordings like *according to researchers* or *it is believed* can be viewed as evidentials of citation or hedging devices, depending on how the particular form is functioning within the genre and/or the surrounding co-text.

In terms of hedging/boosting specifically, Hyland and Milton (1997) compared the writing of L1 and L2 college writers. Their corpora consisted of examination essays from 900 Cantonese speaking students and 770 British learners of similar age and educational level. The authors found that, while the overall use of hedging devices was similar in number between the two groups, the Cantonese speaking students relied on a more limited range of grammatical resources, including most frequently particular modal verbs and the expression *I think*. The L1 writers, in contrast, used a greater number and range of adverbials and verbs for expressing uncertainty. The following two texts (from Hyland and Milton, 1997, p. 191) illustrate the difference:

(1a) Moreover, *I think* reading comic books is a good entertainment because it is healthier than going to karaoke lounge or disco. (L2 text)

(1b) To include Germany again in this argument we may *speculate* what the absence of a monarch may do to the state. (L1 text)

Even more substantial differences between the two student groups were found in the degree of certainty and tentativeness encoded in the text. Specifically, the authors’ findings point to “firmer assertions, more authoritative tone and stronger writer commitments” (p. 193) on the part of the L2 writers, who used more certainty markers. The L1 writers, in contrast, expressed more doubt when putting forth propositions. The following examples (from Hyland and Milton, 1997, p. 194) illustrate the difference between the two groups:

(2a) It is *certain* that Hong Kong will continue to develop prosperously. (L2 text)

(2b) This will *definitely* improve your English. (L2 text)

(2c) In such cases, the press *appear* to have forced unnecessary actions. (L1 text)

(2d) This is *likely* to cause resentment in the poorer communities. (L1 text)

Importantly, the higher-graded L2 texts came closer to the L1 texts in terms of expressing finer shades of epistemic uncertainty. This finding suggests that creating space for making claims in academic writing involves the careful construction of epistemic doubt for the inclusion of alternative interpretations.

Schleppegrell's (2004b) study of L1 and L2 students' writing of lab reports in chemical engineering somewhat corroborates this view. One of the main findings from this study is that the more proficient L1 writers tended to opt for more objectively-worded stances (e.g., *It is obvious that these results are in error*) while the less proficient L2 writers tended to rely on subjective options (e.g., *I believe that these results are in error*). That is, while both groups of writers were attempting a direct and assertive style of stance-taking—one appropriate for the genre of chemical engineering lab report—the L2 writers did not exploit the same range of resources for constructing such a style. Schleppegrell's study, then, underscores the importance of helping students to understand the range of linguistic options available to them for constructing evaluative stances that are valued within the particular academic context.

2.6.3. Analyzing Disciplinary Writing Development and Variation

In addition to expert/student comparisons and L1/L2 comparisons, other research has compared stancetaking patterns in student writing at different stages of development within a discipline (Coffin, 2002; Hewings, 2004), as well as differential patterns among students from different disciplines (North, 2005).

Drawing on SFL-based Appraisal theory (introduced in Chapter 1), Coffin's (2002) analysis of students' history writing reveals a developmental path whereby students are implicitly expected to move from (using Coffin's terms) a "recorder" to an "interpreter" of history and finally to an "adjudicator" of historical discourses. Coffin's analysis draws

on a theory of voice developed by linguists working within Appraisal, and this work has been extended in recent years by Martin and White (2005), Derewianka (2009), Macken-Horarik and Morgan (2011), and Swain (2009). In this work, different authorial voices are conceptualized as construed through specific configurations of evaluative meanings that pattern together in certain kinds of texts. In historical discourses, the “recorder” voice is built through an *absence* or low frequency of evaluating meanings, including judgments of historical actors (e.g., Trotsky was a *strong* leader), appreciations of historical processes (e.g., the warfare led to *major* economic, political and social changes), and explicit signaling of alternative views (e.g., While *others have suggested* that). Example 3 shows a brief sample of the recorder voice in a student’s essay (from Coffin, 2002, p. 517):

- (3) When the Europeans arrived in 1788 they occupied sacred land and destroyed Eora hunting and fishing grounds. In 1790 the Eora people began a guerrilla war against the Europeans.

In this text, the verbs “occupied” and “destroyed” evoke negative judgments of European behavior, but these negative judgments are not explicitly inscribed in the text; they are only implicitly realized. Later in this text, the authorial voice goes on to narrate, or record, historical events, occasionally evoking (but not explicitly inscribing) evaluations of historical figures and processes.

The “interpreter” voice is also characterized by an absence of explicit judgment of historical actors but, in contrast to the recorder voice, it includes frequent appraising of the social valuation of historical processes—for example characterizing an event as a *major* or *important* event. As a result of these explicit appraisals, “the writer’s worldview is more ‘in view’” (Coffin, p. 518) than it is when simply recording history. Example 4 shows a brief sample of the interpreter voice (from Coffin, 2002, p. 518):

- (4) World War II affected Australian Society both during and after the war. The focus of this essay is its impact on Australia after it ended in 1945 and an explanation of how six years of involvement in warfare led to **major** economic, political and social changes. One **major** effect of World War II was a restructuring of the Australian economy: the unavailability of goods meant that Australia had to begin to produce its own.

In this text, the writer is interpreting the impact of historical processes by explicitly evaluating their social value.

The more advanced “adjudicator” voice is characterized by frequent use of Engagement resources to negotiate solidarity with a reader who is projected to hold contrary points of view. In the following excerpt (example 5), the student writer expresses explicit judgment of Trotsky’s leadership capacity and moral propriety, and she uses Engagement resources to ease into a potentially debatable critique of Trotsky while also attributing a problematic term (“whites”) to an external source. (In this text the various Appraisal resources are tagged in parentheses.)

(5) In 1918, The Russian revolution was under threat from both internal and external counter-revolutionary forces. Leon Trotsky **made the Red Army a formidable force** (JUDGMENT). He introduced compulsory conscription for all peasants and workers; and he recruited 50,000 Tsarist officials to provide the Army with **experienced leadership** (JUDGMENT). The Red Army grew from 800,000 men in 1918 to 5 million in 1920 thanks to Trotsky’s **organizational skill** (JUDGMENT). In 1919 **though** (ENGAGEMENT), it **seemed** (ENGAGEMENT) that Trotsky had **failed** (JUDGMENT), as the ‘Whites’ (as the counter-revolutionaries **called themselves** (ENGAGEMENT) gained more and more territory and control.

This text not only makes explicit judgments of Trotsky but also subtly engages with alternative voices by countering (*though*), lowering commitment to a negative evaluation (*seemed*), and distancing itself from a controversial term through the extra-vocalizing quality of scare quotes (“Whites”). In general terms, Coffin’s analysis shows that the more developmentally advanced student writers of history use a wider range of evaluative meanings in their writing, including resources of Engagement for bringing into play other views and voices and playing them against one another. It also shows that higher grades tend to be awarded to essays whose writers use more explicit evaluative moves when using adjudicator voice (p. 515-516). This may be because these specific interpersonal meanings index writers who aware of the need to explicitly evaluate historical actors and processes when writing while also negotiating their interpretations of the meanings of history.

Comparable findings are shown in Hewings’s (2004) study of Theme patterns in undergraduate student writing in geography at the University of Birmingham, UK. This

study attempts to account for the emergence of a discipline-specific style of stancetaking among students in different developmental stages of the subject geography. The analytic construct of *Theme* refers to the “point of departure” for the message of a text (Halliday, 1994, p. 94), and it includes the grammatical subject of the sentence as well as any material that may precede the subject. Hewings’ analysis of different theme types⁸ points to more instances of multiple themes in the writing of the third-year students. Specifically these students used more interpersonal and textual themes in their essays than did first- or second-year students. Hewings argues that this more advanced use of theme positions works to reveal the students’ evaluative stances toward the material as well as the logical progression of their arguments. The first-year students, in contrast, relied more exclusively on unmarked topical themes. The following examples (from Hewings, 2004, p. 140-45) illustrate these differences. The clauses in 6 are from a first-year student’s essay and those in 7 are from a third-year student’s essay.

(6) *The Nile* is an arcuate delta which has a rounded convex outer margin.
The final type of delta is a birds foot.
This is where a river has many distributaries bounded by sediment and which extend out to sea like the claws of a bird.

(7) *Unequivocally / hillslope erosion models* have advanced since the first one in 1940,
but / these models are still not perfect.
Currently / it is fair to say that / results from the models although representative of soil loss in an area are far more accurate.

These excerpts show that the third-year student’s text encodes “a greater number of meanings” (Hewings, 2004, p. 144) at clause initial positions. Further, the more evaluative or persuasive intent of the third-year text is revealed by its use of interpersonal

⁸ These theme types she analyzed include topical themes, which focus on ideational meanings and include themes congruent with the grammatical subject (e.g., *The soft rock* is eroded relatively rapidly), as well as “thematic equatives” or pseudo-clefts (e.g., *What is indisputable* is that women ...) and existential *there* (e.g., *There is* great prestige associated with being innovative). Marked themes include circumstantial adjuncts occurring before the grammatical subject (e.g., *From here*, water would follow the stream), fronted dependent clauses (e.g., *If water becomes sufficiently concentrated* it might begin to cut a channel), and predicated themes or cleft constructions (e.g., *It is perhaps the shorter lifespan of mobile homes* that prevents ...). Textual themes are structural elements such as conjunctions that occur at the beginnings of clauses and operate to signal the relationships between parts of texts (e.g., *However*). Interpersonal themes, finally, include stance adverbials, modals, and mood markings, as well as anticipatory *it* followed by an extraposed subject (e.g., *It is obvious from the descriptions of* ...).

themes (*Unequivocally ... it is fair to say that ... Perhaps*), which suggest the author's preparedness to "intrude more openly into the text" (Hewings, 2004, p. 145). Hewings connects these rhetorical strategies to the writing guidelines in the School of Geography, which stress the importance of terms like *argument*, *criticism*, *insight*, and *imaginative discussion*. In this regard, it is important to note that the first-year papers that received the highest grades tended to, like the third-year papers, incorporate more interpersonal themes.

North (2005) also analyzed themes in undergraduate student writing, but with an eye to pinpointing disciplinary variation. Her corpus consisted of essays written in one history of science course at the Open University in the UK. North divided the corpus into two groups: (1) those written by students with backgrounds in arts, social sciences, or education and (2) those written by students with backgrounds in mathematics, science, or technology. The first group of essays tended to receive higher grades from the course instructor than the second group, and North (2005) suggests that this may connect with differential patterns in theme. Specifically, findings from the theme analysis show that students in the first group, like the more advanced geography writers in Hewings (2004) study, used a greater number of textual and interpersonal themes in their essays. North interprets this difference as reflecting training in argumentative epistemologies where knowledge-building is understood as a matter of interpretation and therefore persuasion: "If knowledge is seen as a matter of interpretation," North argues, "then the writer must do more work to persuade the reader than if the text is seen as a straightforward representation of reality ... From this perspective, both textual and interpersonal themes can be seen as involving writer intervention in the text" (p. 445-6). The more successful response from the course instructor on the first group of essays, then, may be connected to the more frequent textual foregrounding of "knowledge as constructed, using themes which framed the discussion as matter of interpretation rather than fact" (North, 2005, p. 431).

In sum, the value in these discourse analytic studies of stance in student writing is that they use concrete linguistic evidence to support hypotheses about difficulties many students experience in constructing valued meanings in academic writing. Another value is that they provide a specific metalanguage for discussing the details of language use in

terms of their rhetorical meaning-making purposes.

2.7. Extending Analyses of Stance in Student Writing

These discourse analytic studies bear directly on the problem suggested by Thaiss and Zawacki (2006) about the difficulty of observing and discussing with students how valued discursive and rhetorical strategies are accomplished in academic writing (for example, the strategy of constructing a “critical” reader in the text). They also bear directly on the methodological problem identified by Rounsaville et al. (2008) that “students are often not conscious of how they use prior [discursive] resources” (p. 98). As suggested by these studies, researchers need to analyze student writing in detailed ways (in addition to explicitly prompting students to reflect on their experience with prior genres and their stock of discursive resources) in order to identify subtle discursive patterns that students may not be consciously aware of, even when explicitly prompted. In order to extend this discourse analytic work on student writing, I’d like to suggest that at least two analytical refinements are needed.

First, it is important to bring together work on evidentiality, hedging/boosting, modality, and other analytic constructs under a coherent framework for analyzing broad rhetorical patterns in interpersonal stancetaking. Below I suggest that the concepts of “dialogic contraction” and “dialogic expansion”—as discussed in White (2003) and Martin & White (2005)—offer a coherent and comprehensive way to bring together the literature on hedging/boosting, concession, attribution, modality, and negation. Second, it is important to account for the ways that the arrangement and sequencing of various stancetaking resources—and not just their presence or absence in texts—create what Hood (2004) refer to as “waves” of interpersonal meanings in large stretches of texts.

In terms of the first goal, it is currently difficult to see how student writers may combine evidentials, hedging/boosting devices, interpersonal themes, and other metadiscursive strategies in ways that relate to rhetorical choices relevant to the particular genre the student is writing. As Coffin’s (2002) work on “voice” in secondary students’ history papers shows, student genres within particular disciplinary contexts may call for particular evaluative “voices” that are constructed by recurring configurations of interpersonal meanings. For example, it may be that evidentials like *it appears* and

hedges like *perhaps* and *possibly* co-occur in particular phases of an academic argument genre in order to open up space for the reader to imagine alternative points of view. In this way, particular wordings analyzed as evidentials and hedges can be brought together under the general rhetorical category of, to use White's (2003) term, "dialogical expansion." According to White (2003), appearance-based evidentials like *it appears*, *it seems*, *apparently*, and others function to reduce the speaker's/writer's commitment to the proposition being put forth and therefore to open up dialogic space for alternative views and voices. In this way, they can operate similarly to attributions (*According to White, As Chomsky argues*) to bring into the text others' views and voices, to expand the heteroglossic diversity of the text. Likewise, it may be that frequent use of negation (*not*, *never*) and adversatives and concessives (*true*, *of course*, *yes, but ...*) frequently co-occur with attitude markers like *interestingly* and *importantly* in order to tighten up the dialogic space and steer the reader toward the conclusions endorsed by the author; in this way, these wordings can be brought together under the broad category of "dialogic contraction." The larger point in adopting such a rhetorically based framework is to, as argued by White (2003), move "beyond commonalities in lexico-grammatical structuring or affordance and consider commonalities in rhetorical effect" (p. 280).

Second, it is not clear in the discourse analytic studies reviewed above how repeated configurations and sequencing of linguistic resources can create waves of interpersonal meanings that unfold, often implicitly, through individual texts. In her examination of research paper introductions, for example, Hood (2006) demonstrates how the placement of evaluative items can shape the evaluative color of subsequent stretches of text. In example 8 (from Hood, 2006, p. 41), the positive coloring of the lexical item *refinements* in the first sentence extends across the remainder of the paragraph even though no further explicit evaluations are made:

- (8) His methodology showed certain other **refinements**. First, he excluded overseas students. Such students tend to be older than average and also to fare worse academically (Woodle 1979), thus influencing any age / performance relationship. Secondly, he used two measures of performance; the proportion leaving without obtaining a degree and the degree results of those taking the final examinations. Finally, he weighted the degree class obtained according to its rarity value in each faculty.

Hood points out that the lexical item *refinements* is colored for positive value and that its placement in paragraph-initial position works to spread that positive coloring throughout the subsequent steps of *excluded*, *used*, and *weighted*, which are, in-and-of-themselves, value neutral. (In support of this point, Hood suggests that these steps would be coded for negative polarity if the initial stance were about methodological *problems*.) In addition, Hood also makes the point that the positive coloring is linguistically managed by the sequencing markers *First*, *Secondly*, and *Finally*. In terms of coding this text for its construction of evaluative stance, therefore, it is important to account for the placement and cooperation of other linguistic resources (e.g., sequencing markers), as these factors contribute to the interpersonal meaning the text accomplishes.

In terms of the construction of interpersonal stance, Hood's point suggests the need to attend to the sequencing strategies that writers may use for increasing and then decreasing their commitments to propositions—i.e., sometimes opening up dialogic space for negotiation and sometimes closing it down. Tracking such sequencing patterns can help to account for how writers position readers in particular stretches of text. Meaningful sequencing patterns, and repeated configurations of stance resources, can be overlooked when the linguistic lens is trained narrowly on discrete lexicogrammatical patterns and when the analytic approach is geared towards quantification of resources only.

2.8. Implications for Analysis of Student Writing

The explicitly dialogic view of stance that I am arguing for has important implications for the ways we view students' emerging conceptualizations toward knowledge-making. For instance, in terms of Hyland and Milton's (1997) study, hedging and boosting can be seen as working to ground an assertion within the subjectivity of the writer (rather than representing them as facts) and thus both "high certainty" and "low certainty" are dialogized options. An important pedagogical implication of this shift in focus would be to adopt the view that students who frequently use bare assertions and dialogically contractive moves, such as denials and counters, are not necessarily more "certain" or "confident" in their views but rather perhaps less aware of the need to open up the dialogic space at certain key moments in the discourse in order to invoke alternative voices and perspectives. Likewise, students who frequently "hedge" assertions

are perhaps not so much being cautious or tentative with their claims because they are uncertain or “playing it safe” as much as they are displaying awareness of the need to bring into play alternative points of view.

Furthermore, language patterns that index a critical or competitive epistemological stance, as analyzed in Barton (1993), may also be thought of as patterns used to contract the dialogic space at key moments in the discourse, “as the writer bids to win the reader over” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 125). The rhetorical strategies of problematization and counter-argumentation, for example, may be working, in addition to indexing a certain type of knowledge maker, to negotiate meanings with the reader by guiding him or her toward value positions being endorsed by the author. From this perspective, being contrastive in one’s approach to knowledge construction could also be viewed as a dialogic strategy whereby the authorial persona contracts dialogic space just after, or just before, having opened it up. From this perspective, student writing thought of as less critical in epistemological stance could also be thought of as less dialogically aware, or less aware of the need in academic writing to contract and expand room for the inclusion of alternative perspectives in the course of staging an argument.

As I explain in the next chapter, the SFL-based Appraisal framework is a useful tool for peeling back layers of dialogic awareness expressed in student writing. The Engagement subsystem of Appraisal specifically provides a coherent conceptual framework for analyzing writers’ strategies in hedging, boosting, evidentiality, concession, and reader engagement in terms of dialogic engagement. In addition to tracking effective and less than effective argumentative strategies within one discipline, the framework is helpful for revealing patterns of stance that correlate with argumentative goals in specific disciplinary contexts, particularly when the genres under analysis are as closely comparable as they are in Econ 432 and PS 409. I begin the next chapter with a more general orientation to the research context and explanation of my procedures for selecting a corpus of student essays.

CHAPTER 3

Research Design and Methods

Introduction

This discourse-analytic study examines how linguistic patterns in students' writing in two disciplinary contexts—an economics course focused on government regulation of industry (Econ 432) and a political science course focused on twentieth century political thought (PS 409)—operate to construct stances that are valued by the instructors, though perhaps beneath their fully conscious awareness. The analysis of students' writing draws on Appraisal Theory from Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL) in combination with language analytic constructs from other DA traditions, methods from corpus linguistics,⁹ and theoretical insights from rhetorical genre studies. Through this robust set of analytic approaches, the study aims to make explicit valued stances in upper-level student writing, teasing out stance patterns that correlate with (a) high- and low-graded essays and (b) distinct disciplinary contexts.

Delicate analytic tools were needed to conduct this examination for two reasons. First, the student writing under analysis is highly advanced, produced by mostly third- and fourth-year students who are majoring in the courses' disciplinary areas, and so patterns of difference between the high-graded and low-graded essays are often subtle. Second, the two essay assignments are closely comparable. Both require critical analysis of others' arguments, and so disciplinary distinctions in stancetaking are also subtle. In addition to the disciplinary comparison (stance in Econ 432 v. PS 409) and the high-

⁹ Corpus linguistics, generally speaking, is a method for analyzing language use in electronically stored texts. In this study, the computer-aided tool that I used to analyze students' texts is the freeware concordance program, AntConc (Anthony, 2010). I used this software to compare word and n-gram lists (or recurring wordings) between high- and low-graded essays. My uses of this tool were (1) to provide a "check" on my Appraisal analysis through inductive scans of frequently recurring words and phrases in groups of students' essays, one that I may not have noticed through my own analysis lens, and (2) to run targeted searches for specific stance-related items, for example expressions of modality and contrastive connectors. This second use allowed me to recover linguistic items that I may have overlooked in my manual coding of texts.

graded v. low-graded comparison, the study also compares patterns of stance in student writing with the instructors' goals and assessment criteria, as revealed through interviews and course material. By drawing on these additional data sources, the study investigates the degree to which certain patterns of stance in student writing may be valued or less valued for accomplishing the purposes of writing in the two contexts.

This chapter discusses the research context and procedures for selecting a corpus of student essays, the theoretical and methodological approach toward discourse analysis, and the specific analytic procedures used to identify and interpret the meanings of patterns of stance in students' writing. The research questions addressed by the study, presented in chapter one, are reproduced below. Questions one and two are addressed based on instructor interviews, comments on students' essays, and selected course material. Questions three and four are addressed based on linguistic analysis of student essays.

1. What are the pedagogical purposes of student writing in the two courses?
 - 1.1. What genres of writing are assigned to help students achieve these purposes?
 - 1.2. How do the instructors articulate these purposes during interviews?
 - 1.3. How are these purposes presented to students through course material?
2. What characteristics of student writing do the instructors identify (either explicitly or implicitly) as valued in the context of the course?
 - 2.1. How do they articulate these valued characteristics, i.e., through what metalanguage about writing?
3. In what ways, if any, are patterns in stance in the high-graded (HG) papers in each course different from patterns in stance in the low-graded (LG) papers?
 - 3.1. If there are no differences in stance, what other linguistic features may distinguish high- and low-performing writing in the course?
 - 3.2. Are there points of overlap in stancetaking among the high-performing writers in the two courses?
 - 3.3. Are there points of overlap in stancetaking among the low-performing writers in the two courses?
4. If there are differential patterns in stance between the HG and LG essays, and/or

between the disciplinary contexts, how do these patterns correlate with the pedagogical purposes and valued discursive features identified through questions (1) and (2)?

3.1. Overview of Research Design and Methods

3.1.1. General Approach to Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis (DA) refers to a wide variety of methodological and theoretical traditions for interpreting how language constructs meanings within specific social and cultural contexts, and these traditions vary along several important axes. These include the level of language under scrutiny, the theoretical approach to context, the analytic constructs and procedures, and the overall motivations and goals for the analysis.¹⁰ This dissertation is based on the assumption that identifying patterns of stance in student writing requires narrowing the analytic lens to the specific lexicogrammatical resources and larger textual patterns that the writers draw on to construct their texts. This means that, instead of using a DA approach that “pay[s] attention only to themes and messages (sometimes [...] called ‘content analysis’)” (Gee, 2010, p. 205), I use an approach that tracks linguistic patterns in student writing at the levels of word/phrase, clause, and text. It is at these detailed levels that writers make decisions—often perhaps only semi-consciously—about the types of stances to adopt and strategies for positioning the reader toward their arguments. This dissertation therefore uses a linguistically-oriented approach to DA in order to track how the details of language use may correlate with readers’

¹⁰ In terms of level of language use, the analytic lens has ranged from very specific lexicogrammatical resources, for example hedging devices in academic discourse (Hyland, 2005a), to broad socio-cultural worldviews, for example cultural values in television programming (as discussed in Paltridge, 2006). The former approach has been referred to in the literature as “linguistic discourse analysis” (Barton, 2004) or “textually oriented discourse analysis” (Fairclough, 1998) and the latter as thematic or content analysis (Gee, 2010). Theoretical treatments of context in DA range from the text-centered position that the only context that should matter to the analyst is that which can be demonstrated *in the text* to matter to the participants (Schegloff, 1997), to the context-centered ethnographic position that the analyst must be a participant in the cultural context in order to make determinations about text meaning (Anderson-Levitt, 2006). Text analytic procedures range from “top down” or theoretically driven analyses, such as use of gender theory to analyze patterns in spoken discourse, to “bottom up” data-driven procedures such as used in corpus-driven methods (e.g., Römer, 2005). Similarly, they have ranged from directed or construct-driven approaches, such as the use of move analysis (e.g., Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990), to more inductive approaches, such as described in Barton’s (2002) approach, “rich feature analysis.” Finally, major goals have ranged from the explicit project of critiquing and thereby transforming power relations in society (Fairclough, 1998), to generating purely descriptive “rules” for understanding turn-taking procedures in conversation (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974), to improving educational practices (e.g., Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Rogers, 2004; Schleppegrell, 2004a).

judgments and impressions.

More specifically, I argue that recent developments in systemic functional linguistics (SFL), particularly at the level of discourse semantics,¹¹ offer an important theoretical framework and set of analytic tools for analyzing the linguistic construction of stance. Discourse semantics is concerned with meaning beyond the clause, including the following processes, as explained in Martin and White (2005, p. 9):

How people, places and things are introduced in text and kept track of once there (identification); how events and states of affairs are linked to one another in terms of time, cause, contrast and similarity (conjunction); how participants are related as part to whole and sub-class to class (ideation); how turns are organized into exchanges of goods, services and information (negotiation); and how evaluation is established, amplified, targeted and sourced (appraisal).

This study examines the final set of semantic processes: “how evaluation is established, amplified, targeted and sourced.” For this reason, my analysis of student writing draws on Appraisal theory (AT) (Hood, 2004; Martin & White, 2005; White, 2003)—which I discuss below—to analyze the linguistic construction of stance in student writing. At the same time, I argue that the analytic constructs developed in AT—for example the Engagement categories of “dialogic contraction” and “dialogic expansion” (White, 2003; Martin & White, 2005; discussed in Chapter 2)—need not be used to the exclusion of analytic constructs from other DA traditions. Work on stance and closely related concepts like evidentiality and interpersonal metadiscourse—for example, in Barton (1993, 1995), Biber (2006), Hyland (2005a), Myers (2001), Thompson (2001), and Vande Kopple (1985), among others—is complementary to Appraisal analyses of student writing. The specific set of procedures that I use to analyze patterns of stance are based largely on the Engagement framework from AT, but I also open up the analytic lens to consider how other types of linguistic resources operate alongside Engagement resources to construct interpersonal meanings related to stance.

¹¹ This level of language is positioned at levels of abstraction higher than, first, phonology and graphology and, second, lexicogrammar (Martin & Rose, 2007; Martin & White, 2005). The relationship between these levels is understood through the concept of realization. Lexicogrammar is realized through phonological or graphological patterns, and discourse meanings are realized through patterns in the lexicogrammar.

3.1.2. Research Context

This study is situated in two upper-level undergraduate courses at the University of the Midwest (UM, a pseudonym): Economics 432, *Government Regulation of Industry*, and Political Science 409, *20th Century Political Thought* (henceforth Econ 432 and PS 409). Econ 432 was taught in Winter 2009 and had 80 students who met together as a lecture twice a week, along with four associated discussion sections led by two graduate student instructors (GSIs). PS 409 was taught in Winter 2010 and had 40 students who met as a group twice a week, along with one GSI who assisted with grading essays and leading class discussions. Both courses require regular writing (including drafting, peer or instructor reviewing, and revising) as well as regular reflections on writing.

This last component, writing reflection, was required in both courses because both were participating in an ongoing study of the impact of metacognitive, or self-reflective, strategies on students' disciplinary thinking and writing (henceforth "Teagle study"¹²). As a research assistant, I have been contributing to this study for the past two and half years. My role has consisted of analyzing students' written reflections on their writing, as well as data from student and instructor surveys, interviews, and focus-group discussions. All these data were collected for the purpose of better understanding the effects of the pedagogical interventions on students' understanding of disciplinary thinking and writing. Importantly, the Teagle study has not included analysis of the students' actual essay writing. Accordingly, my dissertation attempts to fill this gap by focusing on the performance side of students' emerging disciplinary literacies.

In addition to meeting UM's upper-level writing requirement, both courses require that students write lengthy end-of-term essays in which they critically examine others' arguments. In both essays, students are expected to engage in analysis, evaluation, and reasoned argumentation. Apart from this general similarity, the differences between the two writing contexts are most immediately apparent. Econ 432 is an upper-level course on economic regulation and antitrust policy.¹³ The discourses that students navigate

¹² This three year, iterative study is funded by the Teagle and Spencer foundation.

¹³ Econ 432 students read lengthy legal cases and policy briefs, and they write critical analyses of well-known antitrust cases like *Standard Oil Co. of New Jersey v. U.S. (1911)*, *U.S. v. General Electric (1926)*, and *U.S. v Microsoft (2001)*. This is addition to book chapters and journal articles on monopolization and

between include economics, law, and public policy. The major essay of 3,000-3,500 words is a combination of critical analysis and policy argumentation. By contrast, writing in PS 409 is more characteristic of the humanities than social sciences, a characterization affirmed by the course professor. In their writing, students do not argue from empirical data (whether gathered first- or second-hand), but from their own analyses and interpretations of texts.

These two discourse contexts, then, are marked by important similarities and differences, and these make the question of whether or not there are stances that are valued in student writing across disciplines a particularly interesting one. The answer to this question bears on what it means to teach student writers an awareness of what Thaiss and Zawacki (2006) refer to as “coherence-within-diversity.” As pointed out in Chapter 2, this term refers to a sense of coherence *within a discipline* (rather than across disciplines) despite the various sub-disciplinary variations. There is, of course, a more general sense of the term that has to do with points of connection in what is valued across disciplinary divisions. By examining high- and low-performing students’ writing in two distinct disciplinary contexts, this dissertation study asks whether or not there may be coherence-within-diversity in terms of valued stancetaking strategies in student genres across disciplinary lines.

3.2. Writing Assignments and Corpus Selection

3.2.1. The Corpus of Econ 432 Essays

There are four writing assignments in Econ 432 (shown in Appendix 2), and for reasons explained below my linguistic analysis focuses on a specific corpus of responses to Assignment 4. The four assignments consist of sequenced iterations of the major essay assignment. In Assignment 1, students practice writing what the professor refers to as a “story line” or “executive summary” of a difficult antitrust case. According to interviews with instructors, the purpose of this assignment is to teach students how to read a lengthy and complex legal case and then offer a well-organized and concise summary.

For Assignment 2, students select their own cases, write the story line, and explain why the case is interesting from a public policy perspective. The specific questions that

price discrimination, oligopoly and collusion, conglomerate mergers, and other related topics.

students need to address in their essays (as seen in Appendix 2) are these: “What is the story line? Be sure to discuss any remedies adopted by the court(s)” and “Why is this story interesting from a public policy perspective? Specifically, what are the principal economic issues you plan to address?” The instructor who I interviewed, Mark (a pseudonym), explained in our interview that this assignment “is essentially a proposal for the major essay.”

Assignment 3 is the first draft of the major essay. Students submit a revised version of Assignment 2, as well as (a) an analysis of how the legal remedies used in their cases affected the market structure, market conduct, and/or market performance in relevant markets¹⁴ and (b) an argument for the remedies they would have chosen if they had been in the position to decide remedies in light of their economic analyses.

Assignment 4, the focus of this study, is “a revised, polished, and integrated version of Assignment 3” (as stated in the prompt). Students are expected to produce a well-organized and more concise version of Assignment 3. One way that they make it more concise is by cutting out their responses to the Assignment 2 questions: “Why is this story interesting from a public policy perspective?”, “What are the principal economic issues you plan to address?”, and “How feasible is your proposed analysis of these issues?” In sum, Assignment 4 requires responses to these three questions.

- (1) “What is the story line? Be sure to discuss any remedies adopted by the court(s).”
- (2) “How did the remedies actually used in this case affect market structure, market conduct, and/or market performance in relevant markets?”
- (3) “What remedies would you have chosen?”

This dissertation focuses on Assignment 4 because, based on my reading of students’ work and instructors’ explanations, these essays represent students’ best efforts in the context of the course to pull together a coherent and well-written argumentative essay. These essays, therefore, are likely the best indicators of students’ understanding of the specific argumentative genre required in the course. In addition, if there were major problems with students’ understanding of the case, their analytic process (e.g., their

¹⁴ This was referred to in class material as a “SCP analysis”: Structure, Conduct, and Performance. It was the major guiding framework for the essay, and many of the GSI’s comments on students’ essays had to do with their confusion between what counts as market “conduct,” “performance,” or “structure.”

choice of economic model to conduct the analysis), or other “content” issues, these were usually addressed by Mark on assignment 3.

After selecting the corpus of essays to examine (explained below), I read each of the essays, dividing them into organizational stages that correspond to the three questions above. I borrow the term “stages” from SFL genre theory, whereby genre has been defined as a “staged, goal-oriented social process” (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 8). Similar to rhetorical “moves” (Swales, 1990), stages are the phases of text through which the purpose of a genre is realized. For example, in her analysis of undergraduate students’ critiques of journal articles (which she termed “Evaluative Accounts”), Woodward-Kron (2003) identified four organizational stages: Orientation, Summary of Article, Analysis of Article, and Implications. Furthermore, she broke these stages down into smaller sub-stages, which patterned together to realize the main stages.¹⁵ The purpose of my initial analysis of the students’ essays was not to pin down the precise series of stages and sub-stages that correlate with successful essays. Rather, it was to identify whether students were responding to the three questions identified in a sequential order and through a series of identifiable organizational stages.

Based on this initial reading of the essays, I identified four stages (outlined in Table 3.1). These comprise the executive summary of the case, the explanation of remedies, the analysis of consequences, and the recommendations. The difference between the first two stages is based on the fact that all ten essays that I examined (explained below) clearly demarcate the general overview or abstract, which I refer to (after the professor’s term) as the executive summary, from an account of the Courts’ remedies. Sometimes this distinction was signaled through separate paragraphs and sometimes through section headings, e.g., “Story Line” and “Remedies.” Table 3.1 shows the four stages, the questions that are answered in each stage, and the average length of each of the stages (calculated based on the large corpus of 92 essays, explained below).

¹⁵ Interestingly, Woodward-Kron’s (2003) analysis shows that the differences between high- and low-graded texts in her corpus lie in term of how the Analysis stage is realized rather than in terms of fulfillment of each of the stages. All the essays in her corpus used these stages, but the higher-performing students realized the Analysis stage through lexicogrammatical patterns that convey understanding of “critical analysis” as making connections between ideas rather than evaluating the articles in terms of their methodology, which is seen more frequently in the low-graded essays.

Stages	Questions answered	Average Length
Stage 1: Executive Summary of Case	“What is the story line?”	310 words
Stage 2: Explanation of Remedies	“Remedies adopted by the court(s).”	305 words
Stage 3: Analysis of Consequences	“How did the remedies actually used in this case affect market structure, market conduct, and/or market performance in relevant markets?”	1150 words
Stage 4: Recommendations	“What remedies would you have chosen?”	945 words

Table 3.1. Stages in the Econ 432 essay

My linguistic analysis of stance focuses specifically on stages 2-4 in selected groups of students’ essays. I focus on just these stages for two reasons. First, it is in these stages that the writers transition from summary, or recounting events and arguments in their cases, to developing their own points of view through explanation, evaluations, and arguments. Second, I made this decision in order to make the data set more manageable and comparable to PS 409. As I explain below, the discourse analysis involves coding every sentence (and often individual clauses or phrases) using the categories from the AT subsystem of Engagement (presented in detail below); if students’ summary stages were included in the analysis, every clause would be coded as an ‘attribute’ move or ‘bare assert’. The goal of the Engagement analysis is to explore how the student writers make decisions about expanding and contracting space for negotiating with alternative views and voices when putting forth their own assertions and evaluations, and the type of summary writing in stage 1 is mostly exempt from this type of rhetorical decision-making. Beginning with the ‘explanation’ stage, students begin to project a stance toward the material they are reviewing, and this stance can be coded as dialogically expansive, contractive, or disengaged. Stages 2-4 combined were on average approximately 2,400 words in length.

As shown in Table 3.2 below, I selected two main groups or corpora of Econ 432

essays for my analysis. The first corpus comprises ten essays that I used for close, qualitative and quantitative analysis, and the second comprises 92 essays (including the previous ten) that I analyzed through tools of corpus linguistics for the purpose of verification. Using the small corpus, I identified stance patterns in essays written by five consistently high-performing and five consistently low-performing students. Once I began to identify differential patterns between the two groups, I used the larger corpus in order to verify whether the patterns hold on a much larger sample of high- and low-graded students' essays. Table 3.2 presents a summary of the corpus data for the Econ 432 essays.

Corpora of Econ Essays	Econ essays by high-performing writers	Econ essays by low-performing writers	Total word count
10 essays for whole-text analysis	5 essays, 97 or above (stages 2-4), (12,007 words)	5 essays, 85 or below (stages 2-4) (12,000 words)	24,007 words
92 essays for quantification checking	46 essays (stages 2-4), graded 93-99 (111,583 words)	46 essays (stages 2-4), graded 87 or below (93,462 words)	205,045 words

Table 3.2. Summary of corpus information for Econ 432

The small 10-essay corpus was selected carefully from the 80 essays that were submitted during the Winter 2009 term. Four reasons governed my choice of these 10, and facts about the student writers and their essays are presented in Table 3.3 below.

First, all ten writers are from the same GSI's sections. Between the two GSIs, Mark and Ben (both pseudonyms), it may be fair to say that Mark's expertise is more closely aligned with the focus of the course. In Winter 2009, Mark was in his 5th year of a joint Ph.D. program in law and economics and had worked as an antitrust litigation consultant. In addition, the course was Mark's seventh time to work as a GSI in an economics course that required extensive writing. My rationale for selecting essays from his sections, therefore, is that Mark's evaluations of whether students are "getting" the genre of economically-informed critiques of legal reasoning may be closer to expert evaluations. It is for this same reason that I conducted my interview with Mark rather than Ben, as

explained below.

Second, these ten writers not only received high or low grades on assignment 4 but on all four writing assignments in the course. The five high-performers consistently received grades well above the class average, while the five low-performers consistently received grades below that average. (The average grades for each assignment are: paper 1 = 85.3; paper 2 = 86.8; paper 3 = 88.3; paper 4 = 89.7.) My rationale for selecting essays by consistently high- and low-performing writers was to be able to identify linguistic differences that correlate with strong and weak writers of the genre rather than students who may control the genre but do not put forth full effort on the assignment. While most students' grades increased from assignment to assignment, the grades of these ten writers did not increase very dramatically. The average grade for the high-performers rose from 95.4 on paper 1 to 98.4 on paper 4, while the average grade for the low performers rose from 79.0 on paper 1 to 83.2. (While this is an increase in 3 points and 4.2 points respectively, the average point increase between paper 1 and paper 4 for the class is 7 points.) In addition, while there were other students in class who earned lower grades on individual assignments than did the students chosen for this study, these five low-performing students were confirmed by Mark as having put forth a high level of effort in the course (coming to class, office hours, and their discussion sections) but still not fully understanding how to construct a sophisticated and convincing economic analysis.

This last point is the third reason for my selection. These were ten writers who Mark confirmed as "really getting it" or "not getting it" (a question I put to him before our interview) when it comes to the expectations of the genre. To gain this confirmation, I first selected the ten essays based on grades, as explained above, as well as on Mark's comments on the papers. By reading Mark's comments, I discerned that the five low-performing writers had completed all four stages of the assignment and had carried out a sufficient amount of research (as seen in the number of references in Table 3.3), but did not carry out the analysis well and/or clearly according to Mark's expectations. In an email exchange before our interview, I asked Mark whether he believed these ten students were representative of writers who understood or did not understand the genre and he confirmed that they were. Table 3.3 presents specific information about each of the high- and low-performing writers whose essays I examined, including their major and

year, paper grades, word length of paper 4, and number of references in paper 4.

High & Low performing writers	Major & Year	Paper 1 grade	Paper 2 grade	Paper 3 grade	Paper 4 grade	Paper 4 words	No. of Refs
H1, Luis	Econ, 4	94	98	99	99	2,440	6
H2, Mike	Econ, 4	96	94	99	99	2,528	2
H3, Ken	Econ, 4	97	95	98	99	2,230	10
H4, Keith	Econ, 3	96	95	97	98	2,378	9
H5, Tim	Econ, 3	94	94	95	97	2,431	2
Avg. in HG Essays		95.4	95.2	97.6	98.4	2,401	7.0
L1, Amy	Econ, 4	79	79	82	82	2,478	3
L2, Nancy	Econ, 4	81	83	84	83	1,835	3
L3, Melisa	Econ, 4	78	80	82	82	2,801	6
L4, Dan	Ind. Org., 4	77	83	84	84	2,252	2
L5, Elan	Econ, 4	82	80	82	84	2,634	4
Avg. in LG Essays		79.0	81.0	82.8	83.2	2,400	3.2

Table 3.3. Specific corpus information for Econ 432

Fourth, these are ten writers who, aside from being consistently high- or low-performing, are closely comparable in three other ways. First, except for Nancy's rather short essay, the essay lengths are nearly equivalent. Melisa's and Elan's essays are in fact longer than any of the high performers' essays—considerably so in Melisa's case. Second, while Ken and Keith seem to go above and beyond what is expected in terms of citing scholarly journal articles (students were not given a minimum number of scholarly sources), Mike and Tim are among the top five performers and they only cite two scholarly articles. These numbers suggest that there is not a clear correlation in the course between paper length and/or number of citations and essay grade. Third, these ten writers were, at the time of writing, all in their third or fourth year and had declared either economics or industrial organization as their majors. In sum, it appears that the low-performers were not underprepared for or disengaged from the course writing, at least in ways that can be gleaned by their choices of major and previous training at UM.

One cause for concern is that, while three of the five low-performing writers are

women (Amy, Nancy, and Melisa), all five of the high-performing writers are men. This disproportionate number is partially explained by the fact that, in the Winter 2009 term, women comprised only 24% of the class (19/80 students). It is not too surprising, then, that all five of the high-performing writers might be men. Nevertheless, it is still somewhat disconcerting that three of the 19 women in class were among the most consistently low-performing in terms of their paper grades and were confirmed by Mark as having a tenuous grasp on the specific essay genre. The question of how stancetaking in novice academic discourse might correlate with gender is important to bear in mind, even though it is ultimately beyond the scope of this study.

In sum, based on Mark's evaluation of students' effort, his evaluation of their grasp of the genre (i.e., "getting" Econ 432 writing or not), the length of the essays, the number of citations, and students' status and major, these low-performing students were prepared for the course and were putting forth effort on the assignment. However, they were falling short in their writing. One of the major questions guiding this study, then, is whether these student writers use stancetaking strategies that are less congruent with disciplinary expectations and/or with the goals and assessment criteria for student writing, as articulated by the instructors in interviews.

The larger corpus of 92 essays consists of high-graded (A-range) and low-graded (B-range or below) final essays from all sections of Econ 432 from two different terms: Winter 2009 and Winter 2011. (The series of writing assignments were exactly the same in the two terms—the handout showing the list of assignments was indeed precisely the same.) Specifically, this large corpus consists of stages 2-4 from 46 essays that received grades of 93-99 (for a total of 111,583 words) and stages 2-4 from 46 essays that received grades of 87 and below (for a total of 93,462 words). These were essays that received A's or A+'s in the first group, or B's or below in the second group. In Winter 2009, there were 80 students and in Winter 2011 there were 120 students, giving a total of 200 essays. My analysis, therefore, does not include 104 essays that received grades of 88 through 92, which are in the B+ and A- range. My rationale for this final corpus selection was to increase the corpus size to the largest size possible while still maintaining a clear division between above average and below average responses to the assignment.

3.2.2. The Corpus of PS 409 Essays

The writing assignments in PS 409 are roughly comparable to those in Econ 432 in that they require close analysis and evaluation of others' arguments. This is particularly true of the final essay in the course, which is the focus of my analysis. In total, the writing assignments in the course consist of three short papers of approximately 500 words each, and a final essay of 2,500–3,000 words. For the three short papers, students practice writing what the course professor, Peter, describes as “modules” of political theory writing. These include (using the terms from the course) paraphrases, summaries, explanations, elaborations, counterarguments, applied defenses, and normative arguments (see Appendix 3 for the short paper prompts). The goal of this work, as Peter explained, is that students learn to draw from these modules as they construct their long essays. This goal is presented in the course syllabus in this way:

... Work by political theorists includes argument paraphrases, summaries and comparisons; counterarguments; and new normative arguments. Good work incorporates these into seamless wholes, but to be able to do that, one needs to learn to work with the modules by themselves.

For the long essay assignment, students in Winter 2010 were given a choice of 14 topics based on class readings and discussions (see Appendix 4 for these topics). As in the case of Econ 432, my analysis of student writing in this course focuses on the final essay. I explain the requirements of this essay below.

Instead of selecting 10 essays from this course to examine, I selected 20 essays (10 high-graded and 10 low-graded). I made this choice in order to compensate at least partially for the absence of a larger reference corpus.¹⁶ The 20 essays chosen for analysis are represented in Table 3.4, with more specific information about them in Table 3.5. My procedure for selecting the 20 essays was roughly the same as that used for the Econ 432 corpus. I selected essays written by students who (1) consistently received high or low grades on all their assignments, with the purpose of investigating whether there are

¹⁶ The unavailability of a larger corpus in PS 409 is due to (a) the smaller number of students who took the course compared to the number enrolled in Econ 432 and (b) the fact that Peter, the course professor, participated in the larger research project only one term. Frank, the Econ 432 professor, participated in both Winter 2009 and Winter 2011, so I had access to all 200 students' essays. In contrast, for PS 409 I only had access to essays written by the 40 students who took the course in Winter 2010.

linguistic differences that correlate with strong and weak writers of the genre; (2) were confirmed by the course professor, Peter, as “getting” what it means to write in political theory or not; and (3) were closely comparable except that they consistently wrote high- or low-graded essays.

Regarding this last criterion, the twenty students were closely comparable in terms of their preparedness for the course, meaning their academic status and majors. Except for one high-performing second year student, Emma, and one low-performing second year student, Ryan, all other 18 writers were in their third or fourth year. They were also closely comparable in terms of the length of their essays. (While the HG final essays are in fact longer on average, they are not significantly so. The difference in average word count is 392 words. Further, if Sebastian’s overlong essay of 4,421 words were removed from HG average, the difference would be only 257 words.) There were other students in the course who received lower grades on their final essay but whom I excluded from the analysis either because Peter evaluated them as “strong writers” (his words) who did not put forth full effort on the assignment; or they received very high grades on earlier writing assignments and thus demonstrated some expertise with modules of political theory writing; or they were fourth-year students who had not declared political science as one of their major subjects and may have not been as motivated to master the genres of political theory writing.

Corpora of PS 409 Essays	PS 409 essays by high performing writers	PS 409 essays by low performing writers	Total word count
20 essays for qualitative analysis	10 essays, A graded (32,106 words)	10 essays, B graded or below (28,187 words)	60,293 words

Table 3.4. Summary of corpus information for PS 409

High & Low performing writers	Major & Year ¹⁷	Avg. Short Paper Grade	Final essay draft 1	Final essay draft 2	Final essay word length	Selected Prompt #
H1, Elisa	PS, Eng., 3	3.7	3.7	4.0	2,839	9
H2, Nicholas	NA, 4	4.0	4.0	4.0	3,038	13
H3, Ethan	PS, Span. 4	3.5	3.5	4.0	2,830	2
H4, Eric	PS, Psy, 4	3.7	3.7	4.0	3,440	4
H5, Emma	PS, Hist., 2	3.6	3.3	4.0	3,243	10
H6, Kurt	PS, Eng. 3	3.9	3.0	4.0	2,939	10
H7, Nicole	PS, Econ. 4	3.6	3.7	4.0	3,107	9
H8, Sarah	PS, IS, 3	3.7	3.3	4.0	3,449	12
H9, Richard	Hist., Bio, 3	3.5	3.0	4.0	2,800	10
H10, Sebastian	PS, 3	3.4	3.5	4.0	4,421	1
Avg. in High Corpus		3.7	3.5	4.0	3,211	
L1, Victor	PS, 3	3.0	2.3	2.7	2,921	2
L2, Michael	PS, Span, 3	2.7	2.7	3.0	2,659	1
L3, Heather	Hist., 3rd	3.2	2.7	3.0	3,442	13
L4, Katie	PS 3	3.1	2.7	3.3	2,958	9
L5, Erin	PS, 4	3.3	2.3	3.0	2,596	4
L6, Ryan	NA, 2	2.8	2.7	2.7	2,776	4
L7, Lars	PS, 3	2.8	2.7	2.7	2,631	4
L8, Kory	PS, 4	3.2	2.7	3.3	2,722	1
L9, Drew	PS, 4	3.2	3.0	3.3	2,714	4
L10 Kevin	PS, 3	3.1	2.3	3.0	2,768	4
Avg. in Low Corpus		3.0	2.6	3.0	2,819	

Table 3.5. Specific corpus information for PS 409

In addition to the absence of a larger corpus of political theory essays against which to verify patterns identified in the qualitative analysis, three challenges arose in selecting this corpus of 20 essays. First, the differences in grades between the high- and low-performing students were smaller than the differences in Econ 432. Peter told me in our interview, in fact, that this was one of the highest performing sections of PS 409 he had taught, and this is reflected in the fact that several of the “low” performers actually received B+s in the course. Erin, for instance, received grades of B+ and A- on two of her

¹⁷ As shown in this table, eight of the ten low-performing students and eight of the ten high-performing students were Political Science (PS) majors. Eng.=English; Span=Spanish; Psy=Psychology; Hist=History; IS=International Studies; NA=Not Applicable. Nicholas’s major is NA because he was an exchange student from Finland and did not have a major declared at UM; Ryan’s major is NA because he did not list a major area on the Teagle survey, presumably because he was a second year student.

short essay assignments. Nevertheless, I included Erin's final essay in the corpus of low performing essays because Peter confirmed that Erin struggled putting together a longer essay and may have struggled more generally with the genre, specifically with how to pull together a lengthy analysis of multiple lines of argumentation.

Second, it was impossible to find 10 high-performing and 10 low-performing essays that were graded by just one instructor, either Peter or the GSI appointed to the course, Brad. In this course, Peter and Brad both took part in the grading. I made the decision to include essays graded by both instructors because of the grade norming that Peter and Brad underwent at the beginning of the term. In addition, Peter explained to me that he had a good sense of the level of writing skill of every student because he had read at least two essays written by every student. Finally, he read all the final essays and said he agreed with the grades that Brad had assigned.

Third, unlike in Econ 432, students responded to different prompts, and these ranged in order of difficulty: Prompt 1 was identified by Peter as the least difficult and prompt 14 as the most difficult. (Peter was explicit about the order of difficulty of the prompts, as shown in Appendix 4.) However, as shown in Table 3.5 above, there does not seem to be a clear correlation between prompt difficulty and essay grades. Sebastian and Ethan (both high-performing students) selected Prompts 1 and 2 and both earned high grades, while Kory, Michael, and Victor (low-performers) selected these same prompts and earned lower grades. Likewise, Heather (a low-performer) and Nicholas (a high-performer) both selected prompt 13. One interesting correlation is that six of the ten low-performing writers (and just one of the ten high-performing writers) selected prompt 4. This prompts reads:

Consider both Adolf Eichmann's trial and punishment in terms of Carl Schmitt and Michel Foucault. Discuss the trial from Foucault's and/or Schmitt's perspective as both an institutional process and public spectacle. You might focus your argument by considering the following aspects: Eichmann's capture, the rationale for the trial, the trial itself as a kind of spectacle.

I asked Peter whether he thought there was something about prompt 4 that attracted and/or tripped up weaker writers, and he responded that many students think they have a better grasp of Foucault than they actually do. It may be the case, then, that the high-

performing students better understood the difficulties presented by Foucault. Apart from this possible pattern, there do not seem to be other discrepancies between the high- and low-performing groups—in terms of academic status, major, essay length, or prompt selection. The high-graded final essays are longer on average, but not significantly so. The difference in average word count is 392 words, but if Sebastian’s overlong essay of 4,421 words were removed from HG average (the cap was put at 3,000 words in the assignment sheet), the difference would be only 257 words.

3.3. Interviews with Course Instructors

To provide a contextual frame useful for interpreting patterns of stance in the students’ writing, this dissertation draws on five separate interviews with instructors from Econ 432 and PS 409. Three of these were conducted through the Teagle study—one with the Econ 432 course professor, Frank, one with Econ 432 GSI, Mark, and one with the PS 409 course professor, Peter—and two were interviews that I conducted myself, one with Mark and one with Peter. I chose these two instructors as participants because they both were principal graders of students’ essays in their courses, and both can be understood as representing expert readers of student work in the specific disciplinary contexts. The Teagle interviews were focused primarily on questions about what it means to “think like” and “write like” a member of the specific field, as well as strategies for helping undergraduate students to become more cognizant of discipline-specific thinking and writing. I draw on these interviews to answer questions about the pedagogical purposes for assigning student writing in the two courses and the discursive features that are valued in students’ writing.

For my interviews with Peter and Mark, I prepared semi-structured questions focused primarily on the purposes for assigning student writing, the purposes of specific writing assignments, and the distinctions between successful and unsuccessful student responses. (These interview protocols are in Appendix 1.) In addition, I asked questions about specific essays that they had selected and brought to the interview as representative examples of highly successful and less successful writing. In both interviews, the two essays that were examined were from the small corpora of essays written by consistently high-performing and low-performing writers. For these text-based stages of the

interviews, I tried to ask questions that followed from the previous set of questions about distinctions between successful and unsuccessful writing. For example, Mark spoke about the importance of students' engaging in "counter-argumentation" in their writing in order to build a strong and, in his words, "airtight argument," and so in the text-based stage I asked him to identify areas in the high performing student's essay in which counter-argumentation was well handled. Peter spoke about the importance of "control" in writing, and so I asked him to identify areas in the high performing student's essay that demonstrated control.

In this way, my questions were designed to help me better understand how the two instructors were conceptualizing strong and weak student writing in their courses and how they go about articulating those conceptualizations. It was important for me to understand the instructors' thinking about student writing, unmediated by my own set of questions about stance. This is because my goal was to gauge the extent to which stance enters into their conscious thinking about and reading of student produced work. For instance, Mark's concept of "counter-argumentation" is, I would argue, very much related to the kind of intersubjective stancetaking that my analysis is tracking, and so Mark's unprompted mention of this concept (and term) showed me that it is one that he is attuned to when he reads student work—although, as I will suggest in Chapter 4, he might not be fully attuned to the complex rhetorical maneuvers demonstrated in students' writing that fall under his rubric of "counter-argumentation." For this reason, I did not use the term "stance" (or related terms like "persona," "ethos," "tone," "style," or "voice"), nor did I explain the specific sets of questions that my dissertation is asking. Instead, I told Mark and Peter that I was interested in better understanding what counts as strong and weak student writing in their specific disciplinary contexts for the general purpose of improving college-level writing instruction. In this way, Mark and Peter were positioned as the experts about student writing in their fields, just as they were positioned in the Teagle interviews as experts regarding what it means to think and write like members of their fields.

The three Teagle interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed by an undergraduate research assistant who worked regularly on the Teagle project. I listened to the audio recordings myself to check for accuracy of transcription and to gain a better

sense of the interpersonal meanings of specific responses, for example what words/phrases received greater emphasis and how quickly or hesitantly the responses came. I also digitally recorded the two interviews that I conducted with Mark and Peter and transcribed them myself. I explain my approach to my analysis and coding of these interviews below in the section on specific analytic procedures. The procedures for analyzing the interview transcripts were carried out after I had undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the students' essays, and below I explain the strategies for using my analysis of these transcripts as part of the final stage in interpreting patterns of stance in students' writing.

3.4. Approach to Analysis of Student Essays

One of the central problems all discourse analysts must face is what Gee and Handford (2011) refer to as “the frame problem” (p. 4). Since texts are always constructed in contexts, the analyst must decide how much of the context should be taken into account in order to offer a valid interpretation of a given text. “How,” as the authors put it, “can we be sure an interpretation is ‘right’, if considering further aspects of the context might well change that interpretation?” (p. 4). The DA approach that I use in this study responds to the frame problem in two central ways: by setting the frame on the communicative purposes for student writing, as articulated by the instructors in interviews and in course material, and on the interpersonal dynamics between writer and reader in the context of the situation, as construed in the writer's language choices. I discuss these two related responses in the sub-sections that follow.

3.4.1. Student Genres and Purpose

First, I analyze the students' essays through a genre-focused lens. This means that I interpret recurring features in the essays according to the set of communicative purposes that give rise to those features (after Swales, 1990). The essays written in the context of a university course may be considered instances of student genres, or what Johns (2002) refers to as “classroom genres.” Student genres are written for purposes of fostering and evaluating learning in a specific disciplinary context, and less for purposes of sharing findings, provoking debate, or otherwise extending knowledge within a scholarly

discourse community.¹⁸ Connected to this different set of purposes are different interpersonal dynamics between writers and readers. While the expert writer is interacting with a readership of peers who are reading in order to learn new information and perhaps grapple with new ideas, the student writer is most likely imagining the course instructor(s) as the principal reader, someone who is reading in order to assess learning and degree of effort. In some cases, certainly, student writers may have their peer reviewers in mind when writing, and possibly many advanced students do write for an abstract community of fellow disciplinary participants (perhaps even beneath their fully conscious awareness of this imagined audience). But the different situational purposes are likely to give rise to different choices for constructing stance. As Hyland's (2005b) study shows (reviewed in Chapter 2), these different rhetorical purposes correlate with different reader-engagement strategies, with student writers often more hesitant to project a reader-engaged stance. What this finding suggests more generally is that selections of stance moves in students' essay may be best understood in terms of how they operate to perform the rhetorical and intellectual work that the essay was designed to foster within the context of the classroom.

The interviews that I conducted (described above) were carried out in order to illuminate the specific nature of this rhetorical and intellectual work. Based on prior research on faculty values for student writing (e.g., Thaiss & Zawacki, 2006; Woodward-Kron, 2004; Waldo 2004), writing assignments in the disciplines are largely designed to foster and evaluate students' engagement with course material and disciplinary epistemologies. For this reason, it is plausible to speculate that the high-performing students in Econ 432 and PS 409 are more likely to make stance moves that index that engagement. In short, I use interviews with the course instructors in order to set the contextual frame for my discourse analysis around the set of communicative purposes and expectations for student writing in the two courses.

3.4.2. Register and Context of Situation

The second, and very much related, way that my analytic approach responds to the

¹⁸ Others in composition studies have pointed out differences between expert disciplinary discourses and corresponding student genres on similar grounds, including Berkenkotter & Huckin (1995), Hüttner (2008), Johns (2002), and Russell (1997).

frame problem is by drawing on SFL-based register theory (Halliday, 1978; 1994; Halliday & Matthiesson, 2004). Register in SFL refers to a specific theory of social context that is closely tied to the lexicogrammar of the language. Meaning is understood in SFL to be realized in the language in the form of text, which is thus shaped or patterned in response to the context of situation in which it is used. So closely tied are language and context, in fact, that “one can only be interpreted by reference to the other” (Kress, 1985, vii). The theory posits that variations in the social context can be modeled through the abstract variables of field (i.e., the discourse field, the topic of the text, the nature of the social action), the tenor (or the relationship between participants, i.e. writer and reader), and the mode (or the part that language plays, what the participants expect the language to do for them in the situation).

By referring to tenor, for example, analysts can talk about how interpersonal meanings are realized through specific lexicogrammatical choices that work both to reflect and shape the participant relations in a given context. *Interpersonal meanings* here refers to one of the major metafunctions of language that has developed as use for language has evolved, and this metafunction roughly correlates with the contextual variable of tenor. The ideational/experiential metafunction (which includes functions of language related to the subject matter and social activity) correlates roughly with the contextual variable of field, while the textual metafunction (which includes functions related to the ways language organizes messages) correlates roughly with the contextual variable of mode.

Because of the systematic connections between language choice and context that are modeled in the theory, many useful tools have been developed for analyzing text, particularly at the discourse semantic level (see, for example, Martin & Rose, 2007). Because this dissertation focuses specifically on interpersonal meanings as they are realized through students’ texts, the principal analytic tool that I draw from is the Appraisal framework. Appraisal is “concerned with the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned” (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 23). Appraisal is therefore useful for teasing out the kinds of interpersonal meanings that students are constructing in their texts—i.e., meanings related to stancetaking and reader-positioning—and that may

(or may not) correlate with the communicative purposes for student writing in the course, as revealed through instructor interviews.

I explain the Appraisal framework in detail in the next two sections. I then explain specifically how I draw from the framework in the course of my analytic procedures.

3.4.3. The Appraisal Framework

As briefly outlined in Chapter 1, Appraisal theory has developed relatively recently in SFL theorizing as a means of extending the description of ways interpersonal meanings are realized in text, building from the clause-level resources described in Halliday (1994). The framework has been used to analyze texts from a variety of discourses and genres, including journalistic discourse (White, 2006), pedagogical texts (Oteiza and Pinto, 2008), television interviews (Becker, 2009), rap music (Caldwell, 2008), scholarly research articles (Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011), and student academic writing in history (Coffin, 2002, 2004), education (Woodward-Kron, 2004), and geography (Wu, 2007). These analyses have helped to advance understanding of the patterned use of evaluative resources for constructing an authorial voice, engaging with other voices and perspectives, and signaling community-recognized knowledge, values, and attitudes.

To explore the types of interpersonal meanings outlined above, the Appraisal framework (displayed in Figure 3.1) makes use of three interrelated sub-systems¹⁹: **Engagement**, which is inspired by Bakhtinian notions of heteroglossia and dialogism, models how “values are sourced and readers aligned” (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 16) through such moves as denying, countering, conceding, endorsing, and entertaining other voices and perspectives. Through these moves, other views and voices are subtly brought into the text, or “engaged.” A statement like, “It would appear to me that the courts overlooked important evidence” subtly engages (via the appearance-based evidential *appear*) the alternative view that the courts did not overlook important evidence. In the Engagement framework, this sentence is considered an ‘entertain’ move because it entertains dialogic alternatives. Because my analysis draws mostly on this sub-system, I

¹⁹ In my explanation, these sub-systems are bolded the first time mentioned, and then I use regular typeface when referring to them, with the first letter capitalized. I place names of specific resources within each sub-system in single quotes, such as ‘affect’ in the Attitude sub-system.

discuss it in greater detail shortly.

Attitude explores how ‘affect’, ‘judgment’ of human behavior, and ‘appreciation’ of things and processes are built up in texts. ‘Affect’ encompasses meanings related to emotions and affective responses. This sub-type would be at play were a writer to characterize Foucault’s text as *pleasurable, disappointing, or frustrating*, as these characterizations would focus on the writer’s affective state after reading Foucault (and not on Foucault himself or on his ideas). ‘Judgment’ relates to the explicit or implicit (and positive or negative) evaluation of human behavior. In Chapter 1, I used as an example a student text that negatively evaluates Chomsky’s argument about education by focusing on Chomsky as a person, who is judged as an *idealist* and as not having *a level head* sufficient to *properly understand* his own ideas. Finally, ‘appreciation’ relates to the evaluation of objects and products by reference to community-recognized values like *importance, significance, usefulness, clarity*, and others that are situated within particular discourses. For this reason, use of ‘appreciation’ has been characterized as the “institutionalization of feeling” as these resources “rework feelings as propositions about the value of things” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 45).

Finally, the system of **Graduation** tracks how attitudes and stance positions are subtly adjusted in terms of ‘force’ and ‘focus’. The ‘force’ of a proposition can be raised or lowered, using adverbs of intensification like *slightly, a bit, somewhat, rather, really, very, completely* etc. In addition, the ‘focus’ of a proposition can be sharpened or softened, using a range of wordings like *he effectively admitted it, he might as well have admitted it, a true friend, a long-time friend, a fair-weathered friend*, and so on. The Graduation and Engagement sub-systems are closely related, but it useful to pull them apart in order to account for the various degrees of commitment that are used to trigger dialogical alternatives. For example, consider the difference between these three options: *The findings kind of suggest, The findings suggest, and The findings strongly suggest*. The Engagement resource of ‘entertain’ is used in each (via *suggest*), but since the force of the meaning is slightly different in each instance, the degrees of dialogical openness range from more to less open. In other DA traditions, Graduation meanings have been referred to as intensifiers, boosters, emphasizeers, emphatics, and hedges.

The three subsystems of Appraisal are graphically displayed in Figure 3.1. (Note

that straight brackets in SFL system networks such as this one indicate that one option or resource is selected over another in a given stretch of text. For example, in the Engagement system, a particular wording is monoglossic or dialogic but not both. In contrast, slanted brackets indicate that multiple resources can be selected at once. Any sentence, phrase, or clause can employ resources of Engagement, Attitude, and Graduation, and in the Attitude system, any sentence, phrase, or clause can employ resources of affect, judgment, and appreciation.)

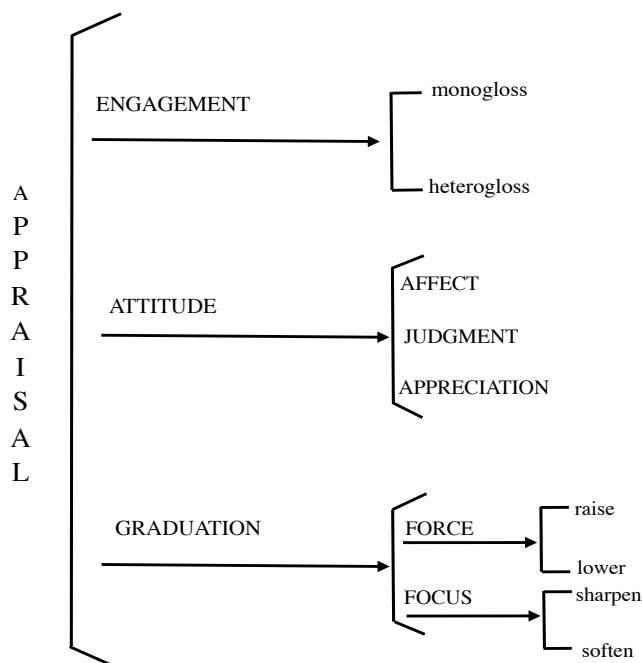


Figure 3.1. The Appraisal system network (from Martin & White, 2005).

Appraisal analyses of student writing such as Coffin’s (2002) (reviewed above) have revealed patterns in “voice” that are constructed through recurring configurations of Engagement, Attitude, and Graduation resources. The following paragraph from a second year student’s argumentative essay written in a political science course provides a brief demonstration of this kind of analysis.²⁰ (Resources of Attitude are underlined, resources of Graduation are in **BOLD SMALL CAPS**, and resources of Engagement are boxed.)

²⁰ The paper was given to me by a former student with permission to cite. This student was a second year undergraduate when he wrote the paper in an introductory course in political theory.

(1) Firstly, Zakaria’s implication that the forces that moved into power in Bosnia were counterproductive ones to the American ends is **TOTALLY irrelevant**. (2) If America found democracy to **TRULY** be such a noble cause to spread, then **SURELY** it would not violate a nation’s sovereignty in an attempt to preserve its democratic status. (3) Although ostensibly this would tie into his greater thesis regarding liberty as a lesser need than democracy as ideals America has worked to spread, his generous usage of the term democracy here and his inability to PROPERLY hold it true to its definition **TOTALLY undermines** his insistence in conceptual exactness and differentiation between democracy and liberty in the first place.²¹

In terms of dialogic Engagement, this text uses a counter-claim in sentence 3. But the Appraisal values that overwhelm the paragraph relate to, on the one hand, Attitudinal resources of ‘judgment’ of individuals’ behavior and disposition (*violate, generous, inability to properly hold it true to its definition*) and negative values of ‘appreciation’ of processes and arguments (*noble, irrelevant, undermines*), and, on the other hand, Graduation resources of ‘force’ (*totally, surely*) and ‘focus’ (*truly, properly*). In terms of sequencing, the high force ‘appreciation’ in the first sentence—that Zakaria’s claim is “totally irrelevant”—sets up a wave of strongly negative meanings that spread through the remainder of the paragraph. In general, the use of Attitudinal resources of ‘judgment’ and ‘appreciation’, the high force Graduation resources, and the dialogically contractive Engagement move creates a stance that is highly attitudinal, forceful, and dialogically contractive.

While students are often encouraged to take a critical stance with regard to others’ arguments, research has shown that a highly attitudinal, forceful, and dialogically contractive stance is less valued in advanced student writing than stances that are more implicitly attitudinal, less forceful (i.e., detached), and more dialogically expansive, or engaged with alternative positions (Coffin, 2002; Derewianka, 2009; Wu, 2007). Especially as students progress into upper-level writing in the disciplines, they are expected to construct stances that are at once critical, authoritative, and dialogically expansive and that work to juxtapose “other voices [that] are explicitly drawn into the discussion, interpreted, analyzed, critiqued and played off against each other” (Derewianka, 2009, p. 163). This view is confirmed through Swain’s (2009) and Tang’s

²¹ In this and other example passages I have tried to highlight lexicogrammatical “signals” for discourse semantic options.

(2009) Appraisal analyses of student writing. In terms of DA method, what this literature reveals is that the system of Engagement is especially useful for tracking differences between effective and less than effective stancetaking strategies used by upper-level student writers.

As third and fourth year students, the Econ 432 and PS 409 writers in this study have presumably learned through their coursework that argumentation in the disciplines tends to use highly charged attitudinal language, such as that used in the critique of Zakaria's text above, infrequently. Even the weaker Econ 432 writers, therefore, are unlikely to characterize the reasoning of the Courts as "totally irrelevant" or to critique a Supreme Court Justice for his or her "inability to properly hold [a point] true to its definition." At the same time, though, many of these students are likely to still have difficulty finetuning their argumentation in such a way that others' views and voices are brought into play in sophisticated, authoritative ways. The Econ 432 and PS 409 essay assignments require that students engage closely with others' arguments, which means that they need to be able to offer summaries of others' lines of argumentations while also projecting a clear stance, one marked by careful analysis, evaluation, and argumentation in regard to others' views.

The Engagement framework deals with meanings that, in the traditional DA literature, fall under the categories of modality, hedging, attribution, concession, and negation and it models these meanings in terms of they engage with others' arguments. It is this comprehensive conceptual orientation toward discrete interpersonal/metadiscoursal constructs that leads me to this particular framework. Below I explain the framework in more detail. I then turn to the specific ways that I draw on the framework in my analysis of stance. As I explain below, I found during my analysis of Engagement resources that I needed to return to other Appraisal resources to capture some key difference in successful and less successful students' essays. In particular, I found that the high and low-performing PS 409 writers draw on Appraisal resources of Attitude in different ways. I first became aware of this difference through my use of concordancing software (explained below), and this difference would have been accounted for in my analysis before this corpus-based stage if I had undertake a complete Appraisal analysis from the beginning, coding for Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation.

3.4.4. Engagement: Dialogic Contraction and Expansion

The Engagement framework models the choices that are available to writers/speakers for raising and lowering commitment to propositions and thus for contracting and expanding dialogic space for alternative perspectives. At the most general level, speakers/writers choose either monoglossic or heteroglossic expressions of the propositions being put forth. As seen in Figure 3.2, the statement *Competition is healthy for the economy* is considered monoglossic in the framework because it puts forth one perspective, that belonging to the author. In contrast, the statement *According to economists, competition is healthy for the economy* is heteroglossic, or dialogically engaged, because it explicitly brings another perspective into play. In doing so, the author shifts responsibility for the proposition to an external source, which allows for an uncommitted stance and, as a consequence, expanded dialogic space. Monoglossic, or bare, assertions often assume that the reader is already aligned with the writer's view and thus alternative positions need not be entertained or negotiated with: the proposition is understood to be unproblematic or uncontested (White, 2008; Martin & White, 2005).

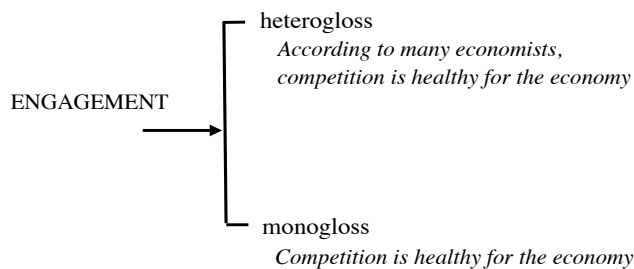


Figure 3.2. Engagement: heterogloss and monogloss (from Martin & White, 2005)

At the next level of generality (see Figure 3.3), speakers/writers choose from heteroglossic options that are more or less dialogically expansive or contractive. Low probability modal expressions and attributions, among other resources, reduce authorial commitment to the proposition and thus expand space for the inclusion of alternative perspectives. High-force modals, denials, and other resources boost authorial commitment; in so doing, they contract space for the inclusion of alternative perspectives.

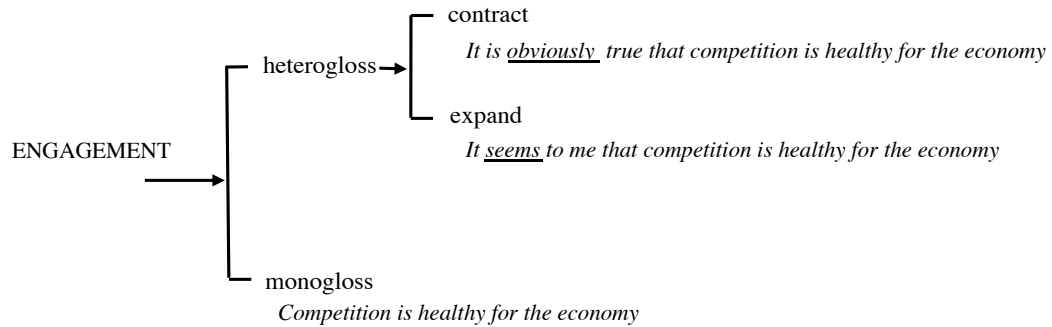


Figure 3.3. Engagement: contract and expand (from Martin & White, 2005)

The full range of heteroglossic options, as discussed in Martin and White (2005), are shown in Figure 3.4. An important point that this framework helps to reveal is that even strongly worded assertions like *It is certain that the interview was successful* are dialogically engaged (or heteroglossically diverse) because they bring into play alternative points of view. The use of certainty markers foregrounds the high level of commitment from the speaker and, as Halliday has famously remarked about such high force expressions, “we only say we are certain when we are not” (Halliday, 1994, p. 362). Halliday’s point is that bare assertions—e.g., *The interview was successful*—paradoxically carry more certainty than forms especially marked for certainty. Highly committed forms subtly suggest, because they may be masking, “an element of doubt” (Halliday, 1994, p. 363). With such complex meanings brought into play through variations in modalizations, it becomes clearer how low-probability modal expressions and appearance-based evidentials like *it may be that, possibly, seems, perhaps, and in my view* operate not just to reduce the author’s commitment to the proposition being put forth but also to open up the dialogical playing field.

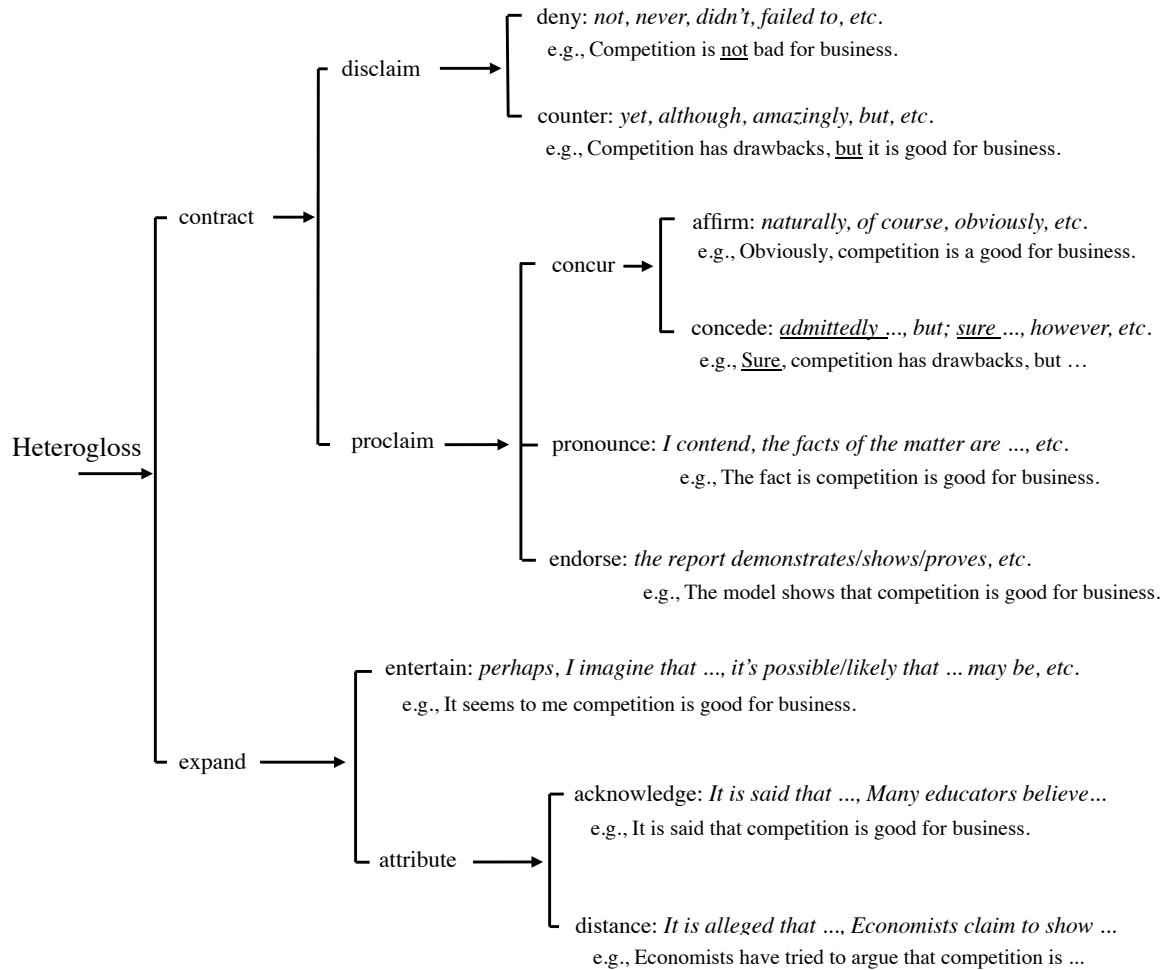


Figure 3.4. Engagement: heteroglossic options (from Martin & White, 2005)

As previously mentioned, the differences in choices represented in Figure 3.4 are realized through lexicogrammatical patterns that have previously been treated in the DA literature through other analytic constructs, including denials, contrastive connectors, concession, attributions, hedges and boosters, modality, and evidentiality. The power in this framework, then, lies in its conceptual coherence in tying these various linguistic areas to the discourse semantics of dialogic stancetaking. The various dialogic options represented in this figure are subtle, but the point of Engagement analysis is to unearth patterns of choices that recur in texts and that work to create a particular dialogic stance. Previous analyses of student writing using this framework have revealed the risks involved in adopting a stance that is either too dialogically expansive or too contractive.

For example, argumentative papers written by the most advanced students in

Derewianka's (2009) study of writing development among adolescents were marked by a more dialogically expansive stance than that found in the writing of the less advanced students. Through strategic juxtaposition of alternative voices, these texts constructed stances that were "explicitly open to other voices and possibilities" (p. 162) but were also fine-tuned in their strategies for contracting the dialogic space and pushing the reader toward the writer's view. Wu's (2007) study of students' argumentative writing in geography supports this conclusion. Wu's corpus consisted of 27 graded argumentative essays written by advanced L2 writers that were taken from two extreme ends of the grading scale of a larger corpus of 149 essays: 15 had received A-range grades and 12 had received C and D-range grades. She found that the A-graded essays used a wider variety of both dialogically contractive and expansive options. The low-graded papers, in contrast, were more often dialogically disengaged or contractive. Other Engagement-based studies have shown that weaker writing is marked by an incoherent dialogic stance (Swain, 2009) or by a weak, non-authoritative stance that gets drowned out by others' voices (Tang, 2009).

What these studies suggest more generally is that argumentative stances valued in college-level writing assignments, perhaps particularly upper-level writing in the disciplines, may be characterized after Booth (1963) as rhetorically balanced. The balance is between, on the one hand, expansive meanings that work to open room for negotiation with an imagined academic reader who is, as Thaiss and Zawacki (2006) describe, "coolly rational, reading for information, and intending to formulate a reasoned response" (p.7), and, on the other hand, contractive meanings that work to pull these readers over to the author's perspective. Striking such a balance would seem especially valued in student genres that call for reasoned argumentation and critical analyses of others' arguments.

3.4.5. Extending from Previous Engagement Analyses

These previous analyses invite at least four important questions that I take up in this dissertation. First, since Wu's (2007) study adopts a mostly quantitative view of differences between the high and low rated student papers, and because her presentation of findings relies on very small stretches of texts (often just single sentences), it is not

clear how and where the Engagement resources are being used within individual whole texts. The rhetorical balance that Wu's findings point to is of value for writing instruction, but it is also important to examine how that balance is discursively managed within an individual text by tracking the rhetorical effect of the sequencing of Engagement resources.

Second, Wu's study is situated in one disciplinary context (geography), as are Derewianka's (2009) and Coffin's (2002) studies, which are both in history. These disciplinary studies are important for revealing effective and less than effective stancetaking in one disciplinary context. Cross-disciplinary analyses are needed, however, to tease out the ways in which disciplinarity may influence student writers' selection of Engagement resources or the ways in which high- and low-evaluated papers in particular courses draw upon different selections of Appraisal resources.

Third, it is important to investigate how particular stance patterns at work in student writing are actually working to influence readers' evaluations of writing in particular disciplinary contexts. It is important, in other words, to focus not only on potential rhetorical effects but also actual rhetorical effects in terms of instructors' reading of particular patterns. The present study takes a step in this direction by asking how particular stancetaking patterns work to realize such discursive goals as "critical reasoning," "in-depth thinking," "sophisticated argumentation," and other values cited by the professors and GSIs of two upper-level undergraduate courses.

Fourth, the Engagement framework does not account for other categories of language that can play a part in reinforcing the "finetuning" strategies that Derewianka (2009) argues are important for understanding stance in advanced student writing. For example, it would seem that strategies of reformulation (e.g., *In other words, this means that, what I am saying is*) and exemplification (e.g., *For example, for instance*)—which are grouped together by Vande Kopple (1985) as "code glosses"—can work to negotiate meanings with the reader and perhaps contribute to a dialogically engaged stance.

To further illustrate this connection, a useful distinction has been posited in the literature on metadiscourse between linguistic resources that are more "interactional" in functionality and those that are more "interactive" (Hyland, 2005c; Thompson & Thetela, 1995; Thompson, 2001). *Interactional* resources overlap with Appraisal categories, as

they work to bring readers into the unfolding discourse by raising questions for their consideration, conceding views they are projected as likely to hold, and otherwise pulling them in and making them participate as dialogic partners. *Interactive* resources, in contrast, operate more to manage the flow of *information* in texts, for example by commenting on the status of the information as it unfolds (e.g., *As previously mentioned, ...*), announcing goals (e.g., *This paper aims to ...*), highlighting shifts in topic (e.g., *I now turn to ...*), introducing reformulations (e.g., *To say it another way, ...*), and signaling logical transitions (e.g., *Therefore ... As a result ...*).

As Hyland (2005c) notes, a similar distinction is posited by Vande Kopple (1985) as that between “interpersonal metadiscourse” and “textual metadiscourse,” with the latter working, like Thompson’s (2001) *interactive* category, to manage the informational flow and ease the reader’s processing load. As I explain below, my analysis of stance keeps the analytic lens open to consider how interactive functions of language like reformulation and exemplifications strategies (or “code glosses”) may conspire in the construction of a particular kind of argumentative stance—one that is dialogically engaged or not, contractive or expansive.

Conceivably, a writer who repeatedly uses code glosses is simultaneously constructing a particular type of stance toward his or her readers (e.g., as reader-friendly or helpful), while also implicitly signaling the status of his or her argument as important, noteworthy, and/or complex and thus deserving careful attention. Vande Kopple (1985) explains that code glosses are used to “help readers grasp the appropriate meanings of elements in texts” (p. 84), and it may be that they accumulate in stretches of text where the writer is contracting the dialogic space to pull the reader over to his or her views.

3.5. Specific Analytic Procedures

My analysis of stance in student writing combines quantitative and qualitative examinations of whole texts, using both directed approaches (via Appraisal) and inductive approaches, as well as concordance investigations and comparisons with interview data. These various analytic processes are deployed recursively, but it is useful to explain them in three major stages: (1) quantitatively-oriented coding of Engagement resources, (2) qualitative interpretation of stance patterns, and (3) contextualization of

stance patterns in light of instructors' interview responses.

3.5.1. Stage 1: Quantitatively-oriented coding of Engagement Resources

The first analytic stage is a quantitatively-oriented coding of Engagement resources in students' essays. I began the discourse analysis with this method for two main reasons. First, I was persuaded by previous Appraisal analyses of student writing (Derewianka, 2009; Swain, 2009; Tang, 2009; Wu, 2007) which have revealed subtle but important differences in advanced students' argumentative writing in terms of Engagement resources. Swain (2009), for instance, found a correlation between variety and balance of Engagement resources and argumentative success, with the more advanced writing drawing on a wider variety of contractive and expansive resources and achieving greater balance between the two categories. In addition to being persuaded by the usefulness of the coding, I wanted to be able to compare Engagement patterns in my corpus with patterns identified in previous studies in order to identify possible influences of genre, disciplinarity, and student status on Engagement selections. Second, I wanted my first "cut" into the texts to be through a process of close reading of whole texts rather than computer-assisted concordance investigations so that I could familiarize myself with students' arguments on an in-depth level

This first stage involves five specific steps, including preparation for the analysis, coding of the 30 essays, and three additional validation steps. Step 1 was to render the texts ready for DA. This step involved setting up tables in doc files for each of the 30 essays and numbering the sentences in each essay.²² The tables comprise two columns. In the right-hand column, I pasted the student's essay in its entirety, and in the left-hand column I labeled the schematic stage and kept notes of potentially interesting patterns while I was coding. I provide an example of this arrangement below in Table 3.6.

In Step 2, I coded every sentence (in schematic stages 2-4) for each of the 30 essays in the two small corpora (30 essays) using eight major Engagement categories: (1) 'bare assertion', (2) 'disclaim:deny', (3) 'disclaim:counter', (4) 'proclaim:pronounce', (5)

²² Initially, I had numbered each non-embedded clause with the intention of assigning a code for each non-embedded clause, but for reasons having to do with the "messiness" of Appraisal boundaries (explained below) I determined this step to be unnecessary and numbered each sentence. To determine a sentence, I interpreted all periods, semi-colons, and in some cases colons to signal the end of a sentence when the preceding clause was an independent clause.

‘proclaim:concur’, (6) ‘proclaim:endorse’, (7) ‘entertain’, and (8) ‘attribute’. (See Appendix 5 for descriptors and examples of each category from the Econ 432 and PS 409 essays.) These eight categories represent two slight modifications of the Martin and White (2005) categories represented in Figure 3.4 (above). These include collapsing the distinctions between ‘proclaim:concur:affirm’ and ‘proclaim:concur:concede’ under the general category of ‘proclaim:concur’, as well as collapsing ‘attribute:acknowledge’ and ‘attribute:distance’ under the general category of ‘attribute’. These modifications were made in light of the relative infrequency of ‘concur’ and ‘attribute’ moves in both the Econ 432 and PS 409 corpora. The goal of this analysis is to discern the relative frequency of these eight options in each of the 30 essays.

This second step (coding) presented several complications that I attempted to resolve in Steps 3 and 4 (described below). These complications result from the inherent messiness of coding for Appraisal values, as these tend to “splash across a phase of discourse, irrespective of grammatical boundaries” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 10). It is for this reason that Appraisal systems (including Engagement) are placed at the level of discourse semantics rather than lexicogrammar. What this means for coding purposes is that a given sentence, or even clause, may make use of multiple Engagement resources, or alternatively any one Engagement option can spread across multiple clauses. A related complication is that Engagement values are not always lexicogrammatically signaled. Most often there is fairly close form-function mapping, but in many instances a given Engagement value must be interpreted from its functional position within the surrounding co-text.

Both of these complications are illustrated in the example coding in Table 3.6, which displays my analysis of Luis’s paragraph discussed in Chapter 1. The Engagement options are tagged and lexico-grammatical signals for these options are underlined. (The numbers correspond to the sentence numbers.)

Schematic stage + Notes on patterns	Student text
Stage 4: Recommendations Notes: Expand-contract alternation	(74) This option is <u>not without</u> its merits [PROCLAIM:CONCUR]; (75) <u>if</u> Vons were allowed to keep all of its Shopping Bag stores, the benefits of merger <u>could</u> be even greater because the stores <u>may</u> have even lower costs and higher bargaining power [ENTERTAIN]. (76) On the other hand, <u>however</u> , regulation is <u>not</u> free [DISCLAIM: DENY]; (77) constant oversight of grocery store prices consumes many resources of the government [DISCLAIM: COUNTER]. (78) The <u>question</u> , then, is this: (79) <u>which would be</u> more significant, the additional savings passed along to customers by retaining the full merger, or the costs incurred by the government to ensure post-merger competitive behavior [ENTERTAIN]? (80) <u>While</u> there is <u>no</u> precise formula to figure out this question [DISCLAIM:DENY], common sense <u>may</u> go a long way in shedding light on the answer [DISCLAIM: COUNTER + ENTERTAIN]. (Luis, S74-80)

Table 3.6. Sample coding of excerpt from HG Econ 432 essay

This text illustrates the messiness of Engagement values. Several sentences in this text are coded for just one Engagement value, including 74 (‘proclaim:concur’) and 77 (‘disclaim:counter’). In contrast, the ‘entertain’ value tagged at the end of sentence 79 is triggered through the lexical item *question* and interrogative mood structure *which would be*, which spread over two sentences. Even more complex, sentence 80 is coded for three different Engagement values. The clause *there is no precise formula to figure out this question* is coded as an instance of ‘disclaim:deny’, and the clause *common sense may go a long way in shedding light on the answer* is coded both for ‘entertain’ (triggered by *may*) and ‘disclaim:counter’ (triggered by *while*). (This is a complex discursive move whereby a ‘counter’ is being entertained rather than more directly asserted, contributing toward a contrastive stance that is also measured.) In order to preserve these complex Engagement meanings, I attempted to code each Engagement value rather than assign an Engagement code to each non-embedded clause.

An alternative treatment of sentence (80) would be to code the entire sentence as a ‘counter’ move, with the rationale being that the ‘counter’ meaning over-rides all other Engagement meanings in this text. My coding procedure, however, reflects an attempt to capture all the various resources that are brought into play in a given stretch of discourse.

This procedure can be characterized in terms of tracking “moves.” For example, sentence (75) comprises one major ‘entertain’ move that spans across three clauses. Sentence (76) incorporates a ‘counter’ and ‘deny’ move simultaneously.

A second complication illustrated in this text is lack of consistent form-function correspondence. Sentence (74), which I interpret as a ‘proclaim:concur’ move, does not explicitly signal the ‘concur’ meaning through wordings like *yes, indeed, certainly, to be sure, or it is true*—although, arguably, the formulation *not without* may often be used to bring into play the meaning of a reluctant concession. I interpret this sentence as saying “Yes, this option does have its merits.” This ‘concur’ meaning is discernable through the semantic cooperation with sentence (76). These sentences appear to be operating as a coordinated pair. Such concur-counter pairings have been previously identified in the literature on metadiscourse and evaluation (Barton, 1995; Martin & White, 2005; Thompson & Zhou, 2000), and so I drew on that literature as well as my own close reading of the passage to inform my coding decision in this case. Alternative treatments would be to read the clause as a categorical statement of opinion, or ‘bare assert’, or else as an instance of ‘disclaim:deny’. My interpretation of this move, however, is not that the writer is categorically stating an opinion or disclaiming against the proposition that *this option is without merits* but rather concurring with a view potentially held by the reader before going on in sentence (76) to offer a counter view.

Such close reading of co-text to make a coding decision is an example of an interpretative move that I likely would have missed had I started with a corpus-based approach using AntConc rather than a sentence-by-sentence hand-coding of Engagement resources. Specifically, if I had relied on targeted searches of lexicogrammatical signals of proclaim:concur (e.g., *yes, indeed, certainly, to be sure, or it is true*), then the proclaim:concur move in sentence 74 would not have picked up.

Steps 3 and 4 in Stage 1 include efforts to validate patterns identified in the first round of coding. In step 3, the coding was validated through intra-rater analysis, which involved my own recoding of the 30 essays after an interval of two to three months. In step 4, I established partial inter-rater reliability by having a department colleague experienced with Appraisal analysis code four entire essays using the 8 Engagement categories: a low and high graded essay from each course. These two validation steps

were undertaken recursively, and both led to refining the analysis by identifying form-function confusions and coding inconsistencies.

After determining the relative frequency of eight major Engagement categories in each essay from the corpus of 30 essays, I then averaged the results across various groups of essays (high- and low-graded in each course). The purpose was to identify whether or not differential patterns emerged between, on the one hand, high-graded PS 409 essays and high-graded Econ 432 essays and, on the other hand, high-graded and low-graded PS 409 essays.

The last step in Stage 1, step 5, is to validate patterns identified in my hand-coding of Engagement resources using concordancing software. To do this, I used AntConc (Anthony, 2010), a free online concordancing program. Throughout my analysis, I used this tool in multiple ways, for example by comparing word and n-gram lists (or “raw” corpus output of two and three-word phrases) between high- and low-graded essays so that I could gain a more inductive sense of frequently recurring words and phrases that do not fit easily within the Appraisal framework. I explain this “corpus-driven” approach (Butler, 2004) below as I discuss Stage 2, but in this first stage I used AntConc in a more targeted way—through an approach identified by Butler (2004) as “corpus-based”—by searching for key words and phrases that are associated with Engagement patterns that I identified in my hand-coding of the smaller corpora. For Econ 432, I searched the large corpus for frequently occurring lexicogrammatical signals of Engagement moves, and in PS 409, I repeated this step using the same small corpus of 20 essays. While hand-coding the smaller corpora, I maintained a list of frequently occurring lexicogrammatical signals, for example *however*, *but*, and *nevertheless* for the option of ‘disclaim:counter’. I then used this list to perform targeted searches in AntConc. This fourth step allowed me to check that I did not overlook Engagement resources in my hand-coding. Furthermore, in the case of Econ 432, it afforded me the opportunity to test out differential patterns in a much larger corpus of high- and low-graded instances of the same essay assignment.

3.5.2. Stage 2: Qualitative Interpretation

Stage 2 involves qualitative interpretation of patterns identified in the quantitative-oriented first stage. This second stage consists of two basic steps: recording and

interpreting sequencing patterns, and expanding the analytic lens to include new coding categories.

Step 1 consists of recording sequencing patterns, including (a) where in a given essay expansive and contractive meanings predominate and (b) how these meanings are managed on a paragraph level. This step was taken so that I could better understand how stances are constructed as rhetorical effects of sequencing of Engagement resources. Typical questions that I recorded during this stage include: What effects on stance are produced through the use of close alternation of expansive and contractive moves within a paragraph or smaller stretch of text? Do resources of ‘entertain’ tend to accumulate together in waves—and, if so, where?—or do they more often cooperate with ‘contractive’ resources? Do ‘disclaim:deny’ moves most often co-occur with ‘disclaim:counter’, and, if so, does this form a kind of rhetorical pair that is deployed at certain discursive stages as an argument unfolds?

These and many other similar questions were guided by my knowledge of quantitative differences identified in Stage 1. For instance, I knew through the analysis in stage 1 that ‘entertain’ resources held a major quantitative presence in the Econ 432 essays, and so I attended closely to the various ways that these resources play out and create rhetorical effects.

In addition to capturing sequencing patterns, Stage 2 also involves developing new categories to capture emerging differences between high- and low-performing students’ texts that are difficult to account for in Engagement terms. This development then feeds back into the quantification in stage 1. One type of category development is category *refinement*. I discovered, in particular, that there were differential patterns between high- and low-graded essays in terms of how resources of ‘entertain’ are realized in texts, and this difference seemed to have important rhetorical effects on stance. For this reason, I developed more delicate distinctions in ‘entertain’ resources. As represented in Figure 3.5 below, I made a broad distinction between resources of ‘entertain’ that suggest a more subjective or internally-oriented basis (e.g., *in my opinion*) versus ones that suggest a more objective or externally-oriented basis (e.g., *research suggests*). Both are resources of ‘entertain’ in that they signal low commitment and openness to other dialogic possibilities, but in academic discourse they result in different stances toward the material

under analysis. I refer to these two options as ‘entertain:internalize’ and ‘entertain:externalize’,²³ and these formed coding categories that then fed back into my quantification in Stage 1.

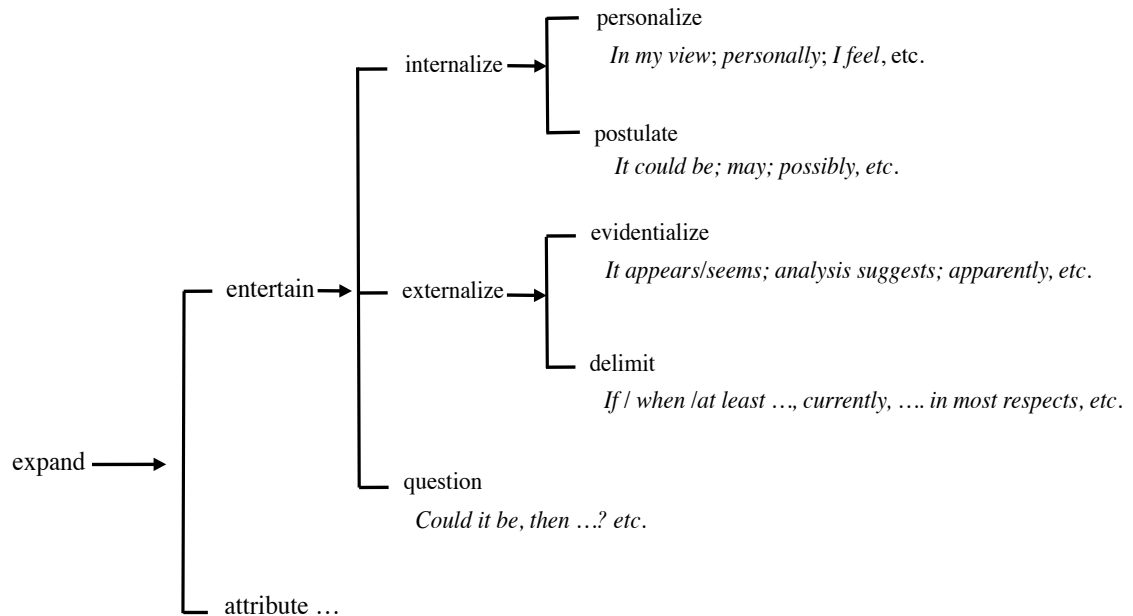


Figure 3.5. Proposed sub-options of ‘entertain’

A second type of category development came about through my use of AntConc to conduct scans of word and n-gram (word cluster) lists. Specifically, by comparing recurring phrases in the high- and low-graded essays, I identified a range of linguistic differences between high- and low-performing writers that are not captured by the Engagement framework. I undertook this step in light of Coffin & O’Halloran’s (2005) argument that any Appraisal analysis is necessarily “a reflex of how Appraisal categories are activated by us as analysts through our own idiosyncratic judgments of text meaning” (p. 153). In other words, there is the risk, as with any theoretical framework, that important meanings will be overlooked or over-interpreted depending on the analyst’s own values and analytic goals. As Coffin & O’Halloran (2005) acknowledge, any text analysis is subject to the analyst’s partial reading, to the theoretical presuppositions inherent in the framework, or to a combination of these factors. To at least partially

²³ See Halliday (1994) on the objective vs. subjective distinction with regard to modal expressions.

provide a check on this tendency, I compared word and n-gram lists between the high-graded (HG) and low-graded (LG) essays in both courses.

This process revealed differences regarding explicit instances of positive attitude, such as *important*, *useful*, *significant*, *strength*, *promising*, and *advantages* (which are not accounted for in the Engagement framework), as well as the types of verbs used when describing theoretical arguments. These include, on the one hand, verbs that tend to follow abstract concepts and are colored for positive discourse prosody (e.g., Foucault's theory *offers*, *provides*, *reveals*, *demonstrates*) and, on the other hand, verbs that tend to follow clause subjects that are persons and are not infused with attitudinal means (e.g., Foucault *argues*, *asserts*, *says*, *claims*). While the verbs in this second category were picked up in my Engagement analysis as triggering 'attribute' moves, I did not code these verb selections for implicit attitudinal meanings. Of course, a full Appraisal analysis would have picked up these meanings. Another linguistic resource that was revealed as important during my corpus investigation stage was the use of code glosses (Vande Kopple, 1985; Hyland, 2000) such as *for example/instance*, *in terms of*, *in fact*, *in other words*, *indeed*, *namely*, and *specifically*, among others. In sum, this more corpus-driven use of AntConc allowed me to compensate for oversights as well as alert me to areas for further targeted concordance searches.

One point that emerged during this second stage is that the various linguistic constructs that are modeled in the Engagement framework as options for expanding and contracting dialogic space (e.g., 'countering', 'denying', 'entertaining', and so on) are very much in conversation with linguistic constructs used in other DA approaches (e.g., problematizing, hedging, attributing vs. averring, etc.), and that any Engagement analysis may be most productive when it is open to a wide range of linguistic resources that conspire in the construction of a dialogic stance.

3.5.3. Stage 3: Contextualizing Linguistic Patterns

Stages 1 and 2 together required constant comparison between HG and LG essays in each course, between HG essays in Econ 432 and HG essays in PS 409, and between patterns in the small corpus and patterns in the large corpus, in the case of Econ 432. Another set of comparisons was tackled in Stage 3 of my analysis, when I interpreted

linguistic patterns in students' essays in light of instructors' interview responses regarding their values and purposes for student writing.

The final stage in my analysis of stance patterns was to contextualize the findings in light of the instructors' interviews responses and various course material. This stage involves two major steps: first, coding the interview transcriptions and selected course material and, second, using the resulting codes to hone my interpretation of stance in students' essays. It is during this second step that I select from the mass of various patterns identified in Stage 2 (above) and identify the patterns that are most contextually salient and useful as examples in the write-up of findings.

The first step is perhaps best described as a thematic or topical analysis of the interview transcripts and course material. The method of analysis that I discerned most suitable for capturing the meanings of the interviewees in the transcripts was a combination of "bottom up" or grounded theory approach (Corbin and Strauss, 2007) and "top down" analysis directed by the governing theoretical framework of stance. The various themes that emerged in my analysis were largely directed by the questions that I posed during the interviews, but the themes that I identified, which are both lexically identifiable and not, run across the various material and question-response interactions. For example, "argumentation" is a pervasive theme in the context of Econ 432 and is identifiable in Frank's responses to questions about purposes for assigning student writing, Mark's responses to question about distinctions between high and low performing writing, as well as the course syllabus and assignment description handout. This theme is usefully signaled directly through words like *argument*, *argumentation*, and *counter-argumentation*.

However, other themes that emerged were not directly signaled but emerged through my own interpretative lens regarding stance (hence "top down"). For example, while the term "stance" was not used by any of the interviewees (nor were voice or tone), quite a few of their responses did fall under what I coded as "stance-related." For example, references to counter-argumentation, a student's "taking a step back," and the "reader" or "audience" were coded as "stance-related" because of this study's focus on dialogic meanings. I interpret the more direct, lexically signaled themes as part of the interviewees' more conscious conceptualization of purposes and characteristics of student

writing, while I interpret the more implicit themes that emerge as operating possibly beneath the interviewees' fully conscious awareness. For instance, while Mark highly evaluates one of the strong writers in his course by focusing on ideational meanings, he also positively evaluates the writer's essay because it "steps outside of economics":

MARK: He explains not just how this [...] here, he actually just steps outside of economics a little bit and I think that's what makes this a really [...] well, maybe I should have said this before. Really, really, good economics papers [...] can recognize the shortfalls of how economists or lawyers think about these things.

This is a stretch of the transcript that I coded as "stance-related" because it speaks to the writer's position or perspective toward the discourse.

In terms of transcription, I use minimal notations to capture pauses in the interviewees' explanations of goals and assessment criteria. These notations are used to indicate how fluidly or not the respondents were able to articulate certain points. Frequent pauses, for instance, may reveal spaces where a refined metalanguage for discussing writing could be useful. The notation "[.]" represents a pause of approximately one second or less. Commas are used to capture shorter pauses. The notion "[...]" shows where I omitted material in order to reduce unnecessary length. Finally, pauses longer than one second are indicated numerically, e.g., "[2 second pause]."

In step 2, I use my analysis of the interviews and course material to interpret the salience of particular patterns of stance over others, as well as to begin extracting possible pedagogical implications. As described in the previous paragraph, I coded the interviews and course material by themes that were directly signaled. These include *argumentation*, *critical reasoning*, *complexity and nuance*, *control*, and others. These themes correspond either to purposes for assigning student writing, evaluative criteria, or both, and so they directed my analysis of stance patterns in students' texts in terms of how they correlate with themes. In addition, I was able to begin the process of identifying patterns that do correlate with repeated themes in the interviews and course materials (patterns in Engagement, for example, which may index "critical reasoning") and those which do not, but which nevertheless point to significant differences between HG and LG papers and/or between Econ 432 and PS 409 essays. This final step in stage 3 is important for the goal of not just identifying differences but making sense of those

differences in terms of how they may correlate with valued stances in the disciplines.

3.6. Strengths and Limitations of the Study Design

This study uses a detailed and systematic approach to the analysis of stance in student essays that addresses the understudied issue of how upper-level student writers may be using language in their writing in nuanced ways to construct interpersonal meanings, index varying degrees of genre awareness, and position the instructor-readers toward favorable or unfavorable responses to their writing. The main argument advanced by this methodological approach is that close linguistic analyses of student writing can reveal patterns of stance that are tacitly valued by instructors and that may index students' tacit genre knowledge. It furthermore can inform instructional interventions aimed at rendering explicit patterns of stance that are valued within specific rhetorical contexts. The specific analytic procedures used can also compensate for gaps in the research literature on stance in student writing. These gaps include insufficient attention to sequencing patterns for building up interpersonal meanings over large stretches of text; too few comparisons in stancetaking strategies across disciplinary contexts; and lack of attention to the actual rhetorical effects of recurring patterns in language use, as revealed in interviews with readers.

Despite these methodological strengths, this study does not incorporate a number of methods and data that would allow for investigation of related questions of significance. In particular, since the focus is on the ways the instructors in the two contexts articulate their goals and assessment criteria, and how these articulations may correlate with patterns of stance in student writing, the study does not incorporate interviews with the student writers, nor track individual students' writing in other contexts. A number of important questions, then, are not answerable, including: How do the students' explanations of their rhetorical aims relate to the stancetaking strategies evident in their texts? What is the nature of the relationship between student writers' existing metalanguage about writing and their writing performances? Are the high-performing writers able to recontextualize their genre knowledge in another disciplinary context, and if so how? These questions are outside the scope of this study. Given the highly subtle linguistic maneuvers under examination, I make some assumptions that they run below

the student writers' conscious awareness. This must remain an open question in this study, however.

An aspect of the study that can be construed as both a strength and limitation is the complicated nature of the analytic procedures. As explained above, the approach combines quantitative and qualitative analysis, as well as theory-driven hand-coding of Appraisal (specifically Engagement) resources alongside inductive scans of output from concordancing software. The complexity and recursivity inherent in the process is time-consuming, though ultimately useful for unpicking patterns of stance in groups of student writing. Finally, the corpus of student essays is too small to be able to generalize about effective stancetaking in economics or political theory writing. Nevertheless, the careful selection of high- and low-performing students' essays and the delicate and systematic analysis offer new ways of investigating patterns in language use that correlate with valued stancetaking in student genres that require analysis of others' arguments. I turn to these patterns in the next three chapters.

CHAPTER 4

The Construction of an Authoritative Stance in Economics 432

Introduction

Bartholomae (1985/2005) argues that the authorial voices students project in their writing are most valued when they “speak as we do” and “try on the peculiar ways of knowing, selecting, evaluating, reporting, concluding, and arguing that define the discourse of a community” (p. 60). While this point has been understood in composition studies for a long time now, the question of how these valued voices are constructed linguistically, through specific patterns in lexis and grammar, is still under-researched.²⁴

As an example of this type of analysis of student writing in a different context, Schleppegrell (2004a) identifies linguistic resources that are valued in high school expository writing because they enable student writers to project authoritative stances.²⁵ Realized through recurring configurations of impersonal subjects, declarative mood structure, passive verb constructions, and other resources, the stances constructed are assertive, “detached and knowledgeable” (p. 88). Explicit attention to the ways these resources work in texts, Schleppegrell (2004a) argues, can help students who are struggling with the genre and register expectations of school-based expository writing to expand their linguistic repertoire for building essays that are recognized in writing guidelines as “reasoned, concrete, and developed” (p. 88).

What I show over the course of the next three chapters is that the linguistic construction of an authoritative stance, or recognizably “powerful” voice, as Bazerman (2006, p. 25) puts it, is also valued in upper-level undergraduate writing in the disciplines. These three chapters examine data from linguistic analysis of HG and LG

²⁴ As reviewed in Chapter 2, notable exceptions include Coffin (2002), North (2005), Woodward-Kron (2003), and Wu (2007).

²⁵ This conceptualization of authority as a linguistic construct is different from notion of authority as empowering or enabling student writers by rendering explicit academic discourse conventions, as discussed in Berkenkotter (1984) and Raymond (1993).

graded essays in Econ 432 and PS 409 and from interviews with the course instructors. Through these methods, I begin to pinpoint how “critical reasoning,” “complexity and nuance” in argumentation, “control” over disciplinary concepts, and other abstract characteristics, ones identified by the instructors as valued in student writing, are linguistically realized in students’ texts. I argue that accomplishing these abstract goals requires use of specific linguistic resources that correlate with the construction of an authoritative stance.

By “authoritative” in this context, I refer to stances that are dialogically engaged, or that project awareness of others’ views and perspectives in the discourse through frequent and varied use of Engagement resources, and that, at least of equal importance, are dialogically controlled. “Control” is a term that I use in the next three chapters to describe the rhetorical effect of strategically sequenced Engagement resources. A stance reads as “in control” or “controlled,” I argue, when it deploys Engagement resources of expansion and contraction in ways that regulate the dialogic space in skillful ways, suggesting at least a tacit awareness of academic writing as a process of contributing to a scholarly conversation. Dialogic engagement, then, is one aspect of an authoritative stance (one concerned with *what* resources are being drawn upon) while dialogic control is another (one concerned with *how* those resources are deployed in the text). Furthermore, I argue that the construction of an authoritative stance correlates with the instructors’ readings of students’ texts as demonstrating complexity and nuance, deep insight, critical reasoning, and other valued characteristics.

The concept of control is interesting for several reasons. It is the focus of Beaugrande’s (1979) argument—written largely in response to the instructional method of sentence combining—that simply asking novice writers to revise problematic texts by reformulating the combination of clauses is insufficient advice. If instructors do not enable students to make decisions about textual “flow” by providing them with linguistic criteria for making those decisions, then merely sending students out to reformulate and recombine sentences may give rise to other textual problems: “Plodding monotony,” as he puts it, can give way to “distracting chaos” (p. 357). Beaugrande’s point is that writing instructors need to assist students to control the flow of information in texts: There are levels of priorities for making “control decisions,” he argues, and “the top level is that of

information priorities: the rate and the distribution of new information being presented against a background of known information” (p. 358).

Certainly, learning to control the rate of textual information is important for many novice writers. As Barton (2002) notes, “artful arrangement of given-new information structure can figure prominently in achieving the purpose of the text” (p. 27). What the findings presented in the next three chapters suggest is that it may be equally important in the context of upper-level writing in the disciplines to frame advice for making top-level control decisions in terms of controlling dialogic space. If students are to assume a dialogic or heteroglossically diverse stance in an authoritative way (i.e., to contribute to a conversation), then they need to learn to control the interaction they are having with their readers and other participants in the discourse. Doing so will contribute toward the construction of a novice academic stance.

As I discuss in Chapter 6, the term “controlled” is also used by the PS 409 professor, Peter, to characterize successful student writing in his course. He speaks of students’ writing as demonstrating control over their own arguments (or not). In this light, another way to express the major argumentative goal of these chapters is as the merging-together of two metalanguages about writing: on the one hand, a traditional instructor-based metalanguage (one that is often very highly abstract, marked by terms like “control,” “complexity,” and “nuance”) and, on the other hand, a more specialized linguistics-based metalanguage—one that is useful for talking about how the details of language use operate in patterned ways to construct abstract and valued meanings.

Talking about stance in such specific ways speaks directly to Thaiss and Zawacki’s (2006) argument (reviewed in Chapter 2) that writing instructors can assist student to develop a mature sense of coherence-within-diversity with regard to diverse writing contexts. Based on findings from this study, I suggest that the notions of authoritativeness, dialogic engagement, and control in stancetaking, when combined with the specific linguistic resources needed to accomplish these aims, can provide a concrete metalanguage that instructors and students can use in WAC/WID instructional contexts to examine how valued rhetorical meanings are accomplished in texts.

This current chapter and Chapter 5 examine the case of Econ 432. Chapter 6 then turns to PS 409. The specific questions that frame Chapters 4 and 5 include:

1. What are the educational purposes of writing in Econ 432, and what genre is assigned to help students achieve these purposes?
2. What characteristics of student writing do the instructors value in the course, and through what metalanguage do they articulate these characteristics?
3. In what ways, if any, are stancetaking patterns in the HG essays different from those in the LG essays? If there are no differences, what other linguistic features may distinguish high- and low-performing writing in the course?
4. If there are differential patterns of stance between the HG and LG essays, how do these patterns relate to Frank's and Mark's articulations of goals and assessment criteria?

4.1. The Econ 432 Essay Assignment

As outlined in Chapter 3, the major essay assignment in Econ 432 requires a high level of critical reasoning. It requires that students select an antitrust case that is, as the prompt states, “interesting” from an economic and public policy perspective, analyze the economic effects of the Court’s decisions (how and why the market structure, conduct, and performance may have changed after the court ruling), evaluate the Court’s reasoning on the basis of those market developments, and finally recommend a new or modified set of legal remedies. (See Appendix 2 for the specific details of the assignment.) The argumentative stages therefore include analysis, evaluation, and recommendation, and the discourses that students navigate between include economic regulation, antitrust law, and public policy.

Frank has preferred not to assign a generic label to the assignment other than “essay” because, at least to his knowledge,²⁶ it does not correspond to any expert genre in the field. Furthermore, in the pre-term interview conducted through the Teagle-Spencer study, Frank was quick to clarify that, “my primary emphasis is not on getting my students to think like economists.” Elaborating, he contrasted his own purposes from

²⁶ Frank has stated in the context of Teagle-Spencer research meetings that he is not aware of any corresponding expert genres or models that students can refer to. Specific genre labels do not appear in any of the course material.

those of his department colleagues:

FRANK: If I were wearing a departmental hat as opposed to a personal hat right now, I think that the way most of my colleagues would respond is [that] “thinking like an economist” means taking an episode that is rich in messiness and complexity in the real world and then trying to find out which features of reality can be ignored safely and to distill that messy situation into a very simple framework, a “model,” and then to analyze the model and its working parts, as a prototype for understanding what is happening in the complex world.

In contrast to this goal of teaching students to “think like economists” by developing and working with models, Frank stated that his purposes “are essentially the development of critical reasoning.” What this means for Frank is applying analytic tools to the task of evaluating others’ arguments:

FRANK: What I try to teach and develop in students via critical thinking is to take a situation which is given to them, a real world situation [...] and to get them to try to see which of the tools that they have learned are most relevant, which ones can be used to evaluate and assess the situation, and to identify what some of the perhaps shortfalls in reasoning might be from very very smart people who just don’t happen to be economists.

As articulated in this response, critical reasoning means reading a complex situation, identifying the relevant tools to analyze the situation, and evaluating others’ arguments on the basis of the analysis. Frank explained that “essay type writing” is ideally suited for fostering and assessing students’ accomplishment of these processes, and, in his view, essay writing runs counter to writing that is more typically assigned in economics courses, which he characterized as “miniature journal articles.”

FRANK: For most of my colleagues, a paper assignment in economics, if there were one, would be how to develop an economic model that is “tight” in the sense that it is capable of being solved as a model and ideally being “estimated,” meaning that it can be fitted to empirical data. In short, thinking like an economist would be developing a journal article in economics because economists communicate with each other primarily through journal articles rather than through books, and as a result a writing assignment in a typical economics course would be how to create a miniature journal article.

FRANK: I think the assignments in the class should always dovetail with the intellectual purposes of the class. My purposes are essentially the development of

critical reasoning and critical reasoning is best advanced and assessed in the context of essay type writing, and in particular, writing in term papers.

As shown in these responses, Frank's main purpose for assigning substantive essay writing in Econ 432 is to enable students to comprehend, identify, apply, and evaluate particular types of arguments. This process of critical reasoning, when articulated in this way, is very general and therefore may seem easy to transfer across disciplinary contexts. However, critical reasoning takes on more specific disciplinary meanings for Frank when he explains the concept in terms of the goals of the course.

FRANK: Critical reasoning involves the ability to read an opinion of a majority or minority of the Supreme Court, to identify what the important economic issues are as opposed to legal issues, what some of the economic claims are that these Justices are making in their arguments, that is, not legal claims but economic claims, and then to have the student assess those claims. So it is essentially taking the arguments of very smart people, [arguments which] are not authoritative as economic arguments, and then playing with them.

This explanation, particularly the very last remark about “playing with” the economic arguments of non-economists, suggests a second, implicit purpose for writing in Econ 432, which is to enable students to argue authoritatively through use of a disciplinary framework. Through the use of analytic tools acquired from class readings, lectures, and independent research, students are enabled to engage in critical “play” and poke holes in the reasoning of non-experts. Through the analytic tools acquired in class, students are positioned as authoritative and thus able to critique arguments that are “are not authoritative as economic arguments.”

In light of this implicit argumentative purpose, an authoritative stance would seem to be valued in students' writing. But what discursive moves operate to construct such a stance? In terms of argumentative modes or types, the Econ 432 essay assignment requires that students argue for causation (e.g., “The divestiture of Firm A resulted in an increase of Y”), engage in counterfactual reasoning (e.g., “If the courts had decided A rather than B, then ...”), evaluate claims (e.g., “The court's reasoning is flawed because ...”), and make recommendations (e.g., “An appropriate solution to this situation would be ...”). It is not clear, however, whether certain choices in interpersonal meanings work

better than others to achieve an effective stance when putting forth these types of arguments. Relevant questions along these lines include: Should the stance be highly committed to, or aloof from, the propositions being forwarded? Should this stance work to position the imagined reader as already aligned with, coolly distant from, or resistant to the views being forwarded by the author, and what are the consequences of these changing positions? How might these choices in interpersonal meanings vary depending on the particular argumentative stage being constructed?

Prior research (reviewed in Chapter 2) shows that there are rhetorical risks involved in assuming a stance that is too highly committed, as the argumentation can be perceived as unjustifiably assertive or rash (Soliday, 2004; Wu, 2007). There are also rhetorical risks involved in adopting a stance that is too dialogically open, as the author's perspective can be lost or "drowned out" by others' views (Tang, 2009). Echoing Booth (1963), balance seems to be key, but it is difficult to gauge what might count as a balanced stance without keeping specifics of the disciplinary discourse in mind. How is the balance achieved on a textual level in certain kinds of discourse? As I show in the next sections, an adversarial, "lawyerly" stance seems to be preferred in Econ 432, and this stance is achieved at least partly through strategic sequencing of expansive and contractive resources in small stretches of text.

In sum, Frank's articulations of his educational goals for student writing in Econ 432 are significant for at least three reasons. First, they relate directly to the issue of expert versus student genres discussed in Chapter 1. While Frank seems to assume that his colleagues in economics follow an apprenticeship model when assigning writing (requiring "miniature journal articles"), the research cited above suggests that Frank's purpose of fostering critical reasoning may in fact be more typical. Second, they raise important questions about the generalizability of valued features in student genres across disciplinary contexts. On the one hand, the critical reasoning processes that Frank articulates fit easily into general definitions of critical thinking that transfer across disciplinary contexts. On the other hand, as Condon and Kelly-Riley (2004) note, "no one definition of critical thinking is applicable to every discipline at every level" (p. 64-5). The subtle particularities that arise in Frank's responses stem from his emphasis on evaluating legal decisions by identifying their implicit economic assumptions. Third,

Frank's responses suggest that some types of claims and discursive strategies will be needed more than others to write the Econ 432 essay, including claims of causation, proposal claims, counterfactual reasoning, and evaluation. Critical reasoning is a concept, then, that students in Econ 432 could be asked to reflect on in terms of "coherence-within-diversity," and they could be assisted in their efforts to write the course essay by bringing critical reasoning down to the level of the text and examining the sorts of discursive resources that are needed to accomplish this valued quality of student writing.

In order to further understand the specific purposes and assessment criteria for the course writing—both of which may be, in part, only tacitly understood by the instructors—I analyze patterns of stancetaking in HG and LG essays. I start by examining commonalities in use of Engagement options in all ten essays. Without getting into specific HG and LG differences at this point, this initial step reveals how recurring patterns of Engagement may relate to the specific argumentative discourse. For example, the analysis reveals a high degree of dialogic engagement among all ten writers, which suggests a baseline for understanding more specific differences between successful and less successful stance choices. After identifying these commonalities, I turn back to the instructors' own explanations of argumentation in Econ 432 in order to identify how their talk about writing may align with the Engagement patterns.

4.2. Use of Engagement Resources in Econ 432 Writing

As explained in Chapter 3, the first step in analyzing Engagement patterns in the ten essays was to calculate the relative frequency (per 2,000 words) of the eight major options in each essay: (1) 'bare assertion', (2) 'disclaim:deny', (3) 'disclaim:counter', (4) 'proclaim:pronounce', (5) 'proclaim:concur', (6) 'proclaim:endorse', (7) 'entertain', and (8) 'attribute'. (See Appendix 5 for descriptors and examples of each category from the Econ 432 and PS 409 essays.) The goals of this analysis include discerning the degrees of dialogic engagement represented in the essays—i.e., the degrees to which the essays are negotiating with others' voices by denying, countering, concurring, endorsing, or entertaining those voices—and identifying which Engagement resources are most frequently selected. The relative frequencies are shown in Table 4.1. The averages in the HG and LG groups are shown below in Table 4.2.

	Monogloss	Heterogloss	Contractive	Disclaim: Counter	Disclaim: Deny	Proclaim: Endorse	Proclaim: Pronounce	Proclaim: Concur	Expansive	Entertain	Attribute
HG1 Luis	13.9	71.5	43.6	14.8	4.1	14.8	7.4	2.5	27.9	18.1	9.8
HG2 Mike	35.6	57.7	28.5	15.8	4.0	3.2	4.7	0.8	29.2	22.9	6.3
HG3 Ken	35.6	52.1	27.8	14.3	4.5	3.6	1.8	4.6	24.3	12.6	11.7
HG4 Keith	44.6	43.7	24.4	15.1	1.7	4.2	3.4	0	19.3	14.3	5.0
HG5 Tim	39.8	57.5	29.6	14.4	5.1	3.4	5.9	0.8	27.9	21.1	6.8
HG Avg.	35.0	56.5	30.8	15.0	3.9	5.5	4.6	1.5	25.7	17.8	7.9
LG1 Amy	43	37.4	19.7	10.5	2.4	0.8	3.2	4.8	17.7	10.4	7.3
LG2 Nancy	32.7	43.6	15.3	6.5	3.3	1.1	3.3	1.1	28.3	22.9	5.4
LG3 Melisa	35.0	48.4	22.1	8.6	5.0	2.9	3.6	2.0	26.3	14.2	12.1
LG4 Dan	27.5	55.4	20.8	8.0	2.4	3.2	4.8	2.4	34.6	19.3	15.3
LG5 Elan	45.1	37.8	18.6	10.0	4.3	2.9	1.4	0	19.2	12.8	6.4
LG Avg.	36.8	45.0	19.7	8.7	3.5	2.2	3.3	2.1	25.3	16.0	9.4

Table 4.1. Engagement resources in individual Econ 432 essays

	Avg. frequency in 5 HG essays	Avg. frequency in 5 LG essays
MONOGLOSSIC OPTIONS	35.0	36.8
HETEROGLOSSIC OPTIONS	56.5	45.0
• CONTRACTIVE OPTIONS	30.8	19.7
disclaim	18.8	12.2
⇒ counter	⇒ 15.0	⇒ 8.7
⇒ deny	⇒ 3.9	⇒ 3.5
proclaim	11.6	7.5
⇒ endorse	⇒ 5.5	⇒ 2.2
⇒ pronounce	⇒ 4.6	⇒ 3.3

⇒ concur	⇒ 1.5	⇒2.1
• EXPANSIVE OPTIONS	25.7	25.3
⇒ entertain	⇒ 17.8	⇒16.0
⇒ attribute	⇒ 7.9	⇒ 9.3

Table 4.2. Engagement resources in HG and LG Econ 432 corpora

As apparent in both tables, the most striking difference between the HG and LG essays is that the former use more contractive resources than the latter. Contractive resources are used, on average, 30.8 times per 2,000 words in the HG essays and just 19.7 times in the LG essays. Another striking difference is that the HG essays use more contractive than expansive resources while the reverse is true in the LG essays.²⁷ I spend time carefully unpacking these differences below. Before that, however, I discuss commonalities between the two groups in order to identify patterns of stance among all ten writers that point to requirements of the specific argumentative task.

At the most general level, both the HG and LG essays use more heteroglossic than monoglossic resources. This pattern holds true for the majority of writers—seven of ten. Exceptions, as shown in Table 4.1, include Keith, Amy, and Elan, who use monoglossic resources with a slightly higher average frequency than the two heteroglossic categories (contract and expand) combined. This may suggest a slightly less dialogically engaged stance on the part of these three writers, two of whom are in the consistently low-performing group.

Apart from these three students, the preference for heteroglossically worded assertions indicates at least some degree of dialogic awareness, or awareness of the need to negotiate assertions with the imagined reader. These student writers are not just making categorical assertions with regard to their judgments and recommendations. They do this, of course, but they also are actively making a case for their judgments and recommendations, sometimes opening up space for negotiation—accomplished by

²⁷ That the relative frequency of expansive resources is almost equivalent in the two groups is somewhat surprising. We might rather expect that (a) the high-performing writers would construct a more measured critical stance by more frequently entertaining dialogic alternatives or (b) they would include more attributions to scholarly voices. While these expectations are not borne out in the evidence, there are in fact important differences between the HG and LG essays in terms of the type of ‘entertain’ resources that are employed. Specifically, ‘entertain’ moves such as *research suggests* and *according to models, it appears* are selected more frequently by the high-performing writers, while ‘entertain’ moves like *in my opinion* and *I think* are selected more frequently by the low-performing writers. I discuss these differences and their implications on reader-positioning in depth in Chapter 5.

reducing their commitment to claims, externalizing the source of propositions, placing qualifications on their assertions, and raising questions—and sometimes closing down space by disclaiming alternative views or strongly proclaiming their own.

A more specific commonality among all ten writers is that the most frequently used Engagement options are ‘entertain’ and ‘disclaim:counter’. This means that the writers are most frequently either raising up for consideration some possible, likely, or apparent proposition (‘entertaining’) or disclaiming against alternative views by offering more complex, refined, or accurate views. The preferred stance seems to be one that is at once highly “contrastive” (Barton, 1993; Wu, 2006; 2007) and, at the same time, dialogically expansive, or willing to negotiate with views other than those being forwarded by the author. The following excerpts from Luis’s high-graded essay shows a typical way that resources of ‘entertain’ and ‘disclaim:counter’ are deployed in the space of a short stretch of text.

(1a) *If* Von’s were allowed to keep all of its Shopping Bag stores, the benefits of merger *could* be even greater because the stores *may* have even lower costs and higher bargaining power [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN]. On the other hand, *however*, regulation is *not* free. ... [CONTRACT: DISCLAIM:COUNTER + DENY] (HG1, Luis, S75-76)

(1b) *While* the Von’s case *may* be viewed as insignificant in one very obvious way – courts never followed the decision and even ridiculed it [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN] – it is *nonetheless* a landmark case in antitrust policy [CONTRACT: DISCLAIM:COUNTER]. (HG1, Luis, S86)

These two texts illustrate the sort of dialogic maneuvering—expanding and then contracting dialogic space—that run through the Econ 432 corpus and that, as discussed below, appear more frequently in the five top essays than in the low-performing students’ essays. Indeed, as shown in Table 4.2 above, the HG essays use on average nearly twice as many ‘counter’ moves as the LG essays (15 instances per 2,000 words versus 8.7). This is an important difference that I spend time with below, but in order to understand the specific student genre it is also important to note that for both groups, HG and LG, ‘counter’ is the second most frequently used move next to ‘entertain’.

This preference for countering as a means to contract dialogic space runs partly counter to Wu’s (2007) analysis of high- and low-scoring argumentative essays written

by L2 writers in an undergraduate geography course. Wu's study reveals an even balance between 'disclaim' and 'proclaim' options in the high-scoring essays and a clear preference for 'proclaim', particularly 'proclaim:pronounce', in the low-scoring essays. Wu's interpretation of this pattern is that the less proficient writers rely too much on pronouncing their own viewpoints (e.g., *There is no doubt that ...*), without doing the rhetorical work needed to create a heteroglossically diverse stance. The findings presented above partly corroborate this analysis. The high-performing Econ 432 writers use 'disclaim' moves more frequently than the low-performing writers. At the same time, though, *both* groups of writers use 'disclaim' more frequently than 'proclaim:pronounce' resources. This means that the weaker Econ writers are not resorting to pronouncing their views, as the weaker writers in Wu's study seem to have been doing. In fact, they use fewer 'pronounce' moves than the stronger writers. In fact, Luis (the writer of examples 1a and 1b above) uses more of this option than any other writer in class, and this does not seem to be a "slip" on Luis's part. As I show in my analysis below, 'pronounce' moves can contribute to the construction of an authoritative stance, especially when this strategy is used alongside other Engagement resources.

This divergence from Wu's (2007) findings appears to be traceable to three factors. First, the Econ 432 writers were further along in their studies than were the writers in Wu's study, who were first year undergraduates. The Econ writers, then, even the weaker ones, may have already been initiated into the contrastive epistemological stance that appears to be valued in academic discourse (Barton, 1993). Second, the subject matter in Econ 432 deals with law and economics, a subdisciplinary discourse that McCloskey (1998) identifies as having a more, in her term, "adversarial" rhetorical style than that found in more mainstream economics. In particular, McCloskey shows that Ronald Coase's famous paper "The Nature of the Firm" (1937) makes frequent use of sentences beginning with "But ..." and "Not only ... but also ...," which worked to create a highly adversarial style that puzzled fellow economists. The passage in example (2) shows a typical way that Coase critiques others' arguments in the essay, with adversarial wording in bold italics.

(2) *Professor Knight says* that “with human nature as we know it it would be impracticable or very unusual for one man to guarantee to another a definite result of the latter’s actions without being given power to direct his work.” This is *surely incorrect*. A large proportion of jobs are done to contract, that is, the contractor is guaranteed a certain sum providing he performs certain acts. *But this does not* involve any direction. It does mean, *however*, that the system of relative prices has been changed and that there will be a new arrangement of the factors of production. (Coase, 1937, p. 401)

In addition to its highly committed and contrastive stance, Coase uses what I refer to below as a ‘deny’ + ‘counter’ formulation to maneuver the reader toward his view. I show that such maneuvers are used more frequently by the high-performing Econ 432 writers. Based on the fact that many Econ 432 students reference Coase’s paper in their essays (among other similarly adversarial texts), there is a possibility that their contrastive style of stancetaking is influenced by course readings.²⁸

Third, and perhaps most importantly, the Econ 432 assignment required that students carefully read and critically evaluate legal decisions. Some of the “additional” countering, therefore, may be a result of the need to critique the reasoning of the courts as a way to motivate a discussion of alternative legal remedies. (The students in Wu’s study were not writing critical evaluations but rather expository essays.)

The Engagement differences between the Econ 432 writers and the writers in Wu’s study suggest that more advanced undergraduate writers—even weaker ones—may have acquired a sense of an effective argumentative stance as one that is contrastive (i.e., requiring frequent ‘denying’ and ‘countering’). At the same time, they also suggest that the notion of a “balanced” stance needs to take into account the disciplinary context as well as the specific student genre. Both factors will influence, among other things, how much disclaiming or proclaiming may be called for in the argumentation.

Unsurprisingly, the idea of constructing a “dialogically engaged stance”—or any kind of stance—is not addressed as a learning goal by Frank or Mark. Both instructors do place emphasis on argumentation when they explain their pedagogical goals for writing. As I show in the next section, however, their explanations emphasize the formal generic qualities of academic arguments and, in some instances, they suggest a somewhat

²⁸ In support of this possibility, my analysis of two L2 writers in this same course (in Lancaster, 2011), shows that Soohyun (a pseudonym), who uses more ‘disclaim’ moves than all five other heteroglossic options combined, frequently refers to Coase’s arguments in the course of her discussion.

reductive view of rhetorical strategies like counter-argumentation. Disciplinary particularities in argumentation do arise as these instructors explain their goals for student writing, but these are not foregrounded for students in instructional material.

In the next section, I explain the specific ways that argumentation is presented to students through course material, as well as Mark's explanations of valued features of student writing. This discussion provides context to the textual patterns identified above. I then turn to specific stance *differences* in the HG and LG essays. By starting with the instructors' more traditional metalanguage about academic argumentation, I attempt to explain how it is that recurring stance patterns in the high-performing students' essays work better than those in the low-performing students' essays to accomplish valued argumentative moves.

4.3. Instructors' Explanations of Argumentation

Mark and Frank both identified argumentation as a central learning goal for students. Through various course materials, they also communicated to students the need to construct clear and well-supported arguments, as seen in the following examples.

From class handout

In discussion-section, your GSI advised you to avoid choosing a case that is (1) a required reading in the syllabus, or (2) the subject of a chapter in Frank E. Kwoka and Lawrence J. White, eds., *The Antitrust Revolution* (K&W). The reason for imposing these constraints is simple: **I want you to develop your own arguments**. If you use a case we discuss in class, or a case covered in K&W, you will probably find it very difficult to develop **a point of view that is distinctively yours**. So it will be very difficult to show how much **thought** you have put into the paper. (italics in original, boldface added)

From essay assignment description

Wherever necessary, define important terms and explain the assumptions underlying **your arguments**. Points will be awarded for **organized and coherent argumentation**.

From essay assignment description

After you finish writing each paper, please reflect on both the good things you accomplished and on what's preventing you from writing an even better paper. Use the "Comment" function in Word to insert at least three questions or comments in the margins of your paper. For example, you might note places where you're (1) especially satisfied with **your argument**, (2) incorporating in

some way the feedback you received on a previous paper, (3) unsure whether you've used properly a concept developed in this course, (4) unsure you've positioned a **particular argument** properly in the presentation of **your overall argument**, (5) unsure you've supplied a **coherent and complete argument** to support a particular claim.

One thing evident in these excerpts is that argumentation is presented to students in a way that overlaps with stance, which is seen in the expressions, “point of view” and “develop[ing] your own arguments.” Students are clearly expected to construct an argumentative stance, but the type of argumentative stance is not made more specific. What is communicated to students is that individual arguments should be developed, they should be organized coherently, and students should adopt a stance—or point of view distinctively theirs.

This generic view of argumentation is also revealed in Frank's and Mark's interviews. Both instructors spoke in detail about the importance of helping students to build strong, well-supported, and coherent arguments. The following excerpt is from Frank's immediate response to the question of “What writing norms or skills do you want students to learn in this course?”

FRANK: I want people to understand argumentation, that is, how in good expository writing, how to construct an argument. And I want them to be able to understand how to adduce supporting material to [...] uh [...] justify the argument. And I want them to appreciate [...] how to add complexity and nuance without [...] uh [...] destroying, without rendering totally opaque, the argument that they are making.

This explanation identifies two interesting pedagogical points: what it means to “construct an argument” and what counts as “complexity and nuance.” When prompted to elaborate on the first point, Frank spoke to the importance of having a thesis that should be developed coherently:

FRANK: For me what it means is to have a thesis, and then to develop that thesis coherently, and by “coherently” what I mean would be that the argument should be developed in logical order, with supporting evidence at the relevant moment in the argument.

This explanation of developing a coherent argument is one that could apply across disciplinary contexts. However, when prompted to elaborate on what he means by “complexity and nuance”—a characteristic that could very well separate highly evaluated student writing from more modestly evaluated writing—Frank spoke in very specific terms by referring to his own work in economics, which he contrasts with more traditional economics work.

According to Frank, because economics is “a model-driven discipline,” there is a value placed on “simplicity” and “elegance” in economic models. Frank explains this as a matter of valuing models that start with unrestricted or “weak” assumptions about a situation and that generate “surprising results.” Frank contrasts this strategy with his own orientation to the field, which he characterizes as “more like an historian.” The reason is that, in contrast to simplicity and elegance, he makes an effort in his work to give “due attention to alternative and concurrent explanations of the phenomena under investigation.” Rather than attempting to reduce complexity by developing streamlined models, Frank tries to uncover the complexity of the phenomena under examination. Frank does not explicitly assign his own writing to students as a model, but he does want to them to, as explained above, “appreciate how to add complexity and nuance” to their arguments “without rendering totally opaque [...] the argument that they are making.”

Mark (the graduate student instructor) does not use the terms “complexity and nuance” in his own criteria for assessing student writing, but as explained shortly he does highly value writing that “anticipate[s] possible criticisms or possible counter-arguments and respond[s] to them” and that conveys “sophisticated thinking.” I show in my analysis that the high-performing writers more consistently make choices in stance that correlate with these goals of complexity and nuance, counter-argumentation, and sophisticated thinking.

In sum, Frank’s explanations of argumentation reflect a tension between at least three perspectives on “good” argument writing. One perspective, one that seems to inform Frank’s conscious pedagogical goals, is that argumentative writing is a transdisciplinary skill that requires developing a thesis, supporting material, and logical organizational strategies. A second perspective, one that emerges when Frank references economics in general, is that argumentative writing is a discipline-specific process, one

made difficult in economics due to the need to take very “messy” and “complex” situations and streamline them down into simple yet powerful models. A third perspective, one that emerges when Frank references his own particular research goals and disciplinary affiliations, is that argumentation is a disciplinarily complex process whose effectiveness depends on one’s own personal and subdisciplinary backgrounds, approaches, and goals.

Tensions between academic, disciplinary, subdisciplinary, and personal contexts also arise in Mark’s explanations about the need for students to create “a strong logical argument.” Below I quote an exchange that occurred in response to my question: “What kind of moves in thinking or writing did you want students to take away from the course and how were the assignments supposed to encourage that?” I quote the exchange in its entirety in order to show how Mark’s own disciplinary background in law may have shaped his perspective on argumentation in the context of Econ 432.

MARK: So what they’re supposed to take away from the course is I think the substantive material that we studied. They’re supposed to learn something about the government regulation of industry and antitrust law and economics. But as far as fostering good writing, I think it was the way assignments were structured was [3 second pause] okay, so what they’re supposed to do as far as writing was learn how to build a strong logical argument that builds from [2 second pause] I don’t know how to say this.

ZAK: Take your time.

MARK: I don’t know if I can elaborate any better than that. The goal is to be able to write a strong defensible argument, to think of, uh, potential holes in your argument [2 second pause] I think I’m probably coming at this more as someone who’s trained as a lawyer, where you always are supposed to think, “Okay, if I’m saying A, what is the natural, you know, what’s the natural counterpoint or counter-argument to that?” And, you know, you want to anticipate what you would be [...] what your opponent or somebody else [...] what a critic would say about it. So it’s anticipating weak points and responding to them, so you can make kind of an airtight argument.

As is evident in his frequent pauses, Mark had some initial difficulty articulating what he means by “strong logical argument.” (This may be at least partly because this exchange occurred toward the very beginning of our interview.) Aiding his articulation was his reaching back to his training in law, which, for him, is a discourse characterized by

anticipating potential counter-arguments and responding to them. Mark's reference to his own disciplinary training is similar to Frank's reference to his own work in economics when explaining "complexity and nuance." These moves underscore Thaiss and Zawacki's (2006) argument that subtle disciplinary contexts are often at play when instructors begin to articulate their goals for student writing, and these subtleties often do not make it into instructional material for students.

Mark's point about counter-argumentation came up several times in our interview, particularly as Mark responded to my questions about distinctions between successful and unsuccessful writing in the course. As I point out shortly, Mark locates counter-argumentation as a strategy particular to legal writing and one that is useful for making an "airtight" argument, but it is possible, too, to connect this rhetorical strategy to Frank's goal (above) of always giving "due attention to alternative and concurrent explanations of the phenomena under investigation." In other words, incorporating into the writing alternative explanations/perspectives/opinions/ideas can work not only as strategy for "winning" an argument, or for "heading off" potential counter-arguments and thereby defeating "opponents," but can work also to enhance the "complexity and nuance" of the argument being built by increasing the heteroglossic diversity of the text.

Mark elaborated on the importance of counter-argumentation when I asked him what he meant by an earlier point he had made about good essays "showing some foresight." The following excerpts show how Mark characterized this rhetorical strategy:

MARK: The really big problem that I see is often students will just state the point that they're trying to make and just kind of leave it at that. They rarely realize that [...] so there are arguments from students where they just don't understand how I could possibly criticize their argument because it's "obviously true." There's always a **counter-argument** to whatever you're saying. Many students don't see that.

MARK: There's always **another side to every argument** and when you're trying to persuade somebody, you know, you can't just say one side of the argument, cause that'd be, your argument is weaker then. You need to **anticipate possible criticisms or possible counter-arguments** and respond to them, even if it's just to throw a sentence in there, you know, "a reasonable person could think the other thing," or "it's totally unreasonable to think the other thing because of x, y, and z." Being able to make an airtight argument, I think, is an important skill in writing.

According to these explanations, counter-argumentation serves two related rhetorical functions. One function is to show awareness of the complexity of the situation under analysis by bringing in alternative perspectives and voices: “There’s always another side to every argument.” This function may relate to the goal for students to learn to argue with “complexity and nuance.” A second function is to create an “airtight” argument by anticipating objections and working in rejoinders. Students should frequently include this discursive move, according to Mark, “even if it’s just to throw a sentence in there.” This latter point seemed to arise from Mark’s frustration with the tendency for student writers to categorically assert their views. Mark suggests that many student writers “don’t see” how a reader “could possibly criticize their argument.”

During the discourse-based section of our conversation, Mark discussed the use of counter-argumentation in Ken’s essay. Specifically, he identified paragraphs 18 and 16 (below), which are in stage 4 or ‘recommendation’ stage of the essay. The following is Mark’s explanation of both instances, starting with paragraph 18 and then moving to paragraph 16. (Main themes that I discuss are in **bold**.)

MARK: So [...] an example of where he did a good job of anticipating a counter-argument is the second to last paragraph. I think there’s probably a few others. This is [...] “opponents of collective bargaining for physicians also argue that strategies to improve negotiating power without violating the anti-trust laws already exist in the form of” [...] basically big hospitals with lots of physicians. And he does a good job of saying [clears throat] that argument is really a non starter. If these hospitals are big enough to effectively negotiate with insurance companies they’re gonna be able to raise prices anyways so that argument holds absolutely no water. I thought that’s **a good insight**. There’s another paragraph before that that also [...] two paragraphs before that. He just does **some empirical research** to say that if doctors were allowed to negotiate collectively, then it’s been estimated that prices would only increase by less than three percent. That doesn’t necessarily seem like a bad thing. I think that’s **a pretty good argument**. We get a much better quality care and prices would only increase three percent.

This explanation suggests that the process of countering an argument helped Ken to convey “a good insight,” and that his having carried out empirical research helped him to develop a particularly convincing counter-argument in paragraph 16. These themes of showing “insight” and incorporating outside research proved to be important assessment criteria for Mark (discussed below); it is therefore worthwhile to examine the specific

sentences that Mark identified when making his remarks in order to see what interpersonal meanings may have influenced his positive judgments.

Excerpt 3a is from paragraph 18, and it is the excerpt that prompted Mark's comment about Ken conveying "a good insight." Excerpt 3b is from paragraph 16, and it is the sentence that prompted Mark's recognition that the writer did "some empirical research." (Wordings that I discuss below are in *bold italics*.)²⁹

(3a) *Opponents of collective bargaining for physicians also argue* that strategies to improve negotiating power without violating antitrust laws already exist in the form of large, multi-physician practices and shared-liability cooperatives.³⁰ *While this is true*, if local markets each came to be dominated by a few individual health care provider companies with enough market power to balance that of the insurance firms, the same costs increases would occur. (Ken, HG3, paragraph 18)

(3b) *Opponents of collective bargaining argue* that physicians will form cartels, driving up compensation rates, which would then be passed on to patients. The result would be more expensive health insurance rates, higher out-of-pocket costs, and more uninsured individuals. *A study commissioned by the American Association of Health Plans (AAHP)*, a group representing different health insurance firms, *found* that such a bill would raise health care premiums by 8.5 percent.²⁷ *However, a Congressional Budget Office study predicted* a 2.9 percent increase in health care costs.²⁸ (Ken, HG3, paragraph 16)

While both texts use counter-argumentation, they use the 'counter' option in the Engagement framework in subtly different ways. Text 3a starts with an argument made by one party in the case (*Opponents of collective bargaining for physicians*) and then concedes the argument (*this is true*) before offering a counter assertion. Through this maneuver (which is somewhat more measured than Coase's "this is surely incorrect" in example 2 above) two externalized perspectives are brought into play: the view of the "opponents of collective bargaining for physicians" is invoked explicitly, and the imagined reader's question of whether the opponents' argument is "true" or not is invoked implicitly. Text 3b starts similarly to 3b but then incorporates findings from two different studies as part of a complex counter-argument strategy. The stance in this excerpt is doubly contrastive: it goes beyond simply endorsing one study to make a

²⁹ The numbers in superscript in these and other passages—for example, *cooperatives*.³⁰—show where students used footnotes in their essay. This number mean, then, that Ken used at least 30 footnotes in his essay. These footnotes are most often used to cite passages from the legal case under examination, but, as shown in Ken's excerpts (1a) and (1b), they are also used to cite scholarly articles.

counter-argument; it uses an additional study to counter against the first one. In so doing, the text incorporates three externalized views: that of the “opponents” and those of two different analysts.

What is interesting about these excerpts is that multiple voices are brought into the text and negotiated with: the reader’s voice and the voices of externalized sources of authority. For this reason, Mark’s explanation of counter-argumentation as a device to create an “airtight argument” and to show awareness that “there’s always another side to every argument” does not fully capture these complex maneuvers. This is one instance, then, in which a specialized metalanguage about argumentative writing could enrich Mark’s descriptions of the ways ‘counter’ moves can be used in essays to achieve argumentative complexity.

This type of refined analysis can also be useful for pinpointing argumentative strategies that help to build what Frank might describe as a complex and nuanced argumentative stance. Being specific about rhetorical maneuvers in this way seems particularly needed in light of the fact that the HG essays use nearly twice as many ‘counter’ resources as the LG essays. The question that drives the next section, then, is how these ‘counter’ resources are being used in the HG students’ essays and for what rhetorical purposes. I begin by discussing the most general Engagement differences between the HG and LG essays and then turn to ‘counters’ in particular. To explain how the ‘counters’ are operating in the Econ 432 corpus, I propose the notion of “contrastive rhetorical pairs” as I categorize the types of counter moves used in the HG texts.

4.4. Fine-tuned Stancetaking: Differences Between High- and Low-Performing Students’ Essays

To review the Engagement results from Table 4.2, the average frequency of expansive options is nearly even between the two groups (used 25.7 times per 2,000 words in HG corpus and 25.3 times in the LG corpus). This means there is a nearly equivalent distribution of ‘entertain’ and ‘attribute’ options selected by the high- and low-performing writers. There are important differences in rhetorical use of the ‘entertain’ options that I unpack in Chapter 5. For instance, the formulations “research suggests ...” and “in my opinion” are both instances of ‘entertain’ because they both weaken authorial

commitment to the assertion being advanced, but these formulations create quite different rhetorical meanings in the course of the Econ 432 essay as well as academic discourse more generally. The most general difference between the two groups of essays is that the HG essays use more contractive resources, including more ‘disclaim’ and ‘proclaim’ moves (the contractive options are reproduced in Figure 4.1.) The HG essays more frequently use almost every contractive resource, for a combined use of 30.8 per 2,000 words in the HG corpus and just 19.7 in the LG corpus. Figure 4.1 reproduces the Engagement system network for dialogical contraction.

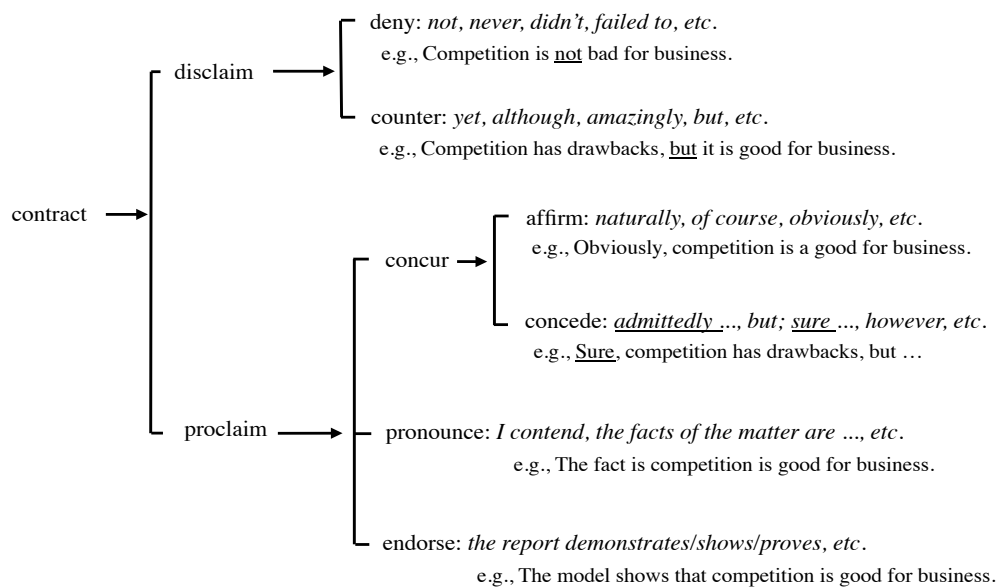


Figure 4.1. Resources of dialogic contraction (from Martin & White, 2005)

To be clear, while all ten of the Econ 432 essays are highly engaged dialogically, the high-performing writers deploy more contractive resources. As I show below, this enables these writers to pull the reader over to their perspectives more effectively. Specifically, they engage in more denying, countering, pronouncing, and endorsing of views than do the weaker writers. Most significant among these differences is that the HG essays use nearly twice as many ‘disclaim:counter’ (or ‘counter’) moves. In addition, as shown in Table 4.1 above, not one LG essay uses as many ‘counter’ moves as any of the HG essays. The lowest relative frequency of this move in the HG essays is 14.3 (in Ken’s essay), while the highest in the LG essays is 10.5 (in Amy’s essay).

The tendency for stronger writers to engage in more countering is supported by lexicogrammatical data from the larger corpus of 92 essays. As shown in Table 4.3 below, while all 92 essays use contrastive connectors,³⁰ the mean number of occurrences per essay is higher in the HG corpus, a difference which is significant below the 1 per cent probability level ($t = 10.691$, $p = .000$).³¹ Interestingly, the HG essays are also statistically more likely to use sentence-initial contrastive connectors ($t = 6.498$, $p = .000$), particularly *However* ($t = 3.470$, $p = .001$). Furthermore, while all 46 HG essays use these devices, 15% of the 46 LG essays do not use sentence-initial contrastive connectors at all, and 17% do not use sentence-initial *However*. Included in this 17% are the essays by Dan and Melisa, who were two of the five writers that Mark confirmed did not seem to “get it” when it comes to the Econ 432 essay.

	% of HG essays using	Mean per HG essay	Freq. per 2,000 words in 46 HG essays	% of LG essays using	Mean per LG essay	Freq. per 2,000 words in 46 LG essays
contrastive connectors, e.g., <i>however</i> , <i>but</i>	100%	23.9	18.2	100%	11.1	10.3
sentence-initial contrastive connectors	100%	6.6	5.2	85%	2.9	2.5
sentence-initial <i>However</i>	100%	4.3	4.3	83%	2.5	2.2

Table 4.3. Contrastive connectors in large Econ 432 corpus

³⁰ The particular contrastive connectors reflected in Table 4.3 include *although*, *alternatively*, *at the same time*, *but*, *despite*, *(even) though*, *however*, *in contrast*, *nevertheless*, *nonetheless*, *rather*, *still*, *surprisingly*, *whereas*, and *yet*. These items derive from my scanning of word lists and 2-to-3 word phrases generated from AntConc (in order to see what is in the corpus), combined with targeted searches of items based on Hyland’s (2005c) lists of metadiscourse markers. In addition, I consulted the context for each instance in order to verify the function of these devices as working to realize ‘counter’ moves in the students’ writing, screening out instances of ‘counters’ in quoted material.

³¹ All significance levels have been calculated in SPSS using a two-tailed t-test for difference between means.

The greater use of sentence-initial contrastive connectors in the HG essays suggests that the most highly effective Econ 432 writers are doing more to signal to the reader the onset of a ‘counter’ move. In addition, the preference for sentence-initial *However* may also mean that these writers are giving more space in their texts to alternative views. They may be offering what Thompson and Zhou (2000) refer to as more “informational weight” (p. 128) to the view that is later disclaimed. On a rhetorical level, this can often suggest that the writer is taking the alternative view seriously before countering, thus creating a reasoned stance. This strategy can be seen in 4a below, where a possible view is introduced and given play in two sentences before a counter is introduced in the third sentence. This strategy may be read in contrast to 4b, where the counter happens within the same sentence as the concession element.

(4a) Of the defendants involved in Utah Pie Company’s case only one seems to have emerged as exceptionally successful. Continental, now known as Morton Frozen Foods Division, had a 13, 11, and 13th percentage share of the market in 1974, 1975 and 1976 respectively (see table 1). *However* this success was *not* a factor of overwhelming market power, as can be seen by ... (Tim, HG5, S43-45)

(4b) This action may have avoided violating the Sherman Act again, *but* it does not maximize social surplus. (Elan, LG5, S85)

An important difference between these two excerpts is that in 3a the non-oppositional element is afforded a higher degree of informational weight. The more frequent use of sentence-initial contrastives in the HG essays, therefore, especially use of *However*, may be due to the high-performing writers’ engaging in more sustained attention to dialogic alternatives.

There is some evidence to support this possibility in the use of sentence-initial *However* in the recommendations stages of the larger corpus of essays. It is in this final stage (stage 4) where the writers argue for the best remedies in the cases they are analyzing. (Many of these sections begin with explicit recommendation sentences such as, “In my view, the best remedy would be” or “Based on the evidence presented above, the best course of action would have been to ...”). To test the degree to which the writers are countering against alternative remedies, I used AntConc to flag all instances of

sentence-initial *However* in this stage of each of the 96 essays³² and then analyzed how this device was functioning in the discourse. (I did this specifically by closely reading the preceding clauses and determining what kind of proposition was being countered, whether a ‘bare assert’, an ‘entertain’ move, an ‘attribute’ move, and so on.)

As shown in Table 4.4, 94% of the HG essays use sentence-initial *However* at least once when offering their recommendation, while 70% of the LG essays do so. In addition, in the HG corpus the relative frequency of sentence-initial *However* is 4.1 occurrences per 2,000 words and in the LG corpus it 2.8 occurrences. Furthermore, 76% of the HG essays use *However* after a preceding expansive move (e.g., *It seems that ... However, ...*), while only 52% of the LG essays use this discursive strategy. Examples are offered below.

	Freq. in 46 HG essays per 2,000 words	% of HG essays used in	Freq. in 46 LG essays per 2,000 words	% of LG essays used in
sentence-initial <i>However</i>	4.1	94% of essays (43/46)	2.8	70% of essays (32/46)
<i>However</i> followed by expand move	2.6	76% (35/46)	1.1	52% (24/46)

Table 4.4. Sentence-initial *However* in large Econ 432 corpus

Examples 5a and 5b are from the 46-essay HG corpus. In 5a, a ‘counter’ follows an ‘attribute’ move. In 5b, a ‘counter’ follows an ‘entertain’ move. In these texts expansive resources are boxed and ‘counter’ signals are underlined.

(5a) According to Masten and Synder, disallowing leasing would decrease organizational efficiency by limiting the effective transfer of information between the seller and the buyer. Purging the implicit service charges and the exclusionary lease terms would also increase free rider issues. However, these disadvantages pale in comparison to those that would happen if we were to allow leasing.

(5b) Because of the evidence presented by Tremblay and Tremblay, it would appear that mergers in the brewing industry would have been procompetitive because of economies of scale. However, allowing a firm to acquire more than 20% of the

³² Doing this required that I omit the text from the second and third stages from each of the 96 essays and upload only the fourth stage into AntConc. The total word count for this new corpus is 83,185 words (41,921 words from the HG corpus and 41,264 words from the LG corpus).

market in Wisconsin would give it too much power to charge higher prices, even if the merger would help lower total average costs.

In each of these examples, other perspectives are brought into the text and given space of one or two clauses before an alternative or more refined view is offered through a ‘counter’.

In contrast to these examples, 6a-6c below are from the 46-essay LG corpus. Importantly, the LG essays also use ‘expand’ + ‘counter’ moves to give space to alternative views. 6a, for instance, uses this resource effectively to adopt an authoritative evaluative stance. The ‘counter’ moves in 6b and 6c, however, are executed less authoritatively.

(6a) As the economic troubles of the 1940’s took place, these once strong production giants floundered to stay afloat, and much of this might have been prevented had these larger companies been improved rather than punished, which inevitably led to a stagnant film market. However, looking past this government misstep, the breaking up of block books was in fact an effective tool in increasing competition, and was a smart way of dissolving unfair economic practices.

(6b) The absence of blanket licenses in favor per-use licensing to create competitive pricing has the possibility to generate lower “competitive” prices than under blanket licenses. However, “price competition is ordinarily not a significant factor in the performing rights market, not because the monopoly of ASCAP and BMI on the market prevents competitive prices from emerging, but instead because price seldom affects a user’s selection of a musical composition” (Fujitani, 1984, p. 124).

(6c) I have shown that the large theatre circuits have advantages in the number, size and market share and they had the market power to control the first-run theatres. The divestiture just made sure that they would not keep the first-run exhibition only to their parent companies, but it cannot prevent the theatre circuits from bargaining with distributors for special film access not available to independent exhibitors. However, after the dispersal of the theatre circuits, their size, number and market share are reduced so the monopoly power was destroyed at the same time. However, the details of this remedy needed more discussion and research, such as what limited maximum number of theatre circuit’s successors.

The ‘counter’ move in 6a works well to pull the reader over to the author’s view. In 6b, however, the writer follows an ‘entertain’ move with a direct quote from a research article. This use of someone else’s words to do the countering for the writer suggests either lack of comfort with the task of offering a counter or lack of time spent to craft a

paraphrase, or both. In 6c, the writer uses several ‘counter’ moves consecutively but not in a clearly motivated way, making it difficult to follow what exactly is being countered and why. These two examples illustrate why simply telling students to use “However” more in their writing would be unproductive advice. It does not give due attention to countering as a motivated rhetorical move for constructing a dialogic stance.

In general, the more frequent use of countering in the HG essays suggests an important difference between the high- and low-performing writers, namely a more contrastive, dialogically engaged stance. Based on the analysis of ‘expand’ + ‘counter’ moves, I undertook a systematic analysis of the Engagement options that occur immediately before each instance of ‘counter’ in the small corpus of 10 essays. The question that guides the next section is, what dialogic elements are being juxtaposed in a contrastive relationship and for what purpose? As I discuss shortly, the use of particular contrastive rhetorical pairs like ‘entertain’ + ‘counter’ allows the HG writers to argue with “complexity and nuance” in a more controlled manner.

4.5. Controlled Countering: Use of Contrastive Rhetorical Pairs

In identifying dialogic moves that precede ‘counters’, I am identifying what Martin & White (2005) refer to as “rhetorical pairs.” They discuss one example of a rhetorical pair when they point out that ‘concede’³³ and ‘counter’ resources frequently co-occur. Through use of wordings like *of course/but* or *certainly/nevertheless*, “the writer construes a putative reader who is presumed to be to some degree resistant to the writer’s primary argumentative position” (Martin & White, 2005, p. 125). The first part of the pair, the concede element, works to establish solidarity with a non-aligned reader. The counter element then pulls the reader over to the writer’s view. Barton (1995) makes a similar observation in her analysis of “contrastive connectors” in argumentative essays, pointing out that contrastive connectors like *However* are often preceded by non-contrastive connectors like *Of course* and *To be sure* to serve a mitigating function. The following excerpt shows an instance of the ‘concede’ + ‘counter’ pair in the Econ 432 corpus:

³³ “Concede” is a subcategory of ‘concur’ in Martin & White’s (2005) framework. In my analysis of rhetorical pairs, I distinguish between highly committed ‘concur’ + ‘counter’ pairs and less committed ‘entertain’ + ‘counter’ pairs, the latter which can also operate as “reluctant” concessions.

(7) *It is true* [CONCEDE] that economists and lawyers can view the same case differently. Each one has different definitions of efficient outcomes and different methods for achieving them. *However* [COUNTER], one thing they can both agree on is that the judgment must be rational given a specific goal. (Mike, HG2, S130-132)

In addition to such ‘concede’ + ‘counter’ pairings (which I refer to as ‘concur’ + ‘counter’), I also identified four other contrastive pairs in the Econ essays. These include: ‘assert’ + ‘counter’, ‘entertain’ + ‘counter’, ‘deny’ + ‘counter’, and ‘attribute’ + ‘counter’. Table 4.5 offers examples of each pair, and Table 4.6 shows the number of instances of each pair in the ten essays and the mean use in the HG and LG corpora. While these pairs are used by both high- and low-performing writers, the high-performers use every pair more frequently, especially ‘entertain’ + ‘counter’.

<p>‘assert’ + ‘counter’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Today, the structure of the U.S. petroleum industry is similar to what existed in the early 1900s [assert]... <i>However</i> [COUNTER], crude oil production has experienced ... (Keith, HG4, S63-64) • In past cases that we have read, this issue of establishing what constitutes the relevant geographic market area has been very important in order to prove illegality [ASSERT]. <i>However</i> [COUNTER], in this case the court decides that they do not need to choose the relevant area ... (Amy, LG1, S6-6)
<p>‘entertain’ + ‘counter’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the defendants involved in Utah Pie Company’s case only one <i>seems</i> [ENTERTAIN] to have emerged as exceptionally successful. ... <i>However</i> [COUNTER] this success was not.... (Tim, HG5, S43-45) • Using <i>my personal opinion</i> [ENTERTAIN] to analyze the remedies used in this case, the District Court was correct ... <i>However</i> [COUNTER], there should have also been certain restrictions, including ... (Nancy, LG2, S43-46)
<p>‘deny’ + ‘counter’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The employers’ objective is again <i>not</i> [DENY] the well-being of the patient <i>but</i> [COUNTER] the maximization of profit through ... (Ken, HG3, S29-30) • Thus, the decision put forth by this court of law is <i>not</i> [DENY] that refusal to deal violates Section 2, <i>but rather</i> [COUNTER] that refusal to deal with no valid business reasons to support that refusal is anticompetitive. (Dan, LG4, S24)
<p>‘attribute’ + ‘counter’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The term monopolist is often <i>applied</i> [ATTRIBUTE] to anyone who has a large enough market share, <i>but</i> [COUNTER] this is wrong. (Mike, HG2, S95-96) • Furthermore [the court] <i>mentioned</i> [ATTRIBUTE] that if doctors had price fixing agreements while working at a clinic then this would also be perfectly proper. The effect of the removal of the cap, <i>however</i> [COUNTER] depends on whether or not ...

(Melisa, LG3, S15-16)
<p>‘concur’ + ‘counter’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>While it is indeed</i> [CONCUR] reasonable that medical providers ..., it is far more logical to assume that [COUNTER]... (Ken, HG3, S32) • <i>Definitely</i> [CONCUR] this would allow for foreclosure, <i>but</i> [COUNTER] would prevent a direct relationship between manufacturers and consumers. (Elan, LG5, S112)

Table 4.5. Contrastive rhetorical pairs in the Econ 432 corpus

Contrastive pair	Instances in 5 HG essays	HG mean	Instances in 5 LG essays	LG mean
‘assert’ + ‘counter’	Luis (6); Mike (4); Ken (6); Keith (6); Tim (6) Total: 28	5.6	Amy (3); Nancy (4); Melisa (5); Dan (3); Elan (6) Total: 21	4.2
‘entertain’ + ‘counter’	Luis (4); Mike (7); Ken (4); Keith (6); Tim (6) Total: 27	5.4	Amy (2); Nancy (2); Melisa (2); Dan (3); Elan (2) Total: 11	2.2
‘deny’ + ‘counter’	Luis (2); Mike (3); Ken (1); Keith (3); Tim (5) Total: 14	2.8	Amy (2); Nancy (0); Melisa (2); Dan (2); Elan (0) Total: 6	1.2
‘attribute’ + ‘counter’	Luis (2); Mike (2); Ken (3); Keith (1); Tim (2) Total: 10	2.0	Amy (2); Nancy (0); Melisa (1); Dan (0); Elan (1) Total: 4	0.8
‘concur’ + ‘counter’	Luis (2); Mike (1); Ken (2); Keith (1); Tim (0) Total: 6	1.2	Amy (2); Nancy (1); Melisa (1); Dan (1); Elan (2) Total: 7	1.4

Table 4.6. Distribution of contrastive rhetorical pairs in the Econ 432 corpora

The ‘assert’ + ‘counter’ pair is used most frequently in Econ 432 to review facts in the case under examination, while the other ones serve a clearer purpose in constructing a dialogically engaged, contrastive stance, in particular ‘entertain’ + ‘counter’, ‘deny’ + ‘counter’, and ‘attribute’ + ‘counter’. As seen in Table 4.6, these three pairs are used more than twice as often in the HG corpus. As I demonstrate below, these resources enable the high-performing writers to adopt a contrastive stance toward a greater number of dialogic participants.

4.5.1. ‘Entertain’ + ‘Counter’

The ‘entertain’ + ‘counter’ pair is used steadily more frequently by the high-performing writers. An important rhetorical purpose of this pair is to introduce into the text a proposition that is apparently or seemingly true before replacing it with a more

refined proposition. This strategy has been referred to in text linguistics as the “Hypothetical-Real” pattern (see Hoey, 1983; Thompson, 2001; Winter, 1994). As shown in example 7, this pattern can be useful for progressing the argument toward increasingly complex points in an organized way (Thompson & Zhou, 2000).

(8) Over the next two years to 1913, crude oil prices rose roughly 20%, gasoline prices were up 50%, and illuminating oil was up 25%.¹⁵ These prices remained elevated for another 10 years before they settled at the levels seen at the time of the decree. Unfortunately, there *appears* to be no definitive explanation for this price behavior [ENTERTAIN]. *Nevertheless* [COUNTER], in analyzing the time series of prices provided in Appendix 10, it could be that Standard Oil slashed prices prior to the court case in order to receive a more favorable ruling. Once the decree was finalized, the Baby Standards did not have to fear further litigation, and as a result were free to raise prices. (Keith, HG4, S26-30)

In this text, the ‘entertain’ + ‘counter’ pair works to offer the reader an apparently true proposition (that there is no definitive explanation for the price behavior) before suggesting some possible alternative explanation. While not *explicitly* interactional (i.e., bringing the reader into the text), this formulation constructs a multi-vocal backdrop against which to guide the reader through the various complexities in the case.

4.5.2. ‘Deny’ + ‘Counter’

The third most frequently used contrastive pair in the HG essays—and a more dialogically aggressive one—is ‘deny’ + ‘counter’. While all the high-performing writers use at least one instance of ‘deny’ + ‘counter’, two low-performing writers, Nancy and Elan, do not use this formulation at all. This strategy typically works to repair a potential misunderstanding on the part of the reader and thus maneuver him or her toward the author’s perspective. Examples are shown in 9a and 9b.

(9a) Somewhat ironically, the wave of mergers following Von’s may have occurred *not* in spite of the court’s decision [DENY], *but rather* directly because of it [COUNTER]. (Luis, HG1, S43)

(9b) For example, if the goal is to protect consumers, it can usually be achieved by increasing competition in an industry. This does *not* mean that competition is always good [DENY]; it is *just* one means of achieving our original goal (helping consumers) [COUNTER]. (Mike, HG2, S133-135)

In these texts, the proposition that is denied may be best understood as a view that the reader is potentially susceptible to believing. 9a forwards the unexpected assertion (signaled by *Somewhat ironically*) that the increase of mergers following the antitrust case may have resulted from the divestiture ruling itself. (The courts would have argued for the opposite effect, a decrease in mergers.) In light of this surprising assertion, the writer denies the reader's (and likely the Court's) anticipated objection, which is that the increase resulted *in spite of the court's decision*. This dialogic alternative is raised, then, but only so that it can be quickly denied. A similar preemptive denial is used in 9b. In this text, the denied proposition, that *competition is always good*, can be traced to the preceding clause, which holds that *increasing competition can usually protect consumers*. The purpose of the 'deny' + 'counter', then, is to add further nuance to the initial claim by correcting something the reader may assume the writer is saying.

In general, 'entertain' + 'counter' and 'deny' + 'counter' pairs can usefully describe the dialogic maneuvers for carving out a contrastive stance while invoking other dialogic possibilities. These resources are therefore potentially useful for pinpointing for students how to go about adopting an authoritative stance in their writing—one marked by dialogic engagement—without coming across as too “biased” or rashly critical.

4.5.3. 'Attribute' + 'Counter'

The fact that 'attribute' + 'counter' formulations are used more frequently by the high-performing writers is interesting given that the low-performing writers use more 'attribute' moves in general, as seen in Table 4.2 above. This difference suggests that, when the high-performers do attribute views to others, they are more often taking a contrastive stance toward those views. Like 'entertain' + 'counter', this pair works to construct a dialogic backdrop against which specific evaluations and judgments can be crafted. This general purpose is shown in example 10 in which the text is organized by two 'attribute' + 'counter' pairs.

- (10) That looks like exactly what happened in this case. The court got so accustomed to associating increased competition with increased consumer welfare that it simply equated the two things. It *decided* that preserving distributors' freedom was

essentially the same as preserving competition, which was always beneficial [ATTRIBUTE]. That is the reasoning behind making maximum price fixing per se illegal, *but unfortunately*, that reasoning is wrong [COUNTER]. Making something per se illegal is the same as *saying* there are no exceptions to the rule [ATTRIBUTE], when *clearly* there *are* exceptions in this case [COUNTER + PRONOUNCE]. (Mike, HG2, S138-142)

One externalized proposition in this excerpt is that *preserving distributors' freedom [is] essentially the same as preserving competition, which [is] always beneficial*. This line of reasoning, attributed to the court, is evaluated as wrong. The second externalized proposition is that *there are no exceptions to the rule* is attributed to an unnamed imaginary source, and this proposition is directly rebutted: *clearly there are exceptions in this case*. What is important in this excerpt is the way in which the text foregrounds an unstated assumption in the court's reasoning, reviewing what the court *decided*, what *the reasoning* is used for, and what that reasoning is *saying* in general terms. The externalization of propositions helps the author gain purchase for building an evaluative stance, which in this text is realized through both 'counter' and 'pronounce' moves.

In sum, contrastive rhetorical pairs are discursive means through which the high-performing writers more regularly carve out a contrastive stance while also invoking dialogic alternatives. These formulations allow writers to progress toward increasingly nuanced, accurate, or complex points in an organized way, while also engaging with the imagined reader by anticipating his or her objections or misunderstandings and responding to them.

In addition to pinpointing discrete instances of rhetorical pairs, it is also useful to investigate how these resources may combine in larger stretches of text to negotiate more complex meanings. Below I turn to a discussion of alternating expand and contract moves within larger stretches of text, and I focus this discussion on a paragraph from Ken's essay that Mark identified as demonstrating "deep insight" into the case and "taking a step back" to evaluate the situation. In combination with a steady use of Appraisal resources of Graduation and other Engagement resources of dialogic contraction, Ken's excerpt makes use of multiple contrastive pairs, which enable him to move back and forth skillfully between opening and closing of dialogic space.

4.6. Construing Insight and Independent Thinking

In our interview, I asked Mark to walk me through a section of Ken’s essay where he displays “deep insight,” and he identified paragraph 11 (in the analysis stage). He remarked that this was the first place in the essay where he realized Ken’s was a top-notch essay. The table below displays Ken’s paragraph on the left and Mark’s explanation on the right. (Engagement resources are boxed; high-force Graduation resources are **bolded**; other stance-related wordings are *italicized*; and key points in Mark’s explanation are underlined.)

Paragraph 11 in Ken’s essay	Mark’s explanation
<p>The result of this kind of market structure is a system in which insurance firms control significant market power, as a <i>monopsony</i> to medical practitioners and a <i>monopoly</i> to patients. The Supreme Court <u>rejected</u> the <u>argument</u> that the Federation’s actions were designed to protect patients from insufficient dental treatment <u>stating</u> that <u>the idea</u> of the provision of information leading to adverse outcomes was <u>directly against the spirit</u> of the Sherman Act. <u>However</u>, <u>their reasoning</u> that insurance companies act almost as simple representatives of patients is <u>not</u> upheld by the current situation. <i>The object of the health insurance company is to maximize profit, not to maximize the health of the patient.</i> <u>If</u> insurance were purchased directly by the patient, competition among providers <u>could</u> equate the objects of both provider and patient. <u>However</u>, a perfectly <i>competitive</i> market clearly is <u>not</u> available to many of the consumers who purchase insurance directly. In addition to the <i>oligopolistic</i> nature of the market, consumers <u>can be assumed</u> to be at a significant informational disadvantage since both medical science and the details of coverage plans are highly complex. Additionally, since insurance is often purchased by their employers, a second screen of motivations is added. The employers’ objective is again <u>not</u> the well-being of the patient <u>but</u> the maximization of profit through lower human resource costs. Because of the current structure of the health insurance industry, there exists only a</p>	<p>“Deep insight” [...] let’s see [...] the paragraph after the one I marked with the asterisk before. Where he’s describing the market structure of the health care system [...] saying the companies have market power. And he explains not just how this [...] <u>here, he actually just steps outside of economics a little bit</u> and I think that’s what makes this a really [...] well, maybe I should have said this before. <u>Really, really good economics papers, and I’m probably a minority here, can recognize the shortfalls of how economists or lawyers think about these things.</u> Where typically we don’t talk [...] in standard economic models today, especially the ones that are taught to undergrads, we don’t consider something “silly” like patient welfare to be a goal of the system, and clearly that should be a goal of the healthcare system, and <u>he kind of is able to take a step back and say, “That’s important.”</u>”</p>

tremendously inefficient link between the objectives of the insurance providers and patients. (HG3, P11, S21-31)	
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Mark's explanation of Ken's paragraph is interesting because it begins with a description of the points Ken is making and then suddenly, in mid-sentence, shifts into a commentary on Ken's stance toward the field of economics. In other words, he shifts from a commentary on the text's ideational meanings to a commentary on its interpersonal meanings:

MARK: He's describing the market structure of the health care system [...] saying the companies have market power. And he explains not just how this [...] here, he actually just steps outside of economics a little bit and I think that's what makes this a really [...] well, maybe I should have said this before. Really, really, good economics papers, and I'm probably a minority here, can recognize the shortfalls of how economists or lawyers think about these things.

Mark's reading of Ken as "stepping outside of economics" and, later, "tak[ing] a step back," which are descriptions about stance towards the discipline, must be at least partially reinforced by Ken's use of language that Soliday (2011) describes as a "blending together" of the language of the target discourse with the student's own language. Specifically, Ken's paragraph moves fluidly between technical expressions (*monopsony, monopoly, oligopolistic, competitive, and inefficient*) and less technical assertions like *The object of the health insurance company is to maximize profit, not to maximize the health of the patient*. The shifts he makes between registers in this paragraph, which coincides with a shift from reviewing others' claims to asserting his own—or from attribution to averral (Sinclair, 1988)—may suggest a kind of internalization of the discourse, one that would allow for ease of movement back and forth between registers. It may also correlate with another type of "control"—one that is constructed less through careful sequencing of Engagement resources and more through ease of movement between registers.

Two kinds of Appraisal resources are at play in this text that reinforce the sense that Ken has internalized the discourse. First, the high-force resources of Graduation (*significant, highly, clearly, many, again, tremendously*) ramp up the already highly

committed stance, and, second, many of the boxed Engagement resources (*However, not, but*) construe a contrastive stance, while others (*If, could, can be assumed*) construe a small degree of dialogic openness or willingness to negotiate meanings with the reader. The balance between high commitment and dialogic openness cooperates with the discursal “blending” to construe a strong sense of authoritativeness.

Further bolstering Ken’s authoritative stance is his use of three different types of contrastive pairs: He uses an ‘attribute’ + ‘counter’ move to take a stance against the Court’s reasoning (*The Supreme Court rejected the argument that ... However, their reasoning ... is not upheld by the current situation*), an ‘entertain’ + ‘counter’ move to negotiate subtleties with a potential counter-argument (*If insurance were purchased directly by the patient, competition among providers could equate However, a perfectly competitive market clearly is not ...*), and a ‘deny’ + ‘counter’ move to disclaim an alternative view and reiterate a previously made point (*The employers’ objective is again not the well-being of the patient but the maximization of profit through lower human resource costs*). These three pairs enable Ken to negotiate meanings with various dialogic alternatives while developing a highly committed and controlled evaluative stance.

The cumulative rhetorical effect of all of these resources is an argumentative stance marked by engagement with disciplinary concepts, a high degree of commitment to propositions, dialogic engagement with potential points of disagreement, and therefore reasoned judgment, or the capacity to, as Mark describes, “take a step back and say, ‘That’s important’.” In this way, the stancetaking suggests a writer who is confidently in conversation with the disciplinary discourse. This stance may have reinforced Mark’s reading of the text as conveying “insight” and “independent thinking” and, implicitly, as being “really really good.”

The kind of authoritative stance that Ken’s text projects can be usefully contrasted with the kind of authoritative stance attempted by the second-year student writer in his critique of Zakaria (discussed in Chapter 3). In this critique, the less advanced writer uses highly ramped up resources of Attitude, specifically resources of ‘judgment’. For example, he critiques Zakaria personally for his “inability to properly hold [the term democracy] true to its definition.” In contrast, Ken evaluates *the reasoning* of the

Supreme Court as “not upheld by the current situation.” He does not evaluate the Justices themselves, for example as “unable to reason adequately” or “deficient in their thinking.” But Ken does use high-force Graduation resources in combination with ‘appreciation’ of texts, processes, and states of affair (rather than judgments of persons), e.g., *highly complex* and *significant informational disadvantage*. Importantly, the configuration of Appraisal resources used in Ken’s text may be more transferable across academic discourse contexts than the configuration of resources used in the Zakaria critique in Chapter 3, and so connecting these various resources to the larger rhetorical aim of constructing an authoritative stance in academic writing can offer a powerful metalanguage for talking with students concretely about tracking “coherence-within-diversity” in academic discourse.

Mark’s appraisal of Ken’s “stepping outside” and “back from” economics can be linked to still other discursive strategies at play in the paragraph. In particular, Ken’s use of the conditional structure (*If ... could*) allows him to bring into play one possible scenario before countering with an explanation for why this possibility is untenable. Without this momentary expansion of dialogic space, the strongly worded denial move that precedes it (*not to maximize the health of the patient*) could come off as unjustifiably assertive. The conditional structure both allows Ken to elaborate on a point while engaging dialogically with an alternative view.

Conditional arguments such as these are used more frequently in the HG essays. As shown in Table 4.7 below, while most of the 92 essays use *if* (only 3 of the 46 LG essays do not) the mean number of occurrences per essay is higher in the HG corpus. Furthermore, the HG essays are also statistically more likely to use *if* in their essays ($t = 2.017, p = .047$).

	% of HG essays using	Mean in HG essays	Freq. per 2,000 words in 46 HG essays	% of LG essays using	Mean in LG essays	Freq. per 2,000 words in 46 LG essays
Total uses of <i>if</i>	100%	3.9	3.5	93%	2.7	2.7

Table 4.7. Frequencies of *if* in HG and LG Econ 432 corpora

As I demonstrate in the next section, conditional arguments contribute toward a stance marked by “independent thinking” (Mike’s term) and “critical reasoning” (Frank’s term). These formulations cooperate with skillful alternation between resources of dialogic contraction and expansion, and may influence Mark’s reading of essays that use these devices as engaging in independent thinking and understanding of the material.

4.7. Conveying Independent Thinking and Understanding Through Conditional Arguments

Hyland (2010) examines conditional arguments in his examination of the discourse of the linguist Deborah Cameron. Cameron’s repeated use of “if we/then we,” Hyland explains, works as a solidarity-building device, inviting negotiation on points while aligning the authorial voice with that of the imagined reader. Specifically, “the specification of an ‘open condition’ treats the possibility of the condition being fulfilled as dependent on the reader’s agreement” (Hyland, 2010, p. 173).

The “if we/then we” formulation per se is infrequent in the Econ 432 essays. It is only used three times by Tim, twice by Mike, and three more times by writers in the larger Econ 432 corpus. But the HG essays do use conditional arguments (without the pronoun *we*) quite regularly and, when used, they tend to precede ‘counter’ moves. This pattern is seen in the italicized wordings in 11a and 11b:

(11a) For example, *let’s say* a producer sells retailers an econ book for \$100 and forbids them from reselling it at any more than \$120. *If* the retailer’s selling cost per book is more than \$20, no reasonable retailer *would* agree to go into business and the market would disappear. *However*, this situation presents two additional problems. (Mike, HG2, S36-7)

(11b) Thus, it is reasonable to assume that health care providers *would* take advantage of the greater bargaining power to improve the quality of care. Such measures *could* even take the form of measures included in many state patient protection bills. *However, if* enacted privately through contracts between insurance firms and health care providers, the inefficiencies of state legislatures *would* be avoided so that the most effective strategies *would* predominate. (Ken, HG3, S80-82)

Excerpt 11a is from Mike’s analysis of price fixing in the newspaper industry, a stage in his essay developed almost entirely by exploring how different arrangements of

price floors and price ceilings are *likely* to affect market conditions. His analysis turns on a case-by-case discussion of four scenarios that bear on the case under examination. Many of the sentences in this section therefore contain ‘entertain’ resources: e.g., *For Case 1, let’s assume ...*, *If the retailer ...*, *the retailer might have ...*, *it’s possible that ...*, *In Case 4, we make things more complicated by assuming that ...*, and so on. In an email exchange following our interview, Mark explained to me that Mike’s ability to move into the hypothetical in this section displays “a real understanding of the big picture, what firms can do in different competitive situations, how that affects consumer welfare, and whether those effects justify government intervention.” Mark’s evaluation in this explanation is focused on Mike’s level of “understanding,” and his level of understanding appears to be conveyed at least partly through his use of conditional formulations.

Much of the rhetorical work accomplished by conditional arguments in Mike’s and other students’ essays is to foreground the authors’ processes of critical reasoning. This is particularly the case when the students are explaining their choice of remedies. It is also the case in the ‘analysis’ stage (Stage 3) when the task at hand is to offer a reasoned definition of the geographic markets that are most relevant for the case under analysis. As Mark’s marginal comments indicate, this was a regular source of difficulty for the weaker writers in class.

The following excerpts offer a comparison of Tim’s (12a) success in explaining the relevant geographic market in his case with Amy’s (12b) comparative lack of success. (Contract and expand resources are labeled.)

(12a) First ***I think*** it is necessary to re-examine the relative product and geographic market. ***I believe if we*** are to include frozen and fresh pies as perfect substitutes then it is appropriate to *claim* the geographic area as Salt Lake City [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN + ATTRIBUTE]. ***However*** [CONTRACT: DISCLAIM] ***if we claim*** that frozen pies are a unique product [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN] then it makes sense to ***recognize*** that due to enhancements in production and transportation techniques the relative geographic market is expanding [CONTRACT: proclaim]. That is, at the time of this case the relative geographic market ***probably*** is the Salt Lake City area [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN], ***but*** [CONTRACT: DISCLAIM] in ten years the market will ***probably*** be a regional or national market [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN]. Now it is ***evident*** that the frozen pie market is a national one [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN], with the most part firms competing on a national, ***not*** local stage [CONTRACT: proclaim + disclaim]. (Tim, HG5, S79-83)

(12b) *I would define* the “relevant” product market in this case as only the state of Wisconsin [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN]. In this market, Pabst’s share of sales was almost 25% after the merger. So *I can see* that this *could* be anticompetitive as it did also create the largest brewer in that geographic market [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN]. (Amy, LG1, S79-81)

Tim’s text in 12a engages in a lengthy conditional argument for why the relevant geographic market is the national and not local frozen pie market. The stancetaking is highly interpersonally invested, which is shown in the opening self-mentions (*I think, I believe*) and repeated use of inclusive-*we* (*if we are, if we claim*). It is not entirely clear what purpose is served by Tim’s use of self mentions, whether to expand or contract dialogic space, and their repetition at the beginning does seem to be somewhat awkward. Nevertheless, the contract-expand alternation that is brought into effect through repeated conditional-counter pairs seems valuable for foregrounding Tim’s reasoning about the appropriate geographic mark. Mark wrote “good” in the margin next to the paragraph, which suggests that the paragraph accomplished a valuable task and that Mark did not respond unfavorably to Tim’s self mentions.

In contrast, in 12b Amy has simply asserted how she would define the relevant market without explaining the basis for her definition. Mark’s marginal comment to this move was, “Why is WI a relevant geographic market? This is a complicated question, and you shouldn’t just assert your answer.” Given that both writers use self-mentions, an interesting point for further examination is how they might be used differently by the more and less successful writers in class. This question is pursued in Chapter 5.

4.8. Conveying Independent Thinking Through Alternating Expand-Contract Moves

In many of the examples from HG essays that I have examined so far, there has been movement on a paragraph level from expansive to contractive wordings. This movement works to entertain alternative perspectives and voices before offering counters to pull the reader over to the author’s view. Alternation between dialogic expansion and contraction is graphically illustrated in Table 4.8 below, which shows an elaborated version of Luis’s conditional argument. The text should be read downward and from left to right.

<i>Expanding dialogic space</i>	<i>Contracting dialogic space</i>
<p>There still exists one important <i>question</i>: <i>why</i> is divestiture better than a regulated merger? <i>What would happen if</i> the Court allowed the merger to stand in all cases, but to mandate that a governmental oversight committee monitor the prices of the food in the one-quarter of Von’s and Shopping Bag stores that are in competing within the same relevant geographic markets?</p> <p><i>if</i> Von’s were allowed to keep all of its Shopping Bag stores, the benefits of merger <i>could</i> be even greater because the stores <i>may</i> have even lower costs and higher bargaining power.</p> <p>The <i>question</i>, then, is this: <i>which would</i> be more significant, the additional savings passed along to customers by retaining the full merger, or the costs incurred by the government to ensure post-merger competitive behavior?</p>	<p>This option is <i>not without its merits</i>;</p> <p><i>On the other hand, however</i>, regulation is <i>not</i> free; constant oversight of grocery store prices consumes many resources of the government.</p> <p><i>While</i> there is no precise formula to figure out this question, common sense may go a long way in shedding light on the answer.</p>

Table 4.8. Expansion and contraction in Luis’s conditional argument

Luis’s paragraph works to bring into play a subtle juxtaposition of perspectives, and this juxtaposition may be characteristic of academic writing valued for engaged and critical reasoning. In her study of the ways experts in anthropology evaluated student writing in a general education course, Soliday (2004) finds that readers tend to reward a “reflective stance,” which involves a “student’s ability to appreciate diverse positions and then to commit to a judgment within [that] context” (p. 74). Such appreciation, or at least awareness, of diverse positions is subtly infused throughout Tim’s and other HG paragraphs, as the authors open up dialogic space by entertaining possibilities, raising

questions, or acknowledging others' views, and their commitment to positions is construed as they tighten up the dialogic space through the use of 'counters'. In addition, the back-and-forth process of expanding and contracting room for alternative views seems to contribute towards the textual complexity that their essays achieve, and also, perhaps more importantly, the construal of critical reasoning or independent thinking valued by Frank and Mark.

Simply alternating between expansion and contraction is not the whole story, though. Many of the LG essays deploy similar discursive strategies, but they tend to do so in a less controlled manner, which is suggested in the findings above by their comparatively infrequent use of contrastive pairs. For example, Melisa's essay—an excerpt of which I briefly analyze below—suggests a high level of dialogic awareness, or awareness of the need to expand and contract room for alternative perspectives in the course of her argumentation. However, she seems to have difficulty controlling the arrangement of Engagement resources. In her case, the problem seems to be less about dialogic engagement than dialogic control, or sequencing of Engagement resources.

According to demographic data gathered in the Teagle study, Melisa's first language is not English and she felt more comfortable writing in Spanish, her first language. Following up with this student, I learned that Melisa grew up in Puerto Rico, where she completed her schooling prior to college in Spanish and spoke Spanish at home. Interestingly, Mark was unaware that Melisa was an English second language writer. He explained that he found her arguments "hard to follow," which he attributed to her "poor understanding of the material." In our interview, he conceded that her writing problems "could be a result of second language issues" but that she "definitely seems confused about the material and the points she wants to make."

Table 4.9 displays a representative paragraph from Melisa's essay (LG3) in which the authorial voice is struggling to control the expansion and contraction of dialogic space.

<i>Expanding dialogic space</i>	<i>Contracting dialogic space</i>
<p>(52) <i>Assuming</i> that Arizona's <i>claim</i> was true and that the price caps were merely a tool for tacit collusion, the effect of the removal of the caps <i>would</i> increase social benefit.</p> <p>it is safe to <i>assume</i> that the demand for healthcare is virtually inelastic.</p> <p><i>when we consider</i></p>	<p>(53) This is so especially considering the <i>fact</i> that</p> <p>(54) Producer surplus <i>however</i>, would decrease, <i>but not</i> as much as consumer surplus would increase. (55) This becomes especially evident</p> <p>the <i>fact</i> that there was price discrimination among those patients who did <i>not</i> have insurance plans that were approved by the foundation due to the <i>fact</i> that the medical professionals were free to choose what fees they would charge. (56) Therefore the gain to these consumers would be <i>even</i> greater.</p>

Table 4.9. Expansion and contraction in Melisa's recommendation argument

There are at least two features of Melisa's text that present problems for an Engagement analysis. First, Melisa tends to overuse the formulation *the fact that*, which she uses three times in these four sentences. Ordinarily, this formulation could be treated as triggering a 'proclaim:pronounce' move because it conveys a high degree of authorial commitment. Melisa, however, will sometimes use the phrase when she is entertaining meanings. For example, *the fact that* in sentence 53 is sandwiched between two 'entertain' resources, which are being used in the context of exploring a conditional or hypothetical possibility. Her overuse of this phrase, then, seems to be disrupting the argumentative rhythm that she could establish by more clearly signaling whether is she opening or closing the dialogic space. Second, some of the awkwardness in this paragraph results from the over-complexity of clausal embedding. Sentence 53 embeds three clauses (*especially considering ...; the fact that ...; it is safe to assume that ...*), while 55 embeds six (*when we consider ...; the fact that ...; who did not ...; that were*

approved ...; due to the fact that ...; what fees ...).

Helping Melisa to notice her over-use of particular phrases and her syntactic over-complexity would be useful first steps for her to work toward alleviating some of the awkwardness in this paragraph. However, to echo Beaugrande (1979), the problem then becomes how she can learn to make decisions about managing the textual flow in a more controlled manner. Using the lens of dialogic control, it appears that several of the clauses are confusing because the dialogic stance toward specific propositions is incoherent. For example, the proposition that is entertained in sentence 52 is taken up as a bare assertion in the next sentence (*This is so ...*). This bare assertion is then elaborated on through both ‘proclaim’ and ‘entertain’ resources: *This is so especially considering the fact that it is safe to assume that the demand for healthcare is virtually inelastic.* Sentences 52 and 53 might operate together more coherently if both propositions used ‘entertain’ resources, as in this suggested revision:

(52) Assuming that Arizona’s claim was true and that the price caps were merely a tool for tacit collusion, the effect of the removal of the caps would increase social benefit. (53) This possibility seems particularly likely [*entertain*] given that the demand for healthcare is virtually inelastic. (54) Producer surplus however ...

In this revised version, the dialogical space is opened up more consistently by reframing sentence 53 as a possibility rather than bare assertion or pronouncement, and this reframing is more coherent with the dialogically expansive maneuver in sentence 52.

It is certainly true that my revision partly solves the control problem by simplifying the overly complex formulation “the fact that it is safe to assume that,” which I reduced to “given that.” It is also true that changing the simple “this” in *This is so* to a “this + noun” formulation (*This possibility*) improves the textual cohesion. But my choice of noun (*possibility*) and verb (*seems*) is based on the goal of keeping the dialogic space open so that the stance is in a more controlled position for finally contracting the dialogical space in sentence 54.

The somewhat confusing nature of Melisa’s writing suggests an incoherent dialogic stance. Just as opposing Attitudinal values in a text could be read as incoherent (e.g., *a significant and trivial contribution*), so too can opposing Engagement values, for example *Assuming that ...* and *this is so ...*. It is possible that this kind of incongruity at

least partly influenced Mark's reading of Melisa's arguments as "hard to follow" due to "poor understanding of the material." Melisa did seem to put forth a great deal of effort in her essay. It is one of the longest in class and contained as many citations as Luis's (six) and more than Mike's or Tim's (which only have two). It is possible, then, that Melisa's weaker control over the resources of dialogic stance resulted in a poor presentation of her analysis and recommendation, which was then interpreted as not understanding the material.

I consider pedagogical implications in Chapter 7, but it is worth pausing for a moment to consider how this notion of dialogic control could be useful to writers like Melisa as part of an instructional approach that teaches toward awareness of coherence-within-diversity. If "good" academic writing is conceptualized as that which is in conversation with a readership of peers who are "reading for information, and intending to formulate a reasoned response" (Thaiss & Zawacki, p. 7), the stance Melisa could be taught to strive for in her essay would be marked by dialogical engagement and control, which is accomplished through mindful attempts to interact with the reader when putting forth arguments—sometimes opening up room for negotiation on points and sometimes closing it down. Resources in the language available for making these moves consist of 'entertaining' views, 'attributing' views to others, 'concurring', 'denying', 'countering', and so on. Such rhetorical consciousness-raising could help Melisa to read genre samples as models in detailed ways and to begin asking new questions about these samples as well as about her own writing. Such questions might include: *How highly committed should I be toward this particular assertion? Should I characterize the status of this evidence as just suggesting or strongly supporting a certain conclusion? Where and how in my essay should I show awareness of alternative points of view? Should I use a 'disclaim' move here to reiterate this point, or would that move be too aggressive? Is it appropriate to 'endorse' this scholar's view as a way to boost my argument, or would that come off as too 'biased'?*

These and related questions may be considered by some as "dream questions," ones that undergraduate writers are not likely to ever ask themselves when writing student genres like essays. It may be true that rhetorical monitoring questions such as these carry more psychological reality for writers when the rhetorical stakes are clearly high—for

example, when they are writing a conference paper to be delivered in front of an actual audience of discerning colleagues, a statement of purpose for graduate school, or a job application letter. However, these and related questions are still very much within students' grasp if they are working within a writing program that helps them to conceptualize their argumentative writing in explicitly dialogic terms, while also providing them with tools for examining and talking about disciplinary texts within an eye to tracking points of coherence-within-diversity.

4.9. Summary and Concluding Remarks

As described in this chapter, the major writing assignment in Econ 432 is embedded within a particular disciplinary context, even if it does not map directly onto an established professional genre, and therefore it calls for particular ways of arguing that are recognizable to the discourse context. Successfully completing the Econ 432 assignment requires undertaking a very specific type of reasoning and arguing and adopting a particular type of stance.

As revealed through the Engagement analysis, this particular type of stance is marked by authoritativeness, a stance quality that is more consistently accomplished in the high-performing students' essays. These essays more consistently project into their texts authorial personae that are highly committed, contrastive, and dialogically engaged with, and thus knowledgeable of, other views and voices. Specifically, these authors more frequently make evaluations and recommendations through the use of such wordings as *certainly*, *it is clear*, *obviously*, *research shows*, *the analysis demonstrates*, and other resources that construe high authorial commitment. In addition, these authors more frequently use coordinated discursive moves, which I refer to as contrastive rhetorical pairs, to achieve a type of controlled stance that reinforces that authoritativeness of the authorial presence at work in the texts.

Greatest disparity between two groups of essays is in the use of countering moves, which are realized through contrastive connectors like *However*, *nevertheless*, and *yet* and used nearly twice as frequently in the HG corpus. These specific stance qualities have been identified in the literature as implicitly valued in academic discourse because they are associated with authoritative voices, i.e., voices recognized as having the right to

contribute to a scholarly conversation (Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011; Hood, 2004; Ivanic, 1998; Macken-Horarik & Morgan, 2011; North, 2005; Schleppegrell, 2004a, 2004b; Tang, 2009).

Several important connections can be made between the interview data and linguistic analyses. First, the more frequent use of ‘disclaim’ moves in the HG essays, particularly through ‘counters’, relates directly to Mark’s emphasis on counter-argumentation as an important characteristic of “good writing” in the course. The linguistic analysis can perhaps add to our understanding of counter-argumentation by showing exactly how, and in relation to what, ‘counter’ moves are taking place. As seen in the use of contrastive rhetorical pairs, writers are not only countering against the court’s reasoning but also against hypothetical or “apparently true” propositions as well as anticipated reader responses and objections. These counters work to add complexity to the argumentation and to engage with the imagined reader.

Second, the high frequency use of ‘entertain’ + ‘counter’ pairs in the HG essays contributes toward a stance that recognizes the “richness” and “complexity of the situation” under analysis, a point emphasized by Frank in his discussion of his own work. Related to this, the more general use of ‘expand’ + ‘contract’ alternations in the HG essays may relate to Frank’s point about paying “due attention to alternative and concurrent explanations of the phenomena under investigation.” Expanding and contracting work to allow into the text alternative perspectives and voices before committing to a position. In this way, they relate to Frank’s emphasis on “critical reasoning” and Mark’s emphasis on “independent thinking.”

In addition to these patterns of difference, another set of differences emerged between the HG and LG essays that does not seem to connect up with any of Frank’s or Mark’s articulated pedagogical goals or assessment criteria. These relate to the construction of authority in terms of reader positioning within the disciplinary discourse and thus are more centrally concerned with the reader side of stance. Since an authoritative stance in this context is dialogically engaged, projecting awareness of others’ views and perspectives in the discourse through frequent and varied use of Engagement resources, it is also one that interacts with the reader in particular ways, positioning him or her in certain ways. I turn to this more reader-oriented side of stance

in the next chapter and show that it is these reader-oriented meanings that that seem to lie below the consciousness of both instructors.

CHAPTER 5

“Students” and “Novice Academics” in Economics 432

Introduction

Chapter 4 uses the Engagement framework from SFL-based Appraisal theory to analyze stancetaking strategies used by consistently high-and low-performing student writers in Econ 432. Differential patterns in selection and sequencing of Engagement resources point to more sophisticated argumentative skill on the part of the high-performing writers as well as the possibility that Mark may have responded more favorably to essays marked by an authoritative stance, one characterized by contrast and controlled engagement with dialogic alternatives. In this chapter, I further complicate this notion of authority as a linguistic construct by examining how differential discursive patterns in the HG and LG essays work to position the imagined reader in different ways and, through that positioning, construct “conversations” that are more and less valued in academic discourse contexts. The emphasis in this chapter, then, shifts from the more writer-centered qualities of stance—those concerned with the construction of a particular kind of authorial presence or voice (for example, as contrastive or committed)—to the more reader-centered qualities, those concerned with the ways the reader and writer are brought together in a dialogic relationship.

These two sides of stance are closely intertwined, of course. The authorial presence constructed in a text is always built up in relation to other (prior or future) voices: those of putative readers, fellow members of a discourse community, adherents to particular viewpoints, and so on. Seen in this way, seemingly minor choices in wording such as *It has been argued that*, *research suggests*, and *from my personal point of view* operate in subtle but important ways to project an interpersonal presence in the text that “acts first and foremost to acknowledge, to engage with or to align itself with respect to positions which are in some way alternatives to that being advanced by the text” (White, 2003, p.

260). Since stancetaking is a process of interpersonal negotiation, the ways writers put forth their claims and evaluate propositions in a given rhetorical/disciplinary context will necessarily influence the ways the reader is positioned in the discourse. It is this type of reader positioning that is taken up in this chapter.

In addition to moving from the writer to the reader side of stance, this chapter also moves from a discussion of stance patterns that correlate with Frank's and Mark's stated goals and assessment criteria to those patterns that are more hidden—that do not easily map onto any of their interview responses. This second shift is related to the first. In their interviews, Frank and Mark emphasized the importance of *writer*-focused behaviors like critical reasoning, complexity and nuance, and independent thinking—i.e., skilled writers are independent thinkers, engage in critical reasoning, and construct complex and nuanced arguments—but they did not address expected readership when they articulated their goals and assessment criteria. It is not clear therefore whether they expected students to view them (Frank and Mark) as the sole audience or whether they expected students to construct a broader community of readers, for example a community of experts in law, economics, or public policy. To borrow Ivanič's (1998) contrast between the “contributor” role and the “student” role in academic writing, it is not clear whether they expected their students to take on a student role and write from the position of undergraduate students in conversation with their instructors or take on a contributor role and write from the position of beginning scholars who are working within a disciplinary conversation.

In his interview, Frank did explicitly disavow the goal of teaching students to write in a specific genre used by economists. The purpose of the essay assignment, in his explanation, is for students to develop their critical reasoning and argumentation skills, and not necessarily for them to learn to think and write like economists. Based on this characterization, the relevant audience for Frank comprises the instructors only, i.e., the Econ 432 essay is a very specific student genre and not a recognizable disciplinary genre that calls for typified ways of arguing. Mark emphasized the reader-centered notion of counter-argumentation as an important assessment criterion, but there is nothing in his explanation of this rhetorical strategy to suggest that the arguments to be countered should be attributable to any particular readership, for example economists, lawyers,

policy makers, or him only. For Mark, counter-argumentation involves “throwing a sentence in there,” seemingly to mark the student writer as careful and not too hasty in his or her conclusions.

While Mark and Frank do not specify the intended audience for their students’ essays, the analysis below shows that there is a differential pattern between the HG and LG essays in terms of the construction and positioning of their readers. These differences are revealed when the very specific ways that the two groups of writers use ‘entertain’ moves are examined. While both the high- and low-performing writers use ‘entertain’ moves frequently, the specific resources they draw on to realize these moves are different, and these differences have important consequences on the positioning of readers.

Specifically, the LG essays use more of what I refer to as ‘personalize’ moves to decrease authorial commitment and thus open up space for alternative views (e.g., *Personally, in my opinion, in my view*), while the HG essays exploit more of what Tang (2009) refers to as ‘evidentialize’ moves (a term I adopt; e.g., *the research suggests, it appears/seems that, etc.) to accomplish a similar dialogic function. This difference runs alongside other, closely related differences in stance and reader positioning strategies that cooperate to create the rhetorical effect of different types of stances. As indicated in the title of this chapter, I characterize these as the “novice academic” stance and the “student” stance. I suggest that these different stances are related to authoritativeness not only because they are realized through more and less authoritative voices (those recognized as committed, objective, contrastive, and scholarly) but also because they construct different types of dialogic interactions with the reader, ones more or less valued in academic discourse.*

My larger goal in this chapter, in keeping with Chapter 4, is to render explicit those patterns in interpersonal meanings that correspond to highly successful and less successful writing in the course. I follow this analysis with a discussion of Mark’s responses to the HG and LG essays. Here I provide some evidence that Mark responded favorably to discursive moves that operate to construct the “novice academic” stance—moves such as ‘evidentializing’ after having just assertively presented evidence—and disfavorably to those moves that operate to construct the “student” stance—which include

personalizing, referencing the classroom discourse (e.g., *According to lecture last week*), and, perhaps surprisingly, “talking down” to the reader by positioning him or her as an uninformed learner.

5.1. Options for Entertaining Other Views

In academic discourse, writers can engage and interact with readers in direct ways, for example by naming them (e.g., *the reader will notice*), directing them (e.g., *refer to table 5*), posing questions for their consideration (e.g., *Is it possible, then, that ...?*), and a variety of other means.³⁴ They can also engage readers in less direct ways by using language that opens up dialogic space for alternative interpretations. For example, in the assertion, “The reasoning in the case is *viewed by many as* unsound,” the main proposition is attributed to an external source, which releases the author from responsibility for the view and “allows” the reader to challenge it. This less direct type of dialogic engagement is modeled in the SFL *Engagement* framework through the options of ‘attribute’ and ‘entertain’ (refer to Figure 5.1 below). While the ‘attribute’ option works to construct a momentarily neutral or distanced stance, the ‘entertain’ option works by weakening authorial commitment to the proposition and thus recognizing the possibility of other views and voices.

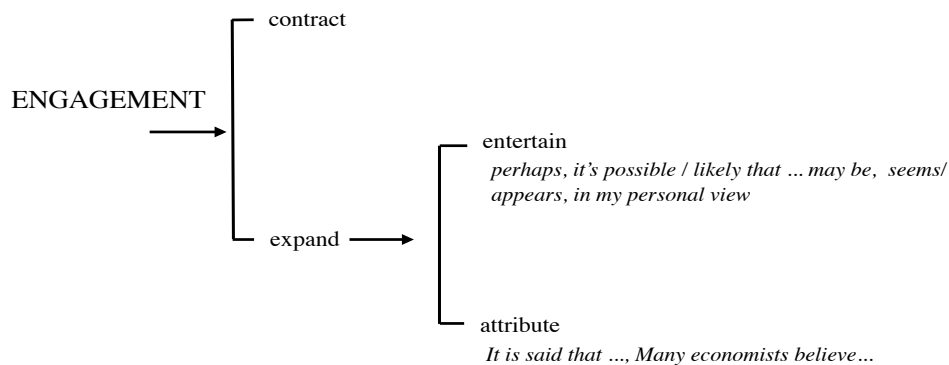


Figure 5.1. Resources of dialogic expansion (from Martin & White, 2005)

³⁴ Hyland (2005b) distinguishes between reader engagement devices that, on the one hand, function mostly to create a sense of solidarity with the reader, which include pronouns (e.g., collective-*we* and *you*), personal asides (via parenthetical insertions), and references to shared knowledge (e.g., *It is well understood that ...*), and, on the other hand, those devices that function more explicitly to persuade readers and “maneuver [them] into accepting the writer’s viewpoint” (368); these include rhetorical questions and directives (e.g., *consider ... take note that ...*).

Analysis in Chapter 4 reveals that both options of dialogic expansion are used with almost equivalent frequencies in the HG and LG papers.³⁵ However, my analysis thus far has not distinguished between various sub-options of ‘entertain’ and their rhetorical uses in the Econ 432 essays. When investigating the subtle ways that writers reduce their commitment to a proposition, it is important to take the analysis down to fine-grained levels of discourse so that the epistemological source or basis of the reduced authorial commitment can be identified. Detailed analysis can reveal, for example, whether writers are *externalizing* the source of their weakened commitment—for example, through sustained consideration of evidence—or *internalizing* that source by foregrounding their personal views and opinions. This very distinction, as I discuss shortly, characterizes stancetaking differences between the HG and LG Econ 432 papers.

As discussed in Chapter 3, entertaining alternative views in academic discourse is often accomplished through low-probability modal expressions (e.g., *possibly, perhaps, may, could, might*) and evidence/appearance-based postulations (e.g., *research suggests, it seems/appears that*). But the move can also be brought into effect through a more explicitly subjective basis. In particular, foregrounding of personal opinion can work to expand dialogic space by suggesting that the view being forwarded is only one view among many, and, as Myers (2001) notes, it can be used to “signal the legitimate arguability of a claim or interpretation” (p. 68). In his article, Myers contrasts these “legitimate” argumentative uses of the phrase “in my opinion” with other less persuasive or “odd” uses, which include “hedg[ing] claims so broad that no one could disagree with them” (p. 68). In determining the ways that “in my opinion” is effective or “odd” for a particular piece of writing, Myers stresses the need to examine the constraints imposed by the specific argumentative genre.

In light of this point, this chapter investigates whether, and in what instances, explicit expression of personal opinion is valued in evidence-based academic argumentation. For the Econ 432 essay, student writers are expected, as Frank explained (in Chapter 4), to use economic tools to “evaluate and assess” complex situations and

³⁵ The ‘attribute’ option is used 7.9 times per 2,000 words in the HG corpus and 9.3 times in the LG papers, while the ‘entertain’ option is used 17.8 times per 2,000 words in the HG papers and 16.0 times in the LG papers.

then, in his words, “adduce supporting evidence at the relevant moment in the argument.” If evaluations are to be bolstered by supporting evidence, in what ways if any are personal judgments valued when making evaluations and recommendations, particularly in student argumentative genres?

The following ‘entertain’ moves show two very different ways to expand the dialogic space. While 1a uses a ‘personalize’ move to achieve this function, 1b uses an ‘evidentialize’ move.

(1a) The remedies that Justice Lewis Powell prescribed did not gain the desired effect, and *I feel* that they were not very effective in promoting competition. (Elan, LG5, S86)

(1b) Taken in whole, *the economic evidence* for grocery retailers in the decades after the Von’s decision *suggests* that increased concentration is pro-competitive and good for consumers, running contrary to the fears proposed by the Court. (Luis, Luis, HG1, S41)

According to the Engagement framework, both texts are instances of ‘entertain’ because they both operate to lower authorial commitment to the proposition being forwarded. (In 1b, the evidence only *suggests that increased concentration is pro-competitive*; it doesn’t *demonstrate, show, or prove* that conclusion.) However, while 1a grounds the assertion within the subjectivity of the authorial voice, 1b grounds the assertion within the discourse of empirical-based argumentation. The first example conveys willingness to reconsider the position being forwarded in light of other (perhaps more authoritative) opinions, while the second conveys to the reader that “it is only the evidence currently at hand, or the surface appearance of things which has led [me] to take up the position [I] have” (Tang, 2009, p. 173). For this reason, 1b corresponds more closely to Frank’s goal of teaching students to “adduce supporting evidence at the relevant moment in the argument.” It also corresponds more closely to the implicit purpose of adopting an authoritative stance in the course writing—as well as perhaps in academic writing more generally—by signaling the use of evidence-based reasoning.

In addition to these two sub-options of ‘entertain’, three additional sub-options are revealed in my analysis. These include what I refer to as ‘postulate’, ‘delimit’, and ‘question’ (refer to figure 5.2 below).

The ‘postulate’ option is akin to ‘personalize’ in that it reduces authorial commitment by drawing attention to the subjective basis of the view. The difference is that it makes this move implicitly (rather than explicitly, as in ‘personalize’) through low-probability modal expressions (*it may/could be that ...*). ‘Postulate’ is different from ‘evidentialize’ in that the epistemological basis for the reduced commitment is internalized rather than externalized. In the case of ‘evidentialize’, the external source of the reduced commitment is made explicit, either within the same clause or surrounding co-text. For example, *empirical evidence suggests*, or something may *appear* to be the case in light of an economic model. In the case of ‘postulate’, such an external basis is not made known. The writer is more conjecturing.

The ‘delimit’ option is akin to ‘evidentialize’ in that it construes an externally-derived weakening of commitment, but it makes this move by foregrounding restrictions or conditions on the generalizability of the proposition being forwarded. Through use of such wordings as *if, when, at least, currently, in most respects*, the author signals willingness to entertain other views in absence of these externalized restrictions. The ‘delimit’ option frequently co-occurs with the ‘evidentialize’ option. For instance, the ‘delimit’ move, *Based purely on the models*, co-occurs with the appearance-based evidential, *it appears that*, in one of the HG texts.

Finally, the ‘question’ option is perhaps most obviously dialogic when it is used, as White (2003) explains, to “introduce a proposition in such a way that it is presented as but one of a number of possible positions” (p. 267). Such questions are often referred to as “rhetorical” or “expository” questions. Note that other types of questions can work in more contractive ways, especially when “they operate to represent the proposition as so self-evident or agreed upon that it doesn’t actually need to be stated by the textual voice” (White, 2003, p. 267). An example of such a pronouncement in Econ 432 is: *Should Herald really be punished for talking the less severe option?* (HG2, S128). Figure 5.2 below illustrates these various options.

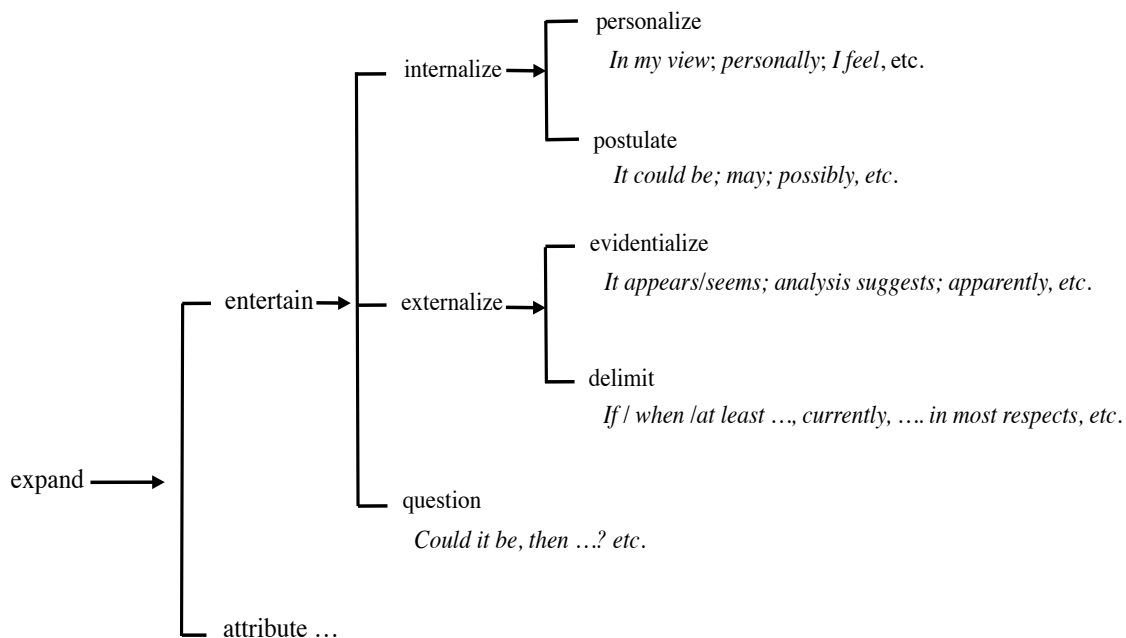


Figure 5.2. Proposed sub-options of ‘entertain’

Examples of these subtypes are provided in Table 5.1, along with their relative frequencies in the HG and LG essays. As shown in this table, the HG essays make greater use of ‘externalize’ options: ‘delimit’ and ‘evidentialize’. The LG essays make greater use of ‘internalize’ options: ‘personalize’ and ‘postulate’. The HG essays also make greater use of the ‘question’ option. The two most striking quantitative differences are in use of the ‘personalize’ option, which is preferred by the weaker writers, and the ‘evidentialize’ option, which is preferred by the stronger writers.

‘entertain’ subcategory + example	Items per 2,000 words in HG corpus	Items per 2,000 words in LG corpus
‘internalize:personalize’ <i>In my opinion</i> , the gains in social surplus from this added national competition would be greater than the small losses in social surplus that are created by the loss of competition in the smaller geographic markets. (LG1, S91)	0.5	4.6
‘internalize:postulate’ Regulation of prices <i>may</i> be left best to companies with	6.8	8.0

more stable cost structures (HG1, S84).		
‘externalize:evidentialize’ Of the defendants involved in Utah Pie Company’s case only one <i>seems</i> to have emerged as exceptionally successful. Continental, now known as Morton Frozen Foods Division, had a 13, 11, and 13th percentage share of the market in 1974, 1975 and 1976 respectively (see table 1). (HG5, S43-4)	5.5	0.9
‘externalize:delimit’ Such a program, <i>with appropriate limits</i> , would provide a balanced structure that would ensure quality patient care. (HG3, S94)	3.0	1.8
‘question’ What would happen if the Court allowed the merger to stand in all cases, but to mandate that a governmental oversight committee monitor the prices of the food in the one-quarter of Von’s and Shopping Bag stores that are in competing within the same relevant geographic markets? (HG1, S73)	2.0	0.7
Total use of ‘expand: entertain’	17.8	16.0

Table 5.1. ‘Entertain’ subcategories in HG and LG Econ 432 corpora

The differential preference for ‘personalize’ and ‘evidentialize’ is also supported by lexicogrammatical data from the larger corpus of 92 essays.³⁶ While 72% of the 46 LG essays use ‘personalize’ signals, just 48% of the 46 HG essays use this device. In addition, while all of the HG essays use ‘evidentialize’ signals, just 61% of the LG essays do so. The HG essays are statistically more likely to incorporate ‘evidentialize’ moves into their writing ($t=6.172$, $p=0.000$), and the LG essays are statistically more likely to incorporate ‘personalize’ moves into theirs ($t=-2.512$, $p=0.014$).

³⁶ The ‘personalize’ signals that I searched for include: *I * believe/feel/think; (in) my * opinion/view; personally; and to me*. The ‘evidentialize’ signals include: *indicat*; suggest*; seem*; appear*; evident(ly); and apparent(ly)*. As with the contrastive connectors analyzed in Chapter 4, these items derive from my scanning of word lists and 2-to-3 word phrases generated from AntConc. I consulted the context for each instance in order to verify the function of these signals as working to realize ‘personalize’ and ‘evidentialize’ moves.

entertain sub-category	% of HG essays using	Mean number of items per HG essay	Items per 2,000 words in HG	% of LG essays using	Mean number of items per LG essay	Items per 2,000 words in HG
'personalize', e.g., <i>in my opinion</i>	48%	0.76	0.8	72%	2.59	3.6
'evidentialize', e.g., <i>the research suggests</i>	100%	4.91	4.7	61%	1.48	1.5

Table 5.2. 'Entertain' triggers in large Econ 432 corpus

As shown in Table 5.3, while just two of the HG essays use the 'personalize' option (and minimally at that), it is preferred over other 'entertain' options (next to 'postulate') in four of the five LG essays.

	'Postulate'	'Evidential-ize'	'Delimit'	'Question'	'Personalize'
HG1: Luis	7.4	3.3	4.1	3.3	0
HG2: Mike	10.3	5.5	2.4	4.7	0
HG3: Ken	4.5	3.6	4.5	0	0
HG4: Keith	4.2	4.2	2.5	1.7	1.7
HG5: Tim	7.6	11.0	1.7	0	0.8
HG Avg.	6.8	5.5	3.0	2.0	0.5
LG1: Amy	2.4	2.4	0.8	0	4.8
LG2: Nancy	16.3	0	2.2	1.1	3.3
LG3: Melisa	6.4	2.1	2.3	1.3	2.1
LG4: Dan	5.6	0	2.4	0.8	10.5
LG5: Elan	9.3	0	1.4	0	2.1
LG Avg.	8.0	0.9	1.8	0.7	4.6

Table 5.3. 'Entertain' subcategories in individual Econ essays

To better understand these quantitative differences, I now examine how ‘evidentialize’ and ‘personalize’ resources are used in students’ texts. In particular I show that they are used to position the reader in different ways, for example as the instructor/grader or disciplinary colleague. During this examination, I expand the analytic lens to include related patterns in reader positioning that conspire in the construction of the “student” and the “novice academic” stance. I develop the argument that the high-performing Econ 432 writers establish authority in their texts not only by constructing assertive, committed, and dialogically aware and controlled voices, as shown in the Chapter 4, but also by arguing with facility through a particular disciplinary framework—in Econ 432, this is a “structure, conduct, performance” analysis of select economic markets. The low-performing writers, in contrast, sometimes position the reader as novices as they attempt to recover some of the authoritativeness that their texts lose by not controlling the disciplinary style of stancetaking.

5.2. Personalizing, Pronouncing, and Reader Positioning

As explained above, ‘personalize’ resources work to ground propositions within the subjectivity of the authorial voice so that alternative views are invited into play. Below are further examples from Econ 432 essays. Note that 2d is from the essay of a high-performing writer, Keith. The high-performers do use this option of ‘entertain’, too, just far less frequently.

- (2a) More specifically, can restricting mergers to particular regions of the United States or forcing the merged company to sell off some of its stores make the world a better place? *In my opinion*, this is possible. By considering and implementing these possible remedies, the courts may be able to establish a more fair and improved method of allowing mergers that do not pose risks to competition. (Amy, LG1, S61-63)
- (2b) *I am of the opinion* that the judicial powers overseeing this case did not have the economic knowledge required to make the right decision, so I will now compare how they made the decision with how it should have been made. (Dan, LG4, S33)
- (2c) The vertical integration that occurred is believed to be good for consumers, but *in my view* once Monsanto was rid of intermediaries and could sell their product (which was now getting to be more necessary as preferences and the market

changes) directly to consumers, their monopoly power grew and they could set higher prices, which would lower social surplus (Paldor). (Elan, LG5, S77)

(2d) In conclusion, *I believe* the two remedies I have proposed would have been more effective than the ones implemented by the Supreme Court. (Keith, HG4, S90)

I have highlighted the use of ‘personalize’ resources in each of these examples, though certainly other infelicities can be identified. In 2b, for instance, Dan speculates directly about the level of *economic knowledge* on the part of *the judicial powers overseeing the case* instead of pointing to data that the Justices may have overlooked (which may then indicate lack of economic knowledge). Rhetorical strengths can also be identified. In 2c, for instance, Elan incorporates outside research to support an assertion about a likely economic effect, and in 2a Amy uses three difference resources of ‘entertain’ (‘question’, ‘personalize’, and ‘postulate’) to construct an engaging, dialogically open stance. My main point, however, is that in each of these instances the subjective origins of the stancetaking are foregrounded, and, in light of Myers’s (2001) point about genre constraints, something odd seems to be happening with these personal references that derives from their incongruity with the argumentative expectations of the Econ 432 essay.

To be clear, by personalizing, or grounding analyses and evaluations within the author’s subjective experience, the authors are indeed expanding dialogic space and thus negotiating propositions with readers. They are signaling willingness to enter into a conversation with readers who hold alternative views. This is an important point to make in light of Wu’s (2007) and Derewianka’s (2009) findings that awareness of the negotiability of claims is a mark of advanced and proficient undergraduate student writing. However, the interpersonal negotiation illustrated in the extracts above seems to be happening with the wrong people. Instead of conversing with fellow economists who expect to engage with empirical evidence and model-based arguments, the low-performing writers are conversing with readers whose *opinions* are more authoritative than their own. These expert readers—namely, Frank and Mark—may come down hard on “flawed” or unsupported arguments, especially those that are left unprotected because they have not been folded within the subjectivity of the authorial voice.

The ‘personalize’ moves in these and other places in the LG essays work to foreground the authors’ awareness that their arguments are negotiable in light of experts’ opinions rather than the possible availability of new evidence. Based on their comparatively infrequent use of ‘personalize’ moves, the stronger writers, in contrast, excel at “pretending” that their readers extend beyond Mark and Frank to a wider community of disciplinary peers. These expert readers are persuaded by judgments that are grounded in empirical research, analytic frameworks, textual evidence gleaned from close-reading, and other externalized sources. Drawing on Thaiss and Zawacki (2006), the high-performing writers’ greater use of ‘evidentialize’ resources suggests that they are more aware of the need in academic writing to convey that they have been “persistent, open-minded, and disciplined in study” (p. 5). These effects will be examined in greater detail below.

Some readers may conclude that the greater use of ‘evidentialize’ moves among the high-performing writers is a consequence of their having conducted more research rather than by greater “genre awareness” or rhetorical skill. In other words, perhaps they are better able to base their judgments on evidence because they have performed the groundwork necessary to make that rhetorical move. However, this argument does not match correlation patterns between the number of research citations and the number of ‘evidentialize’ moves among these ten writers. As shown in Chapter 3, Keith and Ken (both HG writers) include the highest number of references in their essays—nine and ten, respectively. But they use fewer ‘evidentialize’ moves than Mike and Tim, who have fewer citations. (Keith and Ken use ‘evidentialize’ moves 3.6 and 4.2 times per 2,000 words, while Mike and Tim, both of whom have just two references, use this move 5.5 and 11 times.)

The following examples illustrate how Tim and Mike use ‘evidentialize’ moves in their essays. Excerpts 3a-3d show Tim calling upon his analysis of market structure and economic models to construct a carefully measured evaluative stance based on analytic reasoning. This measured stance is conveyed through ‘evidentialize’ moves, which are realized through the appearance-based evidentials *suggests*, *seems*, and *appear*, alongside references to market structure, history, and performance.

- (3a) The structure of the remaining frozen pie industry in Salt Lake City *suggests* that the Supreme Court’s fear of Utah Pie Company’s competitors ability to undercut competition was unfounded. (Tim, HG5, S35)³⁷
- (3b) Throughout the national history and Salt Lake City history of the frozen Pie market it *seems* clear that intense competition does exist. (Tim, HG5, S64)
- (3c) Sometimes competitive prices drive the firms to success, while in other periods product quality, most notably size, *appear* to be the driving force. (Tim, HG5, S67)
- (3d) The rise of Mrs. Smith’s, fall of Utah Pie, and relative success of Continental in the resulting time frame *suggest* internal management, and not the Supreme Court, played the significant role in market performance and conduct. (Tim, HG5, S71)

Excerpts 3e-3h show how Mike is able to adopt a carefully measured evaluative stance in similar ways, calling on references (sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit) to models and to facts in the case.

- (3e) *It appears* that maximum price fixing does the greatest harm when set below a competitive level. (Mike, HG2, S72)
- (3f) Based purely on the models, *it appears* that at the very least, maximum prices deserve a Rule of Reason approach to evaluate their cost and benefits. (Mike, HG2, S74)
- (3g) *Apparently* this did not work very well because it was still a significant factor for overruling Albrecht’s decision. (Mike, HG2, 106)
- (3h) Using this scenario, *it would seem* that Herald was punished for “hurting competition,” when that’s the very thing it was trying to avoid doing by issuing a warning first. (Mike, HG2, S129)

Tim’s and Mike’s frequent use of evidentializing is significant in light of the fact that they use fewer citations in their essays than several of the low-performing writers. Amy, the author of 2a above, cites three articles in her essay, and Elan, the author of 2c, cites four. This would suggest that these low-performing writers have just as many external sources at their disposal to externalize (rather than internalize) the basis of their reduced commitment when they use ‘entertain’ moves.

³⁷ All typos or usage errors in the students’ essays—for example, the lack of possessive apostrophe in “competitors ability” in 3a—are preserved from the original.

To reiterate, the rhetorical effects of these two ‘entertain’ sub-options are different. ‘Personalize’ moves work to negotiate meanings with readers who may be more authoritative than the writer, and ‘evidentialize’ moves work to negotiate meanings with a readership of peers who are persuaded by judgments backed by empirical research or analytic frameworks. This difference in reader positioning is perhaps most clearly seen in the following two excerpts from Keith’s and Nancy’s essays. Both writers use self-mentions (underlined below) when offering critical evaluations of court remedies, but these self-mentions are operating toward different rhetorical effects. The first excerpt (4a) is from Keith’s HG essay and the second (4b) is from Nancy’s LG essay. (The most relevant discourse moves for this discussion are in *bold italics*.)

(4a) In conclusion, I believe the two remedies I have proposed would have been more effective than the ones implemented by the Supreme Court. I have derived these remedies through an analysis of structure, conduct and performance in the petroleum industry, which spanned Standard Oil’s pre-breakup dominance, to the more recent developments in the industry. ***Using an ex post analysis of share prices and product prices, I was able to show*** that the Supreme Court decision had negligible effects on the industry, and therefore a better outcome could have been achieved. (Keith, HG4, S90-92)

(4b) ***Using my personal opinion to analyze the remedies used in this case,*** the District Court was correct in allowing the merger to proceed. However, there should have also been certain restrictions, including requiring the merged Whole Foods to sell off stores in regions of the United States, particularly where their concentration is the highest. (Nancy, LG2, S43-46)

As seen in the italicized clauses, Keith foregrounds the analytic framework that he used to arrive at his evaluation (*an ex post analysis of share prices*) while Nancy foregrounds her *personal opinion*. Keith’s final evaluation is that *the Supreme Court decision had negligible effects on the industry*, and his contribution to the discussion is to propose two alternative remedies. His evaluations and remedies are things that he *derived* and *was able to show* after having carried out the specialized analysis. In contrast, Nancy’s final evaluation is that the court was *correct* but could have proposed more *restrictions*. These propositions are construed as having derived solely from Nancy’s *personal opinion* rather than from the application of a specialized analytic tool.

The more objective evaluative basis that Keith constructs allows him to use self-mentions in a more assertive and authoritative manner than Nancy to ‘pronounce’ evaluations (*I have derived; I was able to show*). This particular use of “I” has been previously recognized in the literature as important for representing an assertive, confident authorial persona who is actively contributing to an ongoing conversation (Ivanič, 1998; Tang, 2009). The use of “I” to ‘pronounce’ a finding or point of view is modeled by the SFL *Engagement* framework as akin to ‘endorsing’ externalized voices through such wordings as *experts show, research demonstrates, the analysis proved, and it is widely recognized*. ‘Pronouncements’ and ‘endorsements’—both resources of ‘proclaiming’ in the Engagement framework—are dialogically contractive because, while signaling the possibility of debate, they close down space for that debate as they work to move the reader over to the author’s point of view. Unlike ‘endorsements’, however, ‘pronouncements’ have the added effect of indexing a strong level of writer commitment to and subjective investment in the argumentation.

Keith’s initial use of *I believe* (“In conclusion, *I believe* the two remedies I have proposed would have been more effective than the ones implemented by the Supreme Court”) could be interpreted as a momentary slip into “student” stance. At the same time, however, removal of the phrase could result in a stance that is unjustifiably assertive, especially as the author is offering a challenge to the reasoning of the Supreme Court. For this reason, a better interpretation of Keith’s use of *I believe* is to offer a “check” on this more authoritative use of “I” elsewhere in the paragraph.

In regard to this last point, it is important to note that Keith could have chosen a more objectively worded concluding statement. For example, he could have used the ‘endorse’ option to write this: *An ex post analysis of share prices and product prices revealed*. Instead, he chose the ‘pronounce’ option, which displays his interpersonal involvement with the disciplinary framework: *Using an ex post analysis of share prices and product prices, I was able to show*. His choice to intrude into the text at this moment may suggest Keith’s awareness of the (likely implicit) expectation that students construct a discursively engaged or aligned stance—one that conveys personal engagement with the epistemological procedure of arguing from analytic tools.

Prior research (reviewed above) shows that faculty across the disciplines value students' personal engagement, enthusiasm, and even "passionate" commitment in their writing (Thaiss & Zawacki, 2006; Waldo, 2004; and Woodward-Kron, 2004) as well as indication of their alignment with, or appreciation of, the disciplinary discourse (Soliday, 2004; 2011). Importantly, Keith's explicit authorial intrusions into the text works to reinforce an authoritative stance while also indexing his interpersonal engagement with the disciplinary framework he is using. In this sense, Keith's "I" is an instance of what may be referred to as a "disciplinary I." This is in contrast to the "I" used in Nancy's, Amy's, Dan's, and Elan's texts (above), which are representative of what may be referred to as "student I". This difference in use of authorial "I," then, is yet another instance in which students can be assisted to examine the details of disciplinary discourse in terms of valued stance moves.

In contrast to Keith's 'pronouncements', Nancy concludes in a less authoritative manner by 'personalizing' her evaluation of the Court's remedy without fronting the analytic tools and research that she used. This formulation contributes to a voice that conveys a lack of authority because it does not foreground empirical justification for its evaluations and recommendations. As I discuss in the next section, such 'personalize' moves connect with other stancetaking patterns in the LG texts to position the reader not as a colleague in the field but as the classroom instructor. I suggest that by not taking on the role of "contributor" (Ivanic, 1998), the LG texts incorporate strategies that could be read by some instructors, if not by Mark himself, as signaling resistance to an implicit expectation of the student coursework essay, which is that student writers position themselves as beginning academics. Sometimes this resistance is reinforced by stance moves that talk down to the imagined reader.

5.3. The Student Stance and Genre Resistance

The differences in stance that are evident in Keith's and Nancy's conclusions (above in 4a and 4b) can be traced to earlier sections of their essays, when they are setting up their analyses. The first excerpt (5a) is from an earlier section of Keith's essay and the second (5b) is from an earlier section of Nancy's. (The most relevant discourse moves for this discussion are in *bold italics*; other relevant wordings are underlined.)

(5a) With *the structure, conduct, and performance* of the petroleum industry prior to the Supreme Court decision defined, *it is now time to analyze* the effects of the remedies on the industry. The decree resulted in the assets of Standard Oil being broken up along geographic lines (Appendix 9). The rights to the “Standard” brand name as well as other famous product brand names were also split among the new “Baby Standards.” While the U.S. government expected the breakup of Standard Oil to result in increased competition and lower petroleum product prices, using *an ex post analysis* of these prices and Standard Oil’s *share price*, *it can be seen* that the remedies were not effective in their intent. (Keith, HG4, S20-23)

(5b) The courts’ decision to proceed with the merge also allows *an economist* to assess *the Horizontal Merger Guidelines* to determine exactly what the courts consider when deciding whether or not a merge should take place. *We* find that the merger may not only increase *efficiencies*, but also result in greater profits for the company as a whole. Using financial data obtained from *The Daily Green*, one year after the merger, total profits for the merged Whole Foods increased by 2.6% in 2008 and are expected to increase even further in 2009.

With *these economic issues in mind*, there is *not enough information* about the two supermarkets and the natural or organic food industry to be able to fully analyze these economic issues. In order to do so, *readers should use economic journals* such as the *Magazine for Global Competition Policy* or opinions posted by journalists on *the Washington Post*. These resources may not only provide concurring and dissenting opinions on whether to proceed with the merger, but also *allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the entire case*. (Nancy, LG2, S6-11)

Keith’s text (5a) once again foregrounds the specialized framework that he uses to carry out the analysis (*the structure, conduct, and performance* framework; *an ex post analysis*) and masks authorial agency through objective stance formulations like *it is now time to analyze* and *it can be seen*. His text also avoids explicit references to the disciplinary discourse (e.g., *economists* or *economic issues*), which can be found in Nancy’s text. Perhaps this is because the authorial voice is taking for granted that the argumentation is taking place among fellow economists. Furthermore, specialized terminology is freely used (*ex post analysis*, *share price*) as well as terms in scare quotes that reflect shared knowledge with the reader (“*Standard*” and “*Baby Standards*”).

Nancy’s text begins to approximate this disciplinary discourse by citing a research study and employing specialized terminology (*the Horizontal Merger Guidelines*, *efficiencies*). Nevertheless, it reflects less comfort with the discourse of empirically-based analysis. After stating that the “economic issues” cannot be “fully” analyzed due to lack

of information about the industry, the text suddenly slips from researcher stance into an “informative guide” stance. This slip happens when Nancy advises *Readers* to consult *economic journals* if they wish to discover more about developments in the market. She even provides reader with a title (the *Magazine for Global Competition Policy*) so that they may gain “a more comprehensive understanding of the entire case.” The stance that Nancy projects in this short stretch of text, to be sure, is “authoritative,” but only by dint of positioning the reader as an interested but novice observer rather than as an interlocutor in a disciplinary conversation.

This strategy, which can be read as talking down to the reader, may seem counter-intuitive in light of the argument that the less successful writers are constructing a student stance. It might be expected that a writer who is taking on the student stance would more consistently take pains to back away from claims of expertise, which is what seems to be driving most of the ‘personalize’ moves in the LG texts, including Nancy’s own. One way to view this seeming contradiction is that Nancy positions the reader as a novice in order to compensate for the difficulty she is having in establishing authority through more genre-appropriate means. As suggested above, the Econ 432 essay positions students as authoritative knowledge-makers, but lack of facility in constructing authority in genre-appropriate ways can result in stance moves that are incongruent with the implicit expectation to enter into a conversation with an interlocutor on equal footing.

Bartholomae (1985/2005) makes a very similar point with regard to the difficulty first-year college writers often experience concluding essays that call for academic “discussion.” He analyzes essays written by students who, because they do not yet control the language that is needed to offer the type of speculative analysis of a problem that academic discussions call for, resort to rounding out their arguments with the genre of the “Life Lesson.” The “Life Lesson” is construed through the stance of a wise, experienced elder who positions the readers as children. Below is a representative excerpt discussed by Bartholomae that comes immediately after the student poses a provocative question about why the mechanics he observed for his essay might have missed a leak, whether it was due to issues of pride, incentive, or motivation.

How could two repairmen miss a leak? Lack of pride? No incentive? Lazy? I don't know. From this point on, I take *my* time, do it right, and don't let customers get under *your* skin. If they have a complaint, tell them to call your boss and he'll be more than glad to handle it. Most important, worry about yourself, and keep a clear eye on everyone, for there's always someone trying to take advantage of you, anytime and anyplace. (Bartholomae, 1985/2005, p. 62-3; Emphases added in original)

Like Nancy's sudden slip into the "informative guide" stance, this student's sudden transition from an academic discussant who is raising a problem to a wise elder who is dispensing practical advice points to this writer's difficulty maintaining the novice academic stance that is expected in academic discussion essays.

In several of the LG Econ 432 essays, this type of awkward genre embedding combines with 'personalize' moves to construct the stance of a learner who is trying out, but not quite "getting," research-based analysis. Ironically perhaps, this learner stance is also reflected in the LG essays' frequent foregrounding of *economics* and of the Econ 432 course itself as discourses. These moves, as shown in the following examples, suggest a lack of integration with or uptake of the target discourse.

- (6a) Using this storyline, the case is interesting from a public policy perspective because it allows *an economist* to address how the relevant product and geographic markets should be defined in this case, as well as whether the courts' view of this analysis is right or wrong. (LG2, S1)
- (6b) This is the piece of conduct that I think is vital to understanding this case, and *from an economic standpoint* the courts made an uneducated decision that could set a dangerous precedent in future refusal to deal cases. (LG4, S59)
- (6c) At the most basic level, this joint venture is fundamentally two firms creating a monopoly in downhill skiing in Aspen, which *as economists, we know* creates a dead weight loss on social welfare. (LG4, 73)
- (6d) *In past cases that we have read*, this issue of establishing what constitutes the relevant geographic market area has been very important in order to prove illegality. (LG1, S6)
- (6e) This worked for Monsanto because *as stated in class*, foreclosure will work provided that there is no competition downstream. (LG5, S61)
- (6f) *As discussed in class*, competition at both stages would yield more social surplus. (LG5, S77)

These explicit references to *class*, *economists*, and *economics*, which are largely absent from the HG essays, work to construct a classroom-based or student stance. This student stance can perhaps be understood as, in some ways, resistant to the implicit rule of the genre, which is for the writer to pretend that she is conversing with colleagues who exist outside the classroom context. The stance illustrated in these excerpts is that of students who are writing their term papers and sometimes, as seen in 6a and 6c, self-consciously performing the role of economists. In constructing this student stance, these LG texts suggest minimal assimilation of the disciplinary language into the student's own language (Soliday, 2011).

What becomes increasingly evident in the next section is that the more frequent use of 'evidentialize' in the HG essays reflects greater uptake of the novice academic stance. This can be seen in the rhetorically-motivated way that 'evidentialize' resources are used to move the discourse from one argumentative stage to the next in an authoritative manner.

5.4. Evidentializing and Construction of the Novice Academic Stance

My analysis of 'evidentialize' moves in the HG essays reveals three primary rhetorical purposes. One purpose is to set up a "Hypothetical-Real" pattern,³⁸ which, as explained in Chapter 4, allows authors to proceed toward increasingly complex analyses in an organized way. In these instances, the writer invites the reader into the unfolding argument by proposing an apparent, surface-level reality (via *It seems/appears that...*) before closing off that dialogic space by offering a more accurate or nuanced assertion. This use of 'evidentialize' works on a micro level (within paragraphs) and correlates with the 'expand' + 'contract' movements discussed in Chapter 4. In this section, I explain a second and third purpose for 'evidentialize' moves, which work on more of a macro level (between and across paragraphs). These purposes have to do with constructing an authoritative stance before easing into a discussion of alternative recommendations.

The second purpose of evidentializing in the Econ 432 essays, one seen mostly in the HG essays, is to draw a reasonable or measured conclusion from assertively presented

³⁸ "Hypothetical-Real" is brought into effect through such formulations as: *It may seem that ... Nevertheless, a more accurate view is that ...* As Thompson (2001) argues, these formulations are dialogic, or interactive, because the first part of the structure is meant to represent a view likely to held by the reader.

evidence. The movement is from ‘contract’ to ‘expand’. This pattern is constructed through an initial presentation of facts, which are either categorically asserted or proclaimed (e.g., *clearly*; *a recent survey ... found*; *the outcome ... did little if anything*), followed by an expansively-worded conclusion (e.g., *Thus, it seems reasonable to assume*). This sequencing strategy allows the writer to argue carefully or conservatively from a great deal of evidence rather than aggressively from just a little. The result is a stance that is authoritative because it is marked by careful and deliberate reasoning based on sustained consideration of evidence. The dialogic movement from ‘contract’ to ‘expand’ contributes to the well-reasoned authoritative stance by demonstrating awareness of the possibility for alternative interpretations of evidence. (In these examples, the ‘expand:entertain’ category is represented in its most expanded version to include sub-options of ‘entertain’, with a focus on the ‘evidentialize’ sub-option.)

(7a) *Clearly*, Von’s did **not** accomplish what it set out to achieve [CONTRACT: PROCLAIM + DISCLAIM]: **countless** subsequent antitrust cases have **completely** ignored the reasoning set forth by the Court [PROCLAIM]. **Apparently** then, the Von’s decision was a failure [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN: EVIDENTIALIZE]. This statement leads to a natural question: **if** the Court got it wrong in Von’s, **what would** the correct decision have been? [ENTERTAIN: QUESTION] For several reasons, the Supreme Court should have ... (Luis, HG1, S54-59)

(7b) *A recent survey of physician satisfaction by Harvard Medical School found* that physician autonomy and the ability to provide high-quality care, **not** income, are most strongly associated with changes in job satisfaction.²⁹ [CONTRACT: PROCLAIM + DISCLAIM]. Thus, it **seems reasonable to assume** that health care providers would take advantage of the greater bargaining power to improve the quality of care [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN: EVIDENTIALIZE]. Such measures **could** even take the form of measures included in many state patient protection bills [ENTERTAIN: POSTULATE]. (Ken, HG3, S78-80)

(7c) The outcome of Utah Pie Co. did little **if anything** then to change the market structure, conduct, and performance in the Salt Lake City frozen pie industry [CONTRACT: PROCLAIM]. Since the market was not under the distress of a firm abusing market power, there were no structural changes, except for the exit of Carnation. The rise of Mrs. Smith’s, fall of Utah Pie, and relative success of Continental in the resulting time frame **suggest** internal management, and **not** the Supreme Court, played the significant role in market performance and conduct [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN: EVIDENTIALIZE + CONTRACT: DISCLAIM]. I would have taken a different approach to the Supreme Court’s decision. (Tim, HG5, S69-72)

In each of these excerpts, the stancetaking progresses from a committed presentation of evidence to a less committed conclusion or interpretation of the evidence. In many of the example texts examined in Chapter 4, there was a reverse movement on a paragraph level from expansive to contractive meanings whereby alternative perspectives and voices are allowed into the text and given dialogic play before they are closed off as the reader is pulled over to the author's view. In 7a-7c, however, evidence is presented matter-of-factly and then the reader is invited in to participate in the interpretation of that evidence. Furthermore, in each of these texts, the expansively-worded conclusion is followed by a proposal for what the courts *should have* done, what *could* happen, or what the individual author *would have* done had he or she been in a position to offer a remedy. In 7a, the 'evidentialize' move is followed several clauses later by the sentence, "the Supreme Court should have ..."; in 7b, the 'evidentialize' move is followed by the sentence, "Such measures *could* even take the form of measures ..."; and in 7c, the 'evidentialize' move is followed by the sentence, "I would have taken a different approach to the Supreme Court's decision."

In light of these surrounding moves, the 'evidentialize' resources in these texts work to index writers who—rather than simply "playing it safe"—are seeking to negotiate meanings with readers who are participating in a conversation that is governed by sustained consideration of evidence. The use of 'evidentialize' marks the transition from one argumentative stage to another—from assertive presentation of evidence to measured consideration of best possible remedies. Furthermore, the momentary opening of dialogic space when drawing generalized inferences about the effects of court-ordered remedies seems to be a way to ease into a proposal for alternative remedies. This "easing in" is created by a style of stancetaking that is simultaneously knowledgeable about the economic market (such that evidence can be asserted or pronounced with a high degree of commitment) and aware of likely alternative interpretations of the evidence. Constructing this knowledgeable and dialogically aware stance before proceeding into a discussion of recommendations corresponds to Frank's goal (explained in Chapter 4) of giving "due attention to alternative and concurrent explanations of the phenomena under investigation." Giving such due attention to alternative views is needed in light of the goal of the assignment to critically evaluate the reasoning of Justices of the Supreme

Court, or, as Frank describes them, “very very smart people who just don’t happen to be economists.” In general, these uses of ‘evidentialize’ strategies to move from an interpretation of evidence to a recommendation for alternative remedies construe authoritativeness by constructing a stance that is simultaneously committed to evidence-based argumentation and dialogically engaged with, and thus aware of, alternative views.

A third, closely related use of ‘evidentialize’ resources in the HG essays is to draw conclusions, not from empirically based evidence, but from theoretical discussions of problems. In these instances, ‘evidentialize’ moves do not follow highly committed moves but rather are used in conjunction with other expansive resources, as shown in examples 8a and 8b. More generally, the movement is not from ‘contract’ to ‘expand’ but from ‘expand’ to ‘expand’. The dialogically expansive stance that results is sustained across a larger stretch of text.

(8a) A *potential* problem with monitoring the prices of a grocery retailer is that food costs *can* rapidly fluctuate over a relatively short amount of time (Webster 1) [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN + ATTRIBUTE]. Ensuring that the Von’s and Shopping Bag stores maintained lower prices would require that regulators constantly keep updated on the changes in the costs of grocery retailers and their suppliers, the manufacturers.

This would *seem to imply* that the cost of regulation *could* be very high [entertain: evidentialize], and, given the fact that splitting up competing Von’s and Shopping Bag stores would result in vigorous competition, would be a second-best option. Regulation of prices *may* be left best to companies with more stable cost structures [ENTERTAIN: POSTULATE]; in the quickly-changing cost structures of grocery retailers, the best option would be to separate the companies and trust market forces to result in competitive outcomes. (Luis, HG1, 80-85)

(8b) ... However, this case is not without concerns. There is the *possibility* for abuse *if* the producer sets different maximum prices for different retailers, allowing some to reap higher profits [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN: POSTULATE]. There is also a *possibility* that for new retailers to enter the market they would have to charge higher prices initially [POSTULATE], in which case a maximum price *could* deter competition [postulate].

It *appears*, then, that maximum price fixing does the greatest harm when set below a competitive level [ENTERTAIN: EVIDENTIALIZE]. *In Case 4* it could *potentially* do harm to small retailers trying to enter the market [POSTULATE], but does so for the benefit of consumers and the producer. Based purely on the models, it *appears* that, *at the very least*, maximum prices deserve a Rule of Reason approach to evaluate their cost and benefits [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN: EVIDENTIALIZE]. (Mike, HG2, S69-74)

As with examples 7a-7c above, ‘evidentialize’ moves in these two texts mark the onset of inductively-derived conclusions while leaving open dialogic space for alternative possibilities. In 8a, Luis begins by suggesting a possible problem (also using ‘attribute’ to externalize the source of that possible view to Webster) and then in a new paragraph moves toward a general consequence of the problem: *This would seem to imply that the cost of regulation could be very high*. The use of multiple ‘expand’ resources in these two paragraphs enables Luis to keep the dialogic space open for a relatively long stretch of text before proffering his remedy for the first time (*in the quickly-changing cost structures of grocery retailers, the best option would be to ...*).

In 8b, Mike is wrapping up a discussion of four hypothetical scenarios that bear on the case under analysis and is moving toward a recommendation for an alternative remedy. He broaches this remedy carefully through the use of the ‘evidentialize’ move in the last sentence: *it appears that, at the very least, maximum prices deserve a Rule of Reason approach*. Later in his essay, Mike argues for this remedy in a more assertive, committed manner, as seen in these sentences:

- The biggest difference in my optimal remedy is that I would have kept maximum price fixing under rule of reason. (Mike, HG2, S112)
- It may be more difficult, but it is far more equitable to give each case of maximum price setting the time it deserves under rule of reason. (Mike, HG2, S142)

The dialogically expansive manner with which Mike first broaches the rule of reason recommendation reflects his (likely unconscious) awareness of the fine-tuned positioning strategy of first proffering a proposition carefully (suggesting it as merely a possibility) before committing to that recommendation at a later stage in a more contractive manner. In this way, his use of ‘evidentialize’ seems to serve a macro-level rhetorical strategy of inviting the reader on board gently before ramping up the persuasive effort.

The ways ‘evidentialize’ moves function in these two excerpts can usefully be contrasted with the second purpose of ‘evidentialize’ (illustrated in 7a-7c). In the earlier examples, the ‘evidentialize’ move enables the writers to transition quickly from a highly committed presentation of evidence to a less committed consideration of the stakes of

that evidence. This fine-tuning argumentative strategy allows the writer to adopt a carefully measured stance immediately following an assertive, highly committed one. These two purposes are very much related, of course, in that they enable writers to regulate the dialogic space and thereby position the reader in strategic ways. The third purpose reflected in 8a and 8b shows that ‘evidentialize’ moves need not always follow more contractive moves.

In general, the ‘evidentialize’ sub-option of ‘entertain’ in the HG essays is used to (1) contribute toward the complexity of the analysis by invoking an apparent reality and replacing it with a more accurate or nuanced reality (i.e., Appearance-Reality), (2) construct a knowledgeable and measured stance as a strategy for easing into an evidence-based recommendation, and (3) construct a dialogically open, reflective stance at key moments in the argument. The second and third type of ‘evidentialize’ (in 7a-7c and 8a-8b) work to construct authoritativeness in two ways. First, they display awareness that arguments should derive either from reasonable consideration of the evidence currently at hand or, in the case of 8a and 8b, from sustained reasoning about a problem. Second, they construe authorial personae that are in conversation with disciplinary colleagues. These projected colleagues may hold different views on the significance of evidence or may draw different recommendations based on critical discussion of problems. They are not already aligned with the author’s point of view but, since they are reasonable, they can be persuaded. One strategy for aligning these readers with the author’s view, then, is to extend offers of solidarity through the use of dialogically expansive moves like *the decision can be viewed as a failure, it appears/seems that, the events suggest, and this situation would seem to imply*. These wordings work to forward the author’s view while also signaling awareness that there are other views at play.

All five of the HG essays use multiple ‘evidentialize’ moves, while just two of the LG essays use this particular option of ‘entertain’. Furthermore, in these two LG essays, the use of *seems*, which is the only lexical item used to bring the move into effect, is not driven by the same rhetorical purpose that is evident in the use of *seems, appears, and suggests* in the HG essays. In other words, neither of the two general purposes summarized above seem to drive the use of *seem(s)* in these two LG essays.

Below, example 9a (from the beginning of Amy's essay) offers one case in point. The general view that Amy is forwarding is that the Supreme Court overlooked basic facts in its evaluation of the economic market and therefore made an unreasonable ruling. The expansively-worded assertion toward the end does not seem to serve a clear rhetorical purpose in achieving this message, however.

(9a) Pabst's largest market share was 27.41% of sales in 1961 in the state of Wisconsin. It was the largest brewer in the state. This is a relatively small geographic market and *still* the market share is just barely above a quarter of the market [CONTRACT: DISCLAIM]. In national terms, Pabst became the third largest brewer in 1961, three years after the acquisition, with 5.83% of the national beer market. These numbers make it *seem* that the anticompetitive damage done to the beer market, no matter how it is defined geographically, must have been minimal [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN: EVIDENTIALIZE]. *However* the Supreme Court *still* finds this merger to be illegal. [CONTRACT: DISCLAIM]. (Amy, LG1, S9-14)

Upon an initial scan, the 'evidentialize' move here corresponds to example 7c above from Tim's essay: a series of monoglossically-worded statements precedes a measured judgment of the evidence. However, the expansiveness of the wording in Amy's text (*make it seem that ...*) is not motivated by an Appearance-Reality contrast or by the purpose of seeding the ground for a discussion of alternative recommendations. Rather, the use of *seem* appears to be working to draw attention to the subjective basis of the author's evaluation, without explaining the reasoning behind that basis (i.e., what the 27% market share suggests about Pabst's ability to set prices), as Mark noted in his marginal comment. The basic evaluative stance here is that *the Supreme Court still found the merger illegal despite the minimal evidence of anticompetitive damage*, but that stance is not very clearly explained.

A somewhat more motivated use of the 'evidentialize' option is evident in example 9b from a later section in Amy's essay. In this text, the 'evidentialize' move is used to draw a measured conclusion from preceding evidence. However, the use of the move in this excerpt does not seem driven by the same larger rhetorical purpose that is evident in the examples above.

(9b) *Despite* the increases in price throughout history, the amount of consumption has *only* changed mildly and increased *if anything* [CONTRACT: DISCLAIM + PROCLAIM]. Competition and concentration in the industry did not *seem* to have an impact on the amount of beer consumed by the United States population [EXPAND: ENTERTAIN: EVIDENTIALIZE]. The concentration of the beer industry increased in spite of the break-up of Pabst and Blatz, and the per capita consumption ceased to be affected; therefore, the ruling of the courts of Pabst to divest itself of Blatz *really* did not have an effect on competition [CONTRACT: PROCLAIM]. (LG1, S73-76)

The use of a dialogically expansive move in the middle sentence is not carried through to the end of the text. Rather, the more general conclusion in this excerpt is realized in a dialogically contractive manner, which runs counter to the expansive concluding style shown in 7a-7c and 8a-8b above, in which the most general proposition is evidentialized. My general point is that, while ‘evidentialize’ resources are used in these texts, they do not contribute to the movement from analysis to recommendations with the same dialogic engagement and authoritativeness that characterize their uses in the HG essays.

In these excerpts, Amy shows that she is to some degree aware of the need to enter into dialogue with the reader and to proffer critical evaluations in a measured way. She uses lexicogrammatical devices like *seems*, *However*, *Despite*, and other resources that are needed to realize stance moves that are valued in the context, but she appears to be struggling to sustain those valued meanings across large stretches of her text. The various interpersonal resources for constructing a valued stance appear to be within Amy’s grasp, in other words—much as we saw with Melisa’s writing in Chapter 4—but, like Melisa, Amy is having difficulty sequencing those stance resources in ways that demonstrate control over a disciplinary-based conversation. For this reason, her essay does not consistently position the reader as a disciplinary interlocutor. Much like Nancy’s sudden slip from novice academic stance into the “informative guide” stance, which works to position her reader as a novice rather than peer, Amy’s text occasionally slips into a student stance marked by a sense of amazement or bewilderment at the flawed reasoning of the Courts, as seen in her endings to the two paragraphs above.

- *However* the Supreme Court *still* finds this merger to be illegal.
- Therefore, the ruling of the courts of Pabst to divest itself of Blatz *really* did not have an effect on competition.

Both of these sentences immediately follow moments in Amy's essay in which she has rather skillfully employed an 'evidentialize' move to offer a measured consideration of evidence (*These numbers make it seem that ... Competition and concentration in the industry did not seem to have an impact on ...*). Instead of keeping the dialogic space open, however, she closes out the paragraphs with the abrupt critiques reproduced above, suggesting momentary but important disengagements from the reader.

5.5. Summary of Findings

The preference for 'evidentialize' over 'personalize' moves on the part of the stronger writers in class reflects, in addition to use of more outside research, greater engagement with empirically-based argumentation in economics. As seen in the analysis above and in Chapter 4, those writers who use more 'evidentialize' moves tend also to use language that (a) constructs an assertive, committed voice (via 'counters', 'pronouncements', and other dialogically contractive resources) and (b) reflects greater comfort with the rules of evidence-based argumentative in economics. These writers do not reference the classroom discourse or draw attention to the field of economics (preferring, instead, to take that for granted) with anywhere near the same frequency as the weaker writers in the class. In contrast, those writers who use more 'personalize' moves convey a more uncertain relationship with the discourse of empirically-based argumentation and thus tend to (a) offer evaluations in a more subjectively-grounded fashion, (b) position themselves and their readers in the context of the classroom (rather than the context of an academic conversation among colleagues), and (c) make grabs for authority by occasionally talking down to the reader, positioning him or her as an interested but unknowledgeable novice, or disengage from the conversation to offer an abrupt critique.

The stronger writers in class have assimilated the language of empirically-based disciplinary argumentation into their essays with more consistency than the weaker writers, and this assimilation, I have argued, construes a novice academic stance that Mark may have responded to when evaluating the essays. Soliday (2011) argues that more or less success in this type of stance assimilation can influence instructors'

evaluation of students' writing. A remaining question, one that I have thus far left on hold, is how Mark actually responded to these differential stances, if he did at all.

5.6. Mark's Responses to the Two Stances

One claim that I have been developing in this and the previous chapter is that the five HG essays use language in particularly effective ways to represent “critical reasoning” and empirically-based analyses, both of which Frank and Mark expected and valued. Another, closely related claim is that these differential linguistic patterns construe stances that position the reader in specific ways, either as the instructor who is teaching the class and grading the essays, as seen more consistently in the LG texts, or as a disciplinary colleague who is participating in the unfolding conversation, as seen more consistently in the HG texts.

Regarding this second claim, there are at least three possibilities about what is happening with Mark's reading of the Econ 432 essays. One possibility is that Mark is not responding to the stances that are being constructed in the essays at all; he is responding instead to the quality of students' analyses (i.e., the “content”), the extent of their research, the length of their paragraphs, the number of examples they provide, and so forth. Those students who happen to be strong writers, who are “getting it,” doing their research, and working hard to construct clear, coherent arguments tend to use language that construct the novice academic stance, while students who are weaker writers, who are not “getting it” or not doing as much research, etc., tend to construct student stances, but Mark's reading is not influenced by these different stances. A second possibility is that Mark *is* responding to the stances that are constructed in the texts he is reading because these stances are meaningful; it is through these stances that writers construe their “critical reasoning,” their “complex” and “nuanced” arguments, and their engagement with the analytic frameworks taught in class. A third, related possibility is that Mark is responding to the stances that are being constructed because they construe valued meanings *and also* because he is being positioned to respond to them in particular ways. According to this view—which I endorse below—the more successful essays in class work to invite the reader to adopt a stance toward the argument as a cooperative partner in the unfolding conversation. Mark's reading of the high-graded essays,

according to this view, could be understood as a process of *identification*: of occupying the subject position that the text creates for him as a disciplinary colleague or as a fellow “novice academic,” a reader whose job is less to evaluate a student’s fulfillment of a student genre and more to collaborate in the construction of a disciplinary conversation.

The notion of identification can help us to understand the nature of the conversation happening between Mark and his students. Burke (1969) offers identification as a way to understand persuasion as a more complex and pervasive process than simply intentional design from the rhetor. Burke’s theory derives from his fundamental understanding of rhetoric as not simply the deliberate “art of persuasion” but as “the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or induce actions in other human agents” (p. 41). Rhetoric, that is, is largely about the process of unconscious or semiconscious inducement, the taking up and aligning of attitudes. When we are identified with others, Burke notes, we are “both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and consubstantial with another” (p. 21).

As Cheney (1983) notes in his analysis of organizational communication, Burkean identification is primarily a “receiver oriented” theory. It explains how listeners/readers may come to identify with a figure or symbol, with or without help from the rhetor. Certainly, identification can be part of the rhetor’s deliberate design. As Burke (p. 46) writes:

... a speaker persuades an audience by the use of stylistic identifications; his [or her] act of persuasion may be for the purpose of causing the audience to identify itself with the speaker’s interests; and the speaker draws on identification of interests to establish rapport between himself and his audience.

This type of deliberate move is evident in political campaign discourse, for example when Senator John McCain repeatedly offered up “Joe the Plumber” as a symbol with which his constituency could identify. However, identification might be more productively understood as an unconscious or semi-conscious process of “yielding to forms.” As Burke notes, “many purely formal matters can readily awaken an attitude of collaborative expectancy in us,” and “yielding to the form prepares assent to the matter identified with it” (Burke, 1969, p. 58). To put this in another terms, Mark’s yielding to particular stancetaking moves prepares his assent to the claims students are putting

forward.

Using Burke, one way to understand Mark’s reading of the high graded essays in his course is that he is identifying with recurring language patterns in those essays, yielding to valued “forms” that work to construct the stance of the committed economic analyst. The recurring constellation of stance features analyzed above can be understood as creating for Mark a subject position both as instructor/evaluator and as dialogic partner in the unfolding argument.

There is some evidence from Mark’s commenting practices to support this claim. Primarily, there are patterns in commenting on the high-graded essays that do not appear, or do not appear as frequently, in the low-graded essays. These include, in addition to fewer directives, more frequent use of brief positive responses, devil’s advocate questions, asides, and writerly suggestions. Examples and frequencies of these categories are provided in Table 5.4.

Response types	Instances in 5 HG essays	Instances in 5 LG essays
Brief positive responses e.g., “Good”; “interesting” “nice”	15	7
Devil’s advocate questions e.g., “Good point. But even without the maximum price, the small sellers would lose business to Wal-Mart, wouldn’t they?”	9	3
Asides e.g., “Interesting side note – in the early years of the Sherman Act it was used almost exclusively against labor unions ...”	7	2
Writerly suggestions e.g., “You might use a weaker word here than ‘could’. Maybe ‘might’ or ‘conceivably could’?”	14	5
Directives e.g., “Avoid the phrase ‘As can be construed’ .”	6	12
Uses of <i>we</i> e.g., “Shouldn’t we just focus on whether or not the price cutting was likely to harm the competition, not whether or not ...”	9	2

Table 5.4. Mark’s response types on HG and LG essays

One point to make about these comments is that there are simply more of them on the high-graded essays. In our interview, Mark explained that he often played the role of “devil’s advocate” when marking essays, especially when marking the better essays in class. This is because their reasoning is already “sound” and therefore could use simply “some additional push.” The weaker essays, in contrast, tend to have “more fundamental problems with the writing itself.” One point to concede, then, is that there is more of almost every comment type on the high-graded essays. An important exception to this, however, is that there are more directives for improvement on the low-graded essays, while the recommendations on the high-graded essays are couched in more suggestive terms. These more writerly suggestions suggest the tenor of peer-to-peer collaboration rather than teacher-to-student instruction.

In addition, the greater number of brief positive responses seems important for their very lack of elaboration. We could understand the brevity of Mark’s praise as stemming from lack of time. He had 40 (quite lengthy) essays to mark. But considering that Mark did write some very lengthy and substantive marginal asides, another explanation for the lack of elaboration on positive evaluations is the difficulty for a disciplinary insider to pinpoint and be explicit about the valued discursive move being constructed. Finally, the more frequent use of *we* in the margins of the top five graded essays may reflect Mark’s tendency to respond to the more successful essays as collaborator rather than evaluator.

Mark’s marginal responses, when considered alongside the language patterns at work in the high-graded essays, suggest that the HG essays are promoting identification from the reader by virtue of an “assumed *we*.” The dialogic nature of the argumentation, that is, may be inviting a more dialogically expansive commenting stance from the evaluator, thus suggesting McCloskey’s (1998) observation that “What distinguishes good from bad in learned discourse ... is not the adoption of a particular methodology, but the earnest and intelligent attempt to contribute to a conversation” (p. 162).

The high-performing writers in Econ 432 more consistently construct stances in their writing that suggest this kind of attempt to contribute to a conversation. This is seen in their use of highly committed and contrastive stance moves, their careful sequencing strategies for regulating the dialogic space and transitioning from one argumentative

stage to another, and their use of what might be usefully characterized as a disciplinary “I”—an authorial “I” marked by uptake of and commitment to a disciplinary framework. These various moves contribute to a stance marked by dialogic engagement and control, and which I refer to as the more authoritative novice academic stance. This stance can be contrasted with the less authoritative student stance that is more consistently constructed by the low-performing writers. The student stance is marked by comparatively less frequent dialogic engagement and control, and therefore by less consistent positioning of the reader as a disciplinary conversant.

5.7. Concluding Remarks

Chapters 4 and 5 have offered a close examination of student writing in one distinct disciplinary context. The analyses have revealed linguistic differences in the writing of high- and low-performing students that have to do with interpersonal meanings. Interpersonal meanings relate to the ways that writers—as they go about analyzing and evaluating things, making assertions and recommendations, providing evidence and justifications and so forth—project stance in their texts. This stance can be characterized as dialogically engaged or disengaged, assertive or tentative, committed or aloof, and it can be seen as necessarily interacting with the imagined reader in certain ways, for example positioning him or her as already aligned with or resistant to the views being advanced, and/or positioning him or her as a disciplinary colleague, or as a novice or expert. More specifically, the analysis in these chapters reveals that the high-performing writers more consistently project a stance that is highly committed while also dialogically engaged, or open to negotiation, with an imagined readership of fellow academics, in this case readers who expect to be convinced through disciplinary frameworks and empirical evidence. I refer to this stance as the novice academic stance, which I contrast with the more classroom-based student stance that is more consistently projected by the weaker writers in class. This stance is marked by lower commitment to propositions (i.e., it is less assertive and contrastive) and by dialogic engagement with a narrower audience, the course instructors.

That there are these stance differences is important because stance is not on the Econ 432 course agenda, at least not explicitly. According to the syllabus, assignment

guidelines, class handouts, and comments on students' essays, students do not receive instruction or feedback on their writing related to stance. Furthermore, according to interview transcripts, the instructors do not think consciously in terms of interpersonal meanings when they explain their goals and assessment criteria. These meanings are sometimes hinted at when Frank and Mark discuss goals like critical reasoning, complexity and nuance, and counter-argumentation, but the idea that these are rhetorical effects of repeated ways of using language, or that evaluation of student work is influenced by stance and reader positioning moves, does not arise. Nevertheless, the analysis undertaken in this and the previous chapter provide evidence that Mark may have responded more favorably to the novice academic stance, as the interpersonal style of his marginal comments on the high-graded essays is more peer-to-peer in orientation: the comments are more suggestive than directive, comprised of more questions, modal verbs, and *we*-pronouns than are found in the comments on the low-graded essays. This difference points to the possibility that Mark, a student himself, may have more closely identified with the novice academic stance in students' essays.

With these points in mind, the next chapter turns to a very different discourse context, an upper-level course in political science focused on 20th-century political theory. It pursues the question of whether a novice academic stance is also valued in this context and, if so, what that stance might look like: through what recurring linguistic means is it achieved and what epistemological practices and values does it reflect?

Combined with Chapters 4 and 5, Chapter 6 offers evidence that a novice academic stance is indeed valued in student writing in both contexts, though the linguistic characteristics of that stance are different. Like the previous chapters, it provides an Appraisal analysis of high and low performing students' essays and through that analysis reveals similarities and differences between what the high-performing writers are doing in terms of interpersonal meanings in the distinct contexts. This analysis, I argue, has important implications for instruction in the context of upper-level writing in the disciplines, and perhaps as well for first year writing, though in a less immediate way. As discussed at the beginning of Chapter 4, this analysis can be useful for instructors who aim to assist their students to move toward an awareness of "coherence-within-diversity" with regard to writing in the disciplines.

CHAPTER 6

Discoursal Alignment and Control in Political Science 409

Introduction

Chapter 5 interprets linguistic differences between the high- and low-performing Econ 432 writers in terms of how they construct what I refer to as a novice academic stance or a student stance. The former (more authoritative) stance is marked by greater facility with building an argument through an analytic framework (namely, the structure-conduct-performance framework for analyzing the industrial organization of a firm); constructing dialogic balance between high commitment and openness to alternative views; and positioning the reader as a fellow conversant in a disciplinary conversation. The less authoritative student stance is marked by less comfort with arguing from an analytic framework and more frequent use of wordings that position the reader as an evaluator or as a novice rather than as an interlocutor of equal status. These qualities are shown in the frequent personalizing moves (*in my opinion*), several references to the classroom discourse (*As we discussed in class*), and comparatively infrequent use of countering and evidentializing moves.

In light of these differences, this chapter pursues the question of whether a novice academic stance is also valued in students' writing in a very different discourse context, Political Science 409 (PS 409), which is an upper level course focused on 20th-century political thought. If so, what does that stance look like? Through what recurring linguistic means is it achieved and what epistemological practices and values does it reflect? This chapter also pursues questions about the types of interpersonal meanings in students' essays that fall within the course professor's conscious awareness, as revealed through his interview responses to questions about goals and assessment criteria for student writing, and what types of interpersonal meanings may lie below his conscious awareness.

I begin with an introduction to the epistemological practices of writing in political

theory, as gleaned from various course material and from interviews with the course professor, Peter, considering what the implications are for valued stancetaking in the course writing. I then discuss findings from the linguistic analysis of students' essays. To tease out patterns in effective and less than effective stancetaking, I coded the twenty PS 409 essays according to the eight Engagement categories used in Chapters 4 and 5 (see Appendix 5 for examples of each category from PS 409 essays). After determining the relative frequency (per 2,000 words) of the various options in each paper, I then averaged the results to test whether differential patterns emerged between, on the one hand, HG political theory essays and HG Econ 432 essays and, on the other hand, HG and LG PS 409 essays. The purpose of the first comparison is to test the degree to which Engagement resources are field specific: if the high-performers in the two courses use Engagement resources in different ways, then this may point to valued patterns in expanding and contracting the dialogical space that are context specific. The purpose of the second comparison is to test the degree to which Engagement resources are used differently by high- and low-performing students in PS 409. In addition to suggesting effective and less than effective stancetaking strategies in this discourse context, this second comparison can reveal the degree to which there is overlap between the two courses in terms of differences between successful and less successful writers. The question, in short, is whether the high-performing writers in both courses draw on Engagement resources in ways that the low-performers do not.

As I discuss shortly, findings from this analysis show that, while there are indeed field-specific patterns in what counts as an effective stance, as suggested by selection of Engagement resources and other linguistic patterns, there are also important points of overlap in what the high performing writers are doing in the two contexts. Both groups, for instance, construe discursual engagement or alignment by positively evaluating disciplinary concepts and by using stancetaking strategies that establish a sense of control over the unfolding argumentation. These points of overlap, I argue, have implications for identifying students' awareness of genre expectations and for talking with students and instructors about points of "coherence-within-diversity" (Thaiss & Zawacki, 2006) in writing undergraduate genres across the disciplines.

6.1. Writing in Political Theory: Epistemological Practices

As the course professor, Peter, explained in a Teagle interview,³⁹ “[political theorists’] objects of inquiry are texts,” and “writing in political theory means analyzing lines of argumentation, understanding precisely and explicitly what the premises are, critically engaging with those premises and examining how those premises may logically lead to certain conclusions.” While the focus of the writing is on political concepts, the “interpretative, argumentative, analytic” work that is involved “is no different necessarily from what it means to be a philosopher or even a scholar in literature.” In these fields, Peter explained, “the writing is the research, the writing is the thinking through.” This is in contrast to empirical work in political science or in other fields like economics, where examination of empirical data guides the argumentation. In the course syllabus, Peter presents the aims of political theory and the purposes of the course in this way:

Political theory is a type of social inquiry which studies arguments made in texts. The purpose of this course is to introduce you to some of the most important arguments made in the twentieth-century, and to teach you to interpret and analyze the texts and evaluate the arguments. Most of the steps require your own expressive skills, particularly your own writing. This means that while the knowledge objectives of the course are limited to the theories we study, mastering the skill objectives will make you prepared more broadly.

Designed to foster close examination of theoretical arguments, the 10-12 page final essay requires that students put various theoretical perspectives on a given problem into conversation with one another—ideally, in order to arrive at a new theoretical position.⁴⁰ The dialogic criterion of the essay assignment is illustrated in the following prompts (see Appendix 4 for a full list of essay prompts). As shown in the underlined phrases, students are expected to examine, explain, elaborate on, apply, and argue from others’ points of view.

³⁹ Peter, like Frank in Econ 432, participated in the Teagle-Spencer study on disciplinary thinking and writing. In that context, he was interviewed at the beginning of the term and was asked questions about what it means to think and write like a political theorist; goals for undergraduate student writing; difficulties undergraduate students have with political theory writing; and other topics related to the metacognitive interventions used in the research interventions.

⁴⁰ I say “ideally” here because, while the prompts do not necessarily ask for a new theoretical position, the work of bringing different theoretical perspectives into conversation with one another can lead to innovative positions.

- Prompt 2: Nancy Fraser argues that conventional “distributive” theories of justice cannot address contemporary problems related to the politics of “recognition.” Explain and elaborate on Fraser’s argument. Then consider how Rawls or Nussbaum would respond to Fraser’s view.
- Prompt 4: Consider both Adolf Eichmann’s trial and punishment in terms of Carl Schmitt and Michel Foucault. Discuss the trial from Foucault’s and/or Schmitt’s perspective as both an institutional process and public spectacle. You might focus your argument by considering the following aspects: Eichmann’s capture, the rationale for the trial, the trial itself as a kind of spectacle.
- Prompt 9: Using Young’s “five faces of oppression,” examine the power dynamics and relationships in one of the following: either Coetzee’s *Disgrace* or the film *Battle of Algiers*. Does Young’s account of oppression provide a useful schematic for understanding the issues that arise in this text? Using one of Fraser, Nussbaum, Rawls, or Foucault, describe how one of these other theories adds other dimensions or perspectives to the analysis Young provides.

Clearly, these and other prompts call for close engagement with multiple views and voices. They require that students read so closely that they can interpret how one theorist would respond to another, or how one or more theorists would interpret an historical event. This sustained heteroglossic engagement has important and complex implications for what counts as an effective stance in the course writing. As revealed through my analysis below, since students are building arguments by constructing *theoretical* conversations, a valued stance in the course writing is somewhat different from the empirically grounded researcher’s stance evident in the high-performing economics essays. In particular, an authoritative stance in this more theoretical context operates as an engaged and sympathetic theoretical guide, one who not only offers commentary and evaluations and asserts propositions, but also weighs and balances different perspectives and juxtaposes them with one another so that the reader can clearly see points of connection. In other words, a valued stance is suspending of judgment and in control of a theoretical conversation. This stance corresponds to what is referred to in the SFL literature on voice theory as an “adjudicator voice” (Coffin, 2002, Derewianka, 2009; Martin & White, 2005): an authorial presence that appears in the text to offer reasoned judgments of others’ positions.

In constructing this adjudicator voice or theoretical guide stance, it seems likely that

the PS 409 writers would make even more moves than their peers in Econ 432 to open up space for negotiating points with the reader. Such a prediction would follow from Hyland (2005a), which shows that research articles in the field of philosophy use more hedges, boosters, and explicit reader engagement devices than research articles in any of the other seven fields in his corpus (philosophy being the only humanities field represented). It would also follow from North (2005), which shows that student writers coming from the humanities used a greater number of interpersonal themes in their writing of the same assignment than students from science backgrounds.

In light of these predictions, results of the Engagement analysis below are somewhat surprising. With the exception of ‘attribute’ moves, the political theorists use fewer Engagement resources than the economists. Even the top-performing political theorists are both less dialogically expansive and contractive in their stancetaking. As I discuss results of this comparative analysis below, I try to understand why the PS 409 writers may be using more monoglossic assertions in their argumentation. More generally, I try to understand how this differential pattern may bear on what it means to argue with authority in this disciplinary context.

6.2. Quantitative Patterns of Engagement Resources in the PS 409 Essays v. Econ 432 Essays

As discussed above, the Econ 432 and PS 409 essay assignments are closely comparable. Students in both courses are expected to develop an argumentative stance while working closely with others’ ideas and positions. The comparable discourse contexts makes an Engagement analysis ideal for the purpose of teasing out dialogic patterns that may be discipline specific, as well as ones that span across the two contexts—specifically in terms of what the high-performing writers (in contrast to the low-performing writers) may be doing in terms of stance.

Results of the disciplinary comparison are displayed in Table 6.1. These show that the high-performing political theorists use fewer Engagement resources than their colleagues in Econ 432. The total number of heteroglossic options is higher in the PS 409 corpus, but this is only because of the vastly more frequent use of ‘attribute’ moves. If attributions were omitted from the calculation, the total number of heteroglossic options

for PS 409 would be 37.6 per 2,000 words, compared to 48.6 in Econ 432. The more frequent use of attributions is not surprising given that the political theory writers are critically comparing others' arguments, which requires that they carefully explain and elaborate on others' views, using frequent quotations, summaries, and paraphrases. More surprising perhaps is that the PS 409 writers use fewer of every other heteroglossic option, right down the list. As a whole, these writers appear to be, while not vastly less, steadily less heteroglossically diverse in their stancetaking than the Econ 432 essays. Furthermore, they employ a significantly higher number of monoglossic statements, or bare assertions.

	Avg. frequency in 5 HG Economics Essays, per 2,000 words	Avg. frequency in 10 HG Political Theory Essays, per 2,000 words
MONOGLOSSIC OPTIONS, i.e., Bare assertions	35.0	53.2
HETEROGLOSSIC OPTIONS	56.5	67.3
CONTRACTIVE OPTIONS	30.8	24.1
disclaim	18.8	17.9
⇒ counter	⇒15.0	⇒14.2
⇒ deny	⇒3.9	⇒3.7
proclaim	11.6	6.2
⇒ endorse	⇒5.5	⇒1.9
⇒ pronounce	⇒4.6	⇒2.8
⇒ concur	⇒1.5	⇒1.5
EXPANSIVE OPTIONS	25.7	43.2
⇒ entertain	⇒17.8	⇒13.5
⇒ attribute	⇒7.9	⇒29.7

Table 6.1. Engagement resources in PS 409 and Econ 432 essays

As shown in Table 6.2, the 10 high-graded PS 409 essays are more heteroglossically diverse than the 10 low-graded PS 409 essays. They use more instances of 'disclaim:counter', 'disclaim:deny', 'proclaim:endorse', and 'entertain' in their essays, and they use fewer instances of 'attribute'. What this suggests, as in the case of Econ 432, is that the low-performing PS 409 writers are less committed and less dialogically engaged in their argumentation than the high-performing PS 409 writers. Other differences will be discussed below.

	Avg. frequency in 10 HG PS 409 Essays, per 2,000 words	Avg. frequency in 10 LG PS 409 Essays, per 2,000 words
MONOGLOSSIC OPTIONS, i.e., ‘bare assert’	53.2	46.7
HETEROGLOSSIC OPTIONS	67.3	65.6
• CONTRACTIVE OPTIONS	24.1	17.8
disclaim	17.9	12.8
⇒ counter	⇒14.2	⇒10.3
⇒ deny	⇒3.7	⇒2.5
proclaim	6.2	5.0
⇒ endorse	⇒1.9	⇒1.3
⇒ pronounce	⇒2.8	⇒3.1
⇒ concur	⇒1.5	⇒0.6
• EXPANSIVE OPTIONS	43.2	47.8
⇒ entertain	⇒13.5	⇒10.2
⇒ attribute	⇒29.7	⇒37.6

Table 6.2. Engagement resources in HG and LH PS 409 essays

In sum, the Econ 432 writers appear to be more highly committed in their argumentation than their colleagues in PS 409. They employ more contractive moves, including ‘disclaim:counter’, ‘disclaim:deny’, ‘proclaim:endorse’, and ‘proclaim:pronounce’. They also employ more ‘entertain’ moves, suggesting greater effort to open up room for negotiating alternative views. The differences in relative frequencies are not great, but they are consistent. The Econ 432 writers use more of every Engagement option, except for ‘proclaim:concur’ (which is evenly infrequent in both groups) and ‘attribute’, which, as mentioned, is not surprising given the need to summarize theoretical positions.

In terms of overlap between the high-performing groups (i.e., “coherence-within-diversity”), there is remarkable similarity in the types of differences between the HG and LG essays. In both courses, the high-performers use more instances of ‘disclaim:counter’, ‘disclaim:deny’, ‘proclaim:endorse’, and ‘entertain’, and they use fewer instances of ‘attribute’. This means the high performers in the two courses are doing similar things in terms of their use of five of the eight Engagement options. They do not do similar things

with regard to ‘proclaim:pronounce’, ‘proclaim:concur’, and ‘monogloss’. While the high-graded Econ 432 essays use more instances of ‘proclaim:pronounce’ and ‘proclaim:concur’ than the low graded essays, the reverse is true in PS 409. However, the differences in these two relative frequencies are minimal. More significantly, while the LG Econ 432 essays use more ‘monoglossic’ resources than the high-graded essays, the reverse is true in PS 409: the 10 HG political theory essays use more ‘bare asserts’ than the 10 LG ones, and in general the political theory writers use significantly more ‘bare asserts’ than the economics writers (53.2 per 2,000 words versus just 35.0).

The greater use of ‘bare assert’ in PS 409 suggests that highly “undialogized” propositions may not be as disvalued in the PS 409 essays as they seem to be in Econ 432. But it also suggests a need to examine these moves more closely to better understand how they are operating rhetorically in the PS 409 essays. My analysis below reveals a number of very important uses of these assertions for constructing an authoritative stance in the discourse context.

One general take-away from these quantitative findings is that the weaker writers in both PS 409 and Econ 432 appear to be less committed and less dialogically engaged in their argumentation. They less frequently counter and deny alternative points of view (suggesting the default stance is less contrastive), and they less frequently entertain dialogic alternatives (suggesting they are doing less work to offer solidarity bids to readers who are not already aligned with their points of view). Corresponding to this pattern, the weaker writers in both contexts use more attributions. Specifically, attributions are used in Econ 7.9 times per 2,000 words in the HG essays and 9.3 times in the LG essays, and in PS they are used 29.7 times per 2,000 words in the HG essays and 37.6 in the LG essays. While the differences in these counts are not vast, they point to a shared pattern between the two contexts.

A second general take away, a rather straightforward one, is that the weaker writers in both courses make fewer averrals and more attributions. The averral/attribution distinction (Sinclair 1988; Tadros, 1993) has been taken up in various approaches to functional language analysis (e.g., Hunston, 2000; Macken-Horarik & Morgan, 2011; Thompson, 1996), and it is useful for understanding how writers manage the inclusion of external voices in their texts while putting forth their own views. The distinction between

the two functions, as Macken-Horarik & Morgan (2011) explain, it that “with averral, the writer takes responsibility for the message while, with attribution, the charge is put ‘in someone else’s mouth’” (p.138). What this means in terms of Engagement is that all formulations that are treated as ‘monoglossic’ and ‘heteroglossic’ (except for ‘attribute’) are cases where the writer is averring. The level of writer commitment to the averral varies with regard to each Engagement option, but nevertheless the writer takes responsibility for the proposition (either explicitly, as in the case of “I argue that,” or implicitly, as in “Research shows”). With ‘attribute’ moves, on the other hand, the writer attributes responsibility externally. As shown in Table 6.3, the weaker writers in both courses use more attributions and fewer averrals than the stronger writers.

	5 HG essays in economics	5 LG essays economics	10 HG essays political theory	10 LG essays political theory
Attributions	7.9	9.3	29.7	35.6
Averral	83.6	72.5	90.8	74.7

Table 6.3. Attributions vs. averrals in PS 409 and Econ 432 essays

While making many attributions could be considered a positive feature of undergraduate writing—especially in light of the risk of appearing quick to judge, under-researched, or under-informed—it appears that the weaker writers in both of these courses may be relinquishing too much responsibility to external sources and thereby losing authority over their own argumentation. They may be losing the “conversation” in terms of their own participation. In argumentative genres that call for critical analysis of others’ views, it is important that the writer give due attention to the views under analysis by summarizing and quoting, but it is also important to maintain authority by elaborating on those views, offering suggestions, raising questions, making assertions, and proffering critical evaluations. The risk in making too few of these moves is to allow the authorial voice to become drowned out by the voices of others, which is what Tang (2009) found in her analysis of weaker student writers’ use of Engagement resources.

Another way to conceptualize the difference reflected in Table 6.3 is to say that, in order to control a conversation, the writer must “speak up” and make his or her presence known. As I show below, making moves to offer evaluations, juxtapose competing points of view, and pull the reader through the discussion is largely what it means to make one’s

analytic and evaluative presence known and assume an authoritative stance in PS 409 writing. Certainly, mere presence and explicitness of the authorial presence—sheer number of averrals over attributions—is not the whole story. Strategic modulation of authorial commitment and use of ‘counter’ moves is also important in PS 409, as it is in Econ 432, and my analysis below shows how use of these resources enable the stronger writers in class to adopt a novice academic stance in their writing. My discussion begins with disciplinary differences in use of Engagement resources and then turns to HG-LG differences in PS 409. Along the way I make points of connection between the two disciplinary contexts in terms of what counts as a novice academic stance and student stance.

6.3. Stancetaking Differences in PS 409 and Econ 432

As shown in the quantitative findings above, the PS 409 writers appear to be less dialogically engaged in their stancetaking. This is shown most clearly in their more frequent use of undialogized assertions, and in their less frequent use of ‘proclaim:endorse’, ‘proclaim:pronounce’, and ‘entertain’. Why do the political theory writers use language that conveys less dialogical engagement?

This is a pertinent question in light of the dialogic nature of the essay prompts and in light of findings from Hyland (2005a) and North (2005), which would lead us to expect greater persuasive effort among the political theory writers. Below I argue that the option of ‘bare assert’ is actually a complex category of rhetorical moves in the PS 409 essays, and I propose the terms ‘orienting assertions’, ‘elaborative assertions’, and ‘associative assertions’⁴¹ to refer to three important types of statements used in PS 409 that do not employ Engagement resources.

6.3.1. Degree of Dialogic Engagement

Illustrating the greater effort on the part of the Econ 432 writers to open up room for negotiating alternative views, the following two excerpts from Econ 432 and PS 409 essays display fairly typical examples of stancetaking patterns in the two essay contexts. These are from concluding sections by high-performing writers, Tim (in 1a) and Elisa (in

⁴¹ I thank John Swales for his suggestion of the term “associative assertion.”

1b).⁴² Tim's conclusion uses a wider range of both contractive and expansive resources than Elisa's conclusion. The result is a more dialogically engaged style of stancetaking in Tim's writing. Below I discuss some points of difference between the two excerpts and then try to account for them in terms of genre differences. (Contractive wordings are underlined and expansive ones boxed. Other related wordings discussed below are in *bold italics*.)

(1a) In conclusion, the appropriate remedy would be not to intervene but rather allow the market to operate under supervision at this point. This is to suggest that as of now Utah Pie Company lacks *significant* evidence that the defendants are poised to engage in a predatory pricing scheme. However *note that* if the defendants were to take future steps towards collusion that Utah Pie Company would have a valid claim under the Robinson-Patman Act, and should bring suit at that time. If this “wait and see” remedy were introduced, *we* could conclude from the history of the frozen pie market in Salt Lake City following Utah Pie Co. that it is clear the defendants were not able to engage in collusive behavior, and that they did not stand to gain from Utah Pie Co's downfall.

The Utah Pie Case is interesting because it clearly stands as a *stain* on the Supreme Court's anti-competitive decision-making history. The resulting effects of Utah Pie Co. actually exiting the market due to its own mismanagement stands in *stark* contrast to the harm the court viewed from its exit. It proved not to limit competition in the market *at all*. The case suggests that in *our* free-market system, the court should err on the side of caution when thinking of interceding to protect small business. Firms are *always* free to bring suit at a later date if circumstances have changed, and in situations such as this the best course of action is to wait and examine at a later date. (Tim, HG5, Econ 432, S105-114)

(1b) David Lurie is a flawed character. Fictional as he may be, the realities played out throughout Coetzee's *Disgrace* mirror realities in our own society. Lurie is blind to the inherent privileges associated with his agent identities: he is a white, heterosexual, professional and able-bodied male. He finds himself unable to cope when these agent identities begin to shift and change. However, though he becomes temporarily disabled and his age renders him dependent upon his nonprofessional daughter, he still maintains *significant* agency through his white male identities. This in itself is *very* telling of contemporary society: oppression and injustice find root in these social-structural ambiguities. Different for each and every individual, the tensions between privilege and oppression are the root of injustice. Fraser

⁴² Peter had singled out Elisa's essay in another context as "easily the top essay in the class" because "it does real political theory." The context for this praise is Peter's nomination of Elisa's essay for an upper-level writing prize. He elaborated in this way: "Even though the title of the paper suggests a review or, at best, a compare and contrast, it is far more than that. By exploring the dynamic nature of oppression in Coetzee's novel ... [Elisa] does real political theory in the paper: she makes a conceptually sophisticated argument about how oppressed groups come into being, disappear, and conflict with one another."

complicates the discussion by bringing economic and redistributive notions into the mix, and through this one hopes change can begin to take form. However, Young’s “five faces of oppression” successfully uncover the ugly realities held within social and contemporary society. (Elisa, HG1, PS 409, S145-155)

Compared to Elisa’s writing, Tim’s uses Engagement resources liberally, as seen in the greater number of highlighted wordings. While Elisa’s conclusion uses several ‘counter’ moves (*Fictional as he may be; However, though; still; However*) to pull the reader over to her view as well as one ‘entertain’ move (*one hopes change can begin to take form*), Tim’s uses a wider range of Engagement resources, including:

- ‘disclaim:deny’ (*not to intervene; they did not stand to gain*);
- ‘disclaim:counter’ (e.g., *but rather; However*);
- ‘proclaim:pronounce’ (*it is clear; clearly*);
- ‘proclaim:endorse’ (*proved*);
- ‘entertain:delimit’ (*as of now; if ... would*);
- ‘entertain:evidentialize’ (*The case suggests*);
- ‘entertain:postulate’ (*we could conclude*); and
- ‘attribute’ (“*wait and see*”).

In addition, Tim’s conclusion is more explicitly reader-engaged. It uses a directive (*Note that ...*) and reader-inclusive pronouns, *we* and *our* (*we could conclude; our free-market*). Elisa’s conclusion, in contrast, is consistently more distanced in its stance toward the reader. While it uses several Appraisal resources of Graduation,⁴³ including *significant* and *very*, to ramp up its direct and assertive style, Tim’s uses even more of these, including *significant, stain, stark, at all, and always*. In general, Tim’s conclusion is more overtly committed to its assertions, seeming to take greater pains to engage and persuade the reader.

These stance differences appear to follow from the nature of the argumentation in the two courses. In Econ 432, the writers are making policy recommendations based on empirical data, recommendations that usually run counter to the line of reasoning used by the courts. These writers therefore tend to proffer their interpretations of evidence and their recommendations carefully, showing respect for the Justices’ opinions and allowing

⁴³ As a sub-system of Appraisal, Graduation tracks meanings related to raising or lowering the force and focus of propositions (in terms of intensity, quantity, preciseness, and proto-typicality).

room for other views in light of new evidence or alternative events, as seen in this sentence: *The case suggests that in our free-market system, the court should err on the side of caution when thinking of interceding to protect small business.* At the same time, these writers are trying hard to persuade the reader to accept their recommendations, making moves to explicitly acknowledge the reader and pull him or her over to their side by using contractive ‘disclaim’ and ‘proclaim’ moves, as well as high-force Graduation resources (*significant, stain, stark, at all, and always*) to reinforce the authoritativeness. Compared to the PS 409 writers, they are more explicitly intervening into the text, both to make careful interpretations and to steer the reader along through the evidence.

In contrast, the PS 409 writers are making theoretical or interpretative arguments rather than normative ones. They are not trying to convince the reader of what should happen in the world but rather making assertions about points of connection and divergence in others’ arguments, as well as applications of theoretical concepts to political problems. It is possible that, within this context, there is more of a writer-reader contract which states implicitly that assertions are always negotiable. If assertions are understood to be negotiable—always up for close analysis and critical questioning—then the writer is free to proceed in a comparatively undialogized or monoglossic manner on a sentence level, as seen in these and other sentences from Elisa’s paragraph above: *David Lurie is a flawed character; Lurie is blind to the inherent privileges associated with his agent identities; the tensions between privilege and oppression are the root of injustice; Young’s “five faces of oppression” successfully uncover the ugly realities held within social and contemporary society.*

If, in other words, the argumentative context of the PS 409 essay is understood to be a dialogic space in and of itself—a space where views are discussed, juxtaposed, and evaluated—then Elisa does not need to actively construct a dialogic space as much as the Econ 432 writers do, as the latter context may be better understood as a place for putting forth a strong, coherent argument based on evidence about the world (rather than as a site for discussion). This difference may be why Elisa and other top-performing PS 409 writers do not as frequently modulate their commitment to assertions as the top-performing Econ 432 writers: they know their interpretations are negotiable. In the next section, I consider in more detail how undialogized assertions are functioning in PS 409,

and I suggest that they do have an important dialogic function in regulating the unfolding conversation on a macro level.

6.3.2. Use of Bare Assertions

In previous Appraisal analyses of student writing (Derewianka, 2009; Swain, 2009; Wu, 2007), bare assertions are sometimes interpreted as strategies that less skilled writers “resort to” when they do not control discursive resources for arguing and engaging with others’ views in more sophisticated ways. Wu (2007), for example, finds in her corpus of argumentative essays written by first year L2 writers in geography that the low-rated essays use significantly more bare assertions than the high-rated ones. As examples, excerpt 2a is a thesis statement from an essay that received a low grade from the course instructor and excerpt 2b is one that received a high grade.

(2a) Television has helped to shrink the relative distance between people and countries.

(2b) Therefore, a tourist landscape with an element of transportation will probably tend to have a stronger sense of globalization than a similar landscape without any relation to transportation.

Wu’s analysis is that statement 2b “allows for dialogic diversity” through the use of the ‘entertain’ move (*probably tend to*), while statement 2a “denies dialogic diversity” (p. 260) by formulating the thesis statement as a bare assertion. Based on such comparisons, Wu suggests that, “those utterances that employ Engagement resources acknowledge the dialogic potential of the utterance, while those that do not do so thereby deny or ignore the dialogic nature of the utterance inherent in the communicative social context” (p. 257-8). Presumably because the low-rated essays in Wu’s corpus use more bare assertions, Wu tends to cast these formulations in generally negative terms: they “deny or ignore” the existence of alternative views; they do not acknowledge “the potential for dialogic diversity.”

Over-reliance on bare assertions, to be sure, can be a problem for many novice writers. This is especially so when the genre they are writing calls for carefully expanding and contracting the dialogical space to negotiate evaluative positions with the

reader. But casting all bare assertions as rhetorically suspect, as Wu's characterization tends to do, overlooks ways that these formulations can be used in specific genres and discourse contexts in sophisticated ways to contribute to an authoritative stance. The writers in Wu's corpus, as shown in 2a and 2b above, are making statements about causal relationships in the world (e.g., *Television has helped to shrink the relative distance between people and countries*), while the writers in PS 409 are making interpretative and theoretical statements (e.g., *The tensions between privilege and oppression are the root of injustice*). The former context, which is perhaps more comparable to Econ 432 in that the writers are making empirically-based arguments, calls for explicit signaling of room for other possible views. By comparison, it may be, as previously suggested, that the PS 409 essay is understood as more of an implicitly dialogic space. If so, monoglossically worded statements are more allowable and, in some cases, perhaps more effective for establishing authority over the dialogue.

In addition to this PS 409-Econ 432 epistemological difference, the precise nature of the proposition being forwarded—and not just the disciplinary genre—is important to consider when determining the appropriate use of dialogic engagement. The following two statements, for instance, are categorically asserted, but they would likely operate in very different ways in the context of PS 409:

(3a) Young's argument is superior to Fraser's. (imaginary sentence)

(3b) Young provides a useful schematic for understanding oppression both in Coetzee's *Disgrace* and contemporary society. (Elisa, HG1, S139)

While 3a might be characteristic of weaker student argumentation, there is not anything rhetorically immature about statement 3b. Its assertive and evaluative stance (*a useful schematic for understanding*) indexes a writer who is confidently in control of the analytic and evaluative expectations of political theory argumentation. Indeed, close examination of bare assertions in the HG essays reveals at least three ways that they operate rhetorically to navigate the reader between theoretical positions and thereby contribute toward an authoritative stance. I discuss these in the next section as three types of bare assertions.

6.3.3. Three Types of Bare Assertions in PS 409

The three types include orienting assertions, elaborative assertions, and associative assertions. I show that the last type is most important for constructing a novice academic stance in the course writing, one marked by critical distance, engagement with theoretical constructs, and dialogic control. (The three types of assertions are bolded first time mentioned.)

First, **orienting assertions** work to orient the reader to a text or set of ideas, which is then summarized through a series of ‘attribute’ moves. As seen in the italicized sentences in examples 4a and 4b, these assertions are typically free of all Appraisal resources (including Engagement, Attitude, and Graduation), as they work simply to prepare the ground for the ‘attribute’ moves that follow.

(4a) *Consistent with social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, Iris Marion Young’s Justice and the Politics of Difference explores contemporary injustice through social-structural forms of oppression.* Modern “dominant political discourse” often uses ... (Elisa, HG1, S1-2)

(4b) *In Discipline & Punish, Foucault takes the reader from the times of public executions to the modern prison system.* He argues that ... (Nicholas, HG2, S38-39)

Second, **elaborative assertions** work to reformulate or extend attributed views in the students’ own words. This type of assertion is often signaled through wordings like *in this sense, this means, and in others words* which have been referred to in the metadiscourse literature as “code glosses” (Vande Kopple, 1985; Hyland, 2000, 2005c). Like orienting assertions, elaborative assertions also tend to be free of Appraisal resources. In 5a and 5b below, the italicized elaborative assertions work to comment on attributions that have just been made.

(5a) In it’s⁴⁴ most concise definition, a social group is, “a collective of persons differentiated from at least one other group by cultural forms, practices, or way of life.” *In this sense, social groups are an indication of social relations: group identification exists in relation to the existence of a counter-group.* (Elisa, HG1, S9-10)

(5b) Fraser contends that the traditional egalitarian theories were developed when

⁴⁴ As previously noted, all errors and typos have been preserved in their original form.

class interest was the political focus. *This means that they were designed with socioeconomic injustices in mind, and attempted to remedy these injustices through political or economic restructuring.* (Ethan, HG3, S13-14)

Both orienting assertions and elaborative assertions enable the writer to explain others' positions without "just summarizing."

Third, **associative assertions** are arguably the most important type of undialogized assertion in the PS 409 essays for establishing a controlled, authoritative stance. Associative assertions enable writers to make associations between different concepts or theoretical perspectives, and frequently they are infused with Appraisal values of Attitude and Graduation. These sentences, as I discuss below, also play an important organizational role in the PS 409 essay for moving from one argumentative stage to the next. Excerpts 6a-6i are examples of associative assertions. (Appraisal resources of Attitude are in **bold type**; Appraisal resources of Graduation are in **BOLD SMALL CAPS**; associative verbs are underlined; and associative verbs that carry implicit Appraisal values are **bold underlined**.)

- (6a) As a normative theorist, Rawls' approach differs **GREATLY** from Fraser's. (Ethan, HG3, S77)
- (6b) This claim by the Argentine government matches up with Schmitt's idea of a sovereign state. (Eric, HG4, S46)
- (6c) Foucault's operational definition of ethics **provides** a description of what society does. (Emma, HG5, S115)
- (6d) Gramsci's ideal of the "public spirit" **supplies** the viewpoint to Weber's suggestion of a political calling. (Kurt, HG6, S26)
- (6e) Young's definition of oppression as being multifaceted is **useful** in explaining **SPECIFICALLY** what forms of oppression are at play in the book and **EXACTLY** how different groups are placed at a disadvantage in regards to the dominant group. (Nicole, HG7, S32)
- (6f) Rawls's concept of justice as fairness **provides a solution** to the social and economic injustice that Fanon and his race suffer. (Sarah, HG8, S29)
- (6g) [Rawls's] theory has **MANY advantages** including **ensuring equal opportunity to basic rights**, **providing motivation for advancement**, and **limiting the inequality of the disadvantaged**. (Sarah, HG8, S31)

(6h) George Orwell’s essays **reveal** how people outside the political establishment, individuals acting alone as well as groups of laymen, make ethical political decisions. (Richard, HG9, S9)

(6i) The **important** aspect of Walzer’s description of dirty hands (as is true with several other theorists) is the distinction between an immoral action and an action undertaken with dirty hands. (Sebastian, HG10, S30)

These sentences function to juxtapose perspectives, evaluate texts and theoretical concepts, and identify questions and complications in the discourse. Associative assertions like these were coded as ‘bare assert’ in my Engagement analysis because they employ minimal or no use of Engagement resources to engage with dialogic alternatives.⁴⁵ In sentence 6a, for instance, Ethan does not open up dialogic space for negotiating his assertion that *Rawls’ approach differs greatly from Fraser’s*. He categorically asserts this proposition as true.

As seen in 6a-6i, associative assertions in the PS 409 corpus frequently employ Appraisal values of Attitude. Eric’s sentence in 6b is different from the rest in that it is Appraisal free: it uses the associative verbal phrase *matches up with* to categorically assert a connection between two different arguments. The other eight examples illustrate how resources of Graduation and Attitude, specifically ‘appreciation’,⁴⁶ are used as the writers positively evaluate the usefulness or significance of the ideas under examination. In these sentences, as with the PS 409 corpus as a whole, ‘appreciation’ values are sometimes explicitly inscribed in the text, for example Young’s definition as *useful* in 6e, Rawls’s theory as having *many advantages* in 6g, and Walzer’s description as having an *important aspect* in 6i. At other times, ‘appreciation’ values are more implicitly invoked. For example, in 6f *Rawls’s concept of justice as fairness* is conceptualized as *providing a*

⁴⁵ In 6d, Kurt does use a scare quote (“*public spirit*”) to trigger an ‘attribute’ move, which is reflected in my quantification of Engagement resources, but my focus is on the undialogized verb *supplies*, which I coded as a ‘bare assert’. Likewise, in 6i, Sebastian uses a parenthetical ‘concur’ move—(*as is true with several other theorists*)—which is reflected in my quantification of Engagement resources, but my focus is on the rest of the clause, which I coded as a ‘bare assert’ because it does not raise or lower commitment to the main proposition *that the important aspect of Walzer’s description of dirty hands is the distinction between an immoral action and an action undertaken with dirty hands*.

⁴⁶ As discussed in Chapter 3, Appraisal models three sub-types of Attitude: ‘Affect’ encompasses meanings related to emotions and affective responses; ‘judgment’ relates to the explicit or implicit (and positive or negative) evaluation of human behavior; ‘appreciation’ relates to the evaluation of objects and products by reference to aesthetic principles like *importance, significance, usefulness, and clarity*.

solution, which is a process that is valued in academic (among many other) discourses, and similarly in 6c *Foucault's operational definition of ethics* is conceptualized as *providing a description of what society does*. In both instances, the verb *provides* carries positive discourse prosody, as things that are “provided” are understood as good things, like *information, evidence, opportunities, insight, support, access*,⁴⁷ etc. *Reveal* and *supplies* in 6d and 6h carry similarly positive meanings. Along with explicit and implicit resources of ‘appreciation’, Graduation resources of ‘force’ (like *greatly* and *many*) and ‘focus’ (like *specifically* and *exactly*) enable the writers to construct a stance of discursal engagement. They index writers who are engaged with the theoretical discourse.

What can also be seen in these sentences is frequent use of nominalizations, which are working in cooperation with the resources of positive ‘appreciation’. Specifically, the nominalizations help the writers to package up discursive processes like claiming, defining, and arguing into “things” or constructs, which can then be moved around the text, juxtaposed with other constructs, and appraised, including *Foucault's operational definition of ethics*, *Rawls's concept of justice as fairness*, and *Young's definition of oppression as being multifaceted*. These constructs are then construed as *offering, providing, supplying, and revealing* things, processes that carry positive discourse prosody and thereby index a kind of authorial “appreciation” for (or engagement with) the constructs. (I discuss nominalization patterns in greater detail below when I turn to differences between the HG and LG PS 409 essays.)

In sum, while orienting, elaborative, and associative assertions are not dialogized, they do index a high level of analytic work and engagement with the theoretical discourse. In this sense, they are not the same as the categorical assertions that Wu (2007) critiques as “denying dialogic diversity.” They can, in fact, be seen as performing important dialogic and argumentative work by bringing views directly into conversation with one another and evaluating their usefulness. In this sense, they function to regulate the dialogue between thinkers by assertively making connections for the reader, e.g., *This claim by the Argentine government matches up with Schmitt's idea of a sovereign state* and evaluating them with respect to one another, e.g., *Rawls's concept of justice as*

⁴⁷ These are six among the top ten nouns following the verb *supplies* on the Corpus of Contemporary American English (Davies, 2008).

fairness provides a solution to the social and economic injustice that Fanon and his race suffer. For this reason, they are instrumental in constructing the stance of an authoritative theoretical guide.

6.3.4. Bare Assertions and Construction of an Evaluative Stance

The assertion types discussed above, especially associative assertions, index writers who value the intellectual affordances of the theory they are reading. Emma seems to value Foucault's operational definition of ethics because it *provides a description of what society does*, and Sarah seems to value Rawls's concept of justice as fairness because it *provides a solution to the social and economic injustice that Fanon and his race suffer*. The cumulative rhetorical effect of these evaluative/analytic stance maneuvers is clearly at play in excerpt 7 from the end of Elisa's essay:

(7) ... The realities raised by Fraser **offer important complexities** to Young's political discourse. Young **provides a useful schematic** for understanding oppression both in Coetzee's *Disgrace* and contemporary society; yet, one hopes to go beyond simply acknowledging that social-structural oppression exists and begin exploring options for improvement. Recognizing oppression is a **crucial step towards change**, yet it is not the only step. (Elisa, HG1, S138-140)

In this excerpt, the verbs *offer* and *provides* reinforce positive 'appreciation' meanings that are directly inscribed through the phrases *important complexities*, *useful schematic*, and *crucial step toward change*. Constructing this stance of discursal engagement or alignment may be especially important in student coursework genres that require critical analysis of concepts gleaned from course lectures or readings. Once such alignment is established, the writer is "free" to push back critically without coming off as rash—without seeming to be making claims that are "beyond the scope of their experience," as one instructor in Woodward-Kron's (2003) study remarked with regard to undergraduate writers who were "too critical" of published journal articles (p. 28). As this same instructor elaborated, "You can't do everything in a research study. And the bottom line is that people out there who know a lot more about this subject than you or I do reviewed this for it to get into the journal in the first place. So it must be reasonably ok" (qtd. in Woodward-Kron, 2003, p. 28). It is possible that this instructor would have responded

more favorably to his or her students' critical evaluations if they were preceded by discursal alignment moves like Elisa's. Elisa accomplishes a critically aligned stance when she moves on to evaluate Young's work as *simply acknowledging that social-structural oppression exists* without proposing *options for improvement*.

The way Peter characterized this rhetorical quality in Elisa's essay is as being "critical" "but without saying, 'Therefore, Iris Young is full of shit. She doesn't know what she's talking about.'" Peter characterized Elisa's essay as both "critical" and "sympathetic" toward Young's typology.

Control is another key factor in the success of Elisa's essay, as I discuss below, and this is important to note, as there is a risk in PS 409 writing (and related contexts) in building a stance that is read as too critical or else too "appreciative." An overly appreciative stance could come off as insincere gushing about the "wonders" of the course readings. An overly critical stance, on the other hand, might suggest a lack of considered engagement. As discussed in Chapter 2, Thaiss and Zawacki (2006) speak of high-performing students who have learned to merge a stance that conveys "carefully reasoned arguments" with a stance that conveys "deeply felt individual passion(s)" (p. 114). A comparable kind of balance is achieved by students like Elisa, who merge a stance of critical distance from the texts under examination and sympathetic engagement with those texts. This notion of balance corresponds to a similar challenge raised by Soliday (2011), as mentioned in Chapter 1, of how to "take your own position" with coming off as "biased" (p. 39-40).

To sum up this section, there is a significant quantitative difference between the PS 409 and Econ 432 essays in terms of the use of 'bare assert' moves (which are used 53.2 times per 2,000 words in HG PS 409 corpus and just 35.0 times in HG Econ 432 corpus). By focusing on the three different functions of these undialogized formulations, however, I have provided evidence that there is an important difference between the two argumentative contexts: the PS 409 writers are, in a sense, freer to put forth unmodulated or undialogized assertions because they are not arguing from empirical evidence but from their own interpretative frameworks, which may be understood in the discourse context as already open to other theoretical possibilities.

I now examine how Engagement resources are used differently by the high- and

low-performing students in PS 409. In addition to suggesting effective and less than effective stancetaking strategies, this analysis reveals overlap between the two course contexts in terms of differences between successful and less successful writers and, more specifically, in terms of what it means to construct the stance of a novice academic.

6.4. The “Novice Academic” and the “Student” in PS 409: Differences Between High- and Low-Performing Writers

As shown in Table 6.2 above, the ten high-graded PS 409 essays are more heteroglossically diverse than the ten low-graded PS 409 essays. In particular, they use more instances of ‘disclaim:counter’, ‘disclaim:deny’, ‘proclaim:endorse’, and ‘entertain’ in their essays, and they use fewer instances of ‘attribute’. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the same basic difference holds between the HG and LG essays in Econ 432. Through strategic use of contrastive pairs (e.g., ‘entertain’ + ‘counter’ and ‘deny’ + ‘counter’) the Econ writers are more consistently able to engage with anticipated reader perspectives and regulate the dialogic space in a controlled and assertive manner.

While the Econ 432 writers use ‘disclaim’ and ‘entertain’ resources to negotiate meanings with the reader, the HG political theory essays more often use these resources to call attention to problematic aspects of others’ arguments. By indicating shortcomings in one theorist’s view or with a certain concept, they adopt a critical stance, and this critical stance works to motivate the need to transition from one concept (or one thinker’s view) to another. Identification of a problem, in other words, motivates the need for a solution, which is offered in the form of a new set of ideas. In this way, recurring configurations of Engagement resources operate to realize problematization moves that serve a macro-rhetorical function, specifically to move from one argument stage to the next in a conceptually coherent and dialogically engaged manner.

6.4.1. Problematization and Dialogic Control

To engage in problematization in a rhetorically effective manner, the high-performing writers draw on Engagement resources of ‘disclaim’ and ‘entertain’. These resources enable the writers to construct stances that are critical yet measured. 8a-8d below illustrate this measured critical stance. In 8a, Nicholas problematizes an aspect of

Foucault's argument as a way to transition into a discussion of Habermas. His stance in this excerpt is critical, but it is also highly engaged dialogically. (The reader-engagement devices are underlined, and lexicogrammatical signals of Engagement resources are in **bold italics**.)

(8a) ***If*** what Foucault says is true – that we are not autonomous and we are no longer the agencies of our own actions [ENTERTAIN] – should we abandon the idea of a human reasoning, able to reflect over choices? My answer is ***no*** [PROCLAIM:PRONOUNCE]. ***I do not deny*** that we all have notions of what is right and wrong behavior and many of these notions are ***without a doubt*** acquired through socialization [PROCLAIM:CONCUR]. Some of this behavior is irrational in the sense that we act it out without justifying the inner logic of it [ASSERT]. To not pick our noses in public is ***certainly not*** a behavior sprung from our reason per se [PROCLAIM:CONCUR + DISCLAIM:DENY] ***but*** something we are disciplined not to do and we understand (at least more or less) that it would be an inappropriate behavior. ***However*** we would hardly accept that every action is strictly a result of socialization [DISCLAIM:COUNTER]. The choice between killing someone and letting him live is an easy choice for the most of us [ASSERT] ***but*** we are ***not*** strictly supervised, constrained and punished to acquire the behavior of not killing people [DISCLAIM:COUNTER + DISCLAIM:DENY]. The choice takes place in our reason, which ***might*** be influenced by structures (how many movies have we not seen or books have we not read as children where murdering is condemned?) [ENTERTAIN] ***but*** we can ***nevertheless*** find valid arguments, which bear logic on their own [disclaim: counter] and are ***not*** dependent on ideas of what is appropriate or not, for not killing people [DISCLAIM: DENY].

This view is somewhat close to Jürgen Habermas who ***says*** that “an autonomous will is one guided by practical reason.” [ATTRIBUTE] (HG2, Nicholas, S70-80).

The high level of both dialogical and reader engagement displayed in this paragraph is unusual among the political theory writers. While Nicholas does tend to assume this highly engaged stance more frequently than his colleagues, this particular excerpt is unusually engaged even for Nicholas. In addition to the underlined reader-engagement devices, it also deploys contrastive rhetorical pairs like those used among the top Econ 432 writers, including ‘concur’ + ‘counter’ (*I do not deny ... However we would hardly accept*) and ‘entertain’ + ‘counter’ (*The choice takes place in our reason which might be ... but we can nevertheless find ...*).

The high degree of persuasive effort demonstrated in this text seems to derive from Nicholas's goal to convince the reader that there is indeed a problematic aspect to

Foucault's reasoning (or the consequences of Foucault's argument) that warrants a transition to a Habermas. In other words, as Nicholas takes on a more critical stance with regard to Foucault, he ramps up the persuasive effort, and he does so in a highly committed and even humorous manner. Authority is suggested by Nicholas's positioning of Habermas's views as in line with his own critique of Foucault (*This view is somewhat close to Jürgen Habermas*), and he adds a note of levity by conceding with the reader that, *To not pick our noses in public is certainly not a behavior sprung from our reason per se*. These various engagement resources index a student writer who has read carefully, enough so that he can adopt a critical stance toward Foucault. They also index a writer who is highly committed to the argument he is developing, and Nicholas's deployment of these resources within a larger problematization move enables him to move forward to the next stage in his argument in a rhetorically-motivated manner.

Examples 8b and 8c are further examples of problematization used as a transitioning device. In 8b, Sarah problematizes an aspect of Rawls's argument in order to return to an earlier discussion of Fanon, and in 8c Ethan problematizes an aspect of Fraser's argument in order to motivate a discussion of Rawls. In these examples, 'disclaim' moves are used alongside 'entertain' and 'proclaim' moves to help construct critical and dialogically engaged stances. (Lexicogrammatical signals of Engagement resources are in *bold italics*.)

(8b) Additionally, **Rawls emphasizes** the necessity of fairness and not just the idea of having a fair opportunity [ATTRIBUTE], **but if** some level of inequality has to be tolerated in his model [ENTERTAIN], **is it fair** that those who suffer might by chance be of the same race or gender [DISCLAIM:COUNTER + PROCLAIM:PRONOUNCE]? A society at this point **would** have to turn back to evaluating the liberty principle [entertain], **but** often institutional policies like affirmative action that are meant to help ensure equality create backlash injustice against a group [DISCLAIM:COUNTER], **even when** they are meant to ensure the same availability of opportunity for all [DISCLAIM:COUNTER].

To further illustrate the remaining problem, and possible solutions, **it is possible** to turn back to Fanon and examine what happens in a colonized society when a member of the oppressed group achieves economic and social success [ENTERTAIN]. ... (Sarah, HG8, S60-66)

(8c) **Fraser prefers** the transformation strategy, which would reconfigure the social structure by eliminating the groups as such [ATTRIBUTE]. **While** this method is **perhaps** more decisive in eliminating the injustice [PROCLAIM:CONCUR +

ENTERTAIN], it *does* have the drawback of *not* being in the immediate interests of any group, as they would stand to lose their identities [PROCLAIM:CONCUR + DISCLAIM:COUNTER]. Therefore, *while* Fraser's matrix *may* help soften the redistributive-recognition dilemma [PROCLAIM:CONCUR + ENTERTAIN], it *doesn't* offer *any* obvious solutions to the problem of recognition in modern society [DISCLAIM:COUNTER].

As a normative theorist, Rawls' approach differs greatly from Fraser [ASSERT]. ... (Ethan, HG3, S74-77)

The use of problematization in these texts is akin to the use of 'evidentialize' moves among the high-performing Econ 432 writers. As discussed in Chapter 5, the Econ 432 writers frequently use 'evidentialize' resources as they transition from the analysis stage to the recommendations stage in an authoritative matter. Likewise, the frequent 'disclaim', 'entertain', and 'proclaim:concur' moves in the HG political theory corpus not only enable the political theory writers to adopt a contrastive, dialogically engaged stance at key moments in their essays but also to transition from one argumentative stage to the next in a way that demonstrates control over the various parts of the argument.

To reiterate, the PS 409 writers use resources of Engagement less frequently than the Econ 432 writers, as seen above in the comparison between Elisa's and Tim's concluding paragraphs (1a and 1b), but this does not necessarily mean that they are less dialogically engaged in their argumentation. Their essays use monoglossic resources more frequently, but the analysis above suggests that a large percentage of these serve a macro-level dialogic function by orienting the reader, elaborating on points, and making associations between ideas (as seen in 6a-6i). These latter 'associative assertions' are instrumental in enabling the stronger writers in class to construct an assertive evaluative stance. In addition, the top-performing PS 409 writers *do* employ more Engagement resources in their texts than the low-performing writers, and these "additional" resources tend to bunch together at key transitional moments in their essays (as shown in 8a-8d). Specifically, they are used when the writers are carrying out the rhetorically challenging work of problematizing one set of ideas in order to motivate the introduction of a new set of ideas.

While all ten of the high-performing political theorists use at least one problematizing move, only four of the low-performing writers use this strategy. One reason for this seems to be, echoing Barton (1993), a tendency on the part of weaker

writers to adopt a less contrastive stance in favor of a stance characterized by “shared social agreement” (p. 765). In the case of PS 409, the shared social agreement stance is actually more of a stance of presumed agreement among theoretical positions. This stance is reflected in the less frequent use of ‘disclaim’ and ‘entertain’ moves in the LG corpus. This stance is illustrated below in the different ways that Victor, a low-performing writer, and Ethan, a high-performing writer, respond to essay prompt 2. The prompt is reproduced below along with excerpts from Victor’s (9a) and Ethan’s (9b) essays. Key stance differences between the excerpts are highlighted in ***bold italics***.

Prompt 2: Nancy Fraser argues that conventional “distributive” theories of justice cannot address contemporary problems related to the politics of “recognition.” Explain and elaborate on Fraser’s argument. Then consider how Rawls or Nussbaum would respond to Fraser’s view.

(9a) ... Both [Fraser and Nussbaum] put forward ideas on how to eliminate social and economic inequalities and provide justice to people, although Fraser is more concerned with the means of bringing justice to people who need it, whereas Nussbaum looks at the ends by which we can evaluate if justice is provide or not. Therefore, ***in my opinion their views complement each other*** by providing suggestions on two aspects of the same problem: how to provide social and economic justice and the grounds on which we can judge if this goal is accomplished. (Victor, HG1, S3-4)

(9b) ... Fraser’s proposal posits that “the remedy for cultural injustice ... is some sort of cultural or symbolic change.” She calls this cultural change “recognition.” ***Rawlsian theory, however, disputes Fraser’s sharp division between socioeconomic and cultural injustice.*** In fact, Rawls would respond to Fraser by saying that his theory fairly addresses cultural injustice, and her attempt to redress cultural injustice through recognition may actually lead to unjust outcomes. (Ethan, HG3, S3-6)

There are several important linguistic differences between 9a and 9b. For instance, Ethan uses more nominalizations to refer to discursive products (*Fraser’s proposal, Rawlsian theory, Fraser’s sharp division between ..., his theory, her attempt to ...*), while Victor uses more person-focused clause subjects (*Both, Fraser, Nussbaum*). More importantly, Ethan adopts a contrastive stance in response to the same prompt that elicits an agreement-focused stance from Victor. It is noteworthy also that the wording of Ethan’s argument goal directly mirrors the wording of the prompt. Ethan asserts that

“Rawls would respond to Fraser by saying ...” in response to the prompt to “consider how Rawls or Nussbaum would respond to Fraser’s view.”

This high degree of sensitivity to the language of the prompt—and perhaps to its implicit expectation to juxtapose the two theorists’ views *critically*—seems to be an important element in these high-performing students’ “genre awareness.” In fact, Elisa, who Peter identifies as the top writer in the class, was critiqued on an earlier draft of her essay for following the language of the prompt too closely. It may be, then, that Ethan’s decision to focus on Rawls (rather than Nussbaum) in relation to Fraser allowed him to more easily build a contrastive stance in his essay. Such genre awareness may also be at play among the top-performing Econ 432 writers, many of whom seem to have selected the legal cases to analyze in their essay based on how straightforwardly they could identify shortcoming in the courts’ reasoning and thereby craft a contrastive stance with regard to the remedies.⁴⁸

The drive toward agreement may be an important force behind the student stance. But the student stance is also constructed through unsuccessful *attempts* to adopt a critical stance. In example 10 below, Ryan, who is one of the few second-year students in this study, attempts to problematize an aspect of Foucault’s argument as a way to transition into a discussion of Walzer (as the students were doing in 8a-8d). But he executes this move in a way that reflects discomfort with the rhetorical task of problematizing. (Engagement resources are in ***bold italics*** and other important words are underlined.)

(10) One thing that ***Foucault doesn’t address***, not saying that he should have because it isn’t one of his ideas, is whether the old form of public executions and the new form of punishment is an act of dirty hands or not. ***According to Walzer’s argument I think*** the act of public executions would definitely be an unjustified act of dirty hands, but what about the new forms of punishment such as jail time? Giving someone jail time for a crime that they’ve committed seems to be completely necessary, but is there a better way of taking care of the problem? (Ryan, LG6, S55-56).

⁴⁸ The Econ 432 GSI, Mark, told me in our interview that he pushed students to disagree with the courts’ reasoning because it would make the essay easier to write, and during office hours he intervened on assignment 2 or 3 if students had selected cases that were interesting to them but where they tended to agree with the court’s set of remedies.

In this text, Ryan qualifies his gap move in an infelicitous manner with a personal aside to the reader (*not saying that he should have because it isn't one of his ideas*), and then goes on in the second sentence to formulate his assertion both as an 'attribute' and 'personalize' move, using both *According to Walzer's argument* and *I think*. His second problematize move is then couched as an informally-phrased question (*but what about ...?*).

Like the Econ 432 writer, Melisa (discussed in Chapter 4), Ryan seems to be aware of the expectation to assume a critical stance in this course essay and to negotiate positions with the reader (an awareness that may separate his writing from Victor's). But his prose does not demonstrate control over that critical stance. It is at times difficult to tease apart 'attribution' from 'averral' in his writing, as seen above in the second sentence, and the reader constructed in this text is quite clearly Peter, the instructor/evaluator/expert, rather than a peer discussant. This is seen in the quick personal aside that qualifies the critique of Foucault and the 'personalize' move in the following sentence. Both moves suggest an effort to cover his tracks by appealing to the reader through the stance of the inexperienced student.

In comparison, Ethan's more critically distant and assured stance in 9b is in line with the novice academic stance. In Ethan's text, this stance is constructed through the contrastive position he takes, as well as through abstract (or non-personal) clause subjects (*Fraser's proposal, Rawlsian theory, her attempt*) and use of quotation marks to identify attributed wordings and terms ("*recognition*"). Many of the high-performing writers use scare quotes adeptly in their writing, and this usage corresponds to Peter's remark (discussed below) that successful student writing in political theory is marked by the ability to "be precise with one's concepts and words," which Peter frames as a kind of "micro-level control" than indexes successful writing in the course.

In the next section, I discuss differences between the HG and LG essays in terms of the use of "I." As in the case of Econ 432, the use of 'personalize' resources is certainly an important element of the student stance, but it is not the whole story.

6.4.2. Authoritative and Non-Authoritative Self-References

Both the strong and weak PS 409 writers use authorial "I," but the way it is used

are different. While several of the strong writers frequently use “road-mapping ‘I’” to refer to metadiscursive modes (e.g., *In this essay I argue; I do not deny*), the weaker writers more frequently use “I” in ‘personalizing’ moves. They do this not only to open up the dialogic space, as seen in 11a and 11b below, but also to assert their alignment with one theorist’s point of view over another’s, as seen in 11c and 11d:

(11a) *I feel like* this is closely linked to Nussbaum’s concept of moving to a good human life. (Victor, LG1, S36)

(11b) In this case, *I would assume* that many our friends and colleagues would agree with the French police commissioner, explaining that security by and far overwhelms the importance of some privacy. (Michael, LG2, S47)

(11c) *I favor* the philosophy of Foucault. (Heather, LG3, S213)

(11d) *I completely agree* with Foucault’s idea that our new forms of punishment are more civilized, but not all is lost from our past styles. (Ryan, HG6, S113-114)

Heather’s and Ryan’s averrals in 11c and 11d are particularly ineffective in this essay assignment, especially because they are not later qualified in subsequent sentences. (If they were followed by ‘counter’ moves, it is possible they would read as more congruent with the novice academic stance.) Both of these sentences are from the conclusions, which Heather and Ryan seem to understand as an opportune moment in their essays to take a stance in favor of one position over another—much as they may have learned to do when writing “compare and contrast” essays.

A related pattern in several of the LG essays is for the writers to use “I” to foreground their own interpretative efforts. This pattern can be seen in these examples from the LG corpus.

(12a) *Through my reading of Walzer and Pontecorvo, I conclude* that the French police commissioner’s varying degrees of guilt portray him as a morally complicated character. (Michael, LG2, S21)

(12b) *I interpreted* the meaning to be that the penalty must be fair to the crime, so in order for that to happen it must meet the “common idea” of more than just one person. (Ryan, LG6, S70)

(12c) This *I wasn’t too sure about*, but *I took this to mean* that the crimes committed

must all be categorized in a unique way to each offense. (Ryan, LG6, S72)

(12d) *What I'm trying to say* is that in order for potential criminals to be deterred from committing crimes there will always need to be a much greater punishment than benefit to the crime. (Ryan, LG6, S110)

In these sentences, Michael and Ryan are referring metadiscursively to their own interpretative and argumentative efforts. They are “getting meta,” as Macken-Horarik & Morgan (2011, p. 138) put it, by calling attention to their own processes of concluding, interpreting, and explaining. Signaling these efforts so explicitly can be read as redundant, especially if the interpretative context is implicitly understood, as it appears to be in PS 409. This sense of redundancy is even clearer when sentences like 12a-12d are contrasted with the more objective forms of language that the high-performing writers use to “get meta.”

To refer to the results of their own analysis, the high-performing writers more often use metasemiotic nouns like *interpretation*, *perspective*, and *understanding* or metasemiotic verbs in passive construction like *when viewed through this light* or *understood in this way*. These embedded forms are seen in the boxed wordings in Eric’s and Nicole’s texts below.

(13a) **Viewed** in the context of the theories of Michel Foucault and Carl Schmitt, Eichmann’s capture, trial, and execution presents important developments in terms of justice, punishment, and sovereignty. On the whole, while Foucault’s theories of modern justice contradict the reality of the trial, **an interpretation** of Schmitt justifies both Eichmann’s capture and execution. (Eric, HG4, S46)

(13b) Young’s concept of the “five faces of oppression” offers **a perspective from which to view** the various relationships in the novel as ones that are typical of societies imbued with systemic oppression. Young’s definition of oppression is also useful in **examining** the different ways in which, and to what degree, different groups suffer from oppression in the novel. Nancy Fraser’s explication of the “redistribution-recognition dilemma” adds a deeper dimension of **understanding** as to why the problems of the previous system of apartheid remain. (Nicole, HG7, S32)

In both of these excerpts, Eric and Nicole refer to their own mental processes of viewing, interpreting, perceiving, examining, and understanding (processes valued in PS 409

writing), but they do this through objectifications: *viewed, an interpretation, a perspective from which to view, and understanding*. Macken-Horarik & Morgan (2011) point out that these objectified forms of voicing are grammatically “incongruent,” in contrast to the grammatically congruent forms used above in 12-12d. The incongruent wordings are highly valued in academic writing—especially in genres that require close analysis and interpretation of texts—because they offer a level of abstraction away from the writer, which contributes to the construction of an “expert stance” (Macken-Horarik & Morgan, 2011, p. 143). The “expert” stance in PS 409 is metadiscursively self-referential, but in a more distanced way than see in the LG texts (12a-12d) above.

Except for their use in the introductory sections of some of the HG essays, the more explicit forms of metadiscursive reference (such as seen in 12a-12d) are dis-preferred by the ten strongest writers in class. While Michael (in 12a) uses a noncongruent form of metadiscursive reference when he refers to *my reading*, other more explicit references like *I conclude, I interpreted, I wasn't too sure about, I took this to mean, and What I'm trying to say* are more characteristic of the student stance.

Before moving on in the next section to examine how these features play out quantitatively in the two corpora, it is worth reiterating that, in constructing the novice academic stance (one marked by authoritative control over ideas), the stronger writers are also construing their alignment with the disciplinary constructs that they are using. Thus, the *perspective* and *understanding* that Nicole reached (in 13b) was made possible by *Young's concept of the “five faces of oppression”* and by *Nancy Fraser's explication of the “redistribution-recognition dilemma”*. These texts *offered* Nicole a new perspective and *add[ed] a deeper dimension of understanding* to the material. While it is perhaps unfair to suggest that Nicole is “gushing” about the usefulness of the theory she is using, she clearly does display appreciation of the constructs that have enabled her to make her argument. In this way, the stance she is constructing is aligned with the theoretical discourse. I refer to this stance below as a discursively aligned stance, and this stance is part of what it means to argue as a novice academic in the discourse context.

6.4.3. Quantification of Control and Engagement Features in HG and LG Corpora

Table 6.4 below shows the relative frequency of lexicogrammatical features that

play a part in realizing a controlled and disciplinary engaged stance in PS 409. As shown in this table, the ten high-performing writers more frequently draw on nominalized verbal processes (*account, analysis, approach*), reporting verbs with abstract subjects and/or positive discourse prosody (*offers, presents, provides*), reporting verbs with human subjects and/or neutral discourse prosody (*argues, claims, says*), explicit tokens of positive appreciation (*important, useful, usefully*), contrastive connectors (*but, however, while*), and code glosses (*in other words, indeed, namely*).

Control and engagement features ⁴⁹	Relative Freq. in 10 HG essays	Relative Freq. in 10 LG essays
nominalized verbal processes <i>account, analysis/analyses, approach, argument(s), assumption(s), attempt, claim, concept, critique, criticism, description, idea, premise, principle(s), solution, remedies, theory/theories, the view(s)</i>	31.4	17.0
Reporting verbs with abstract subjects and/or positive discourse prosody <i>offer(s), present(s), provide(s), complicate(s), reveal(s)(ing), raises, establishes, show(s)(ing), demonstrate(s)</i>	5.9	1.6
Reporting verbs with human subjects and/or neutral discourse prosody <i>argue(s), claim(s), say(s), assert(s), propose(s), state(s), writes, contend(s), view(s), describe(s), consider(s)</i>	4.5	7.9
Explicit realizations of positive appreciation <i>important*, useful*, significant*, strength, promising, advantages</i>	7.9	2.4
Contrastive connectors <i>but, however, while, rather, rather than, instead, although, unfortunately, yet, still, nevertheless, even though</i>	19.8	12.2
Code glosses <i>for example/instance, an/the example, in terms of, in fact, in other words, indeed, namely, specifically, such as, that is, which means, this means, mean* that, particularly, in this case</i>	7.5	5.1

Table 6.4. Control and engagement features in HG and LG PS 409 corpora

⁴⁹ The symbol “*” indicates a word in lemma form. Using lemmas allowed me to retrieve all forms of the word from AntConc that are relevant to the analysis. For example, with attempt*, AntConc generated *attempt, attempts, and attempting*. I scanned the list and counted only instances of *attempt/s* in noun form. Searching for *demonstrat** reveals *demonstrate, demonstrates, and demonstrating*.

These differential lexicogrammatical patterns index a stance among the high-performers that is more consistently engaged with the discourse and also contrastive. The first four categories are lexicogrammatical features that are associated with an engaged (or appreciative) stance. The final two categories (contrastive connectors and code glosses) are lexicogrammatical features that are associated with moves that construct a critical and controlled stance.

The fact that the low-performing writers use a greater number of ‘attribute’ moves, as revealed in the Engagement analysis, is reflected in the more frequent use of reporting verbs with human subjects or neutral discourse prosody. Verbs in this category occur in formulations like *Foucault argues/claims/says/asserts*, in which the grammatical subject of the clause is a person and/or the stance toward the proposition is neutral or not clear. This category is in contrast to reporting verbs used with abstract subjects and/or positive discourse prosody, which are used more frequently by the HG group. In this category are verbs that (a) appear in formulations like those examined above in 6a-6i (*Foucault’s operational definition of ethics provides*; *George Orwell’s essays reveal*, and *The realities raised by Fraser offer*) or (b) appear with human subject while carrying positive discourse prosody, such as *Foucault offers/shows/demonstrates*, and others that suggest a positive orientation to the ideas. Items in the third category often co-occur with items in the first category. For example: *Schmitt’s account reveals* or *Fraser’s principle complicates*.

In my close reading of students’ whole texts, I discerned that formulations like these often work to construe a stance that is both critically distant and engaged with the discourse. This more implicit kind of evaluation tends to co-occur in the HG essays with the more explicit realizations of Appraisal like *important*, *useful*, *significant*, *strength*, *promising*, and *advantages*. In the next section, I turn to the beginning paragraphs of Elisa’s essay in order to illustrate how the linguistic resources shown in Table 6.4 pattern together in the introduction of one successful essay. Elisa’s essay was singled out by Peter as the best essay in the class, and I argue that it constructs a stance marked by control over and engagement/alignment with the discourse.

6.4.4. Control and Engagement in Elisa's Essay

Peter explained to me in our interview that Elisa does “some very strong things” in the opening paragraphs of her essay and that, throughout her essay, she is both “critical” and “sympathetic” in her treatment of Young’s typology. I have reproduced those opening paragraphs below. There are many linguistic features in this text that can be discussed, but for now I will briefly explain four features that seem to be contributing to a sense of critical and sympathetic control. The four features include (1) nominalized verbal processes (highlighted in Elisa’s text in **bold boxes**); (2) metasemiotic verbs (highlighted in *bold italics*); (3) metadiscursive markers (highlighted in **plain boldface**); and (4) Appraisal resources of positive appreciation (highlighted in **bold underlines**).

Consistent with social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, Iris Marion Young’s *Justice and the Politics of Difference* explores contemporary injustice through **social-structural forms of oppression**. **Modern “dominant political discourse”** often uses the term oppression to describe external societies with implications of brutal tyranny over a whole people. **However**, this is **not** the oppression Young explores within contemporary social movements. **Instead**, Young frames oppression as systematic constraints that subsequently oppress individuals because of their distinct social identities. Young describes this form as oppression as one that “refers to the vast and deep injustices some groups suffer as consequence of often unconscious assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people... in short, the normal processes of every day life.” This oppression is embedded deep within the structure of our society- and **thus** systematically carried out through economic, political, and cultural institutions.

If oppression is a structural phenomenon that negatively affects – immobilizes or diminishes – a group, it is **important** to *explore* **Young’s definition of a social group**. In its most concise definition, a social group is, “a collective of persons differentiated from at least one other group by cultural forms, practices, or way of life.” **In this sense**, social groups are an indication of social relations: group identification exists in relation to the existence of a counter-group. **For example**, the identity “disabled” could not exist without the existence of an “able” group. **While** these groups exist only in relation to one another, the alternative group is **not** necessarily the source of oppression. **However**, Young points out that “for every oppressed group there is a group that is privileged in relation to that group.” **Thus**, systematically one group’s oppression causes privilege of the other.

Each individual person claims many different social identities; **thus**, individuals belong to a large variety of social groups – groups which one intentionally and unintentionally belongs. There is intersectionality between identities, and one **may** experience systematic oppression towards one social identity in addition to privilege for another. Young acknowledges that, “group differences cut across individual lives in a multiplicity of ways that can entail privilege and oppression for the same person

in different respects.” **Because of this** Young **offers** a “**plural explication**” of the concept of oppression to capture the experiences of a variety of individuals belonging to an even more diverse number of social groups and experiences: Young **presents** her reader with the “**Five Faces of Oppression.**” Within **the five faces of oppression** exist **exploitation**, **marginalization**, **powerlessness**, **cultural imperialism** and **violence**. Young proposes these categories as distinctions that cover contemporary social groups and movements that are oppressed and illustrates how they are in fact structurally abused. To further *explore* **Young’s account of oppression**, let us *examine* how power dynamics and relationships play out in J. M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace*. (Elisa, HG1, S1-23)

Again, there are many features of this text that point to highly skilled academic writing, including motivated use of scare quotes, lexical variety in reporting verbs, and syntactic complexity and variety. But Elisa uses four features in particular that run throughout the HG corpus (and not as much in the LG corpus) and that cooperate in the construction of a controlled and engaged stance.

First, Elisa uses nominalizations like *modern “dominant political discourse”*, *Young’s definition of a social group*, “*plural explication*”, and *Young’s account of oppression*. In each of these, semantic processes (defining, explicating, accounting) are realized as nouns instead of verbs. As such, they allow Elisa to talk about discursive processes as if they were things—things that can be commented on, evaluated, and projected as performing new discursive actions. While use of nominalizations has been widely critiqued for obfuscating meanings and concealing authorial agency (e.g., Billig, 2008), their use has been shown by others to be necessary for the development of specialized discourses (Halliday, 2004; Martin, 2008). If verbal or material processes cannot be bundled up and transferred into things, then little can be said about them.

Second, Elisa uses metasemiotic verbs (in ***bold italics***) that refer to her essay’s own discursive processes. Verbs like *explore* and *examine* refer to the discursive goals of the essay and may be working to index a student writer who is metadiscursively aware of how various stages of her argument fit together. Unlike some of the other high performing writers in class, Elisa constructs a critically distanced stance by avoiding authorial “I” altogether, preferring objective formulations like *it is important to explore*, *to further explore*, and *let us examine*. Nevertheless, strategic use of these metadiscursive verbs indexes a writer who knows “what any given thing is trying to do,” as Peter puts it

in the interview. In addition, Elisa's metadiscursive verbs often mirror those in the prompt she is responding to:

Prompt 9: Using Young "five faces of oppression," **examine** the power dynamics and relationships in one of the following ...

Third, corresponding to these metasemiotic verbs are other metadiscursive markers that guide the reader through the argumentation (highlighted in Elisa's text in **plain boldface**). These comprise a wide variety of connectors including contrastives (*However, not, Instead, while*), logical connectors (*thus*), causatives (*Because of this*), and code glosses (*For example*). What these devices have in common in Elisa's text is their use in guiding the reader toward and through Young's ideas. For instance, the initial 'counter' moves are used to situate Young's work on oppression; they do this by countering the reader's expectation that Young's work extends from the "dominant political discourse." These and other metadiscursive devices, therefore, may be especially important for establishing a sense of authorial control in a genre such as the PS 409 essay, which is so much about reviewing others' ideas.

Fourth, Elisa's text uses explicit tokens of attitude like *important* (in **bold underlines**) to convey her appreciation of disciplinary concepts. Many of these positive meanings are highly nuanced. She writes, for instance, that Young *offers* tools for throwing new light on oppression in Coatzee's novel (and things that are *offered* are generally good). Compare the projected attitude in the following two formulations:

- a. Because of this Young *offers/provides/gives* a "plural explication" of the concept of oppression ...
- b. Because of this Young *explains/argues/claims/writes/believes* that oppression ...

Both of these formulations are possible of course, but the formulation in (a) subtly construes more appreciation of Young's work. These and other reporting verbs interplay with nominalized processes to convey not just control but sympathetic control.

In the final section of this chapter, I turn to Peter's explanation of valued features in student writing, which he frames in terms of "control." I then turn to his specific remarks about Elisa's essay. I show how these comments acknowledge both Elisa's analytic

work—her contributions to political theory—as well as, more subtly, her interpersonal engagement with the material. At the same time that Peter evaluates her writing, he also positive evaluates Young’s typology as *important*, *very cool*, and *very valuable*. These evaluations suggest that Peter’s reading of Elisa’s essay is at least partly a process of identifying with an argumentative stance toward Young’s work that is sympathetic and critical. To say it another way, Peter seems to be appreciating Elisa’s appreciation of the theoretical apparatus she is using.

6.5. Peter’s Awareness of Valued Stance Patterns in PS 409 Essays

In our interview, I asked Peter to articulate distinctions between successful and unsuccessful student writing in his political theory courses, and the topic of our conversation turned quickly to the abstract concept of control. He spoke specifically in terms of “macro” and “micro” level control. First, macro level control has to do with how the structure of the paper “flows together”:

PETER: A macro level of control is not just that a paper has an intro or that paragraphs have topics or something like that, but in **control of how that structure flows together**. Where they might need signposting, where they don’t. Where they fail to do that. And that, again, I do think the idea of control is the key issue here because it’s **knowing what any given thing is trying to do**. And I’m pretty sure, as with any good writer, they’re not always necessarily conscious of that, so it could feel more intuitive to them [...] but control seems like a good way of making a distinction between a structurally successful paper and not.

When I asked Peter whether he sees a connection between students’ control over language and their interpretations of the texts they are examining, his response begins to touch on issues of stance, specifically the idea of *seeing what’s going on*.

PETER: Yes [...] So [...] I think there are two kinds of things that very often one can tell from the text, where I feel that the student hasn’t gotten it. And so sometimes it’s just a straightforward misinterpretation, and it could be a decent paper and the writer just doesn’t get it. But much more often they are **uncertain of what the text is saying** [...] So it’s not misinterpretation as much as **not quite seeing what’s going on**. And so then it’s harder for them to think, “what am I trying to say here? How do these pieces fit together here?”

Peter's explanation suggests that students' language use can betray an uncertain grasp of how concepts or positions taken in their own writing relate to one another—how “pieces fit together.” Uncertain grasp over the material may reveal itself through the students' lack of control over macro and/or micro levels of language use. This explanation suggests that a reader's judgment of whether a student “gets it” is influenced by the student's use of language, or what “one can tell from the text.”

To help me understand this relationship between control of language and control of conceptual material, I asked Peter to walk me through an essay that demonstrates excellent control, and Peter selected Elisa's essay. I reproduce part of our exchange about her essay below, as a number of important meanings arise in Peter's explanation. In particular, as he explains the essay's strengths, he speaks indirectly to issues of stance, specifically attitude. Highlighted in boxes are Peter's evaluations of Elisa's attitudinal stance; in *bold italics* are evaluations of her analytic stance; and underlined are evaluations of Young's typology. This last type of evaluation is important for showing how Elisa's and Peter's stances toward the material may have converged.

ZAK: So I'm wondering if you can just point to perhaps a passage or even the first passage where you thought to yourself when grading, “This student is really in control of what they're doing.”

PETER: Yeah [.] It's hard to pick any given point.

ZAK: Because it works on a macro level?

PETER: It works on so many levels, but I guess, again, one of the reasons why I [.] the reason I saw this as a strong paper is it takes [.] it looks like a compare and contrast paper, which can often be kind of tedious and mechanical and can even weaken a good student [...] And what Elisa does here is *not just compare* [.] or it's an ideal compare and contrast because *she takes a conceptual set of ideas*, Iris Young's typology of five kinds of oppression [.] it's academic political theory sort of focused on typology [.] and she's very comfortable *understanding* what those are and then *connects* it to J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* [.] which is a novel about post-apartheid South Africa, and *connects* them. And so what it is [.] it's not just, “Somebody says this. He says that.”

ZAK: Right

PETER: It is in some ways *complementing* the kind of typology and *complementing* it critically. So it's not [.] so she thinks that Iris Young is onto something very

interesting] with her typology, so *she does some strong things* early in the paper [.]. She *situates* both in an important context of multiculturalism, politics of identity, *understanding* sort of post material injustices in general. So *good situating, understanding* of what the important questions are. Then being very sympathetic to this very cool typology, which is a very valuable analytic tool for understanding issues like oppression and then suggesting, “but if we look at, in some ways, the micro politics that Coetzee depicts so well in post-apartheid South Africa, we get complications to that typology.” So it’s all sympathetic. It’s critical without saying, “Therefore, Iris Young is full of shit. She doesn’t know what she’s talking about.”

This explanation refers to both analytic and attitudinal meanings in Elisa’s essay. In terms of analytic work, Elisa does *not just compare: she takes a conceptual set of ideas, understands, situates, and connects them* to themes in the novel she is analyzing. In so doing, she *complements* the original typology that she’s using. In terms of her attitudinal stance, Elisa is *comfortable* with the analytic framework, *critical* and *very sympathetic* toward it, and appreciates it as *very interesting*. Peter appears to highly value Elisa’s positive alignment with Young’s typology, which he himself appreciates as *important, very cool, very valuable*. On one level, then, Peter is acknowledging Elisa’s contributions to political theory and, on another, he seems to be appreciating Elisa’s interpersonal engagement with the material. The critical and sympathetic stance that Elisa constructs, then, may be influencing a sympathetic reading from Peter.

Clearly, Elisa is a student who has a sophisticated handle on the material she is analyzing as well as control over the stance resources needed to create an authoritative argument. In our interview, Peter also speaks of students unlike Elisa, who are less certain in their conceptual understanding and thus experience greater difficulty pulling together a controlled argument. These students, as he puts it, “are uncertain what the text is saying. So it’s not misinterpretation as much as not quite seeing what’s going on. And so then it’s harder for them to think ‘what am I trying to say here? How do these pieces fit together here?’”. Unlike Elisa, these students do not have a strong conceptual understanding of the material, and so they experience difficulty sustaining a controlled argument in their writing.

There seems to be a third possibility, though: a student writer who does have a firm conceptual handle on the material, of how the pieces fit together, but does not yet

command the necessary discursive resources for conveying that understanding.⁵⁰ Such problems have been understood in composition studies for a long time now, particularly since Shaughnessy (1977) showed through her careful linguistic analysis of “basic” writers’ texts that highly sophisticated analytic thinking often underlies language use that is incongruent with expected genre/register configurations. In Chapter 4, we saw this possibility play out in Mark’s responses to Melisa’s essay. Mark was not aware that Melisa was writing in English as a second language and so, unlike with other L2 writers in his course, he was not attuned to her use of language and was instead reading for analytic rigor and clarity of ideas. As I discuss at greater length in my analysis of this and another L2 writer’s essay (Lancaster, 2011), Mark remarked that he wished he had known Melisa was an L2 writer because he may have read her essay differently. Lack of control over genre/register conventions, then, may index students’ uncertain grasp of the material or, alternatively, it may *reinforce* the impression of uncertain grasp of the material. Certainly both processes can be at play in any given piece of student writing.

6.6. Concluding Remarks

As suggested throughout this chapter, there are important points of overlap in what the high-performing writers are doing in the two contexts. Both groups, for instance, construe engagement with disciplinary frameworks or concepts. When Keith in Econ 432 writes that, “Using an ex post analysis of share prices and product prices, I was able to show that . . .,” he is making a similar stance move that Elisa makes when she writes that, “The realities raised by Fraser offer important complexities to Young’s political discourse” or that Nicole makes when she writes that, “Young’s concept of the ‘five faces of oppression’ offers a perspective from which to view the various relationships in the novel as ones that are typical of societies imbued with systemic oppression.” All three writers are constructing a stance that is based within the respective disciplinary

⁵⁰ It is certainly also possible that weaker writers are rushing their writing because they need to meet a deadline, i.e., they have not allowed sufficient time for drafting and revising. In this case, what may be understood as poor command of discursive resources could result from insufficient time spent crafting their prose. As explained in Chapter 3, the low-performing writers in this dissertation’s study were perceived by their instructors as putting forth effort in their writing. They completed drafts of their essays, received feedback, and revised. For this reason, it is likely that some of the low-performing writers do, in fact, have difficulty in their command of discursive resources. More research is needed, however, that explores correlations between time spent writing and level/perception of performance.

epistemologies.

More generally, this chapter has provided evidence that a more academic or, as Macken-Horarik and Morgan (2011) put it, “expert” stance is also valued in PS 409, which is suggested by recurring patterns of meaning in the HG essay corpus that contribute toward a stance marked by control over and sympathy with the political theory discourse. The value of a controlled and sympathetic stance is suggested by Peter’s explanation of successful student writing in the course, particularly Elisa’s opening paragraphs. Linguistic features that contribute to this stance include nominalized verbal processes (*Foucault’s account of .*), positive appreciation of analytic constructs (*offers, provides, reveals, useful, important*), metadiscursive markers (*However, thus, rather*) and noncongruent forms of voicing via metasemiotic verbs and metasemiotic nouns. Repeated configurations of these resources construe a stance of control and positive alignment with disciplinary constructs.

There are clear differences in the linguistic resources that construe the novice academic stance in the two discourse contexts. But the fact that the high-performing writers in both courses are displaying commitment to their arguments and uptake of disciplinary constructs has powerful implications for how to talk with students and instructors about student academic writing. Specifically, the overlap between the two contexts in terms of what the high-performing writers are doing with language in the plane of interpersonal meanings suggests that the authorial presence that students project into their texts performs important persuasive work for how their essays are read and responded to, and that the authorial presence, whether the participants are aware of it are not, is always being read in terms of its relationships to disciplinary constructs and to imagined readers. More generally speaking, there does seem to be a correlation between success on the essay assignment and patterns in stance.

I would also like to suggest that Peter’s focus on *control* when asked about successful student writing privileges analytical or, more generally, ideational meanings. Ideational meanings in this context, as revealed in his response, are related to how well students have understood concepts, made connections between ideas, and figured out how the various parts of their argument are related to one another. The valued meanings which are not so privileged by the concept of “control” have to do with attitudinal

meanings, which are implicitly revealed through Peter's explication of Elisa's essay. In this explanation, he positively evaluates Elisa's "critical" and "sympathetic" stance, and the construction of this stance can be seen in the patterns of positive meanings she constructs toward the framework she is using to carry out her analysis of a novel. Similar stance meanings appear to be valued in Econ 432, especially those having to do with students' positioning of their own perspectives with regard to the economics framework they are using.

The importance of interpersonal meanings in both sets of student essays makes sense when we take into account the courses' pedagogical goals. Both Frank and Peter assign substantive writing in their courses in order to foster students' skills in discursive reasoning so that, ideally, they can transfer these skills to other discourse contexts. As discussed in Chapter 4, Frank stated that learning to think like an economist is not the goal of his major essay assignment but rather learning to reason critically and build a coherent argument that applies to discourse contexts outside economics. Namely, students are required to make legal recommendations based on economic analyses and concern for public policy. Similarly, while Peter spoke to me about the importance of having students, as he puts it, "practice the practices of inquiry in our disciplines," he also spoke toward the end of our interview to the issue of transfer:

PETER: Especially in the age of Google, knowledge and information is cheap. Getting information is not a particularly good use of our time. And what we can do is teach [students] [...] give them an example and have them practice the practices of inquiry in our disciplines. And why I think that's helpful, even if they don't want to become political scientists or political theorists or English scholars, is that doing it gives them sets of skills that can be transferred to other things.

In both courses, then, a student writer who "gets it" may be a student who understands that the point of the course writing is to learn how to use a disciplinary framework, or to call on specific disciplinary concepts, to reason through others' claims and thereby construct a cogent and complex argument. Such a student, we might expect, will project a stance that indexes this pedagogical goal and is therefore valued in the discourse context. In PS 409 and Econ 432, indexing this pedagogical goal means conveying alignment with disciplinary concepts.

On a closely related point, Peter remarked in our interview that stronger writers in class “get” the practice of using conceptual tools to pursue a line of inquiry. As he explains,

PETER: Teaching inquiry is not about giving answers and giving data and giving facts, but teaching thinking skills. So some students, regardless of their background in theory, get that and then might not have as hard of a time saying to themselves, “Ok, what are the specific tools used with this particular set of preoccupations?”

Based on this comment, we can understand why the political theory writers who linguistically foreground the tools or constructs they are using in their analyses, like the high-performing Econ 432 writers, are more successful in constructing a stance that is recognized by Peter as a “controlled” authorial presence in the text. A stance guided by disciplinary constructs is, after all, aligned with field-specific ways of talking, of justifying assertions, proffering evaluations, and so forth, and that is also in control of these specialized ways of interacting.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusions and Implications

Introduction

Previous research on student academic writing has shown that the argumentative challenges of writing in the disciplines require specialized ways of using language, ways that often are not transparent to students or their instructors and that therefore require careful analysis and explicit instructional attention (Christie & Derewianka, 2008; Coffin, 2002, 2004; Hood, 2004, 2006; Macken-Horarik & Morgan, 2011; Schleppegrell, 2004b; Woodward-Kron, 2002, 2003). This dissertation study has provided further evidence to support this methodological and pedagogical argument. The analysis shows that the distinct disciplinary contexts of Econ 432 and PS 409 call for different ways of using language to construct stances that are congruent with the argumentative expectations of the specific assignments. It also has shown that there are points of overlap between the two contexts in terms of what counts as effective stancetaking.

While there is also important stylistic variation among individual writers, the high-performers in both Econ 432 and PS 409 more consistently construct what I refer to as a novice academic stance and the low-performers a student stance. I characterize these differences in terms of “consistency” because, as the analysis shows, stance is not a static quality of texts. The high-performers “slip” into student stance occasionally, missing opportunities to use more valued stance resources, and the low-performers do at times (even frequently) accomplish sophisticated stance moves that are characteristic of the novice academic. This pattern suggests that, in instructional settings, students can be assisted to identify the resources that they draw on in their writing to make more and less valued stance moves. I discuss this implication in more detail below.

The findings regarding overlap between the two contexts point to the possibility that, despite the dynamic and complex nature of writing in the disciplines, there are “standards,” to echo Thaiss and Zawacki (2006), for what is recognized as good academic writing. In Econ 432 and PS 409, these standards have to do with the inter-

related qualities of contrastiveness, critical distance, dialogic control, and discursal alignment. These qualities (reviewed below) are important because they correlate with students' performance in the courses, and they seem to have had at least a partial effect on positioning the instructors to respond favorably or less favorably to students' essays. For this reason, findings from this study point to the need to assist faculty in the disciplines to identify patterns of stance in their students' writing and to refine their metalanguage (or language about language) for discussing these patterns with students in detailed and coherent ways. Below I discuss this pedagogical implication in specific terms, suggesting ways that writing specialists can work with instructors in faculty development contexts as well as ways instructors can work with their students in instructional contexts.

Before proceeding further with these implications, I should point out that Econ 432 and PS 409 may be atypical courses in several respects. First, both Frank and Peter may be unusually committed to fostering learning through writing. Both participated in the Teagle-Spencer study of disciplinary thinking and writing (described in Chapter 3), and the pedagogical interventions used in this study required that they devote additional time to writing instruction. This involved supplementing their pre-existing writing assignments with regular writing exercises and new methods of providing feedback to students. In both courses, students drafted and revised their essays after receiving comments from instructors and, in the case of PS 409, also from their peers.⁵¹ The quality of students' writing, then, may be unusually high even for upper-level undergraduate students.

Second, as revealed in interviews and their writing assignments, both professors aimed for their students to develop critical analysis and argumentative skills that transfer to contexts beyond economics and political theory. Econ 432 requires that students use an economics framework to critically analyze legal arguments and make policy recommendations, and PS 409 requires that students critically juxtapose theoretical perspectives and apply them to a set of questions or problems.⁵² A principal goal in both

⁵¹ The PS 409 professor, Peter, appears to be especially committed to improving undergraduate writing instruction. He participated in a writing fellows program with faculty in other disciplines, has given a talk at a writing conference, and has nominated several student essays for college-wide writing prizes.

⁵² Peter, as discussed at the end of the last chapter, positions this goal explicitly in terms of transfer: "And what we can do is ... have [students] practice the practices of inquiry in our disciplines. ... even if they don't want to become political scientists or political theorists or English scholars ... [this] gives them

courses, then, is to foster students' abilities to apply disciplinary concepts to other contexts through written argumentation. For this reason, students are not writing what Frank refers to as miniature journal articles—or versions of expert genres in the disciplines.

All of this is to say, the patterns of stance identified in this study may not be typical of economics and political science discourses. Nevertheless, they speak directly to the question of what it means to construct stances that are recognized as authoritative and engaged with the discourse in student genres across the curriculum, especially in assignments that call for critical examination of others' arguments. It is likely that the qualities of contrastiveness, critical distance, dialogic control, and discursual alignment, among others, are valued in a variety of fields when the argumentative assignment calls for close analysis and response to others' views. The specific findings from this study are important, too, because they suggest that greater awareness is needed among disciplinary faculty of what is actually “happening” when they are reading student work and therefore how they can make their responses more explicit to students when providing them with feedback on their writing. If, that is, reading student writing is understood as a process not only of discerning students' level of effort, grasp of the material, analytic rigor, and so on but also of *being positioned* to respond in certain ways through repeated patterns of language use (patterns that index certain pedagogical goals, epistemological assumptions, and disciplinary affiliations), then instructors can learn both to monitor their judgments and discuss writing with their students in new ways.

I begin the sections that follow with a brief review of the major findings of this study. I then offer suggestions for faculty development workshops and for classroom activities in upper-level courses in the disciplines. Next I turn to implications for first year writing (FYW) and graduate-level writing instruction. Following these pedagogical implications, I discuss methodological implications for linguistic discourse analysis of student writing. Finally, I explain the ways that findings from this study point to needed lines of research in writing studies.

7.1. Review of Major Findings

A useful way to review the various patterns of stance identified in this dissertation is by framing them in terms of Thaiss and Zawacki's (2006) concept of coherence-within-diversity. Indeed, specific findings point to at least two types of coherence-within-diversity that are at play in the writing of the Econ 432 and PS 409 writers and, by implication, student writers in other discourse contexts.

First, the “diversity” element refers to the wide range of linguistic means through which student writers can realize the novice academic stance. Despite diversity in argumentative (and thus language) requirements presented by the two disciplinary contexts and despite diversity in *styles* of stancetaking among individual writers (for example Nicholas's highly reader-engaged style versus Elisa's more critically distant style), the high-performers across the contexts make comparable stance moves, as do the low-performers. If instructors are able to identify this underlying coherence in their own students' writing—if, that is, they can identify patterns of stance that are at play despite stylistic variation—then they could develop new ways of talking to students about what it means to write effectively in their course contexts without impinging on students' more individualized stylistic strategies.

Second, there appears to be a diverse array of factors at play for *why* the low-performing students are not more consistently taking on the stance of the novice academic. If instructors could learn to identify these factors, then they could further refine their strategies for working with individual student writers. Furthermore, as I discuss in greater detail below, they could develop a more precise metalanguage for discussing stance in ways that could, as it were, “level the playing field” between students who are “genre aware” and command the necessary discursive resources for realizing the stance of the novice academic and students who, for a variety of complex reasons, either lack the awareness or discursive resources needed to construct valued stance maneuvers in their writing. I consider both of these points in more detail following a review of the patterns identified through the analysis.

7.1.1. Stance Differences Between Econ 432 and PS 409 Writers

In terms of disciplinary stance differences, the Econ 432 writers more frequently

use Engagement resources and less frequently use bare assertions than their peers in PS 409. I argued in Chapter 6 that these differences stem from requirements of the specific argumentative tasks. First, the greater use of Engagement resources among the Econ 432 writers seems to stem from the expectation to display awareness of the complexity of the cases they are evaluating. These writers are expected to project awareness that the legal decisions they are critically examining were made by, as Frank puts it, “very very smart people who just don’t happen to be economists.” Conveying awareness of this complexity means opening up and closing down the dialogic space in order to allow in alternative views before pulling the reader back to the writer’s view.

Second, the greater use of ‘evidentialize’ moves among the Econ 432 writers, as well as the greater use of ‘proclaim:endorse’ and ‘proclaim:pronounce’ resources, may stem from the need in that essay to catalogue the various pieces of evidence with a high degree of commitment (thus the ‘proclaim’ moves) and then back off from full commitment when drawing conclusions (thus the ‘evidentialize’ moves). The carefully measured stance that results from this effort is seen in example 1 when Ken reduces authorial commitment via the appearance-based evidential *seems reasonable to assume*.

- (1) *A recent survey of physician satisfaction by Harvard Medical School found* that physician autonomy and the ability to provide high-quality care, *not income*, are most strongly associated with changes in job satisfaction [CONTRACT]. Thus, it *seems reasonable to assume* that health care providers would take advantage of the greater bargaining power to improve the quality of care [EXPAND]. (Econ, Ken, HG, S78-79)

Hyland (2005c) explains that Darwin frequently used “hedges” in *The Origin of Species* in order to convey “caution about matters which he could not prove” (p. 68). It appears that Ken is adopting a similar tactic to construct a cautious stance while also pulling the reader into his process of interpreting evidence.

Third, in contrast to this measured researcher stance, the PS 409 writers use language that constructs a theoretical guide stance—one that assertively orchestrates a dialogue between theoretical perspectives and steers the reader through the dialogue. Specifically, the PS 409 writers use bare assertions more frequently than the Econ 432 writers. Bare assertions are more rhetorically motivated in this context as they enable the

writers to orient the reader to new theoretical perspectives, elaborate on those perspectives, and make associations between thinkers and ideas in assertive ways. Furthermore, it is likely that these moves can be realized in more assertive terms in PS 409 due to a shared understanding between reader and writer that interpretative assertions are always negotiable. At the same time, though, when the task calls for problematizing theorists' views, the higher-performing political theory writers *do* frequently call on 'entertain' resources to mitigate the force of their critiques and display appreciation for the value of the arguments they are problematizing, much as the Econ 432 writers do when critiquing the reasoning of Supreme Court Justices.

In general, the different argumentative tasks in the two courses require distinct linguistic resources, and these resources point to fine-tuned argumentative strategies that are of educational value. Arguably, however, the more striking linguistic differences identified in this study are those that correlate with the high-performers in both contexts and those that correlate with the low-performers in both contexts.

7.1.2. Overlap Among the High-Performers in Econ 432 and PS 409

As shown in Figure 7.1, the novice academic stance in both contexts is marked by authoritativeness. This is a rhetorical quality that is constructed through a configuration of linguistic resources that realize at least four inter-related qualities, including contrastiveness, dialogic control, discursal engagement, and critical distance. As shown in the figure, these four qualities are construed through recurring linguistic features that vary depending on the discourse context. Below the figure I offer a brief recap of each of the four qualities, which are in **bold lettering** the first time mentioned.

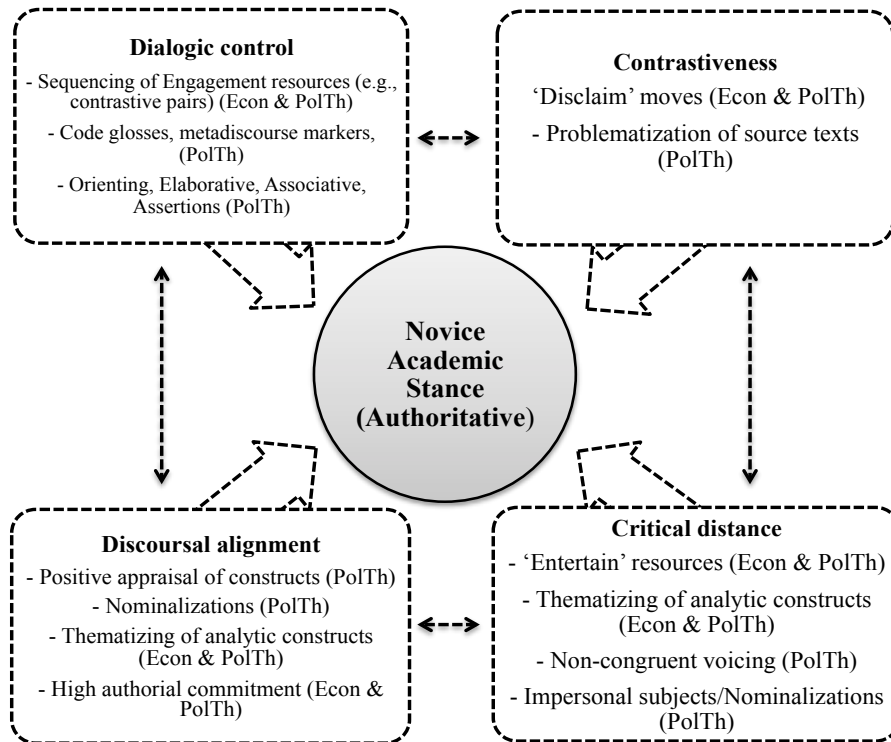


Figure 7.1. Rhetorical & linguistic qualities of the novice academic stance

In terms of **contrastiveness**, the high-performers in both courses use more ‘disclaim’ moves than the low-performers. In Econ 432, this pattern was validated by a statistically significant difference in use of contrastive connectors between the 46 high-graded essays and 46 low-graded essays. The high-performers in both courses more frequently use counters to (1) problematize the texts they are examining (which often motivates a transition from one part of the essay to another) and (2) construct solidarity-building moves via contrastive pairs to pull the reader over to the their views. This more frequent use of countering among the high-performers corroborates Barton’s (1993) empirically-based argument that a contrastive epistemological stance is valued in student academic writing. It also corresponds to one of Thaiss and Zawacki’s (2006) “standards” for good academic writing, which is “An imagined reader who is coolly rational, reading for information, and intending to formulate a reasoned response” (p. 7). This is true at least if this “coolly rational” reader is understood as one who is not already aligned with the author’s point of view.

Dialogic control is constructed not just through what Engagement resources are selected in a text but how they are sequenced, combined with other resources, and signaled to the reader. On a micro-level, dialogic control is achieved in several ways. One way is through strategic alternation between resources of dialogic expansion and contraction. Expand-contract alternation enables the writers to manage the negotiation between various views or voices without losing their own “intrusions” into the dialogue (often via ‘disclaim’ moves). As seen in the excerpt from Melisa’s essay in Chapter 4, dialogic control can waver when it is unclear whether an expansive or contractive move is being executed. Melisa’s over-use of such wordings as *the fact that* and *This is so* may be “mis-triggering” contractive moves. As an English as a second language writer, she may not yet command the linguistic resources needed to carry through an expansive or contractive stance in effective ways.

Micro-level dialogic control is also achieved through linguistic resources that are not modeled in the Appraisal framework. These include features of interactive metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005c; Thompson, 2001), including code glosses and transition devices. These resources are used more frequently among the top-performing PS 409 writers to package up theoretical arguments and juxtapose them with one another and to navigate readers through complex theoretical arguments.

Dialogic control is also more consistently at work in the HG essays on a macro level. In PS 409, the high-performing writers’ frequent use of ‘associative assertions’ allows them to transition assertively from one argumentative stage to the next. Likewise, their frequent use of Engagement resources of ‘disclaim’, ‘entertain’, and ‘proclaim:concur’ enable them to problematize ideas in a measured way while also rhetorically motivating the transition from one idea to another. A similar type of macro control is achieved by the Econ 432 writers through their use of ‘evidentialize’ strategies. As shown in Chapter 5, the high-performing writers use these moves more frequently than the low-performing writers, and one function is to enable them to ease into the recommendation stage of their essays in a dialogically expansive manner.

By **critical distance**, I refer to a quality of stance marked by interpersonal detachment toward the entities that are being analyzed and evaluated. The high-performing PS 409 writers achieve this quality through the use of clause subjects that

refer to discursive products (*arguments, definitions, theories, proposals, etc.*) in contrast to the theorists themselves. The high-performers in both courses also use fewer ‘personalize’ strategies when making evaluative associations. In the examples below (reproduced from Chapter 6), the wordings associated with critical distance are in ***bold italics*** and the more person-focused language is underlined.

(2a) ... ***Fraser’s proposal*** posits that “the remedy for cultural injustice ... is some sort of cultural or symbolic change.” She calls this cultural change “recognition.” ***Rawlsian theory***, however, disputes Fraser’s sharp division between socioeconomic and cultural injustice. In fact, Rawls would respond to Fraser by saying that his theory fairly addresses cultural injustice, and ***her attempt to redress cultural injustice through recognition*** may actually lead to unjust outcomes. (PolTh, Ethan, HG, S3-6)

(2b) Both Fraser and Nussbaum put forward ideas on how to eliminate social and economic inequalities and provide justice to people, although Fraser is more concerned with the means of bringing justice to people who need it, whereas Nussbaum looks at the ends by which we can evaluate if justice is provide or not. Therefore, in my opinion their views complement each other by providing suggestions on two aspects of the same problem: how to provide social and economic justice and the grounds on which we can judge if this goal is accomplished. (PolTh, Victor, LG, S3-4)

Both texts are the last several sentences of the essay introductions. Ethan’s stance, in addition to being more contrastive by positioning Rawls in a critical relationship with Fraser, is more critically distant. He uses three clause subjects that refer to discursive products (*proposal, theory, and attempt*), and he uses grammatical metaphor to project his evaluative association in an objective way: a *theory* is made to do the *disputing* rather than a person. In contrast, Victor’s stance, in addition to being focused on complementarity, is more personalized. The main argument is realized in a personalizing move (*in my opinion*) and most of the clause subjects are persons. In general, ‘personalizing’ moves are more frequently selected by low-performing writers in both courses, and this pattern is statistically significant in the case of Econ 432.

A critically distant evaluative stance is also realized through ‘entertain’ resources, which lower the writer’s commitment to the evaluation. This strategy is seen in Ethan’s and Mike’s excerpts in 3a and 3b. These resources enable the writers to forward their critical evaluations in a way that signals willingness to enter into dialogue with the reader

as well as low interpersonal commitment and thus distance.

(3a) **One way** that Fraser **could** attempt to resolve the redistribution-recognition dilemma would be to loosen her assumptions. One of Fraser's basic assumptions was that recognition always differentiates social groups while redistribution always dedifferentiates groups. This however, **may not always** be the case. (PolTh, Ethan, HG3, S38-40)

(3b) It **appears**, then, that maximum price fixing does the greatest harm when set below a competitive level. **In Case 4** it could **potentially** do harm to small retailers trying to enter the market, but does so for the benefit of consumers and the producer. Based purely on the models, it **appears** that, **at the very least**, maximum prices deserve a Rule of Reason approach to evaluate their cost and benefits. (Mike, HG2, S72-74)

The critical evaluations proffered in these excerpts are carefully measured. The LG essays in both courses use fewer Engagement resources than the HG essays, a pattern which indexes less dialogic engagement and control and less critical distance when making critiques and offering interpretations. Successful construction of the novice academic stance in Econ 432 and PS 409 is also realized through balance between critical distance and the final rhetorical quality, discursal alignment.

Finally, **discursal alignment** is achieved through use of language that frames evaluations in terms of disciplinary constructs while also positively evaluating those constructs, conveying assimilation of the disciplinary discourse. In example 4a, Keith's use of "I" conveys a writer who uses a disciplinary framework (*an ex post analysis of share prices and product prices*) to make his evaluation, and in 4b Elisa's positive evaluations (*important* and *useful*) convey a writer who values the usefulness of theoretical constructs.

(4a) Using an ex post analysis of share prices and product prices, I was able to show that the Supreme Court decision had negligible effects on the industry, and therefore a better outcome could have been achieved. (Econ, Keith, HG4, S90-92)

(4b) ... The realities raised by Fraser offer important complexities to Young's political discourse. Young provides a useful schematic for understanding oppression both in Coetzee's *Disgrace* and contemporary society (PolTh, Elisa, HG1, S138-140)

Both texts use Appraisal values of ‘appreciation’—negative ‘appreciation’ in *negligible* and positive appreciation in *important* and *useful*. Martin and White (2005) explain that ‘appreciation’ “reworks feelings as propositions about the value of things” (p. 45). In other words, ‘appreciation’ encodes feelings in texts in an “institutionalized” way (Martin & White, 2005, p. 45). The kind of “institutionalization of feelings” evident in these excerpts may be read by Mark and Peter as uptake of the disciplinary discourse, and therefore their reading of students’ work may be characterized by identification with the particular style of stancetaking.

Linguistic thematizing of disciplinary concepts construes both critical distance and discursal alignment, and it may be that the instructors read the novice academic stance that is projected by these rhetorical qualities in a more sympathetic way. These are not rhetorical qualities that connect neatly to the interview data or to any of the course material, except for Peter’s remark that Elisa is “sympathetic” to Young’s typology. But since they do correlate with high-performing writing in the two courses, it is plausible to speculate that they influenced the instructors’ reading in positive ways.

7.1.3. Differences Among Individual Students

As just reviewed, there is coherence in stance strategies among the high-performers’ writing despite disciplinary variations. Differences in *individual* writers’ stylistic strategies were not the focus of this study, but these are also evident in the various examples provided throughout Chapters 4-6. Perhaps most noticeably, Nicholas and Elisa, both high-performers in PS 409, use strikingly different prose styles. Nicholas, as noted in Chapter 3, was an exchange student from Finland at the time of the course,⁵³ and his writing throughout the semester, as discussed in Chapter 6, is explicitly reader-engaged. He uses humor when making his points, as well as frequent rhetorical questions, personal asides, and self-mentions, all of which he uses to guide the reader through his argument. Elisa, in contrast, is more consistently critically distant. She does not use “I,” rhetorical questions, personal asides, or reader directives. Despite these striking differences, however, both writers’ final essays are characterized by the four rhetorical

⁵³ His response to the “language background” question on the Teagle survey shows that English is his second language but that he is more comfortable writing academic papers in English than in his first language.

qualities reviewed above.

Nicholas's and Elisa's individual writing styles may be influenced by the linguistic/rhetorical backgrounds of the writers and/or their perceptions of what it means to take on the stance of a novice academic. When commenting on students' stancetaking, therefore, it would be important for instructors to be aware of how to help students to achieve a novice academic stance while not impinging on the stylistic stamp that makes their writing their own. This is all the more reason that instructors like Peter would benefit from understanding what counts as a novice academic stance in his course context (and what does not) so that this language-related feedback to both high- and low-performing students does not conflate individual stylistic patterns with patterns that index the novice academic or student stance.

Differences are also evident in terms of why certain students may not take on a novice academic stance. Ryan (in PS 409) and Melisa (in Econ 432), for instance, seem to be aware of the discursive expectations of the essays they are writing, i.e., they seem to be "genre aware." Ryan appears to have at least an inchoate awareness of the need to problematize theoretical perspectives, as does Melisa of the need to engage consistently with dialogic alternatives when building her argument. The challenge for these two students, then, appears to be one of marshaling the discursive resources needed to realize these strategies in their writing. This appears to be a challenge for Melisa because she is writing in English as a second language,⁵⁴ and perhaps it is a challenge for Ryan because he was at the time of the course a second-year student and may have lacked opportunities to write essays in which he critically juxtaposes multiple theoretical views.

In contrast to these two writers, Victor and Nancy do not seem to possess such genre awareness. Throughout the course, Victor's writing displays hesitance to problematize theoretical perspectives and more of a desire to locate points of agreement among different thinkers' views. For this reason, his writing elicits such comments from Peter as "simple compare and contrast" and "only summarization." Nancy's writing, meanwhile, does not reflect awareness of the need to externalize the basis for her evaluations through objective 'entertain' strategies. That is, Nancy frequently uses

⁵⁴ Unlike Nicholas, Melisa indicated in the Teagle pre-term survey that she is more comfortable writing academic papers in her L1 than in English.

personalizing strategies, even though she appears to have done the research needed to use evidentializing strategies.

In sum, there appear to be at least two different types of student writers who consistently adopt a student stance in their writing: those who are “genre aware” but, due to a variety of inter-related sociocultural, linguistic, or educational reasons, do not command the discursive resources needed to realize the stance of a novice academic, and those who for similarly complex reasons do not see the educational stakes in taking on the stance of a novice academic or may even resist taking on that stance.

For these complex reasons, simply advising all students to adopt a novice academic stance in their writing would be incomplete and possibly irresponsible advice. Students need assistance in identifying the stance moves that are valued in samples of the discourse they are being asked to write, as well as a concrete metalanguage for discussing and reflecting on the discursive resources available to them for realizing these valued moves. If equipped with a robust metalanguage for discussing stance, high-performing and low-performing writers could discuss their writing with one another (for example in peer review contexts) in very concrete terms, making their writing strategies and questions explicit both to themselves and one another. Importantly, they could also be supported in this effort by instructors who attend explicitly to interpersonal meanings in academic writing, meanings that, while valued, more often than not go unnamed and therefore unnoticed by students.

In the sections below, I turn directly to pedagogical suggestions, and I begin by identifying further challenges that need to be addressed if students are to learn to identify and use valued patterns of stance in disciplinary writing. Namely, to help students reflect explicitly on valued stance moves, instructors clearly need to be aware of the importance of stance themselves. In response to this challenge, I argue that in the context of faculty development workshops writing specialists can assist instructors to begin reading student writing not just in terms of clear and accurate representation of content but also in terms of interpersonal meanings—for the ways that patterns of language use in student writing correlate with valued and less valued disciplinary stances.

7.2. Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions

The principal pedagogical implication that has emerged from this study is the need for greater awareness among faculty in the disciplines of valued and less valued patterns of stance in student writing. Sharing results of discourse analyses, such as the one offered in this dissertation, is one way to foster such awareness. Another way, one that I would argue has greater potential for sustainability, is through faculty development workshops that are designed to assist faculty to identify patterns in their students' writing for themselves. Since this second option is especially challenging considering that most instructors in the disciplines do not have prior training in text analysis, it is important that the pedagogical stakes of attending closely to micro-level meaning-making in student writing be made apparent. For instance, writing specialists can assist faculty in the disciplines to identify how patterns of stance in their students' writing operate to position the instructor-reader in certain ways—as aligned or not with a shared analytic framework or with a certain kind of epistemological and attitudinal orientation to disciplinary concepts.

With a keener eye to the ways specific linguistic patterns interrelate with learning goals and epistemological practices, instructors in the disciplines can become more reflexive about how and why they respond to student writing in the ways that they do. They can also learn to discuss with their students in explicit ways what rhetorical moves are valued in the course writing and why. To engage in this type of focused attention and discussion of language use—both in the contexts of faculty development workshops and course instruction—some type of specialized metalanguage (or language about language) is needed. I explain the need for and type of metalanguage in more detail below. I then turn to suggestions for faculty development workshops, ones designed specifically to foster awareness of stance in student writing.

7.2.1. Need for a Stance-Focused Metalanguage

A meaningful metalanguage about stance is needed in WAC/WID contexts so that writing researchers, faculty in the disciplines, and students can attend explicitly to important linguistic features that are at play in given contexts. By employing a specific metalanguage about stance, instructors can enable their students to ask new questions

about writing, monitor and evaluate their own micro-level stance choices when writing, and reflect on the discursive resources that they already command and can potentially recontextualize to meet the demands of other writing situations— including other disciplinary genres.

Given the inevitable time constraints in a busy academic term and the lack of linguistic/rhetorical training among most faculty in the disciplines, a natural objection to the above suggestion is that use of a specific metalanguage, while ideal, is unrealistic. Another possible objection is that patterns of language use can be identified without employing a specific metalanguage. I respond to the first objection below in detail. To the second one, I would suggest that many linguistic features of texts cannot be identified without some kind of non-commonsense terminology. Terminology is unfamiliar and appears “jargony” when the concepts themselves are unfamiliar, and identifying features of language that construe interpersonal meanings is itself an unfamiliar task. But as this dissertation has shown, disciplinary meaning-making requires specialized uses of language, ones which some students command better than others, and these specialized uses of language need naming.

The pertinent question, then, is perhaps less what metalanguage should be used and more what linguistic concepts require attention in specific contexts and why. Consider the highlighted items in the following texts from Econ 432 (discussed in Chapter 5):

(5a) It *appears* that maximum price fixing does the greatest harm when set below a competitive level. (Mike, HG2, S72)

(5b) The rise of Mrs. Smith’s, fall of Utah Pie, and relative success of Continental in the resulting time frame *suggest* internal management, and not the Supreme Court, played the significant role in market performance and conduct. (Tim, HG5, S71)

Should the italicized wordings be named? If so, why and how? In my analysis in Chapter 5, I refer to these wordings after White (2003) and Martin & White (2005) as resources of ‘entertain’ because they operate subtly to entertain alternative views in the discourse. I later refer to these wordings more specifically as ‘evidentialize’ resources in order to contrast them with ‘personalize’ moves and other sub-types of ‘entertain’. I use these terms so that I can track and articulate a differential pattern between the writing of high-

and low-performing students in Econ 432. Of course, the above wordings could also be referred to as hedges, downtoners, qualifications, “weasel words,” or something else, but to come to notice their use in discourse, some type of label is needed.

In their popular textbook *They Say/I Say*, Graff and Birkenstein (2006) make an effort to use non-specialized terminology to identify “the moves that matter in academic writing” (the subtitle of their book). To refer to attributions, for instance, they use the descriptive phrases “introducing what ‘they say’” (p. 163), “introducing ‘standard views’” (p. 163), and “capturing authorial action” (p. 165). Below each phrase, they list wordings or “templates” associated with each function. The sorts of strategies they offer could be very useful for student-writers who are struggling with the basic discursal means for reviewing others’ arguments and taking a stance. However, by keeping the description of language at the very general level that they do, the authors are unable to discuss patterns of language that operate at more specific levels of discourse and that may create valued meanings in particular discourse contexts.

In addition to not taking into account the distinct uses of language needed to construct meanings that are valued in specific disciplinary contexts, Graff and Birkenstein’s (2006) textbook does not provide a sense of the wide diversity in stylistic means for achieving valued stances. It does not, for instance, provide a sense of the strikingly different stylistic strategies adopted by students like Nicholas and Elisa, as discussed above. Students reading this book, therefore, may have their suspicions confirmed that academic writing does not allow room for creative approaches to orchestrating a scholarly conversation. Even more importantly perhaps, the textbook does not provide a sense of the various obstacles that may prevent many students from easily incorporating Graff and Birkenstein’s suggested strategies into their writing. This may be particularly the case for students like Victor and Nancy, who do not seem to have an awareness of the need to engage in more advanced forms of disciplinary discourse, ones construed through strategies like problematizing, evidentializing, and foregrounding of analytic constructs. To get at these and other more specific strategies, a more specialized metalanguage for discussing stance is needed.

Interestingly, the authors do discuss the importance of “entertaining objections” (p. 78; 170) in academic writing. They offer wordings such as these:

(6a) Yet some readers may challenge the view that ...

(6b) Of course, many will probably disagree with the assertion that ...

(Graff & Birkenstein, 2006, p. 170-1)

In light of patterns identified in this dissertation, these examples are interesting because of the second layer of “entertaining” brought into play through the low-probability modal expressions, *may* and *probably*. Unacknowledged by the authors, these micro-level ‘entertain’ moves lend a more measured stance to Graff and Birkenstein’s examples, which would read differently if worded in a more contractive manner. Also unacknowledged are the ‘counter’ (*Yet*) and ‘proclaim’ move (*Of course*). The authors do not explain how these resources relate to “entertaining objections.”

By pointing out these more micro-level features, I do not mean to suggest that every stance resource needs to be explicitly named every time discourse is examined. Findings from this study do suggest, however, that in student academic writing, the focus of Graff and Birkenstein’s textbook, ‘entertain’, ‘counter’, and ‘proclaim’ meanings are important, and acknowledging these meanings requires a non-commonsense terminology. Even the authors cannot entirely avoid employing technical terms. As two instances, they refer to “embedding voice markers” (p. 70-1; 170) and “metacommentary” (p. 123-132; 176). These (or similar) terms are necessary, as I believe the authors would acknowledge, if they are to make the points about language that they need to make. In general, the degree of specialization in metalanguage is influenced by the type of meanings and level of linguistic detail under examination.

Referring back to the first objection, how realistic is it to propose using a specialized metalanguage in faculty development contexts focused on stance and reader positioning? Which linguistic concepts should be addressed and how? My response to these questions focuses on two types of metalanguage about stance, one more general and the other specific, and I explain how these could be useful to writing specialists who aim to assist faculty in the disciplines to track meaningful patterns of stance.

7.2.2. Use of a Stance-Focused Metalanguage in Faculty Development Contexts

The first, more general metalanguage comprises concepts such as stance, reader-

positioning, dialogic expansion and contraction, authoritativeness, and the four rhetorical qualities identified in this study (contrastiveness, dialogic control, critical distance, and discursal alignment). These concepts are “general” because they are abstracted away from word/phrase, clause, and text-level patterns. When examining student writing, writing specialists and disciplinary faculty could use these general concepts to guide their process of identifying and interpreting patterns of language use in student work.

In terms of *how* they could use these concepts, I would suggest that the metaphorical orientation of writing-as-conversation could serve as a useful overarching framework. As I discuss below, this metaphorical orientation could be more useful than other metaphors about writing, such as argument-as-war (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), when the task at hand is to identify patterns of stance in students’ texts. This is because it offers a lens through which to introduce related conceptual metaphors about stance. These include reader positioning, dialogic control, and dialogic expansion and contraction. Through the use of these concepts, other more general stance concepts can be introduced in coherent ways. An *authoritative* stance, for example, can be discussed as a quality that is achieved not just through use of highly assertive language but through language that constructs dialogic control, or control over a conversation among various participants in the discourse. Reader-positioning, likewise, can be introduced as a lens through which to examine how student writers use language to engage and interact with the reader when developing their arguments. In general, the writing-as-conversation metaphor could be useful for anchoring discussions of stance with faculty from various disciplinary contexts. Importantly, it can also lead to the formation of new questions about student writing that motivate instructors to closely examine language use in their students’ writing.

The second type of metalanguage is more directly tied to text-level details. While obviously less intuitive for instructors who have not been trained in discourse analysis, this metalanguage—e.g., counters, evidentializing, personalizing, pronouncing, attributions, contrastive rhetorical pairs, code glosses, metadiscourse markers, and so on—might be drawn on selectively as faculty begin to notice patterns of language use in their own students’ writing. As discussed above, identifying linguistic patterns is facilitated through a metalanguage that gives a name to specific linguistic concepts, and whichever linguistic features are discussed must be determined by the discourse context,

by how language is repeatedly used to create certain kinds of contextually-valued meanings.

Before continuing to specific examples of this way of talking about stance with instructors in the disciplines, I would like to suggest that the writing-as-conversation metaphor should supplement or re-orient (rather than entirely replace) instructors' existing metalanguage about writing. This is so that instructors can practice examining student texts through lenses that are both familiar and new. Terms that might be more familiar to describe qualities of student writing—ones like well-structured, clear, critical, analytical, formal/informal, and awkward, among many others—could in fact serve as starting places for infusing faculty development workshop activities with metaphors that place emphasis on meanings related to stance, reader positioning, and dialogism.

I now turn to specific examples of how faculty in the disciplines might be encouraged to track patterns of stance in their students' writing. Starting with the case of PS 409, Peter's term for effective student writing is "control." This is a concept he spoke about enthusiastically in our interview and one that he reported to be using with students when discussing writing. Understandably, however, he had some difficulty identifying places in Elisa's essay where control is constructed, as well as places in Victor's essay where it is not. Introducing the concept of *dialogic control* could usefully direct attention to meaningful patterns in students' writing for navigating between different theoretical viewpoints. The question, that is, could subtly shift from *how a sense of control is accomplished in the text* to *how the student writer establishes control over the dialogue between theorists*. With this subtle shift, the discussion could lead to explicit attention to repeated ways that high-performing students use language to control the dialogic exchange between different theoretical perspectives.

In my own analysis, I identified 'orienting', 'elaborative', and 'associative' assertions. These devices play a clear role in the high-graded students' writing in construing macro-level control over the theoretical discussion. A useful set of questions for fostering this or a similar analysis might include, *how does the student writer use language to make associations between different theoretical perspectives? What use of language is effective for constructing a sense of control over those perspectives? What use of language is not so effective for this purpose?* Questions like these could guide a

discussion of specific students' essays and possibly they could lead instructors like Peter to notice the types of assertions identified in this study, in addition to others.

Identifying patterns of language use related to dialogic control could also lead to an examination of 'counter' moves in the political theory essays as well as the slightly more abstracted concept of problematization. Moving the attention down to text-level features with a focus on 'counters' and problematization could then open up a discussion about ways to problematize in more and less measured ways. Such a discussion could lead to the observation that 'entertain' resources are useful for constructing a stance that is both contrastive and measured or "aware" of other dialogic possibilities.

Many of the PS 409 students could have benefited from a metalanguage for connecting sentence-level features to the abstract concept of dialogic control, and they could have come to see multiple ways through which this quality is achieved. With the concepts of 'countering', 'entertaining', and 'problematizing', as well as the three assertion types, students would be well positioned to examine key transitional moves in their own and others' writing, as well as the type of stance taken toward that problematization (e.g., measured, careful, etc.).

In Econ 432, Mark's metalanguage about student writing is guided largely by the conceptual metaphor of argument as war (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In our interview, he spoke to the need for students to build strong, defensible, and airtight arguments. His use of the term "counterargument" is not incoherent with this metaphor, especially as he explains the strategy in terms of responding to what "your opponents" would argue. If your opponents are likely to launch an attack, then making every move possible to defend your position is expected, even if it means a last-ditch effort to "throw a sentence in there," as Mark puts it, to seal up a hole in your argument.

This conceptual metaphor for understanding argumentation could open up important discussions about goals for student writing in workshop settings with faculty in other disciplines. Interestingly, this particular metaphor does correspond to the highly adversarial quality of the discourse on antitrust law and economics (McCloskey, 1985/1998), a quality which is realized in the high-graded Econ 432 essays partly through 'counter' moves. But the argument-as-war metaphor does not account for all of Mark's explanations of valued features of student writing. For example, he praises Ken's writing

for revealing “deep insight” and “independent thinking”—characterizations which appear more related to interpersonal stance than argumentative “defense.” Mark also offers high praise to Ken for “step[ping] outside of economics,” which is suggestive of academic writing as participating in a disciplinary (or interdisciplinary) conversation, to echo Klamer’s (2007) argument that economics discourse is conversation, one in which participants uses certain kinds of language to take stances and offer evaluations of others’ work. If the conceptual metaphor for analyzing and evaluating student writing were shifted from argument-as-war to participating in a conversation, how could counterargumentation be seen and talked about differently?

In a faculty development workshop setting, Mark could be encouraged to consider how counterargumentation correlates with taking a step back or outside of the discourse. Stemming from this discussion, different uses of countering could be introduced. For example, deny/countering and concede/countering—both highly contractive maneuvers—could be discussed as reader-oriented strategies for steering the reader through the discussion. Attribute/counter and entertain/counter, in contrast, could then be discussed as moves for negotiating with others’ views, for participating in the conversation, while also construing “independent thinking” or critical reasoning. This type of discussion would preserve Mark’s focus on counterargumentation while also shifting the concept from one metaphorical system to another, from argument-as-war to argument-as-conversation.

In addition to using conceptual metaphors to facilitate interaction about patterns in student writing, it would also be possible to build activities that start with instructors’ comments on students’ essays rather than with the essays themselves. Instructors could be encouraged to examine patterns in their own commenting practices, perhaps with a special focus on those pertaining to language use. What types of patterns in student writing elicited their comments? From there, discussions could focus on how students’ use of language index particular kinds of stances. For instance, Mark was sensitive to students’ level of commitment when putting forth critical evaluations, as seen in his suggestion on Keith’s essay to use a “weaker word” than “could.” This would be an opportunity for Mark to reflect on the question of where in students’ argumentative writing they should try to adopt a committed stance and where they should strive for a

more expansive one. In particular, if the larger goal is for students to construct an assertive, committed, strong argument, what exactly is the purpose of backing off from full commitment to a critical evaluation? Why not, as it were, use the “stronger” word? Such a question ties in directly with the metaphor of writing-as-conversation because it suggests that authoritativeness has just as much to do with manipulating dialogic space in strategic ways as it does defending positions by sealing up holes in arguments.

Examples of useful workshops discussions/activities could go on. But in general, findings from this study suggest that it is important to create opportunities for meaningful interaction among disciplinary faculty and writing researchers about language use in student writing. This interaction can be guided by at least a general metalanguage about stance and reader positioning, one useful for promoting conscious noticing of patterns in language in student-generated texts. This general metalanguage could be framed in terms of writing-as-conversation. In the section below, I consider how this interaction may lead to instructional interventions in upper-level courses in the disciplines. I then consider possible implications for two very different instructional contexts, first year writing (FYW) and first year graduate-level writing.

7.2.3. Implications for Writing Instruction in Upper-Level WID Courses

Considering that instructor expectations regarding stance often remain implicit, it is important that upper-level courses in the disciplines provide students with opportunities to reflect explicitly on language/rhetorical issues regarding stance. Recent research in writing studies calls for increased opportunities for students to engage in meta-reflective activities focused on their understanding of disciplinary thinking and writing practices (Jarratt et al., 2009; Melzer, 2009; Thaiss and Zawacki, 2006). In light of findings from this study, it would seem especially important to provide opportunities for reflection on stance. Such opportunities can be provided in the context of instructor-led whole-class discussions or small-group activities, including peer review workshops, as well as office hour interactions and instructor-to-student feedback on paper drafts.

Specifically, instructor-led discussions with students about what sorts of critical stances are valued in certain disciplinary genres could go a long way toward making explicit what “critical” reasoning means for the purposes of the discipline or

subdiscipline as a whole. Such a discussion could follow from activities whereby students, working in groups, examine paragraphs from students' papers from previous terms. Instructors, for instance, could select paragraphs from essays in which the stancetaking is particularly well-handled as well as paragraphs from essays in which the stancetaking is not very well-handled, and students could then be prompted to compare and contrast the paragraphs, identifying qualities of each text that stand out for them as strong or weak. Instructors may want to provide specific stance-related questions for students to discuss, and these might include: How committed is the author to his or her assertions, and is this level of commitment warranted for this portion of the paper? How does the author comment on the status of evidence that is used to support claims (for example, as suggesting or "proving" a certain conclusion)? Where and how does the author show awareness of alternative points of view? Does the author engage with readers' expectations and, if so, how? A class activity such as this could be strategically timed around students' own writing assignment in the course so that they are grappling with language issues around stance as they are constructing their own arguments.

Another useful instructional practice would be to have students, working individually or in pairs, rewrite excerpts from students' papers that they find problematic in terms of stance. The opportunity for students to engage in interactive reflection with their classmates on texts that model (or fall short of) the discursive moves that they are expected to make can increase their awareness of the range of stancetaking options that are available to them in a given genre or sub-genre, and it may enable them to become more mindful of their own stancetaking choices.

While engaging in close analysis of stancetaking strategies can help both English L1 and L2 writers to become more conscious of stance in disciplinary writing, it is likely that the activity of closely analyzing texts would be particularly beneficial to L2 writers like Melisa, whose writing I examined in Chapter 4. As suggested in Tardy's (2006) comparative research on L1/L2 genre studies, it is possible that L2 writers refer to genre models when learning to write in an unfamiliar genre more regularly than their English L1 peers. If this is the case, then the process of analyzing samples of the target genre (with the guidance of their instructors) could help alert these writers to important rhetorical meanings that underlie recurring linguistic features in the samples they are

examining. Such rhetorical consciousness-raising could help L2 writers to use genre samples as models in more nuanced ways. Of course, the same processes could be encouraged of L1 writers who do not yet command the discursive resources needed to construct a novice academic stance.

For example, as revealed in Chapter 6, Ryan appeared to be aware of the expectation to assume a critical stance in this course essay and to negotiate positions with the reader, but he was not fully in command of the necessary discursual resources for engaging in problematization in genre-congruent ways. By examining stancetaking strategies in examples of strong and weaker student writing, Ryan could come to observe patterns of language available to him for carving out a contrastive stance in more sophisticated ways. For instance, selecting out examples of problematization moves in high-performing students' essays could alert students like Ryan to patterns of language available to him for problematizing theorists' views in a style of stancetaking that is both critically distant and measured or "aware" of the complications involved.

As acknowledged above, other low-performing writers may not be as aware of the implicit expectation to adopt a contrastive stance. For students like Victor in PS 409, who took a stance of assumed agreement among theoretical perspectives and therefore had difficulty critically juxtaposing arguments in specific ways, a useful pedagogical intervention would be to present him with several students' responses to the same prompt, discussing strengths and weaknesses. At the same time, building in class time to discuss strategies for responding to prompts could lead to an explicit discussion of stance. What stances are valued in writing in the field, and how might the wording of the prompt anticipate those valued stances? Why are certain stances valued over others?

In addition to whole-class discussions about stance, it is important that instructors provide students with opportunities to engage in reflection on their own stancetaking strategies *while writing*. One of the instructional interventions used in the Teagle-Spencer study (see Kaplan et al. (2009) and Silver et al. (2011)) is the requirement that students insert metareflective "monitoring comments" in the margins of their papers (using the "Comments" function on Microsoft Word). Students pose questions about assignment expectations and disciplinary content, and they explain and evaluate their writing decisions. This commenting tool would be ideal for the purpose of initiating a dialogue

between students and instructors (and potentially peer reviewers) about student writers' stancetaking strategies. Specifically, instructors can encourage students to reflect on the relative degree of dialogic openness in particular stages of an argument. Students may want to ask whether their evaluations of others' arguments are worded in a way that is both authoritative and dialogically open, or whether they are handling the requirement to be concise and assertive, on the one hand, and sophisticated and nuanced in their analysis, on the other.

In general, findings from this study suggest a need to bring together the recent interest in composition studies on meta-flection and transfer with the concept of metalanguage about writing, specifically stancetaking. If faculty in the disciplines are supported to make connections between stance and their goals for student writing, then they can build in instructional time to explicit discussions of stance and epistemological expectations in the disciplinary context.

7.2.4. Implications for First Year Writing Instruction

The implications for first year writing instruction are less immediately clear than they are for WAC/WID contexts. That there is a kind of coherence-within-diversity in terms of what counts as a novice academic stance in Econ 432 and PS 409 does suggest possibilities for talking with students in specific ways about the expectations of upper-level writing in the disciplines. Before proceeding with concrete suggestions, however, I would like to express several notes of caution.

First, readers of this study may be intrigued to learn that the high-performing writers in both courses use more 'counter' resources than their low-performing classmates. Especially interesting perhaps is that the Econ 432 writers use a statistically significant greater use of sentence-initial *However*. It bears repeating, however, that the advice to first-year writers to use *However* in their writing frequently would be unsound advice. The high-performers in Econ 432 and PS 409 did not earn high grades by peppering this word throughout their essays. *However* was used more frequently by the high-performers because they were adopting a more contrastive stance against a greater number of dialogistic alternatives. In many instances, these uses of *however* were combined with resources of 'entertain' to adopt a carefully measured contrastive stance.

To make these lexical frequency counts useful, first-year writers could learn to track how and for what purposes contrastive connectors are used in texts.

Second, there is a similar risk in suggesting to FYW students that using categorical assertions is desirable in political theory writing (or in closely related fields) because “your reader knows your interpretation is ‘just your opinion’.” Many incoming university students already come into their college writing courses having learned the lessons to “be assertive, use active verbs, be clear and concise, eliminate ‘filler’ words, avoid repetition,” and so on. The finding that the high-performing PS 409 writers use more bare assertions than the low-performers could therefore simply reinforce these hard and fast stylistic principles, one which I would argue should be pushed back against in FYW courses. There are other patterns in this study that would help students to see meaningful reasons to violate the principle of “always be assertive.” For example, the greater use of ‘evidentialize’ over ‘personalize’ moves in the Econ 432 corpus could be useful for showing that there are many ways to go about reducing authorial commitment and increasing room for dialogue while still maintaining an authoritative stance. But even this differential pattern should be handled cautiously.

This is because, third, the greater use of ‘personalize’ moves by the low-performers in both courses could translate into the advice to “be sure to avoid ‘I’ in your writing.” This is clearly not the case when the specific rhetorical uses of “I” are closely examined. As Ivanic (1994, 1998) and Tang (2009) both discuss, use of “I” can enhance the authoritativeness of the argumentative stance. A more authoritative use of “I” is seen in several of the ‘pronounce’ moves that are used by the high-performing writers in Econ 432 (e.g., *I was able to show that*) and in the “roadmapping” use of “I” in PS 409 (*First, I discuss*). These and other uses of “I” can be teased apart in the FYW context as an additional way to push back against some of the hard and fast rules that many students bring to their first year of academic writing.

More generally, findings from this study suggest ways of talking to students in more specific terms than currently available, for example in Graff and Birkenstein (2006), about academic writing as entering into and contributing to a disciplinary conversation. While the nature of the conversation in the Econ 432 and PS 409 essays is somewhat different, it can be seen that the high-performers in both contexts more

consistently position their readers as disciplinary interactants rather than as instructors. As conceptual metaphors, stance, dialogic expansion and contraction, and reader positioning offer a set of lenses through which first-year students can be assisted to read academic discourse. These lenses could help students to see that academic writing is not just an “objective,” impersonal discourse. While it is true that academic writers want to avoid “bias,” they also want to take positions while interacting with their readers and persuade them to accept their line of argumentation. Prompting students to closely read sample texts in order to identify how these aims are accomplished could lead to more specific discussions of language use in texts. Features like modal expressions, attributions, concessions, attitude markers, and many others can be examined in terms of their use in orchestrating other voices in the discourse while steering the reader through the conversation.

7.2.5. Implications for Graduate-Level Writing Instruction

Interestingly, some of these same pedagogical implications may be applicable to graduate-level academic writing instruction. As noted by Feak (2008), Tardy (2009), and others in *English for Academic Purposes (EAP)*, the expectation to adopt an authoritative stance is challenging for many new graduate students, an increasing number of whom in U.S. universities are multilingual writers, re-entering university after years in the workforce, and for other reasons not fully in command of the genre knowledge needed to contribute authoritatively to a disciplinary conversation in their fields. Well-known difficulties for graduate students of procrastination, “imposter syndrome,” writer’s block, and other anxieties are surely influenced by the implicit expectation to take on a sophisticated, scholarly stance when learning to write unfamiliar genres like literature reviews, research proposals, and others carefully reviewed in Swales and Feak (2004).

Developing a metalanguage for reflecting explicitly on stance and genre may help to ease some of this anxiety. Cheng (2007, 2008), for instance, discusses the gains an L2 graduate student made by reflecting on the rhetorical “moves” (Swales, 1990) that he used in his own writing and that were used in genre exemplars from his field of study. Close text analysis guided by the concept of moves and move-steps may have enabled this student to develop, as Cheng puts it, “a deepened understanding of how writer,

reader, and purpose interact in a piece of text that results in the use of certain generic features” (Cheng, 2008, p. 65).

Findings from this dissertation suggest additional layers of stance-focused metalanguage that could be useful to entering graduate students. In particular, differential patterns between high- and low-performing students support Swain’s (2009) argument that talking with novice academic writers explicitly about dialogic expansion and contraction may help to ease some of the stress associated with being the sole voice of evaluation in their writing—the lone author proffering assessments of others’ (experts’) work and staking out new claims. If novice academics come to see authority in their writing as a matter of skill in orchestrating voices, allowing space for alternative views, and representing these alternative views fairly and sensitively, then they may feel a sense of communal responsibility at play in their writing efforts and less of a need to be the sole voice of authority.

At the level of the text, graduate students in writing workshop settings can learn to identify evidentializing and other options for entertaining alternative views, as well as contrastive rhetorical pairs for engaging the reader and pulling her over to the writer’s view. They can also learn to identify strategies for constructing both critical distance and discursal alignment through thematization of analytic constructs and proclaim moves, including both ‘endorse’ and ‘pronounce’ strategies. The more general question of when to contract and when to expand dialogic space in particular disciplinary genres could inform instructional tasks aimed at raising students’ awareness of stance expectations. There is some evidence, as discussed in Chapter 5, that a more expansive stance is valued when writers are interpreting the significance of evidence before moving ahead to make suggestions about alternative remedies. Such a strategy may extend to proposal/prospectus writing, as graduate students learn to propose a line of research after articulating the significance of the problems and evidence that would motivate such a proposal. In general, discussing correlations between raising/lowering commitment and argumentative structure would be a worthwhile workshop task for graduate students who need assistance understanding how the details of language use are influenced by the social functions of academic genres.

7.3. Implications for Linguistic Discourse Analysis of Student Writing

In this study, especially fine analytic tools and complex procedures were needed to tease out patterns of stance. This is because of the highly advanced nature of the writing. Below I make some suggestions for future research on advance student academic writing in terms analytic approach and use of the SFL Engagement framework.

7.3.1. Implications for Analytic Approach

As I explained in Chapter 3, I began my analysis of stance using a quantitatively-oriented manual analysis of Engagement resources (Martin and White, 2005). This initial Engagement analysis proved to be an effective “way into” the dense and highly complex student writing, though incomplete in and of itself as a way of accounting for all the patterns that emerged through my analysis.

I followed the initial Engagement analysis with an inductive analysis of concordance lines (generated from word- and phrase-lists from AntConc; Anthony, 2010). I also used close reading of Engagement resources in students’ texts in order to interpret specific configurations and clusters of Engagement values. These subsequent stages allowed me to identify differential patterns that were not picked up through my initial Engagement analysis. These patterns include (a) the specific ‘entertain’ resources for expanding dialogic space (e.g., ‘personalize’ and ‘evidentialize’), (b) the types of ‘bare assertions’ at work in the PS 409 essays (‘associative’, ‘orienting’, and ‘elaborative’), (c) Appraisal resources of Attitude in the PS 409 essays, (d) metadiscoursal features that fall outside the Appraisal framework, including nominalizations, code glosses, meta-semiotic verbs and nouns, and (e) various other wordings that conspire in the construction of the “novice academic” and “student” stances, including linguistic foregrounding of analytic tools and references to the classroom discourse.

In light of the importance of these patterns for construing the novice academic and student stances, four alternative approaches to the analysis would have been possible. First, it would have been possible to start with a full-scale Appraisal analysis, using all three sub-systems, Attitude, Graduation, and Engagement. Doing this would have enabled me to pick up the differential patterns in ‘appreciation’ resources in the high- and

low-graded political theory essays that I identified by analyzing output generated from word lists in AntConc. Second, it would have been possible to start with a corpus-driven analytic approach (Butler, 2004), using inductive scans of word- and phrase-lists generated from the various corpora and rigorously comparing patterns between data sets. This approach might have helped me to home in on the differential patterns in ‘personalize’ and ‘evidentialize’ resources rapidly, as well as account for other “odd” discrepancies between the corpora, such as references to class (e.g., *in lecture, last week, in class*, etc.). Third, it would have been possible to start with a “corpus-based” analysis (Butler, 2004) in which I run targeted searches of lexicogrammatical features associated with the Engagement options, using word and phrase lists. Fourth, it would have been possible to start with an inductively-oriented “rich feature analysis” (Barton, 2002), which, like the corpus-driven approach, would have allowed me to begin inductively but with the lens focused on whole texts. Starting in this way, I might have gained a more general sense of some of the key differences between the high- and low-performing students’ essay before committing to the full-scale Engagement analysis or some other framework.

Use of Engagement analysis as a way into the data proved effective on several levels. First, because it was motivated by the goal of identifying how students engage with alternative views and voices as they construct their arguments, it was useful for identifying the degrees of dialogic engagement evidenced in the student writing and the types of dialogic maneuvers most frequently made in the two course contexts. In this way, it allowed me to link the notions of contrastiveness and dialogic control to the rhetorical quality of authoritativeness. This may, in turn, offer a new lens for understanding the linguistic construction of authority in terms of orchestrating a conversation and controlling that conversation, rather than in more author-centered terms.

One drawback to undertaking a full-scale Appraisal analysis is that it would have been excessively time-consuming to analyze the texts of thirty 2,500-3,000 word essays. Appraisal analyses tend to treat in-depth the configuration of resources in very small numbers of texts. For instance, Hood’s (2004) doctoral study of Appraisal patterns focuses on just ten introductions from undergraduate students’ essays. Finally, a drawback to beginning with more inductive approaches is that I would not have been able

to compare the quantitative results of my Engagement analysis with those previously examined. This comparison and contrast proved useful as I grappled with questions of why the high-performing Econ 432 writers might be using so many ‘counters’ compared to writers in other discourse contexts.

7.3.2. Implications for SFL Modeling of Engagement

Findings from this study offer a number of implications for future SFL Engagement analyses. In this section, I discuss limitations of current modeling of Engagement for the purposes of analyzing academic writing, as well as lingering problems and suggestions for future analysis of Engagement analyses of academic writing.

Suggested Refinements to the Engagement Modeling

First, my analysis suggests possibilities for refinements to the Martin and White (2005) Engagement model. Compared to journalistic discourse—the basis for the development of Engagement in White (2003) and Martin and White (2005)—it may be that the Engagement values that receive more sustained realization in academic discourses have to do with ‘entertaining’ and ‘countering’ alternative views and less with ‘proclaiming’ the views of the authors. For this reason, suggested refinements to the model consist of pulling out particular Engagement resources to further levels of delicacy and collapsing others together.

In particular, a significant finding from the analysis of Econ 432 and PS 409 essays is that resources of ‘counter’ and ‘entertain’ are among the most frequently used resources in both contexts, as shown in the relative frequencies of each resource per 2,000 words in Table 7.1. Another significant finding is that the political theory writers more frequently use bare assertions, or assertions that do not encode explicit values of Engagement, compared to the economics writers. In response to these frequency counts, I focused my analysis in Chapters 4-6 largely on these three resources: ‘counter’, ‘entertain’, and bare assertions. Differential patterns between high- and low-performing writers revealed a need to track ‘entertain’ and bare assert moves to further levels of delicacy.

	Avg. frequency in 5 HG Economics Essays, per 2,000 words	Avg. frequency in 10 HG Political Theory Essays, per 2,000 words
bare assertions	35.0	53.2
disclaim: counter	15.0	14.2
disclaim: deny	3.9	3.7
proclaim: endorse	5.5	1.9
proclaim: pronounce	4.6	2.8
proclaim: concur	1.5	1.5
entertain	17.8	13.5
attribute	7.9	29.7

Table 7.1. Use of ‘disclaim’ and ‘entertain’ in PS 409 and Econ 432

For ‘entertain’ resources, analysis showed that there are differential patterns between high and low-performing Econ 432 writers in terms of their use of ‘entertain:evidentialize’ moves (*research suggests; according to models, it appears/seems*) and ‘entertain:personalize’ resources (*in my opinion, I think*). Other ‘entertain’ options identified through the analysis include ‘entertain:delimit’ and ‘entertain: postulate’. For bare assertions, analysis showed that ‘orienting’, ‘elaborative’, and ‘associative’ assertions were key moves in the PS 409 essays for juxtaposing perspectives, evaluating texts and theoretical concepts, and identifying questions and complications in the discourse. While these various sub-option are not modeled in Martin and White (2005), I would suggest that they should be included in the coding of Engagement resources in future analyses of writing in academic discourse contexts.

In addition, the analysis of ‘counter’ resources in Chapter 4 revealed frequently recurring contrastive rhetorical pairs: ‘assert’ + ‘counter’, ‘attribute’ + ‘counter’, ‘entertain’ + ‘counter’, ‘deny’ + ‘counter’, and ‘concur’ + ‘counter’. While the latter two pairs tend to operate in more contractive ways, often to engage directly with the reader and pull her over to the writer’s views, the ‘attribute’ + ‘counter’ and ‘entertain’ + ‘counter’ pairs are used to negotiate with alternative views beyond those of the reader. They tend to be used less for explicit reader engagement and more to interact with the voices in source texts under analysis or the broader discourse context. The basic question raised by analysis of contrastive pairs, then, is, whose views are being countered?

Because the construction of a contrastive epistemological stance appears so valued in academic discourse, it would be useful for the Engagement framework to model these various meanings in greater detail. More research is needed to track where and how these contrastive pairs occur in argumentative genres, and on the basis of that further analysis refined sub-options for countering can be suggested.

In contrast to ‘entertain’ and ‘counter’ resources, ‘proclaim’ resources were selected infrequently by all 30 writers in this study. This means these writers infrequently put forth positions with a high degree of authorial commitment, unless they are disclaiming (countering and denying) others’ views. For this reason, I would suggest that it is less necessary to include the various sub-options of ‘proclaiming’ when analyzing student academic writing, and perhaps particularly upper-level student academic writing. While awareness of the various sub-options may be important, I would suggest that the Engagement analysis need only capture the basic option of whether the proposition is being proclaimed.

Lingering Problems with the Coding of Engagement Values

In addition to these needed refinements, lingering problems with operationalization of the Engagement framework should be acknowledged. These have to do with (1) the status of the monogloss or bare assert category and (2) the difficulty of determining Engagement values based on surrounding co-text.

First, the status of bare assertions as undialogized, or denying dialogistic diversity, is called into question by the analysis of the political theory essays. The associative assertions in 7a and 7b, for instance, do not explicitly employ lexicogrammatical values of Engagement, but characterizing them as therefore monoglossic is nevertheless questionable.

(7a) Rawls’s concept of justice as fairness provides a solution to the social and economic injustice that Fanon and his race suffer. (Sarah, HG8, S29)

(7b) Young provides a useful schematic for understanding oppression both in Coetzee’s *Disgrace* and contemporary society. (Elisa, HG1, S139)

These assertions are working to associate at least two theoretical views, and so the basis

for evaluation does not appear to be solely the writers'. Sarah is using Rawls, and Elisa Young, to provide a basis for evaluation. On a more macro level of analysis, these associative assertions work as transitioning devices in the respective essays, allowing the writers to move from one part of the discussion to another. Associative assertions like these enable writers to establish a kind of macro-level dialogic control. They index dialogic engagement, then, but in a way not currently modeled in the Engagement framework.

A related operationalization problem is how, and how much, of the surrounding co-text should be referenced when determining what Engagement values are being brought into play. In Chapter 3, I explain that the opening sentence in example 8a was difficult to code due to the ambiguous status of the formulation *not without*. Is this phrase operating as a bare assert, a denial, or a concur move? I eventually decided on the latter, interpreting the sentence as working in cooperation with the subsequent 'counter' sentence "on the other hand, however" to form a 'concur' + 'counter' pair.

(8a) This option is *not without* its merits; if Vons were allowed to keep all of its Shopping Bag stores, the benefits of merger could be even greater because the stores may have even lower costs and higher bargaining power. On the other hand, however, regulation is not free (Luis, S74-76)

Yet another possibility is to code Luis's *not without* as an expansive move. This interpretation would be supported by reading the move as bringing into effect the immediately following expansive meanings, *if*, *could*, and *may*. Reinterpreting the sentences as expansive is supported by example 8b, which follows the same pattern as 8a.

(8b) However, this case is *not without* concerns. There is the possibility for abuse if the producer sets different maximum prices for different retailers, allowing some to reap higher profits. (Mike, HG2, S69-70)

This second *not without* move is also followed by expansive meanings (*possibility* and *if*). In both examples, *not without* anticipates expansive meanings. For this reason, should the initial moves not also be read as expansive? This question is similar to the 'associative' assertion problem raised above, as it relates to how much (and what parts) of the co-text to take into account when interpreting Engagement values. For it would appear that

Engagement values are not only realized through lexicogrammatical resources but also through the positioning of the proposition within the text.

More analyses are needed that help to clarify how particular lexicogrammatical resources work to anticipate contractive or expansive moves within particular genres. Such research would be useful even if it were to identify some wordings as ultimately ambiguous or multi-functional in terms of their Engagement values. It would also be useful for the more general question of how text positioning influences the realization of Engagement values. In general, more research is needed that tracks how and where specific Engagement values pattern together in given genres. This type of analysis could inform instructional interventions aimed at making abstract qualities like “argumentative complexity” more visible as they are realized in specific genres.

7.4. Design Limitations and Implications for Future Research on Student Writing

This study did not incorporate a number of methods and data that would allow for investigation of questions that arose during my analysis. For one, it did not incorporate linguistic analysis of students’ course reading as a way to investigate the degree to which some students may have modeled (tacitly or consciously) their stancetaking after expert writing in the field. In addition, since the focus of this study is on the ways patterns of stance in students’ writing correlate with the instructors’ goals and assessment criteria for student writing, it did not incorporate interviews with the student writers, nor track individual students’ writing in other contexts.

Use of these data sources alongside close text analysis of student writing invite a number of questions of interest to scholars in both composition-rhetoric and applied linguistics. These include: How do students model their writing on course reading? What is the nature of the relationship between student writers’ existing metalanguage about writing and their writing performances? What is the nature of the relationship between writers’ metalinguistic competence and their self-reflections on their writing? How do high-performing writers transfer or recontextualize their social knowledge of genre, i.e., their awareness and control of expected stance and reader positioning moves, when moving from one writing scene to another? Below I explain each of these questions and why they are important.

7.4.1. Analyzing Reading Material to Account for Stancetaking Patterns

In this study, I accounted for the linguistic differences in student writing between the two disciplinary contexts by interviewing the course instructors about their goals and assessment criteria for student writing and examining selected course material like assignment prompts and instructor comments on students' writing. Further research can rigorously examine the texts students read in the course in order to investigate the degree to which students may be taking up a style of stancetaking used by experts in the field. This line of investigation has implications for the ways that stance is presented to students, specifically in terms of whether or not certain course readings can serve as genre exemplars or not for students' own writing. There is some evidence to support the possibility that the differential patterns in stancetaking in PS 409 and Econ 432 result from implicit modeling of texts.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Coase's (1937) essay "The Nature of the Firm" was cited by at least several students in their essays, and, as McCloskey (1998) discusses, this essay adopts a highly adversarial rhetorical stance. In my own reading of Coase's 8,000 word paper, I counted 48 'disclaim' moves of the sort frequently used by the Econ 432 writers, and most of these were expressed in a highly committed style of stancetaking.⁵⁵ In addition, Coase frequently uses 'attribute' + 'counter' and 'deny' + 'counter' formulations, both of which are used more frequently by the high-performing writers.

A more direct correlation between assigned readings and students' stancetaking seems to be at play in PS 409. My reading of Young's (1990) *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, which Elisa and many other students closely examined in their essay, reveals a use of Appraisal resources that appear to be mirrored by the high-performing writers. In 9a, I have reproduced a sentence from Elisa's high-graded essay, and following that are sentences from Young's text. (In these texts, both explicit and implicit resources of Appreciation are in *bold italics*.)

⁵⁵ Coase frequently combines sentence-initial *But* with 'pronounce' and 'deny' formulations like *clearly not true* and *clearly important*. These are several examples: "***But*** this implies that ... which is ***clearly not true*** in the majority of cases" (p. 390); "***But*** this is ***clearly not true*** of the real world" (p. 390); "***But*** it is ***clearly important*** to investigate how the number of products produced by a firm is determined ..." (p. 402).

- (9a) Young *provides* a *useful* schematic for *understanding* oppression both in Coetzee's *Disgrace* and contemporary society. (Elisa, HG1, S139)
- (9b) Accordingly, I *offer* below an explication of five faces of oppression as a *useful* set of categories and distinctions which I believe is *comprehensive*, in the sense that ... (Young, 1990, p. 40)
- (9c) An *important* contribution of feminist moral theory has been to question the deeply held assumption that moral agency and full citizenship require that a person be autonomous and independent. Feminists have *exposed* this assumption as inappropriately individualistic and derived from a specifically male experience of social relations, which values competition as solitary achievement. (Young, 1990, p. 55)
- (9d) As I have indicated, the Marxist idea of class is *important* because it *helps reveal* the structure of exploitation: that some people have their power and wealth because they profit from the labor of others. (Young, 1990, p. 56)

In 9a, Elisa evaluates Young's schematic as *useful*. In 9b, we see that Young evaluates her own schematic with the same adjective. In addition, Young *offers* this tool, and Elisa takes it up by appreciating what it *provides*. Texts 9c and 9d are instances where Young positively evaluates theoretical contributions as *important* and, less directly, as working to *expose* and *reveal* problems. Because the analysis in Chapter 6 shows that the high-performing PS 409 writers use these explicit and implicit resources of positive Appreciation in similar ways, it is plausible to speculate that sentences like these, which recur throughout Young's text, may be working as models for Elisa's own evaluative stancetaking and may be reinforcing both instructors' and students' sense of what is valued in the discourse.

Drawing connections between students' reading material and their writing in this way is an important method for accounting for differential patterns in stance. It can also reinforce the method used in this study of accounting for linguistic patterns by interviewing the instructors about their goals and assessment criteria. The instructors' selection of reading material, after all, is wrapped up with their pedagogical goals, and their selections may sometimes indicate argumentative characteristics that they would value in their students' writing. While Peter may not say that his primary goal is for Elisa to learn to write like Iris Young, he does evaluate Elisa's essay as "doing real political theory," as mentioned in Chapter 6. It makes sense, then, that what he recognizes as "real

political theory” would be characterized by a similar style of evaluative stancetaking as Young’s. It is perhaps even more doubtful that Frank or Mark would suggest that they would like for their students to write like Ronald Coase, but there appears to be something in the task of using an economics framework to critique others’ lines of reasoning that require an adversarial, “lawyerly” stancetaking style. This line of investigation can help to get at the question of how students’ genre knowledge may be subtly and implicitly shaped by their engagement with the reading material. A related line of investigation is to speak directly with students about their genre knowledge.

7.4.2. Using Text Analysis to Track Students’ Tacit Genre Awareness

The highly specific nature of the linguistic patterns identified in this study suggests that many of the high-performing students have certain types of tacit awareness of “student genres” that the low-performing writers do not. For instance, as seen in Chapter 6, Ethan (a high-performer) and Victor (a low-performer) approached the same prompt with different authorial stances, one contrastive and the other governed by assumed theoretical agreement. Adopting a critical stance, however, is clearly valued in the course writing, even though this is not made explicit in the list of assignment prompts. The value of being critical is suggested by Peter’s positive remarks about Elisa’s “critical” stance, as well as the more frequent use of ‘counters’ and problematization strategies among the high-performers. The high-performers in both courses clearly also understand that ‘personalizing’ should be avoided to the extent possible in academic writing, especially perhaps writing that calls for critical analysis of others’ arguments. Finally, they clearly also understand the need to position the reader as an interlocutor on equal footing rather than as the course instructor. This can be seen, among other places, in their avoidance of referring to the classroom discourse, as doing so would break the pretense that their instructor is not their sole reader.

These kinds of genre awareness may not be easily recoverable in interview contexts. In my own experience as a writing instructor, students will answer that they are writing to their professors when asked who their intended audience is, even when it is clear in their writing that they are constructing a broader readership of disciplinary colleagues. A needed line of research, therefore, would be to systematically test the

degree to which high-performing students like Elisa, Eric, Nicholas, Ken, and others are able to explain their awareness of genre expectations. Consider as illustration the following two texts written by Eric in political theory:

(10a) This claim by the Argentine government matches up with Schmitt's idea of a sovereign state. (PolTh, Eric, HG, S46)

(10b) *In this sense*, the trial *somewhat* contradicts Foucault's theory of the modern exercise of power. In modernity (*according to Foucault*), power is diffused so much as to make it impossible to locate the source of power. In the trial, however, the source of power is clearly identifiable; therefore, the trial *seems* to be more in line with Foucault's pre-modern concept of justice and power. (PolTh, Eric, HG, S81-84)

It could be illuminating to ask Eric why he uses "hedges" in 10b but not in 10a. Without too much prompting, he could probably answer that hedges are a good idea when challenging others' views in order to adopt a measured critical stance but that they are not needed when making associations between ideas. Very likely he could come to this explanation, in so many words, if closely paired examples like these were presented to him. But it is doubtful he could put his finger on this bit of genre knowledge if asked in more abstract terms what his rhetorical strategies are for critiquing theorists' points of view. It is doubtful he has conscious awareness of this genre knowledge, in other words.

In addition to not incorporating student interviews, this study also did not undertake a systematic analysis of the "metareflective comments" that many of these students were required to insert into their essays as part of the Teagle study on the effects of metacognitive interventions. These comments are therefore a largely untapped source of data for comparing students' current metalanguage about writing. If the high- and low-performing students attend to similar issues in their writing reflections, then it is plausible to speculate that the high-performers' greater rhetorical skill, as revealed in this study, truly does lie beneath their conscious awareness. If, in contrast, there are clear patterns of difference in what they are attending to in their writing, then it could be that their differential patterns of genre knowledge are more within their conscious grasp.

7.4.3. Tracking Students' Recontextualization of Genre Knowledge

Finally, this dissertation research has revealed that the higher performing writers in

political theory and economics draw on different discursive strategies for constructing an effective stance in their writing. It has also revealed that there is important overlap in the rhetorical qualities that count as a “novice academic” stance in the two contexts.

However, the study does not track whether high-performing students like Elisa and Keith and others are able to recontextualize that novice academic stance when writing in different disciplinary contexts. It is possible that Elisa, for instance, might have difficulty constructing the novice academic stance that is valued in Econ 432 if she were to take that course. This question has high stakes for the ways instructors engage with students like Elisa about their writing and for the ways that Elisa can learn to recognize the discursive resources that she controls. While Elisa uses language in highly specialized ways to construct meaning that are valued in the context of PS 409, it is by no means automatic that she will experience similar success in a very different discourse context.

7.5. Concluding Remarks

This dissertation project was driven by the goal of informing university-level writing instruction. Specifically, the goal was to describe how language works rhetorically in student genres in the disciplines to achieve meanings that are valued in the undergraduate curriculum. This goal has its seat in the long-term aim of assisting students to take stock of their learning and transfer their knowledge and skills from one context to another. Students are positioned to do this, I would argue, when they are given opportunities to be reflective about their writing and provided with tools for focusing those reflections in specific, rhetorically-oriented ways.

With a rich metalanguage for making connections between texts and contexts, high-performing student writers like Elisa can learn to read unfamiliar rhetorical scenes and draw on their discursive expertise in strategic ways to respond effectively. For students like Victor, Amy, Melisa, Michael, and others who appear to be putting forth effort in their writing but not employing the necessary rhetorical and linguistic strategies needed to create valued stances, it is doubly important that instructors be explicit about their genre expectations and work with these students to closely read genre exemplars, identify how patterns of language are working, and learn to monitor and evaluate their own discursive choices

Appendix 1: Interview Protocols

Protocol for Political Theory Interview (with Peter)

- 1) Before we get to the political science 409, I'm wondering if you can talk about your field and your work. How would you characterize your academic field, and how does your own work fit into that field?
- 2) I'm interested in how you think about the purposes for student writing in your courses, specifically political science 409. Also, have your purposes changed in any way since you've been teaching?
- 3) What are a few of the distinctions that you can make between successful and unsuccessful student writing in this course? If you had a rubric for grading these papers, what sort of elements would appear on the rubric?
- 4) High graded paper: What particular details about the argumentation (or analysis, interpretation, evaluation, critical thinking, etc) strike you in this paper? Why?
- 5) Could you point me to one or two passages in which the analysis/interpretation/evaluation/critical thinking is particularly well-handled/poorly handled?
- 6) Low graded paper: What particular details about the argumentation (or analysis, interpretation, evaluation, critical thinking, etc) strike you in this paper? Why?
- 7) Could you point me to one or two passages in which the analysis/interpretation/evaluation/critical thinking is poorly handled?

Protocol for Economics Interview (with Mark)

- 1) I wanted to start by reviewing your experience as a GSI for Economics courses. About the writing assignments in this course, the four writing assignments were clearly built on one another. I'm interested in how you (and perhaps Frank) were thinking about the larger purpose of this sequence of assignments for fostering

disciplinary thinking and writing. Can you explain the rationale behind the sequencing of assignments in terms the larger goals of the course?

- 2) What are a few of the distinctions that you can make between successful and unsuccessful student writing in this course? If you had a rubric for grading these papers, what sort of elements would appear on the rubric?
- 3) You indicated this this high graded paper was written by a student who clearly “got it” when it comes to this type of analysis and argumentation. I’m wondering if you could walk me through the notes you made to these papers. I was hoping you could do some comparison and contrast between what Paper A is doing well and Paper B is not doing so well.
- 4) What particular details about the argumentation (or analysis, interpretation, evaluation, critical thinking, etc) strike you in this paper? Why?
- 5) Could you point me to one or two passages in which the analysis/interpretation/evaluation/critical thinking is particularly well-handled/poorly handled?
- 6) What particular details about the style strike you in this paper? Why?

Appendix 2: Writing Assignments in Economics 432

ASSIGNMENT 1

<u>Due</u>	Friday, January 30, before 5 pm
<u>Returned</u>	Friday, February 6
<u>Weight</u>	8% of course grade
<u>Length</u>	One page (maximum)

Task: Answer the following question in your own words and according to your own logical organization: What is the **story line** in *Brooke Group v. Brown and Williamson Tobacco*? (In other words, who are the parties to this case, in what kinds of business do they engage, how do they interact, what does the plaintiff allege, how does the defendant respond, how does the case reach the Supreme Court, what exactly does the Court decide, and how do the majority and minority disagree?)

ASSIGNMENT 2

<u>Due</u>	Wednesday, February 18, before 5 pm
<u>Returned</u>	Monday, March 2
<u>Weight</u>	10% of course grade
<u>Length</u>	Five pages (maximum)

Tasks

FIRST. Identify precisely the case (or ensemble of cases) you plan to analyze.

SECOND. Answer the following questions about your case(s): (1) What is the story line? Be sure to discuss any remedies adopted by the court(s). (2) Why is this story interesting from a public policy perspective? Specifically, what are the principal economic issues you plan to address? (3) How *feasible* is your proposed analysis of these issues?

ASSIGNMENT 3

<u>Due</u>	Wednesday, March 18, 2009, before 5 pm
<u>Returned</u>	Wednesday, April 1
<u>Weight</u>	12% of course grade
<u>Length</u>	Four pages (maximum) for task 1, eight pages (maximum) for task 2

Tasks

FIRST. Submit a revised version of Assignment 2.

SECOND. Answer the following questions: (1) How did the remedies actually used in this case affect market structure, market conduct, and/or market performance in relevant markets? (2) What remedies would you have chosen?

ASSIGNMENT 4

<u>Due</u>	Friday, April 10, before 5 pm
<u>Returned</u>	Monday, April 20, after the examination
<u>Weight</u>	10% of course grade
<u>Length</u>	Ten pages (maximum)

Task

Submit a revised, polished, and integrated version of Assignment 3 (both tasks).

COMMENTS

1. This course satisfies the Upper Level Writing Requirement. Your grades on the several paper assignments depend on the quality of your writing as well as the quality of your economics.
2. You know from the syllabus that Economics 432 is serving this term as a “laboratory” for a study being conducted by As a result, discussions of writing will differ slightly across sections. Therefore, it is very important that you attend your assigned section regularly. Your grade in the course will not depend on the section to which you belong.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Submit all papers electronically using the “Assignments” function on this course’s CTOOLS site. With your second paper, submit electronically a copy of your case(s).
2. Respect the length constraints. When calculating paper length, exclude the cover page and any pages devoted solely to appendices, bibliography, charts, endnotes, figures, references, and/or tables.
3. On the cover page, on successive lines, centered, roughly one-third of the way down the page, place: (1) the title of your case, (2) the standard legal citation for your case, (3) your name, (4) your UMID number, and (5) Economics 432, Winter 2009, and (6) Your GSI’s name, followed by your section number.
4. Type and double-space your paper, using margins of 1 inch and a font size of 12.
5. To each page of your paper except the cover page, apply a header. The header should contain your name and the page number. Consider the cover page to be page 0. Number pages and endnotes consecutively, using Arabic numerals. (Examples of Arabic numerals: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Examples of Roman numerals: I, II, III, IV, V; i, ii, iii, iv, v.)

SUGGESTIONS

1. Begin immediately your search for a suitable case. The articles, books, and cases in the syllabus are full of citations to major cases. Articles in major periodicals (e.g., *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Economist*) sometimes refer (albeit without citation) to current cases.
2. Choose your case carefully. Cases on “government regulation of industry” are easy to find. Select a case that permits you to discuss several of the issues and tools studied in this class. Especially attractive are cases in which you are able to identify and analyze “important issues” that lie beneath the surface of the case’s narrative—issues that might have received too little judicial attention from a public policy perspective because they weren’t decisive to the *legal* disposition of the case. For the purposes of this assignment, “case” includes decisions of regulatory agencies (such as the Federal Trade Commission, the Federal Energy Regulatory

Commission, and the Michigan Public Service Commission).

3. Show what (and how much) you have learned in Economics 432. The instructions on examinations read (in part): “Wherever possible, enrich your answers with examples and references drawn from course discussions and materials. Wherever necessary, define important terms and explain the assumptions underlying your arguments. Points will be awarded for organized and coherent argumentation.” These instructions apply also—indeed, especially stringently—to the paper assignments: Unlike examinations, papers permit direct access to class materials; and they need not create time pressures.
4. Don’t hesitate to consult additional primary and secondary sources. Don’t forget to use items on the syllabus! Mention *all* of the sources you use, including web sites, in the bibliography. Use a bibliographic scheme that enables the reader to locate the materials easily in a library or on line.

Appendix 3: Short Essay Prompts for Political Science 409

Write a 500-word paper (equivalent to two double-spaced pages) on two of the topics below during this semester. You cannot write your papers from topics in the same set. The due date for the paper is different for each set. No late papers will be accepted. If you can't get your paper done on time, you will need to write a new one on a new set of topics.

Set 1 — Draft due to peer February 10, final draft due February 17

1. Summary. Summarize Max Weber's "Politics as a Vocation." The piece is long, and you will have to very economical about emphasizing the main points and finding ways of describing large parts of his text succinctly. In a summary, you almost never have time to quote anything. For examples of certain kinds of summaries, you can look at the inside flaps of the dust jacket in any new book, or look at some book reviews.
2. Elaboration. Antonio Gramsci thinks the "Modern Prince" can manifest itself as the political party. Elaborate on his view, focusing on the ways in which the Machiavellian elements inform the nature or structure of the party.
3. Explanation of a concept. Explain how Carl Schmitt understand the concept of "enemy." Note that a good explanation will say something (brief) about the role of the concept in the theory in general and/or about its significance in general.

Set 2 — February 17, February 24

1. Summary. Summarize George Orwell's essay "Politics and the English Language." In other words, tell your reader succinctly what the essay is about and what position Orwell advocates in it.
2. Counterargument. Write a paper in which you argue against some one aspect in Walter Benjamin's argument about "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical

Reproduction.” Be sure to identify which point you are contesting.

3. Analysis. Some readers of Orwell’s essay “Shooting an Elephant” suggest it demonstrates a conflict between two kinds of power. Write a paper in which you identify the two different kinds and analyze one of these. (This is very difficult. The use of any outside sources — even for background — counts as academic misconduct.)

Set 3 — February 24, March 10

1. Interpretation. On p. 140, Frantz Fanon writes: “The Negro is a toy in the white man’s hands; so, in order to shatter the hellish cycle, he explodes. I cannot go to a film without seeing myself. I wait for me. In the interval, just before the film starts, I wait for me. The people in the theater are watching me, examining me, waiting for me. A Negro groom is going to appear. My heart makes my head swim.” Offer an interpretation of this passage. Unlike an argument paraphrase, in which you basically restate the argument in simpler terms and do not draw from other parts of the text, here you need to tell your reader what you think Fanon means. For that, you may well have to draw from other parts of the book.
2. Comparison. Identify one aspect or a dimension on which the anti-colonial positions of Orwell and Fanon are different, and offer a hypothesis (with reasons) on what explains that difference.
3. Counterargument. Fanon thinks that white racism causes a “collective neurosis” in nonwhite subordinated people. Write a paper in which you argue that “pathologizing” political phenomena — that is, thinking of them as a kind of health issue — is a bad idea. (This assignment is very difficult!)

Set 4 — March 10, March 17

1. Explanation of a concept. The subtitle of Eichmann in Jerusalem is “A Report on the Banality of Evil.” Explain what Arendt’s concept “banality of evil” means.
2. Normative summary. Write a paper which briefly summarizes Arendt’s argument in Eichmann in Jerusalem. Do not try to summarize the whole book, but only Arendt’s argument.

3. Defense. When Eichmann in Jerusalem first came out, many readers said, “She is basically exonerating Eichmann.” Write a paper in which you defend Arendt against the charge. (You may, of course, think the charge is correct; you can still do this exercise.) Note that you don’t have much space, so try to focus your defense on some key aspect. You will also need to explain — very briefly — why someone might think Arendt is exonerating Eichmann in the first place.

Set 5 — March 17, March 24

1. Comparative counterargument. Adopting Weber’s position from “Politics as a Vocation,” write a paper in which you offer one critique of either Walzer’s or Hollis’s argument. Note that you have to write very economically, as you will need to make clear to your reader what Weber’s and either Walzer’s or Hollis’s argument is.
2. Illustration & analysis. Describe an example of your own that illustrates the so-called “dirty hands” problem in politics, and apply an analysis from either Walzer or Hollis to the case. Be sure to identify all the relevant features of the case and what makes it a case of dirty hands.
3. Applied defense. Could Eichmann have used Walzer’s argument to defend himself? If so, how might the argument have gone? Again, remember this is an exercise; the point is not to defend Eichmann, but to try to understand the possible implications of Walzer’s argument.

Appendix 4: Final Essay Prompts for Political Science 409

Write a 2,500–3,000-word paper (10–12 pages double-spaced) on one of the following topics. The first draft of the paper is due at 11:30 a.m. on April 7. Please submit it through the “Assignments” feature on CTools. The final draft of the paper will be due at 12:30 p.m. on April 28. The planning exercise for the term paper is due by midnight on March 31. The evaluation of the process is due at the same time as the paper.

You may use some of the work you have done in your short papers in your term paper. If you do, you must cite yourself. For example, you might say in a footnote, “The following three paragraphs come from my paper on Orwell” or “This section develops further a theme I began in my paper on Hollis.” You should not separate the earlier text in any other way (for example, by putting it in quotation marks or indenting it as a block quote).

The topics are, roughly, in order of difficulty.

1. Requires additional work.] Watch the (very long) film *The Battle of Algiers* and use it to discuss the “dirty hands” problem. You must use at least two of the following authors: Weber, Arendt, Walzer, Hollis.
2. Nancy Fraser argues that conventional “distributive” theories of justice cannot address contemporary problems related to the politics of “recognition.” Explain and elaborate on Fraser’s argument. Then consider how Rawls or Nussbaum would respond to Fraser’s view.
3. Here’s a rough summary of Foucault’s argument: The motivation behind modern theories of punishment was to make punishment more “humane” and “civilized.” Unfortunately, reforms based on those theories actually made things worse, at least in some ways, because they diffused the exercise of power so completely that nobody can possibly locate power. In contrast, however nasty the “old” exercise of power was

- in practice, you could always see it: it was in public, it was exercised by clearly identifiable actors (ultimately the king), and so you could resist it. Elaborate Foucault's argument, using at least one other author we have read to support it, and then critically evaluate it using some other author we have read. (Count 'em: you'll need to use three authors.)
4. Consider both Adolf Eichmann's trial and punishment in terms of Carl Schmitt and Michel Foucault. Discuss the trial from Foucault's and/or Schmitt's perspective as both an institutional process and public spectacle. You might focus your argument by considering the following aspects: Eichmann's capture, the rationale for the trial, the trial itself as a kind of spectacle.
 5. [May require additional work.] Choose an existing political practice or institution and evaluate it from the perspective of Rawls's two principles of justice. Would the practice be justifiable by the principles, or would it be shown to be illegitimate? The quality of your paper will depend on (a) how well you choose and describe the practice or institution, and (b) how specifically and insightfully you apply Rawls's principles. It is perfectly possible that the principles might apply in opposite ways; again, we evaluate how well you reason about it. Generally, making the paper a polemic for your political position is likely to weaken your argument. We strongly recommend you to check with us particularly about your choice of the practice or institution.
 6. [May require additional work.] Evaluate some existing practice, phenomenon or institution using Martha Nussbaum's conception of social justice. Be sure to say something about the strengths and weaknesses of applying that conception; you can do it, for example, by comparing it to how a Rawlsian or some other conception might fare in such an evaluation. As with the previous question, we strongly recommend you to check with us about your choice.
 7. Schmitt's discussion of the concept of "the political" includes an understanding of "sovereignty" which is only contingently connected to the nation state. First, explain why this is the case. Second, evaluate Schmitt's argument by applying it to some specific political phenomena discussed by two of the following authors: Gramsci,

- Orwell, Fanon, Arendt, Foucault, Habermas, Fraser, and Coetzee. As with the previous topic, we strongly recommend you discuss your choices with one of us.
8. Fanon, Arendt and Young all present political critiques of ascriptive practices. Choose three of the authors and compare and contrast these critiques, focusing on what each shares with the others and how their views are different. (Make sure you explain “ascription.” You may draw on the lectures to do so; do not cite the lectures, though, and be sure to focus primarily on the texts.) Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the critiques as political tools.
 9. Using Young “five faces of oppression,” examine the power dynamics and relationships in one of the following: either Coetzee’s *Disgrace* or the film *Battle of Algiers*. Does Young’s account of oppression provide a useful schematic for understanding the issues of that arise in this text? Using one of Fraser, Nussbaum, Rawls, or Foucault, describe how one of these other theories adds other dimensions or perspectives to the analysis Young provides.
 10. Can ethics apply in politics, according to Foucault’s argument in *Discipline and Punish*? Elaborate your answer and then use two other authors from the following list to explain why you do or do not agree with Foucault: Weber, Gramsci, Orwell, Habermas, and Arendt.
 11. One trend in twentieth-century political discourse is an expanding conception of what counts as political. Gramsci, for example, thinks culture is political. Fanon thinks he can see racism — a political phenomenon — in the depiction of black people in the movies. Feminists have argued that many previously personal or domestic issues are political. Some people think we’ve gone too and politicized too many aspects of human life. One might argue that in the early part of *Disgrace*, David Lurie represents this view. Drawing from the theorists you consider relevant (at least two; three is better) and from examples in *Disgrace*, analyze the concept of “the political” and explain what makes something political and something non-political, and why.
 12. Re-articulate Fanon’s critique of colonialism, first in the language of “redistribution,” and then in the language of “recognition,” drawing on two of Habermas, Fraser, Young, Rawls, and Nussbaum. What are the benefits and/or drawbacks of either or

- both of these paradigms? Is it possible to draw on both to form a cohesive argument, or are they inconsistent with one another?
13. Arendt, Habermas and Foucault seem to agree with Weber's diagnosis of modern knowledge: increases in scientific knowledge have led to increases in forms of domination and control. However, their "prognoses" on the basis of this diagnosis differ: Habermas argues that this process can be offset, whereas Foucault seems to think there is no hope for autonomous human agency. It is less obvious what Arendt's position is, although her analysis seems to require the possibility of agency. Write a paper in which you evaluate Habermas's and Foucault's arguments and then explain what implications that has for our understanding Arendt. (The lectures on "structure/agency" problem have given you some key resources for thinking about this question.)
 14. Write a paper on a topic you develop. If you choose this, you must clear your topic with us before proceeding: submit a written topic on which you propose to write. Your paper must address at least two separate authors or texts, one from the first half of the semester and another from the second.

Appendix 5: Engagement categories, descriptors, and examples from Econ 432 and PS 409

Engagement category + Descriptor	Examples from Econ 432 and PS 409
<p>monoglossic statement (or bare assertion) An assertion which uses no Engagement resources. No alternative views or voices are engaged.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The decree resulted in the assets of Standard Oil being broken up along geographic lines. (Keith, Econ, S21) • These advantages are crucial to maintaining equal opportunities and the just distributions that a society like Fanon’s decides on in framing the government. (Sarah, PS, S50)
<p>disclaim:deny Invokes a contrary position by rejecting it directly. The contrary position is therefore allowed into the text but given very little dialogic space.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The employers’ objective is again <i>not</i> the well-being of the patient but ... (Ken, Econ, S29) • This is <i>not</i> a conspiracy theory which looks for the root of all this at the top of the political and economical hierarchy. (Nicholas, PS, S63)
<p>disclaim:counter Invokes a particular expectation and then provides an alternative to counter the expectation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>While</i> the Supreme Court rejected the “quality of care” argument in the federation case, the oligopolistic characteristics and purchasing structure of insurance make this outcome unsurprising. (Ken, Econ, S91) • Therefore, <i>while</i> Fraser’s matrix may help soften the redistributive-recognition dilemma, it doesn’t offer ... (Ethan, PS, S76)
<p>proclaim:concur Engages with another perspective, e.g., the reader’s, by directly agreeing with it. Expresses a strong level of writer commitment and therefore allows little room for dispute.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Indeed</i>, it is odd that both the FTC and courts have historically regarded huge, publicly traded insurance firms rather than health providers as the legal proxy of patients. (Ken, Econ, S32) • <i>Yes</i>, we are all surrounded by judges who demand normalized behavior and cast light on anything that is regarded as a negative deviation. But ... (Nicholas, PS, S67)

<p>proclaim:pronounce Contracts dialogic space by expressing a strong level of writer involvement and commitment. Due to the explicit commitment, the assertion is seen as less than absolute. (Compare, e.g., with bare assertions.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clearly</i>, Von’s did not accomplish what it set out to achieve. (Luis, Econ, S54) • <i>There is no doubt</i> that Eichmann was aware of the implications of his actions. (Nicholas, PS, S119)
<p>proclaim:endorse Contracts dialogic space by expressing the writer’s alignment with an attributed proposition. As such, the dialogic space is somewhat narrowed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Evidence showed</i> that ... there was “a large number of small competitors, the absence of significant price wars, ...” (Luis, Econ, S11) • <i>As Weber suggests</i>, the personal conduct and nature of the politician play an important role in maintaining the public’s focus on political morality. (Kurt, PS, S50)
<p>entertain Expands dialogic space by invoking alternative views through the use of modals, conditionals, appearance-based evidentials, rhetorical questions, and other means.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It appears</i> that maximum price fixing does the greatest harm when set below a competitive level. (Mike, Econ, S72) • <i>In this case, if</i> men spent as much time engaged in childrearing as women, then <i>there is a chance</i> that many women would feel a loss of identity. (Ethan, PS, S25)
<p>attribute Expands dialogic space as the writer attributes the proposition to an external source.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hovenkamp argues</i> that a company could have one hundred percent market share both as a newspaper publisher and distributor, and still have no monopoly power. (Mike, Econ, S76) • <i>Her premise</i> is that the current “postsocialist age” is defined by the struggle for cultural recognition for oppressed groups rather than class interest. (Ethan, PS, S8)

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