Engaging with Dialogic Alternatives in ESL Argumentative Essays: Systemic Functional Linguistic and Teacher Perspectives

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Abstract

This study explores the patterns of intersubjective stance in short argumentative essays written by students in a pre-university level ESL course. It adopts the analytical framework of *engagement* from systemic functional linguistics, which describes the options of interpersonal meanings as resources to engage with different knowers and their views. Previous research adopting this linguistic scope has mainly focused on analysis of texts. The current study attempts to connect the linguistic analysis with perspectives of an ESL writing teacher. A multi-phased mixed methods design was adopted to both analyze the engagement patterns in the student texts, and to discuss the text analysis with the course teacher in an interview.

The analysis of engagement reveals patterns that contribute to an effective, dialogically engaged intersubjective stance, with frequent, diverse, and strategic deployment of heteroglossic meanings. These patterns were recognized by the teacher as valued elements of "nuance" in argumentative writing. Interestingly, the less dialogically engaged, "assertive" stance was also encouraged and even considered more suitable for the pedagogical context, given the emphasis on clear, coherent, and concise expression of ideas in the essay assignment, the students' level of lexico-grammatical control, and cultural differences. The findings also include potentially problematic engagement patterns, as well as the engagement-related terms and notions used by teacher in the interview. The text and teacher perspective findings have implications for pre-university ESL writing pedagogy, as well as for theorization and analysis of engagement.

Résumé

Cette étude explore les tendances de position intersubjective dans de courts essais argumentatifs écrits par des étudiants dans un cours d'anglais langue seconde au niveau pré-universitaire. L'étude adopte le cadre d'analyse de l'engagement provenant de la linguistique fonctionnelle systémique, dans lequel les options de sens interpersonnels sont décrites comme étant des ressources ayant pour but d'engager différentes épistémologies. Alors que les recherches antérieures ayant adopté ce cadre linguistique ont principalement mit l'accent sur l'analyse de textes, la présente étude vise à faire le lien entre l'analyse linguistique et les perspectives d'un enseignant d'un cours de rédaction en anglais, langue seconde. Cette étude adopte une approche de méthodologie mixte à deux phases, à la fois pour analyser les tendances d'engagement dans les textes des étudiants, et pour discuter l'analyse de textes dans une entrevue avec l'enseignant du cours.

L'analyse de l'engagement révèle des tendances qui contribuent à une position intersubjective efficace et engagée d'un point de vue dialogique, avec un déploiement fréquent, diversifié et stratégique de sens hétéroglossiques. Ces tendances furent reconnues par l'enseignant comme étant d'importants éléments de «nuance» dans l'écriture argumentative. Fait intéressant, la position «autoritaire», moins engagée d'un point de vue dialogique, fut également encouragée et même considérée comme plus appropriée pour le contexte pédagogique, étant donné, d'un premier abord, l'importance accordée à l'expression claire, cohérente et concise d'idées dans l'essai, le niveau de contrôle lexico-grammaire exercé par les étudiants, ainsi que les différences culturelles. Les résultats attestent également de tendances d'engagement potentiellement problématiques, ainsi que des termes et notions liés à l'engagement qui furent utilisés par l'enseignant lors de l'entrevue. Les résultats du point de vue du texte et de

l’enseignant ont des implications pour la pédagogie de rédaction en anglais langue seconde au niveau pré-universitaire, ainsi que pour la théorisation et l'analyse de l'engagement.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

This thesis is a study of the interpersonal dimension of writing, specifically intersubjective positioning in written arguments. It explores how student writers in a pre-university ESL course use language to engage with alternative views and positions in the text to take their stances in a short argumentative essay assignment, and how the course teacher considers students' use of the relevant linguistic resources. The study has emerged from two areas of concerns in the research literature: one from linguistics and the other from writing pedagogy. I will begin the thesis by presenting below a few themes in the background that have shaped the positions and focus of this study.

Deconstructing Challenges of University Writing

Effective writing is undoubtedly a key component for one's educational success nowadays, yet it presents considerable challenges for many students. The challenges of writing in different educational settings are certainly influenced by various factors that have been extensively investigated in a wide range of fields such as applied linguistics, rhetoric, second language studies, and composition studies. A major preoccupation across the literature is that of genre. From a genre perspective, the difficulties of academic and other types of writing derive from the gap between the expectations of a communicative context and the writing practice of new comers to the discourse community who are unfamiliar with the conventions (Hyland, 2004c). Such a gap could be greater for students from socioeconomically and/or linguistically marginalized backgrounds (e.g., immigrants, international students, linguistic minorities), who have limited access to the genres valued at school, university and beyond, throughout their learning at home, at school, and in public life, than their middle-class, dominant language

speaking counterparts (Heath, 1983; Mahboob & Szenes, 2010; Martin & Rose, 2008; M. Rose, 1989). Such unequal access to the valued discourse practice, the "genres of power" (Martin & Rose, 2008, p. 19), can further affect students' educational success through writing assessment (Lee, 2008; Mahboob & Szenes, 2010; Wu, 2007). Adding to this challenge is a colour-blind liberal discourse of equality and individualism in education, which distracts our attention from such institutional inequality of access and places emphasis on the role of individual efforts (Kubota, 2002). Particularly in writing pedagogy, this is reflected by the progressivist process writing movement and whole text approaches which favour students' individual creativity and ownership of their writing (e.g., Kress, 1987; Sawyer & Watson, 1987). Without acknowledging and making explicit the expectations imposed by genres, some scholars maintain that such respect and encouragement for individualism are found to mask and maintain the unequal access to the privileged practices in writing, further disempowering students from marginalized groups (Hyland, 2003a; Kress & Knapp, 1992; Martin & Rose, 2008; D. Rose & Martin, 2012).

In response to these concerns, a considerable body of linguistically-oriented research has been devoted to deconstructing the valued discourse practice in various genres, and developing explicit genre-based writing pedagogies in school, university, adult education, and professional settings for both first and additional language (L2) learners (see Hyon, 1996, for a review of two major linguistically-oriented approaches to genre, English for Specific Purposes and Systemic Functional Linguistics). Despite the diverse foci, theoretical orientations, and analytical techniques, it is the general consensus in this work that by making visible and accessible the linguistic resources needed for an effective text in the genre, writing teachers are able to narrow the gap between genre expectations and novice student writers from different backgrounds, potentially enabling more equitable educational experience (e.g., Hyland, 2004c; Martin & Rose,

2005). It is this linguistically-oriented work and the belief in an explicit, language-focused writing pedagogy that have informed the current thesis project. Particularly, this study analyzes the language of intersubjective positioning in writing, an important yet potentially challenging aspect for novice student writers.

Academic Argument and Its Interpersonal Dimension

When entering university, students can face challenges in mastering the new, unfamiliar ways to engage with knowledge (Hood, 2004, 2010). This is partly reflected by the many course assignments that require them not only to simply demonstrate their "correct" understanding of knowledge taught in class, but also to take their own positions and argue for them (Nightingale, 1988; Soliday, 2011; Wardle, 2009). Besides putting forward the writer's own positions, students are often also expected to carefully analyse, evaluate, and manage existing or imagined, anticipated positions in the text, in order to realize an effective stance towards given topics (Chang, 2010; Hyland, 2004b). Further complicating the expectations of "taking your own position" is the preference for "objectivity" and the related impersonal, faceless writing style in many disciplines (e.g., Coffin, 2002; Hyland, 2002; Soliday, 2011; Webb, 1992). To manage these abstract and even seemingly contradictory expectations may not always be an easy task for novice writers. Concerns have long been expressed about students' ability to argue effectively and academically in writing (e.g., Bacha, 2010; Hirose, 2003; Varghese & Abraham, 1998). Possible observations might be that students are overly assertive, subjective, emotional, or, on the other hand, are not constructing strong arguments or not making their positions clear to readers. Given that the ability to write effective arguments plays a considerable role in university study, as well as in one's professional and everyday life (e.g., Németh & Kormos, 2001; Yeh, 1998), it is essential that these challenges of academic argument are understood and addressed in

writing pedagogy.

"Taking your own position," and other such requirements in university assignments, acknowledge academic writing as a social activity that involves interaction with different knowledge and knowers in the discourse community (e.g., Hood, 2010, 2011; Hyland, 2004a; Hyland, 2004b). We align with one party of knowers in the debate by attributing and supporting their knowledge and positions, dis-align with another by criticizing and distancing. We invite our readers to join our side and think the same way, while at the same time admit and expect that not all of them would do so. In this sense writers realize their position in argument by establishing and carefully handling social relationships with the dialogic others. This social, interpersonal nature of academic writing has attracted considerable interest from writing researchers and educators. Rhetoric researchers who investigate genres as "social action" (e.g., Miller, 1984) have focused on the analysis of the context where texts are situated. For student writers, this means the importance of raising the awareness of the social or rhetorical situations where they write, including their purposes, the parties they are addressing, relationships between these parties, and issues of power. While acknowledging the rich pedagogical implications of this context-focused perspective, the position taken in this text-focused study, as explained in the last section, is that many student writers' difficulties lie in the insufficient control over the linguistic resources needed to realize the appropriate social relations in academic genres, and that they need more explicit guidance on how notions such as "taking a position/stance", "evaluating/critiquing scholarly work", or "subjectivity/objectivity" are linguistically realized or otherwise avoided through strategic choices of particular text structures and expressions. As I will argue soon, this is at least the case of bilingual/additional language writers who are at the same time learning to control linguistic forms of the target language while familiarizing

themselves with the conventions of writing.

An interest in how language reflects and realizes social relations and positions brings us to another diverse area of linguistics with a variety of terms and concepts. According to the systemic functional perspective to language (e.g., Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013), enacting social relations is one of the three basic functions of language, termed the "interpersonal metafunction". When we speak or write, we not only "make sense of our experience" (i.e., ideational function), but also "inform or question, give an order or make an offer, and express our appraisal of and attitude towards whoever we are addressing and what we are talking about." (p.30) As Hyland (2004a) also points out, the interpersonal function of language is "encoded in every sentence we write" (p. xi). The functional account of "language as action" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013, p. 30) enables systematic exploration of "genre as social action" (e.g., Miller, 1984) at the level of language. It is believed that exploration of the interpersonal aspects of academic texts will make more visible the conventions of social interactions in academic writing.

In systemic functional linguistics (SFL), the interpersonal dimension of language has attracted a growing body of research into the language of evaluation and stance, or *appraisal* (Martin & White, 2005). This theorization of interpersonal meanings is concerned with how we speak or write to negotiate attitude or stance or make evaluation, and in such a way relate ourselves to others. As explained in Martin and White (2005), evaluation is realized through the speaker/writer's choices of meanings within three simultaneously operating semantic systems: *attitude*, *graduation*, and *engagement*. *Attitude* is referred to the "kinds of feeling" we express (p.42); *graduation* deals with the "gradability" of attitudinal meanings (p.135); finally, engagement involves a variety of linguistic resources of "intersubjective positioning" (p. 95), traditionally under the headings of concession, modality, hedging, evidentiality, attribution, etc.,

and is concerned with the ways in which the speakers/writers are positioned in relation to their own views and others', including "potential responses" (p. 36) to these views.

This study focuses on the system of engagement, that of intersubjective positioning. This means an interest in how student writers use language to acknowledge the backdrop of diverse opinions and make their way towards their argued positions in relation to those opinions, by asserting/denying/supporting/problematizing/distancing/construing a reader who holds the same or contrary view, in brief, by "engag[ing] with dialogic alternatives" in the text (White, 2003, p. 262). These activities discussed in engagement constitute key aspects of the social interactions and positioning in writing. A closer look at them at the level of language will provide valuable insights to the social and interpersonal nature of argumentative writing and more generally academic discourse, and will have implications for the teaching of academic writing.

The Double Challenges for Additional Language Writers and Pre-university ESL

Turning to the pedagogical context and the population, this study is primarily concerned with student writers who choose to study in English as an additional language (hereby L2) at the tertiary level, and the language programs that are designed to support their L2 and writing needs at university. For these students, the challenges of engaging with knowledge in a new way through university genres is further complicated by the parallel challenges of learning and using a L2. L2 writing research finds that even accomplished writers in their mother tongues (e.g., those who pursue graduate studies in L2 environments) do not necessarily bring their L1 literacy skills to L2 writing (e.g., Connor, 1996; Hyland, 2003b). Attention should therefore be given to the language development and the needs specific to L2 student writers.

Successful L2 writing requires multiple levels of competence from grammatical, discursive, to sociolinguistic (Canale & Swain, 1980, as cited in Hyland, 2003b). The level of

grammar, at which L2 writers demonstrate rather salient differences from their L1 counterparts, has been a major theme in L2 writing education and research (e.g., Ferris, 1999, 2004). It is certainly essential that grammatical competence is attended to in the classroom for L2 students' clear, recognizable communication in writing. However, the teaching of grammar in writing is sometimes problematized for decontextualizing language forms from use, leaving students with an abstract set of rules that do not always apply to real life writing situations (Byrd & Bunting, 2008; Vellenga, 2004). An example that Byrd and Bunting (2008, p. 42) gives is the use of passive voice, which, as they observe, is opposed, devalued in a one-size-fits-all manner by some ESL writing teachers. Beliefs such as these overlook the close connection between language form and context of use, making it difficult to raise L2 writers' awareness of how language varies across contexts.

At the more abstract level of culture, L2 writers also face challenges due to their differences from their L1 counterparts. In Contrastive Rhetoric, for example, it is suggested that people from different cultural and/or educational backgrounds write in different rhetorical patterns (e.g., Connor, 1996; Hirose, 2003; Kaplan, 1966; Uysal, 2008). These culturally-related patterns may or may not be valued or recognized as possible alternatives by L1 readers adopting a different writing convention. Furthermore, of particular interest in the current study of academic arguments might be the ways in which knowledge is perceived by writers due to their cultural values. Hyland (2003b) and Lee (2006) both point out that while Western contexts tend to emphasize critical thinking, questioning and reconstructing existing knowledge, some other cultures such as East Asian cultures might value the conservation and reproduction of the "correct" or "respected" knowledge. For L2 writers from cultures in the latter case, making arguments, taking their own positions, or critically evaluating existing knowledge might be an

uncomfortable concept.

While such cross-cultural aspects behind L2 writing have probably been acknowledged in university ESL curricula, they might not be explored sufficiently, according to Atkinson and Ramathan (1995, p. 559), as a "precondition for instruction", due to L2 students' more evident, immediate needs of clear, grammatical writing to "survive" in university studies. This could result in pragmatic, simplistic approaches to the culture behind English academic writing. In Atkinson and Ramathan's (1995, p. 554) study, it is found that the English Language Program's (equivalent to ESL) favor for easily acquired and used model essays with "straight deductive rhetorical structure" does not correspond with the University Composition Program's advocacy of more sophisticated critical thinking and culturally-preferred notions. As an example related to the interpersonal in writing, Hyland (2008, p. 70) points out that L2 writing students are often given the impression that English L1 speakers are "direct" and "assertive", and that English academic writing should be assertive and certain accordingly. Such one-size-fits-all ideas fail to guide students through the complexities under the notions of "arguing", "taking a position/stance", which they need to discover in order to make their transition into the culture of learning and knowledge making in university. Here, as one may also notice, the cultural challenges for these L2 writers is, on one hand, about making transition from one sociolinguistic community to another, on the other, about studying in a new level of education. University/pre-university ESL courses are often where students are prepared for such "double culture shift" (Ballard, 1984 as cited in Lee, 2006, p. 4) in a limited amount of time. Certainly, it would be a daunting task for teachers in this context to provide a comprehensive account of the dual cultural difference students may face in their academic courses, alongside the teaching of the formal aspects of language.

The challenges for L2 writers both at the level of language forms (e.g., grammar and text structure) and the level of culture seem to pose a dilemma in L2 writing classrooms. As discussed above, an emphasis on formal aspects could sometimes compromise thorough exploration of the context of culture in writing, which is essential in L2 students' later academic studies. On the other hand, cultural knowledge needed for successful academic writing might be too abstract for students when basic forms are yet to be learned for clear, recognizable written communication in the L2. Being a L2 writer myself, such a disconnection between the formal and the cultural in writing became obvious to me when I started to write academically in English. I found my previous intensive training in grammar and in writing "model" essays insufficient for me to control the nuances of academic arguments. When macroscopic requirements were given by professors, such as "take your position", or "evaluate their views", it was not always easy for me to find the appropriate text structures, grammar, and wording to fulfill those requirements.

A Discourse Analytic Approach to the Intersubjective Positioning in Writing

The current study considers that such a dilemma can be addressed if the connection between language form and context is systematically understood and taught. In SFL such a connection is well clarified in a stratified model of language in context, where social activity (culture) performed by text is seen as realized by discourse ("sequences of meanings"), which is further symbolized by lexico-grammar at the clause level (Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 1). From this perspective, it should be clear that the understanding of the relationship between the abstract level of culture in writing (e.g., in the current study, how one should position themselves in relation to knowledge and knowers when arguing their points) and the formal aspects (e.g., the lexico-grammar needed to realize such position/stance) would be not be complete without at least the investigation of text at the level that "interfaces" (p. 3) with both grammar and culture,

namely, discourse.

The SFL framework *engagement* used in this study is placed at the discourse level (Martin & White, 2005) and describes a system of meanings as resources available for a writer/speaker to engage with different knowers and their views, in other words, the possible ways to position self and other in the text. The framework has been used as a powerful tool for analyzing the variation of interpersonal meanings in writing across genres. By analyzing L2 writers' intersubjective positioning with this discourse semantic framework, it is believed that the abstract cultural notions behind academic argument (particularly those related to social interactions as discussed in the last section) can be made more concrete in manageable stretches of text, and that the diverse repertoire of lexico-grammatical resources, the "smaller bits" of language needed to effectively participate in academic discussions, can be integrated in a systematic way. It is expected that a systematic connection between the formal and the cultural of social and interpersonal relations in writing can facilitate the discussion of academic argument in the L2 classroom, and eventually increase L2 learners' context sensitivity of intersubjective positioning, which will benefit their later writing across academic and professional contexts.

Purposes of the Study

So far I have identified the key areas of concern in which this research project emerged. The purpose of this study is essentially to respond to these concerns. First, the study aims for a deeper linguistic understanding of the interpersonal nature of academic argument, focusing specifically on how writers relate their views to those of their readers and other knowers, or in the technical term, their "dialogic alternatives" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 98). Previous research using the same analytical framework (i.e., engagement) has mainly analyzed academic writing at more advanced levels, such as undergraduate course assignments or research papers, and

expert/published academic writing. This study is intended to extend this analysis to the pre-university ESL context.

Secondly, this linguistic inquiry seeks pedagogical implications. As discussed, a systematic description of the discourse semantics of interpersonal engagement can enable a clearer connection between the "culture" of social interaction in academic writing and the lexico-grammatical resources (forms) that writers need to effectively participate in such culture. This is especially important for L2 university students who explore both these levels of writing at the same time. Therefore the study attempts to identify engagement patterns that are effective, valued, or otherwise problematized in the pedagogical context of pre-university ESL, making them more visible and accessible.

An additional attempt of this study is to bring teacher perspectives to the primarily linguistic literature it draws on. Previous research into engagement has rendered rich findings from writing across different contexts. While many studies suggest pedagogical application of the linguistic framework, most of them base their discussion mainly or solely on the analysis of texts, with genre expectation of what is valued defined by academic performance evidence such as grades, or whether an investigated piece of writing is published. Very few involve perspectives from teachers of ESL or academic courses. An exclusively linguistic approach might overlook some useful details and explanations articulated by these expert reader-assessors. In addition, the uptake and applicability of the literature's linguistic description and explanation in the classroom are questionable without further investigating teachers' views on and responses to the analyses. Therefore, this study tries to set up a dialogue between linguists and ESL teachers to consider the potential of the engagement framework in pedagogical application.

To fulfil these multiple purposes with the time and resources available for this project, I

chose to work with one pre-university ESL course, with one teacher, on a type of practice assignment commonly seen in this context, the short argumentative essay. With such a relatively small scale, the study does not intend to seek generalizable claims on engagement in argumentative writing or ESL teachers' opinions. Rather, by exploring multiple data both quantitatively and qualitatively, I aim for richer description and explanation of the specific concept engagement from wider perspectives. I begin, drawing on the linguistic literature, by analyzing the engagement patterns of students' essays. Then I build on this engagement analysis to explore the teacher's relevant opinions.

Outline of This Thesis

Chapter 1 provides the rationale and purpose of this study and briefly introduces the relevant literature. Chapter 2, the literature review, navigates through the literature related to stance, especially engagement, to further present my theoretical and methodological positions. Then Chapter 3 introduces the research design in detail, including the analytical framework of engagement. Chapter 4 presents and discusses the study's findings. Chapter 5 revisits the research questions with further discussions. Finally, the concluding Chapter 6 summarizes the study, discusses considerations when interpreting results, acknowledges limitations, and provides implications.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

In Chapter 1, I drew on the broad literature on writing to introduce the background of this study. This chapter will situate the study in the more closely related areas of applied linguistics. I will first present the study's theoretical orientation and introduce the current analytical framework of engagement. Then I will review empirical studies that analyze the intersubjective positioning of writing using engagement. Finally, I will summarize findings of these studies and identify potential space for the current study.

Mapping Relevant Concepts: Stance, Evaluation, and the Interpersonal of Language

The broad linguistic literature that this study draws on is characterized by a diversity of overlapping terms and definitions. To avoid confusion and enable clear discussion, it is helpful to first identify the key headings used in this thesis and clarify their relationships.

In this thesis I mainly use the term "stance", which is defined in SFL (particularly the *appraisal* theory) as the configuration of interpersonal and evaluative meanings in the text with "particular rhetorical objectives and the construction of authorial personae." (Martin & White, 2005, p. 164) The more specific "intersubjective stance" (White, 2003) is referred to the configuration of engagement, the meanings of intersubjective positioning.

In the broader literature, "stance" is also used as an umbrella term by many researchers. For example, Gray and Biber (2012, p. 15) summarize that the general linguistic interest of stance and its synonyms lies in "the ways in which speakers and writers encode opinions and assessments" in language. Recent writing studies focusing on engagement also align with this cover term (e.g., Chang, 2010; Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011; Lancaster, 2012; Myskow & Gordon, 2012; Wu, 2007).

"Evaluation" is seen as a near synonym of "stance", as it is "perhaps the most salient and widely recognized form of stancetaking" (Du Bois, 2007, p. 142). The SFL theory of appraisal sees itself as the study of the language of evaluation, and distinguishes "evaluation" and "stance" as different levels of abstraction in their inquiry: stance is located at the higher level of abstraction as the pattern of evaluative meanings discussed in appraisal, including those of engagement (Martin & White, 2005).

At a broader level, a linguistic study on stance is concerned with the interpersonal aspect of language, how we establish relations with others when speaking or writing. In Chapter 1, I pointed out the pedagogic importance of understanding this aspect of writing and indicated my choice of intersubjective positioning (i.e., engagement) as the main focus. Such focus is admittedly a narrowed scope of the "interpersonal", but as will be demonstrated in this chapter, a salient aspect that awaits further exploration in linguistic and writing research.

Stance as Meanings: the Appraisal Theory

Different linguistic approaches have explored the phenomenon of stance at multiple levels. As summarized by Hunston (2011), stance (or "evaluation" in her work) has been studied at least as action (e.g., Du Bois, 2007; Haddington, 2007; Johnstone, 2007), as text function (e.g., Thompson & Hunston, 2000), as lexico-grammatical resources (e.g., Biber, 2006; Biber & Finegan, 1989; Conrad & Biber, 2000; Hyland, 1998, 2005), and as meanings. Adopting systemic functional linguistics' appraisal theory, particularly the sub-system of engagement, the current study falls in the final category which considers stance as discourse semantic resources.

Appraisal (Martin & White, 2005) sees stance as realized by three simultaneously operating systems of meanings: *attitude* is associated with personal feelings; *engagement* is concerned with intersubjective positioning; *graduation* is concerned with the grading of attitude

and engagement meanings (e.g., the scale from *good*, *very good*, to *excellent*, from *kind of*, *somewhat* to *really*, from *maybe*, *probably*, to *certainly*, etc.). The outline of attitude and engagement shows a consideration of "personal attitudes" and "status of knowledge" (Gray & Biber, 2012, p. 16) as two major components of stance, which is found in many other approaches (e.g., Conrad & Biber, 2000; Hyland, 2005; Thompson & Hunston, 2000). *Graduation* compliments this distinction by adding the gradability of evaluative meanings into discussion. In terms of analytical approach, appraisal is text-focused, with foundational work (e.g., Martin, 2000; Martin & White, 2005) starting from qualitative discussions of texts. However, as I will review below, some recent studies also include quantitative methods.

In Chapter 1 I have discussed one advantage of investigating stance at the discourse semantic level, especially the possibility to systemize the great variety of stance-invoking words and phrases under a typology of semantic options. In addition, since appraisal draws on SFL's theorization of language as a social semiotic, interpretation of text meanings is based on and validated with appraisal's systematic account of interpersonal meaning options available in language, without the need for "ethnographic" or "commonsense" means of validation from the discourse community as do some other analyses of stance (Hood, 2010, p. 10). Therefore the framework can enable consistency and comparability among analyses of stance in writing across contexts.

Engagement: Intersubjective Stance from the Systemic Functional Perspective

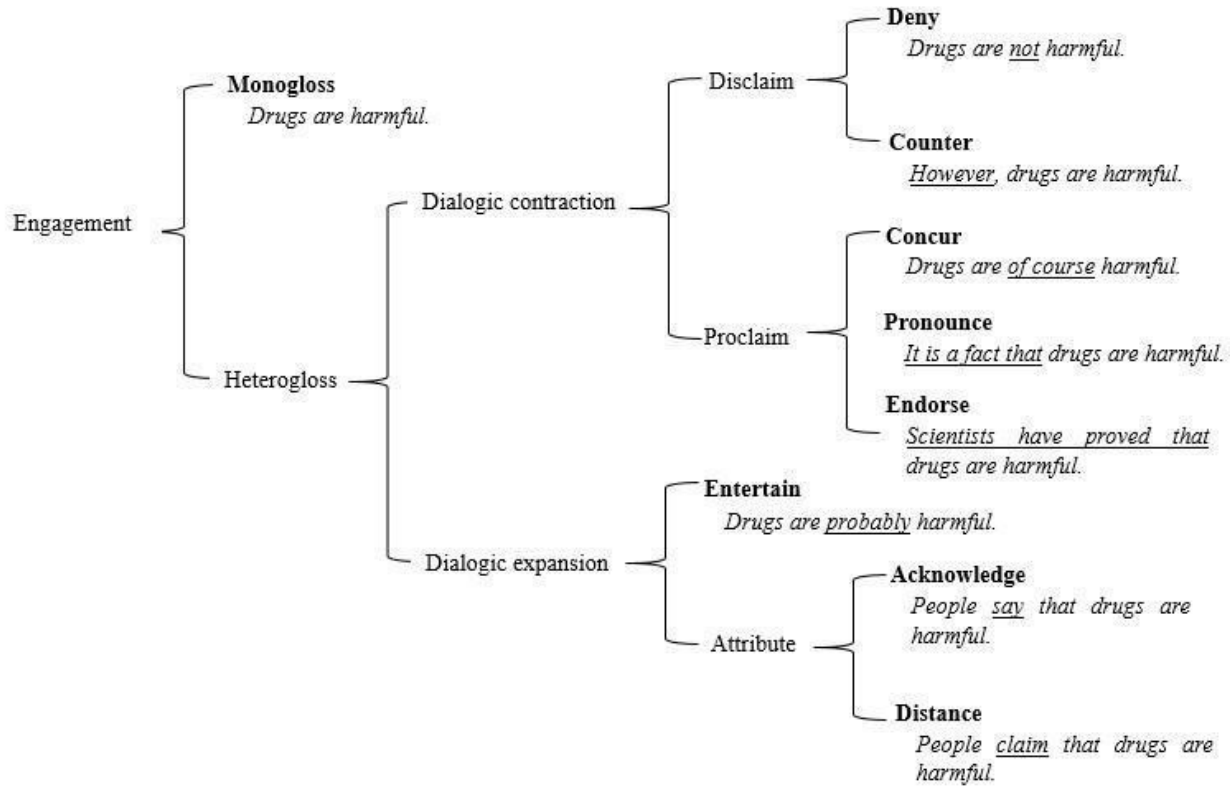
This small scale study chooses to focus on the system of engagement in second language argumentative writing, as the resources writers use to take an intersubjective stance in the backdrop of different views towards a subject matter. Engagement sees the linguistic resources for intersubjective positioning as "fundamentally dialogic and interactive" (White, 2003, p. 260).

Accordingly the focus in this account is the dialogic relations between ideas and opinions. This theoretical position derives from Bakhtin's (1981) dialogism, with the basic view that all utterances encode some relation to what is said before, or what is expected or imagined to be said, thereby engaging with dialogically alternative ideas. By engaging with dialogic alternatives with options described in engagement, writers align or dis-align with different knowledge and knowers, and thereby establish and negotiate their own positions in the discourse community. From a more reader-oriented perspective, engagement meanings "navigate" the reader through the diverse views in the discourse community towards the speaker/writer's position (Hood, 2004, p. 206). In such process, the reader is construed as sharing the same knowledge or otherwise holding a different view from the writer (Coffin, 2002).

Depending on whether an utterance acknowledges thereby engages with dialogically alternative views or voices, engagement first distinguishes two broad categories of meanings: *monogloss* and *heterogloss*. Monoglossic utterances deny space for any alternative propositions or options, and presents the speaker/writer's assertion as absolute or factual (bare assertion). In contrast, *heteroglossic* utterances overtly acknowledge and engage with alternative positions.

Heteroglossic meanings can be further grouped into a series of categories that either *contract* or *expand* dialogic space for alternative positions. Dialogically contractive meanings bring in alternative positions, and "challenge, fend off, or restrict" them. Within this category are the options of *disclaim: deny*, *disclaim: counter*, *proclaim: concur*, *proclaim: endorse*, *proclaim: pronounce*. In contrast, dialogically expansive meanings "actively mak[e] allowance" for alternative positions (Martin & White, 2005, p. 102). Ways of dialogic expansion include *entertain*, *attribute: acknowledge*, and *attribute: distance*. Figure 2.1 (based on Martin & White, 2005) summarizes the typology of these technicalities, with the nine options used for the current

analysis in bold. A more detailed explanation of each engagement category is provided in Appendix A with examples from the current essay data[1].



(Adapted from Martin & White, 2005 with examples from the current data)

Figure 2.1: The Engagement Framework

While an effective authorial stance in writing is certainly associated with the contextually recognized or valued configuration of all appraisal meaning systems (i.e., attitude, graduation, and engagement), the current study sees engagement, as the system of intersubjective positioning, as a salient aspect in the challenge of academic stancetaking. Based on the notions of dialogism and dialogic alternative, engagement explicitly addresses the issues of

[1] The appendix is intended to facilitate reading of the rest of this thesis for those who are unfamiliar with the theoretical framework.

(dis-)alignment, knowledge status, inter-knower or inter-knowledge relations, positioning within discourse community, writer identity making, etc. As discussed earlier, such notions are key to successful stancetaking in academic texts where diverse and conflicting views are to be managed with careful choices of interpersonal meanings. Novice student writers could find these notions abstract and challenging without clarifying how they are related to specific language use. In addition, engagement also covers a variety of resources traditionally discussed under other perspectives on stance (White, 2003). Some of these headings might have already been familiar among L2 and writing teachers, such as modality, negation, evidentiality, hedging, concession, projection/sourcing, reported speech grammar, etc. It is hoped that engagement can integrate these headings in a system of meanings.

Below I will review findings of recent empirical studies on stance in academic writing with a focus on engagement resources.

Empirical Analyses of Engagement in Academic Writing

Although relatively small in number, empirical writing studies adopting the engagement analytical framework have expanded their interests to a number of educational contexts, disciplines and specific text types, providing valuable findings on the nature of academic authorial stance. They also demonstrate multiple methodological orientations based on their contexts and purposes. I group the studies according to three broad approaches. The first approach can be considered as descriptive and explanatory, which draws on specific pieces of writing to make explicit the engagement patterns preferred by expert or successful writers. The second group compares and contrasts the engagement resources across texts in different contexts (e.g., disciplines) or by different writers (e.g., novice versus expert). The third category can be called teaching-oriented, which more actively includes teaching- or teacher-related components

in their research designs to examine the potential of engagement in pedagogical application.

Descriptive-explanatory approach

Beginning with studies adopting a descriptive-explanatory approach, Hood's (2004) doctoral dissertation is one of the earliest comprehensive discussion of appraisal in academic writing. She analyzes all three appraisal systems in both L2 undergraduate dissertations and published research papers. Engagement resources are discussed in terms of alignment and management of space for other views and voices. Meanings that contribute to the "confirm[ation]", "authoris[sation]", or "support" of a position indicate increased degree of alignment (e.g., attribution/projection, endorsement); in contrast, those that "problematize" (e.g., counter/concession) or "negate" (deny) function to enact disalignment (p. 213). The analysis shows how a published text frequently and strategically brings in external viewpoints and at the same time encode to values of (dis)alignment to them. In this way the reader is guided towards the writer's position by the prosody of alignment and disalignment. In contrast, the signaling of alignment or disalignment is not as frequent nor consistent in a student's text, which affects the clarity of the writer's position. Examples illustrated include substantial citation without the writer's own assessment, or the absence of counter-expectation resource where alignment seems shifted. This analysis demonstrates not only the highly heteroglossic nature of effective academic arguments, but also the importance of strategic alignment signaling.

Swain (2009) analyzes engagement resources in two short discussion essays by Italian L1 ESL undergraduate students. Similarly, she finds that, even both "for" and "against" positions are brought into the argument (heteroglossically diverse), a lack of consistent alignment results in a weak essay. Quantitatively, Swain finds a better balance between dialogic contraction and expansion in the more successful essay. The less successful one has a larger proportion of

contractive resources resulting in a more assertive stance. More importantly, the counts of each engagement subcategory shows that the more successful text engages opposing views with more diverse engagement options, while the less successful essays mainly rely on disclaim: deny (i.e., negation) to do so. In addition, Swain (2009, p. 180) also points out engagement's ability to explain academic writing as "management of voices" instead of "extension of [the] individual sel[f]" which can promote confidence in novice writers.

Pascual and Unger's (2010) study investigates engagement patterns preferred by writers of successful natural science grant applications. They choose a mixed-methods approach to analyze the 'Benefit' (B) and 'Importance Claim' (IC) stages (p.270) of two successful grant proposals in chemistry and physics written by Argentinean researchers in English as their L2. Both of these successful texts are found to be highly heteroglossically diverse, with frequent consideration of alternative views using all heteroglossic options except attribute: distance (attributing a view but remaining distanced from it, e.g., *They claim that ...*). Particularly among the 40 heteroglossic instances found in the two texts, 20 fall in the entertain category (presenting a view as one among other possibilities, e.g., *It is probably the case that ...*) (p. 272). In terms of what options are preferred in what stage, they find most heteroglossic instances in the IC stage, with only a few in the B stage. They explain this variation across stages with a difference in potential audiences: the IC stage is intended for a more "local" community of scientists where the author is engaged in technical dialogues with diverse views on the topic; in the B stage, audiences are construed as coming from a wider range of backgrounds and thus expect a less dialogic discourse style (p.276). The study is another effective illustration of the heteroglossic nature of academic writing. It also draws our interest in engagement variation across stages of a text.

Chang and Schleppegrell's (2011) analysis of four published social sciences research introductions explains how both dialogically expansive and contractive styles are capable of achieving the goals of "establishing a territory" (of research), "establishing a niche" and "occupying a niche" in Swales's (1990) three-move model of introduction. In the former case, for example, the exemplified text modalizes (entertain, dialogically expansive) multiple possible challenges or negative results regarding an educational phenomenon, thereby emphasizing the need for deeper understanding on the issue. Similarly in another introduction, multiple views on an issue are attributed (dialogically expansive) in a neutral or distanced manner by the author in order to suggest the need for new knowledge. In a dialogically contractive introduction, proclaiming and disclaiming resources narrow down space for alternative positions and construe a "confident stance" regarding the importance of the proposed research (p. 147). The study not only shows different rhetorical effects made by dominant engagement choices in the introductions, but also emphasizes the importance of prosodic patterns of engagement. For example, after entertaining different possibilities (e.g., *It may be the case that …. It is possible that*), a clear stance can be achieved by the strategic follow-up of dialogically contractive utterances (e.g., *The position of this article is that…)* at the end of a rhetorical stage. Chang and Schleppegrell (2011) also draw clear connections between rhetorical purpose, engagement patterns, and the lexico-grammatical realization of engagement meanings, proposing a model for clarifying these connections in writing pedagogy.

An earlier analysis of historical discourse by Coffin (2002) briefly reported that engagement helps to "*extravocalize*" *judgement* towards people in history texts. The concept of "*extravocalization*" in engagement is equivalent to Martin and White's (2005) category of *attribute*. By mediating evaluative meanings to other appraisers (especially unspecified ones),

writers maintain a distant authorial persona and achieve an objective stance, which are valued in historical discourse.

Comparative approach

Another approach to engagement analysis includes clear comparative components in the research design. Lee (2006) conducted a comprehensive mixed-methods analysis on high- and low-graded writing (HGE & LGE) by both East Asian students (EAS) and Australian born English L1 students (ABS). The analysis shows that grade-based differences are more significant than cross-cultural differences. There is an overall larger number of engagement resources in the HGEs, especially *presuppositions* (monoglossic propositions that can be inter- or intra-textually interpreted as taken-for-granted by the reader, e.g., *The sun rises from the east.*) and attribution (e.g., citing external opinions, e.g., *According to scientists …*). In contrasts, LGEs have more monoglossic absolute statements of facts and their own assertion. Within heteroglossic options, LGEs rely more heavily on deny (negation) and modalization (e.g., *This <u>may</u> be ….*) to engage with alternative positions. When attributing external views, the HGEs show a balanced use of acknowledge (e.g., *According to …*), endorsement (e.g., *The scientists <u>have convincingly demonstrated</u> that …*), and distance (e.g., *Some people <u>claim</u> that …*), and combine them with dialogically contractive resources (i.e., deny, counter, pronounce, concur) in order to navigate his or her own position through the diverse others'. The HGEs also demonstrate more diverse linguistic realizations of attribution including direct quote and different grammatical forms of projection.

Another mixed-methods study by Wu (2007) compares engagement in high- and low-graded undergraduate geography essays in the Singaporean context. Similarly to Lee's study (2006), more engagement resources in total are found in HG texts. LGEs have a notably larger

proportion of bare assertions than HG ones, resulting in a more monoglossic style in the texts. The analysis shows that a heteroglossic, contrastive stance is valued by the grader. More instances of "problematization" are found in HG texts with the frequent use of disclaim: counter meanings (e.g., *however*, *even*, *surprisingly*). HG essays also tend to use proclaim: endorse (e.g., *Research has found that ...*) and attribute (e.g., *The study reports that ...*) to source contrasting ideas from different parties, adding to the dialogic diversity to these HG texts. In contrast, uncritical pronouncement (e.g., *I argue that...*) of own positions with no or little contrastive data result in a weak stance in the LGEs. Wu's (2007) findings on the preference for contrastive stance is in alignment with Hood's (2004) results.

Derewianka (2009) situates her engagement analysis in adolescent history writing. The comparison is done with student writing in history class across three different stages in secondary school as well as in the early stage of university. The results track the growth of diversity of engagement resources across stages. In the early secondary stage represented by a short semi-autobiographic assignment, the writer's feelings about a historical event was mediated through a fictional character s/he creates. The dialogically expansive resource "I think" (encoding an entertain meaning) explicitly presents the young writer's position as personal, contingent and open to alternatives (p. 148). The middle secondary stage text (an analytical response essay to prompt) sees the use of counter and attribute resources and the frequent use of "high modality" in combination with personal pronouns (p. 152). In comparison, the third (late secondary) stage essay is considered more skillful in negotiating intersubjective stance with low modality and passive voice. In early tertiary, engagement resources are more extensively found. Especially, projection with a wide variety of mental process verbs, as well as direct quote as attribute: distance resources, is shown in the analyzed text. Like in other studies, strategic

combination of contractive and expansive devices is found to contribute to more complex and effective academic stance. The reported cross-sectional differences are discussed in terms of writers' awareness of the social, dialogic nature of academic writing at different stages of education.

Studies with teaching/teacher-related design

The studies reviewed so far have revealed valuable findings on the nature of effective academic stance from the perspective of engagement. Yet while all these studies set out to consider the pedagogical implication of engagement analysis, discussion is not yet extended in the pedagogical contexts in-depth. In the descriptive-explanatory studies, researchers draw on linguistic analyses and contextual information (e.g., whether a text is published) to interpret the preference of intersubjective stance. Comparative studies more explicitly base discussion of stance effectiveness on extra information such as level of education, or grades given by teachers. What is limited here seems the perspectives and opinions from teachers. Without working more closely with the pedagogical contexts, for example, considering teachers' responses or views towards students' engagement patterns or researchers' analyses, the potential of linguistic insights will not be fully understood and will be eventually limited. The following reviewed engagement studies involve more explicit and detailed designs that involve teaching intervention and/or teacher perspectives.

A study with rather detailed consideration of pedagogical intervention is Chang's (2010) dissertation, in which she proposes teaching stance with a computer-assisted corpus tool drawing on engagement together with rhetorical move analysis from work in ESP (e.g., Swales, 1990). Chang (2010) argues from a cognitive perspective that the "probabilistic" and "inductive" aspects of language learning make it possible to connect computer corpora with stance teaching

(p. 26). Her proposed teaching tool divided published research introductions into rhetorical moves and clauses and explained the engagement patterns across moves. Seven Chinese L1 graduate students (p. 65) were guided into inductive learning of these patterns, and the effectiveness of the computer-assisted teaching approach was examined. The results show that the students' stance performance was improved, especially proclaiming positions and prosodic patterns according to rhetorical moves. However, in terms of cognitive activity, it is found that the tool has just a limited effect on students' inference of stance patterns from the corpus. While further research is needed in this direction, Chang's proposed tool and study make an important step forward to examine pedagogical intervention on stance, and suggest at least some degree of effectiveness of engagement-focused writing pedagogy.

The case study by Myskow and Gordon (2012) is much smaller in scale, but incorporates both text and interview data. Also focusing on engagement, this longitudinal case study discusses the role of a "reader-oriented approach" in preparing one Japanese high school student for an impromptu writing task for university entrance (p. 90). The teaching approach comprises "contextual analysis" where the student was encouraged to do a small "ethnographic" research on the university community he aimed for (p. 97). The researchers compare the student's short response essays to the same writing task before and after such reader-oriented teaching. As in other studies, the authors also see a change from a monoglossic to a more heteroglossic style of argument, with more engagement options found within the heteroglossic category rather than a heavy reliance on monogloss and entertain as in the students' pre-test. More interestingly, the interview with the student shows that although the reader-oriented instruction raised his awareness of potential reader values differing from his own, such awareness did not necessarily

result in a more heteroglossic strategy in writing, but rather a "topic avoidance" strategy (p. 97) so as not to confront the reader's position.

Lancaster's (2012) study compares stance patterns both between high- and low-graded undergraduate student papers and between disciplines (political theory and economics). As a further step, he contextualizes and clarifies the text analyses in interviews with teachers. The data show multiple grade-based differences in engagement, with which Lancaster discusses a successful "novice academic stance" (p. 1) in terms of four qualities: "contrastiveness", "dialogic control", "discoursal engagement", and "critical distance". In specific engagement terminology, the first three qualities are comparable to findings in other studies: for example, contrastiveness involves frequent countering of alternative positions, especially with "contrastive rhetorical pairs" (p. 125) such as "entertain-counter" and "concur-counter"; Dialogic control is related to the strategic switching between dialogic expansion and contraction. Critical distance can be realized by impersonalizing evaluation of attributed views with nominalization of the attributed knower's mental process (e.g., *Smith's perspective is insightful*). This study also proposed possibilities in promoting a stance metalanguage among university faculties.

Summary of engagement analyses in academic writing

In the above, I have reviewed recent academic writing studies involving analyses of engagement. These studies have tested SFL's semantically-oriented model of intersubjective stance in empirical studies and have rendered rich and insightful findings as to what contributes to an effective academic stance.

Among the findings, the most evident generalization that may be made is the importance of dialogic diversity in a successful academic stance. This diversity might have different meanings across these studies. First, as one point shared by all reviewed studies, successful texts

are found to encode more heteroglossic meanings overall with alternative views and voices frequently brought into text. This contrasts with findings in less successful texts which often barely assert their positions with monoglossic statements. Second, dialogic diversity can mean using more engagement options, instead of relying heavily on a few (Derewianka, 2009; Lee, 2006; Myskow & Gordon, 2012; Swain, 2009; Wu, 2007). Distinguishing engagement resources in a greater delicacy is another trait of dialogically diverse texts. For example, when attributing external views, successful writers are found to encode their positioning with those views using endorse or distance in addition to acknowledge (Lee, 2006). Third, a balance between dialogic contraction and expansion is found as a valued feature in effective stance (e.g., Derewianka, 2009; Lee, 2006; Swain, 2009). Macroscopically this means that the successful writer is able to include different parties in the debate without being drowned by their voices. Fourth, going into further delicacy, diversity is also found within individual engagement options in more advanced texts, both in terms of lexico-grammatical realization (e.g., metaphorical realization of modality as discussed in Hood, 2004; Lee, 2006) and the further fine-tuning of engagement meanings (e.g., adjustment between high and low modal meanings in Derewianka, 2009). In sum, an effective intersubjective stance is repeatedly associated with dialogic diversity in the literature.

Among different engagement options, the literature shows a strong emphasis on disclaim: counter as the key to construct a contrastive stance or to problematize other views (Hood, 2004; Lancaster, 2012; Wu, 2007). On the dialogically expansive side, attribution (often discussed as projection of external views) is also found to be a frequently used component of engagement in academic texts, together with the position-encoding options of endorsement (e.g., *They have <u>demonstrated</u> that …*) and distancing (e.g., *They <u>claim</u> that…*), which tend to appear in more advanced texts, as just mentioned.

Apart from overall composition of engagement choices in the text, another important theme in the findings is the sequential or prosodic patterns of engagement. In Martin and Rose's explanation (2003, p. 54), prosody of meanings involves how appraisal (here specifically engagement) choices "resonate with one another from one moment to another as a text unfolds." Chang and Schleppegrell (2011) and Hood (2004) have particularly detailed discussion related to this point. Lancaster's (2012) discussion of "dialogic control" demonstrates the importance to strategically switch between dialogic expansion (opening space for other views) and contraction (fending off alternative positions to reach own positions) in written arguments. Furthermore, variation of engagement use according to rhetorical stage (e.g., Pascual & Unger, 2010) can also be interpreted in terms of sequential patterns, since it also involves where to use what, but at the whole text level. In Pascual and Unger (2010), stage difference derives from the difference in target audience.

Lee (2006) and Lancaster's (2012) studies also discuss cross-cultural, cross-disciplinary, and cross-task variation of engagement. However, both suggest that the variations based on writing performance are more notable.

With regard to analytical methods, it is rather common in this literature to analyze text features both quantitatively and qualitatively. The overall composition of engagement choices can be well demonstrated quantitatively. Specific texts or instances, the diversity within engagement options, lexico-grammatical realization, as well as prosodic or sequencing patterns can be best analyzed qualitatively. Recent studies also involve interviews with teachers or students (Lancaster, 2012; Myskow & Gordon, 2012). This mixed-methods direction suggests the complexity of the notion of stance which requires exploration from multiple angles.

Summary of Chapter

In this chapter, I first positioned this study in the literature of stance and its synonyms. By aligning with SFL's appraisal and specifically engagement, I positioned this study as one of the discourse semantics of intersubjective stance, which is, as I have argued, a complex challenge faced by novice and/or L2 academic writers. In the second part of this chapter, I turned the focus onto the immediately related studies, which are engagement analyses in academic written texts. The insights provided by these studies have further supported the potential of this analytical framework. At the same time, a potential gap is identified between linguistic and pedagogical perspectives in this line of research. Only three studies are found to explicitly include teaching intervention or teacher opinion in their research designs. I have argued that this gap would potentially limit the impact of such linguistic study on the academic writing pedagogy.

In response to this gap, the current study aligns with the small number of teaching/teacher-involved studies of engagement and intends to further explore the potential connections between engagement and teacher perspectives on the dialogic nature of academic writing. Two main benefits are expected from a better understanding of such connection. First it is expected that the teachers' opinions can verify and clarify the linguistic analysis of engagement. Secondly, the teachers' response to the engagement framework and analyses will help researchers examine the compatibility of the theory with the pedagogical context, and further identify pedagogical needs. Lancaster (2012) has provided a valuable discussion of the challenges of adopting a stance-focused metalanguage in university discipline teaching, in terms of necessity and accessibility of metalanguage, as well as how the metalanguage can be shared with university faculties. The current study intends to extend this discussion to another context less touched in the literature, which is pre-university ESL.

With pedagogical context, theoretical orientation, and specific linguistic focus clarified at this point, the last position in consideration will be the appropriate analytical approach. Given the limitations of resources and access to the population, I choose to work with a small group but in-depth. A combination of the analytical approaches available in the literature would seem a way to achieve this depth. In particular, I choose to combine both quantitative and qualitative discussion of the student text data, and contextualize the text analyses with findings from the literature and the teacher's perspectives demonstrated in an interview. In other words, the current study is concerned with the engagement patterns in student writing and the teacher's opinions related to intersubjective stance. In investigating the teacher's opinions, I further explore the connections between the teacher's perspective and the linguistic perspective (engagement). The research questions and specific analytical procedures will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methods

Overview

This chapter presents the research design of this study. It first introduces the research questions and an overview of the mixed methods research design. Then it gives a description of the research context. Finally, it describes the specific methods and analytical approaches used for each set of data.

Multiphase Mixed Methods Design and Research Questions

This study attempts to make explicit and explain the stance patterns in ESL argumentative essays by connecting two perspectives: the linguistic perspective based on analysis of engagement in the student essays, and the ESL teacher's perspective based on the teacher's response in an interview and his short written comments on the essays' marking sheets, alongside other contextual information. Given the multiple sources of information which need different analytical approaches, as well as the two perspectives involved in my research purpose, the current study falls in the category of mixed methods research.

Research questions

This study aims to address three questions:

1) What are the patterns of engagement resources in the short argumentative essays?
2) What engagement choices or patterns does the teacher identify as valued or problematic in the current context of pre-university ESL argumentative essay writing?
3) In what ways does the teacher describe students' language use for engaging with alternative views and voices, using what metalanguage or principles that are

equivalent or relevant to notions in the engagement framework?

The study adopts an overall multiphase mixed methods design (J. Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; J. W. Creswell, 2014) with a literature review phase and two main phases of data collection and analysis. Figure 3.1 is a visual diagram of the research design of this study.

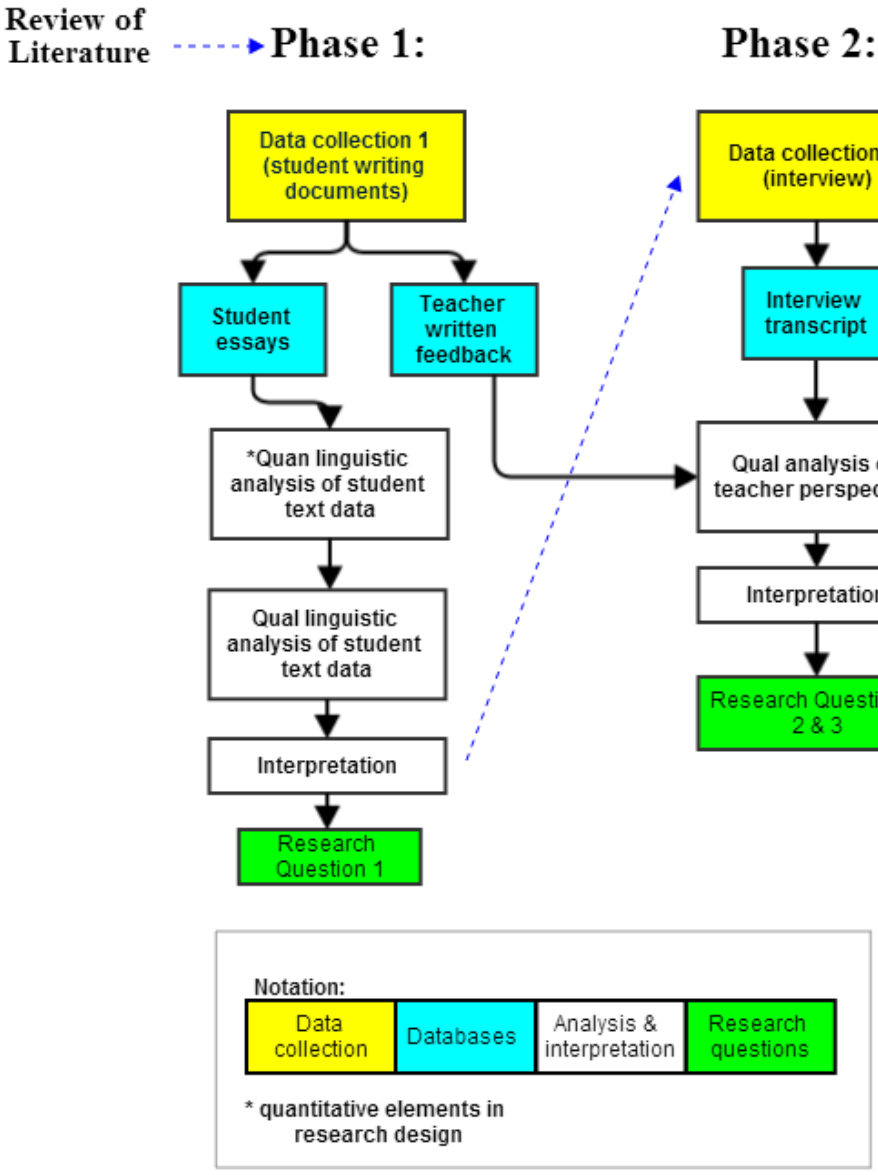


Figure 3.1: Diagram of Research Design

The main two phases of this study were initially informed by the literature review (as presented in Chapter 2). This included the conceptual framework, specific linguistic focus and the overall research methods. In addition, the research design was informed by the engagement literature. Particularly, the two-part design with linguistic analysis of student writing and an interview with the instructor was inspired by Wu's (2007) unreported interview with the instructor-grader, and especially Lancaster's (2012) detailed design involving both student text and teacher interview analysis. In choosing to combine both quantitative and qualitative analyses of student essays, I drew on multiple engagement analyses reviewed above. The details of research design are expanded on in the rest of this chapter.

The Research Context and Participants

This study was conducted in ESL400 (a pseudonym), an advanced-level English course in a continuing education department at a major university in Canada. ESL400 was a six-week full-time (five hours a day) intensive course designed to foster students' all four English language competencies (reading, listening, speaking and writing) for both academic and professional purposes. The course syllabus states that it emphasizes the integration of the linguistic, communicative, and socio-cultural levels of English learning. Accordingly, the course content was diverse, ranging from general grammar, vocabulary, reading, listening training, to interview and speech delivery skills, specific purpose writing, and cultural exploration activities (e.g., tours in the city). A series of professional communication topics were explored, such as professional emails, meetings, and job seeking. As the highest level ESL course provided by the department, ESL400 is one of the two required courses for a department-issued English proficiency certificate that can be used to fulfill language requirements of admission to academic programmes in the university.

The class had 19 students, among which 14 participated in this study (n=14). They were mostly young adults and were from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and all spoke English as an additional language. The class worked with two instructors. John (a pseudonym), the teacher participant in this study who has 30 years of ESL teaching experience, took charge of most of the writing in the course, including writing instruction, writing activities, student-teacher meetings, etc. As John pointed out, some students took this course in order to obtain proficiency attestation for university admission, while others intended to develop their professional communication competence.

Throughout the six-week class period, students were required to produce multiple documents and essays as take-home assignments and in-class assessments. ESL400 mainly worked with two categories of writing: professional writing (e.g., professional letters, emails, résumés, and cover letters) and short argumentative essays. Among 48 scheduled taught classes in the course, six were related to argumentative writing. Students were typically asked to take a position regarding a topic of controversy, with some background reading materials on the topic prepared by John. In this class, one argumentative essay was scheduled as a final in-class assessment and six as take-home assignments.

In summary, ESL400, as an advanced pre-university ESL course, presented a mixed-purpose writing curriculum that intends to address students' English needs for academic and professional communication. With a focus on argumentative English writing, students were prepared to communicate effectively in a wider range of written genres they would encounter outside the ESL classroom.

The Student Essays

Short argumentative essays (or "persuasive essays" as called in the course) were collected

from the fourteen student participants in ESL400. They were the take-home assignment in the fifth week of the course, which served as preparation/practice for a final in-class argumentative essay assessment in the sixth week. In the assignment, the students were asked to take their position for or against drug legalization. They were given an article titled "What if we legalized all drugs?" (Skeel, 2008) to familiarize themselves with the topic. The suggested length of the essays was 500 words. The essays collected ranged from 214 to 1063 words, with most essays between 200 to 500 words. A summary of the essays' word counts is provided in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Summary of the Essays' Word Counts

Words per essay	**N**		**Words**
201~400	8	Minimum	214
401~600	4	Maximum	1063
601~800	0	Mean	462.7
801~1000	1		
≥1001	1		

Each essay was returned with a marking sheet completed by John (see Appendix B), which typically includes the scores on each aspect in the marking rubric (linguistic, lexical, and discursive competences), short comments beside each score, and overall comments and suggestions in a comment section. The written comments by John are part of the teacher perspective data in this study.

Phase 1: Analysis of the Student Essays

The first phase of this study was an analysis of the students' stance patterns drawing on

the SFL framework of engagement. To prepare the raw data for analysis, the essays collected in hard copies were entered into a word processing file and formatted for coding: identifying information of the students and the university (including the names of any related places) were removed; each essay, paragraph, and sentence were numbered to facilitate location of individual engagement instances and larger text units. The overall position interpreted (i.e., "for" or "against" drug legalization) was marked beside the title of each essay. Comment sections were reserved for each paragraph for making note of the engagement patterns within particular rhetorical stages. An example of the coding transcript is provided as Appendix C.

Drawing on Lancaster's (2012) design, my analysis of the student texts consisted of four main steps: 1) identifying purposes and generic stages, 2) quantitative coding and summary of engagement 3) qualitative exploration of engagement patterns, and 4) contextualization of the identified patterns in the teacher interview.

Identifying purposes and generic stages

In order for valid interpretation and explanation of students' texts, it is helpful to first clarify the purpose and the corresponding generic stages in the analyzed genre. It is rather straightforward that an argumentative essay as such has the purpose of presenting a position regarding the topic (drug legalization) and convincing the readers to hold the same belief. The only point to add briefly is that writers in this ESL context were actually simulating this persuasive process in the course of their English learning, with the teacher as probably the only reader, whose principle engagement with the text was to evaluate linguistic, lexical and discursive competences demonstrated by the student writer. In work on genre, differences between student and expert genres are discussed in-depth (e.g., Hüttner, 2008). For the purpose of this study, the note to add here is that interpretation of students' language use should take the

pedagogical context into account. For example, do students use certain features because this is taught in class, or because there are specific requirements for the assignments? This is considered during my interpretation of the findings and will be discussed in the following chapters.

Together with the reflection on the essays' purposes was a brief analysis of the generic staging of the essays in my first reading of the essays. This procedure helped to divide the whole texts into smaller units of analysis with distinct functions to guide the qualitative interpretation of engagement patterns. The essays generally followed a three-part structure with an introduction, a body, and a conclusion (e.g., Reid, 1988). To attend to the variations within such general structure, I adopted the stage labels of argumentative genres from Martin and Rose (2008), in which most essays could be seen as overall one-sided "*exposition*" type of argument, with the general stages of a "thesis", a few "arguments" and "reiteration" of the thesis (p. 120). Some essays also show features of the "*challenge*" and "*discussion*" genres, with alternative positions attended and/or challenged. Accordingly I labelled stages devoted to presenting alternative positions as "alternative arguments" and considered if any element of "challenge" was involved within these stages. Some essays did not present their positions directly in the thesis stage and rather set up the background of the debate for the reader first (e.g., *Some people think that ... Others think that ...*). Such opening stages were labelled "identification" (Write it Right, 1996). There were also essays that embed "narratives" as part of their thesis or argument stages. These stage labels will be used in the qualitative analysis in the next chapter.

Quantitatively-oriented coding

The analysis began with my quantitatively-oriented coding of engagement resources in the essays. This involves giving one or more engagement value (engagement option) to each proposition identified in the text data. The study uses Martin and White's (2005) outline and

definitions of engagement to code 9 categories: monogloss (bare assertion), disclaim: deny, disclaim: counter, proclaim: concur, proclaim: counter, proclaim: endorse, entertain, attribute: acknowledge, attribute: distance (see Appendix A for definitions and examples).

All essays were coded twice at two different points of time, between which I reflected on and clarified my coding criteria, procedures, as well as my understanding of the engagement framework. In both attempts, I made note of a small number of instances that might be given alternative interpretations, and discussed them with the supervisors of this thesis.

My first attempt of coding revealed considerable challenges in defining the unit of analysis, which I aim to discuss in some detail here. In the engagement analysis literature, a consensus has not been reached regarding the unit of coding. Swain (2009) counts expressions/lexico-grammatical items that inscribe engagement meanings. Pascual and Unger (2010, p. 272) count what they call "heteroglossic instances" in their data which is not clearly defined. Chang and Schleppegrell (2011) code each non-embedded clause with one or more values. Myskow and Gordon (2012) analyze each statement's engagement value. Such variation reflects an important challenge in quantifying semantically-oriented discourse analyses like the current one. At the semantic level, analysts are concerned with how many propositions (or proposals) there are in the data. But the boundary between propositions is not always easy to determine. As Lancaster (2012, p. 86) warns, coding of engagement is one of "messiness", since engagement meanings are not necessarily restricted by lexico-grammatical boundaries such as punctuation or clause boundaries. As demonstrated by his study and also found in the current text data, a given clause or sentence may be interpreted as encoding one or more engagement values; in some other cases, an engagement meaning may extend across a number of clauses.

Lancaster's (2012, p. 88) approach to address this complication is to "capture all the

various resources that are brought into play in a given stretch of discourse" and to "trac[k]" the "moves" of engagement. Such description recognizes the need to consider the unit of analysis as semantic (e.g., proposition/proposal meanings) as well as the important role of interpretation in determining such semantic unit. In the current study, I overall followed Lancaster's principle to capture "moves" of propositions in the data. Below I devote some additional textual space to make transparent some criteria I used to determine proposition/proposal units, in other words, what justifies a clause or sentence for being a unit of proposition/proposal meaning in this study. They should be treated as tentative observation subjected to exceptions in the current analysis and others.

At first, I interpreted the engagement of each non-embedded clause as did Chang and Schleppegrell (2011) and initially attempted by Lancaster (2012). The criterion of non-embeddedness is helpful in filtering out the embedded elements in a proposition which, from a systemic functional grammar (SFG) perspective, can be seen as "removed from the line of negotiation" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013, p. 171). However, it was rather evident that some types of non-embedded dependent clauses, such as temporal clauses (e.g., *when people use marijuana ...)* and conditional clauses (e.g., *If marijuana becomes legal in .....)*, were still unlikely read as independent propositions/proposals. Here it is helpful to introduce Morley's (2000, p. 89) distinction between "integral" and "supplementary" bound clauses. The examples given above (together with other types such as projected clauses) are typically integral parts of its superordinate element as they contain meanings that are not optional or extra for the proposition. "Supplementary bound clauses", on the contrary, provide extra information that may be interpreted as additional propositional meanings. In identifying these "supplementary" clauses, context-based interpretation was used together with grammatical clues. For example,

dependent clauses of reason are typically supplementary. To verify whether a dependent clause is supplementary, a test method proposed by Morley (2000, p. 90) is to add phrases such as *in fact*, *by the way*, or *incidentally*, beside the tested clauses. This test method turned out helpful to identify some dependent clauses of reason as non-supplementary (therefore not coded alone as a unit of analysis), because in meaning they read more as part of the proposition being made in the whole sentence.

Similarly to embedded clauses, non-finite clauses were not coded independently as proposition meanings either, since they are "even further removed from the status of negotiability" according to functional grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013, p. 172).

Independent clauses, then, are typically coded as a propositions. Sentences with compound predicates (e.g., *He goes to school and studies science.*) are further considered regarding the relevance of experiential meanings between the verbs. If the meanings of the verbs seem closely connected, for example, temporally or causally, then they are treated in the same unit of analysis.

There is also a small number of offers, invitations, and questions that seem to function mainly as discourse organizing utterances, rather than containing any position in the argument. As discourse organization is not the focus of engagement, these special instances are not coded alone, but considered together with its neighboring sentences. A few examples of this category are presented below.

- ***[INVITATION]*** *Now, could you please think for a while how would be your country if the legalization of drugs will be permitted?* ***[OFFER]*** *Let me tell you what had happened and what would happen in XXXXXX, my country. (Chris, E4)*
- ***[QUESTION]*** *What is marijuana in terms of health risks? [MONOGLOSSIC] It's*

50 to 100 per cent more carcinogens compared to the regular cigarettes, elevated risks of mental disorders and brain malfunctioning, and an aggressive threat to the immune system. (Hayden, E10)

Figure 3.2 summarizes a guideline for the eligibility of a clause for being considered as a minimum unit of engagement coding, according to its status of negotiability. It can be seen that context-based interpretation is necessary to address the "grey area" between coded or non-coded dependent clauses. Although this might indicate the need for a further elaboration on what constitutes a proposition, the proposed framework based on SFG was helpful in sorting of most clauses in the current data. It is hoped that bringing such functional insight of form-meaning connection in English can provide a more transparent guideline for the interpretive coding procedure.

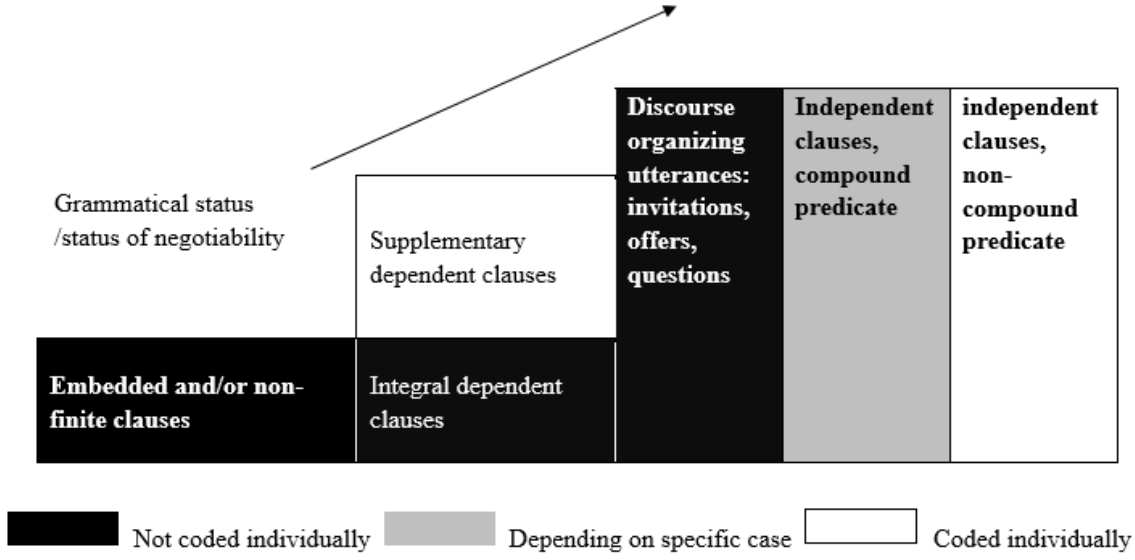


Figure 3.2: Criteria for Individually Coded Clauses

A unit of analysis which does not invoke any alternative position (i.e., categorically presenting a statement as factual or absolute) at any grammatical location (including embedded or non-finite elements) was coded as monoglossic (bare assertion). Other heteroglossic propositions were coded with one or more engagement values. In this way any lexico-grammatical item that added to the heteroglossic characteristics of an essay could be tracked in the analysis, while propositions that are entirely monoglossic were also identified.

As a final step of validation, I used computer-assisted keyword searching to verify the consistency and completeness of my coding. First, I revised coding that I marked as uncertain in my first attempt and verified whether a defendable coding decision was made, and whether such decision is consistent across the data. In case where a decision cannot be made with reference to the literature, I discussed them with my thesis supervisors. Second, following Lancaster (2012), I searched key words and phrases frequently mentioned in introductions of each engagement option (e.g., in foundational theoretical work or in empirical analyses reviewed in Chapter 2) to ensure common engagement-encoding words and phrases were detected in my manual coding.

In sum, while the coding process involves the researcher's subjective interpretation, it is hoped that such interpretation is validated through clarifying the analytical framework and procedures, as well as validation procedures (i.e., reflection, discussion with supervisors, and computer-assisted verification).

Quantitative analysis procedures

The two scores calculated for the quantitative analysis were relative frequencies (the average frequency of an engagement category per 200 words within a given essay) and percentage (the percentage of a given category among all engagement items found in an essay). The two scores of each engagement category were compared across individual texts. In addition,

the proportional composition of engagement in each essay was observed and categorized into a few "styles" of intersubjective stance among the essays. These styles will be presented in the next chapter.

Qualitative exploration of engagement patterns.

The quantitative comparison was followed by the qualitative, interpretive exploration of the essays. In this step I aimed to explore the patterns that are not reflected by the quantitative overview. Particularly, I am interested in the three foci below:

1. Sequential or prosodic patterns and locations of engagement meanings. Are there any sequential or prosodic patterns which result in more or less effective intersubjective positioning in the essays? In terms of location, can the deployment of a certain type of engagement at a certain location (a stage in essay, or a location within a stage or a paragraph) be associated with a more or less effective stance?
2. Lexico-grammatical realization of engagement meanings. What are the possible lexico-grammatical realizations of a given engagement option in this essay? Can any type of realization be associated with more effective intersubjective stance in this context?
3. Further meaning variation under the same engagement categories. If multiple lexico-grammatical realizations of the same engagement option is found, what subtle differences in meaning can be further identified to develop sub-types of these engagement options, and can any of these sub-types be associated with effective intersubjective stance in this context?

The specific procedures to analyze these aspects in the texts involved Tesch's (1990) qualitative method of "organizing system". Specifically I read through the essays again, made

notes of observations along the margin, grouped and compared these observation notes with reference to findings from the literature, and organized the notes into categories of themes related to Research Question 1 (engagement patterns in the essays). In this inductive analytical procedure, I developed a system of categories (themes) and refined it until it is saturated and sufficient to represent the characteristics of the data. The themes identified in the essays will be reported in Chapter 4.

As a final step to analyze the student essays, explanation of quantitative overview and qualitative exploration of patterns were contextualized with John's response in his interview. Such contextualization is reflected in the discussion of results.

Phase 2: Interview and Analysis of Teacher Perspectives

The interview

As an essential part of the teacher perspective data, the interview was designed for two main purposes: first, with regard to Research Question 1, the interview set out to enable contextualized interpretation of the findings engagement patterns in the student essays; second, it aimed to address Research Question 2 and 3, namely to elicit John's opinions on students' engagement choice and patterns, as well as John's way to explain these choices and patterns using his language. The 100-minute semi-structured interview covered three main themes: 1) discussion on selected essays, 2) general discussion on argumentative writing and engagement-related notions 3) request for basic information. In the first part of the interview, I shared my preliminary analysis of the essays with John for his comments on selected texts and instances that demonstrated interesting engagement patterns. In the second part, I extended the discussion of specific texts and instances towards a more general discussion related to engagement and argumentative writing. I asked John to comment on different engagement categories in

consideration of the pedagogical context, for example, whether he had observed certain patterns in his students' work, or whether he had analyzed writing with students in a similar way. Lastly, in the third part, I requested basic information of the pedagogical context, such as course and assignment purposes, marking criteria and procedures, and the teacher's training background. An outline of the interview is provided as Appendix D. More details of the interview design (e.g., selection of essays) will be explained before the interview findings are presented in Chapter 4. In addition to questions planned in the protocol, I asked follow-up questions for further explanations and elaboration when necessary, sometimes using the language-related terms brought up by John. In sum, it was believed that a semi-structured interview design exploring the teacher's perspective to engagement, from specific text instances to general, contextualized conceptions, would elicit useful answers for the research questions.

Generally throughout the interview, I did not use the exact same terms in engagement, considering that many of them have distinct meanings within the SFL literature, and might be interpreted differently by the interviewee. Instead, I developed my own translation of the engagement notions with longer expressions, explanations and specific examples highlighted in or extracted from the student essays. I believed that in this way, the linguistic focus in this study could be introduced quickly and clearly to the interviewee.

The entire interview was audiotaped and transcribed. The transcription process allowed me to gain an overall sense of John's answers before analyzing them.

Analysis of teacher interview

The analysis of John's interview response also involved the qualitative method of "organizing systems" (Tesch, 1990, p. 141) drawing on extraction, categorization, and organization of data pointing to the relevant research questions (RQ). The research questions can

be summarized as 1) John's valued and problematized choices and patterns of engagement (RQ2). 2) John's description and explanation of engagement using equivalent terms (RQ3).

I first read through the interview transcript and divided it into two major categories: comments that are "relevant" or "irrelevant" to the research questions. Then, the relevant content was further categorized according to its relevance to engagement (e.g., comments interpretable under different engagement categories, patterns, positive, negative evaluation and comments, explanations of patterns and choices etc.), and argumentative writing in general. This categorization process was undertaken until a "saturation point" was reached, where the categorization is sufficient to explain the data for the research questions. As a last step for verification, all content categorized as "other" or "irrelevant" were re-examined.

Treatment of written comments as teacher perspectives

As mentioned, short comments were given to each essay by John on the marking sheets, both beside the scores and in a comment section. Given the small size of this data set, it did not seem necessary to report a detailed analytical procedure separately. Rather I saw these comments as essentially the same type of data with the interview transcript, at least for the purpose of this study. Therefore in reality I added them to the analysis of teacher interview and will report the findings briefly in the next chapter.

Summary of Chapter

In this chapter, I have presented the multiphase mixed-methods design of the current study. A key purpose served by this design is to bring together the linguistic perspective demonstrated in the engagement analysis, and the teacher perspective shown in John's interview response and short written comments. In analyzing student essays, the current design draws on multiple tools available in the literature, including quantitatively-oriented coding and qualitative

analysis with three foci. The underlying motivation to orchestrate these approaches in the same study is to achieve a deeper understanding of the complex and slippery notion of stance, and how we may analyze it for pedagogical purposes. Arguably the trade-off for depth is a relatively small scale of research that does not allow statistical tests with the data. However, I argue that a richer description and explanation of the diverse intersubjective stance patterns would be a more reasonable choice than solely relying on a quantitative overview of the 9 engagement options, given the pedagogical purpose to make stance explicit to students. As for the teacher perspective, the second phase of the study adopts an exploratory strategy with data collection informed by the first phase (engagement analysis), and a qualitative analysis that sets out to interpret the teacher's opinions in linguistic terms.

The above description of the research design has tried to maintain as much transparency as possible. Especially the discussion of linguistic coding criteria is intended to open discussion on the challenges of defining the unit of meaning for writing research. Eventually to say that meanings are countable may only be a practical decision for research purpose. The nature of engagement coding is to capture and make sense of (from a pedagogical point of view) all the instances that contribute to the coherent whole of stance, at a defined level of delicacy of meaning. Finally, since analysis of meanings is inherently interpretive, I attempted to adopt a few strategies to validate such interpretation. This includes adopting the engagement framework itself which enables theorized analysis of intersubjective positioning, drawing on a brief review procedure, computer-assisted searching, as well as coding the data twice to increase intra-rater reliability.

Chapter 4: Presentation and Discussion of Results

Overview

This chapter will be divided into two main parts. In the first part I mainly address Research Question 1 by profiling the engagement resources in the students' essays. I begin with a quantitative overview, then qualitative analysis of the patterns demonstrated by the coding. In the second part, I will address Research Questions 2 and 3 drawing on John's interview response and written comments. The teacher's opinions related to engagement are presented in themes. John's perspectives will also be brought back to the engagement analysis in Chapter 5 to contextualize the text findings for Research Question 1. When reporting text findings, English pseudonyms are given for each essay's writer to facilitate description of their writing strategy.

Quantitative Overview of Engagement Resources

As explained in Chapter 3, the quantitative analysis calculated the relative frequencies (per 200 words) and percentage of each engagement category in the essays.[2] The relative frequency scores enable comparison of engagement frequency among essays of different lengths. The percentage scores indicate the proportion of each engagement option in all identified engagement options within and across essays. These engagement scores reflect the degree to which alternative viewpoints and positions are explicitly attended (i.e., monogloss versus heterogloss) and the degree to which the writer relies on certain categories to engage with dialogic alternatives.

As a general introduction to the data, it is found that in all 14 essays, 72% of the identified engagement instances belong to heteroglossic categories, suggesting that dialogic

[2] For a quick reference on the engagement categories, see Appendix A.

engagement is rather common in these argumentative essays. In other words, most views are not monoglossically asserted but put forward with consideration of alternative opinions held by the reader or other knowers.

Within heterogloss, there are slightly more dialogically expansive resources (7.13 times per 200 words, 37%) than contractive ones (5.64 times per 200 words, 35%). Among the 9 engagement categories, it can be clearly seen that monogloss and entertain are the most often used options, with relative frequencies of 4.77 (28%) and 5.78 (31%). Among other resources, the two disclaim options, counter and deny, are found more frequently. Proclaim options, including concur, pronounce, and endorse, are relatively infrequent. Lastly, it is also noted that the option of attribute: distance is rather rare, with only 4 instances all found in Essay 10. Table 4.1 summarizes the relative frequencies and percentage of engagement resources in all the 14 essays in the quantitative analysis.

Table 4.1: Relative Frequencies and Percentage of Engagement Resources in the Essays

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="8">Monoglossic

4.77
28%</td><td colspan="8">Heteroglossic

12.77
72%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Dialogically contractive

5.64
35%</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="3">Dialogically expansive

7.13
37%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Disclaim

4.14
26%</td><td colspan="3">Proclaim

1.50
9%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Deny

1.61
10%</td><td>Counter

2.54
15%</td><td>Concur

0.53
4%</td><td>Pronounce

0.64
4%</td><td>Endorse

0.34
1%</td><td>Entertain

5.78
31%</td><td>Acknowledge

1.27
6%</td><td>Distance

0.08
1%</td></tr>
</table>

Note: relative frequencies per 200 words are shown.

A further examination of the engagement proportions in each individual essay shows notable diversity across the corpus. Focusing on the basic distinction of monogloss versus heterogloss, it is first noted that the percentage of monoglossic bare assertions range widely from the lowest 9 % (E9) to the highest 45% (E12). This suggests that some students adopt a highly assertive style of argument, depending heavily on factual description or categorical statements, while some essays seem to limit such assertiveness and draw on more heteroglossic resources. E2 and E12 have the largest proportion of monoglossic bare assertions (42% and 45% respectively). On the other extreme, E3, E9, E10, E13 have no more than 20% of monogloss.

Another observation of the individual essays is that some of them use more engagement categories than others. As reviewed in Chapter 2, the use of diverse engagement resources is associated with successful academic stance. To present the different degrees of diversity of engagement resources (i.e., number of engagement options used), I divided the essays into 4 categories as shown in Figure 4.1. E6, E7, E9 and E10 show highly diverse engagement resources, with 8 or all 9 categories used. Essays with 5 categories or less are considered as less diverse in engagement resources. In this last type of lower engagement diversity essays, E2 and E12 are further grouped as the two monogloss-dependent ones.

Relating the above observations on monogloss-heterogloss ratio and on engagement diversity, it can be seen that E3, E9, E10, E13, which have very high proportion of heterogloss, all have 6 or more types of engagement resources. Particularly E10 is the only essay in the corpus that uses all 9 categories in the theoretical framework. In contrast, the highly monoglossic "assertive" E12 and E2 use only 5 and 4 kinds of engagement resources respectively. This indicates that assertive writers in this corpus rely on fewer engagement categories while the opposite is true to the least assertive writers.

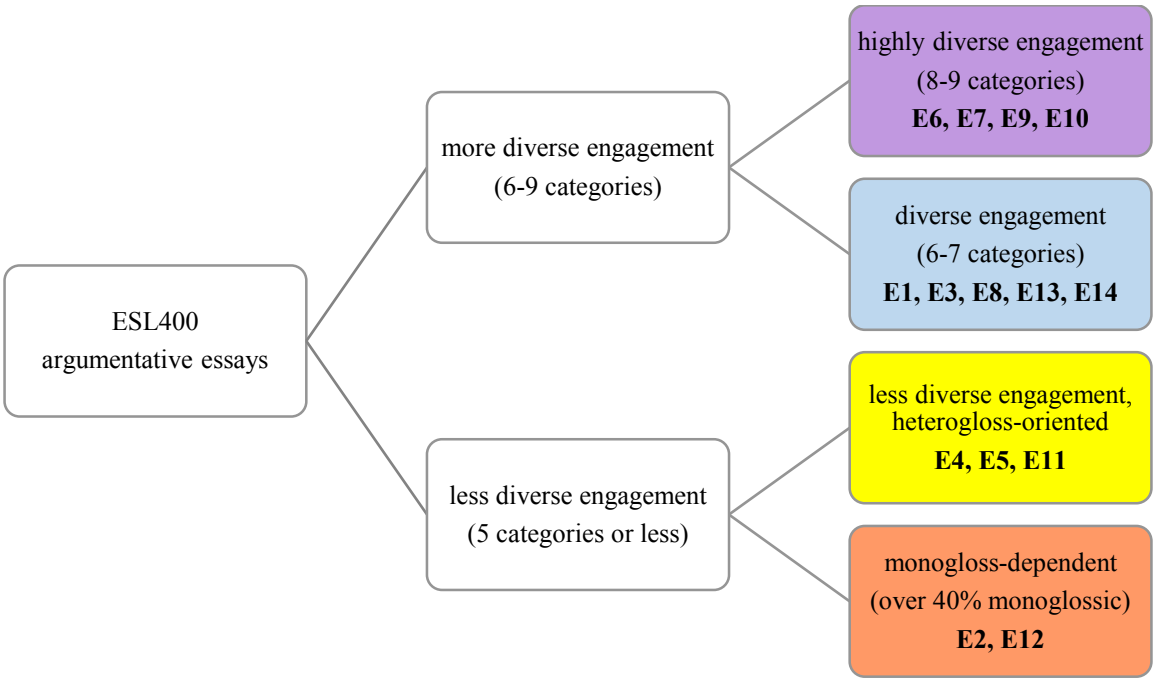


Figure 4.1: Categories of the Essays by Degree of Engagement Diversity

Since not all of the 9 engagement options are used in every individual essay, it is also worth further looking at what categories are absent in some essays. The absence of attribute: distance in all essays except E10 is certainly the most salient result. Besides distance, the three types of proclaim resources, including concur, pronounce, and endorse, are the most frequently absent. Eight essays have no proclaim: endorse meanings, and this number is respectively 7 and 4 for proclaim: concur and proclaim: pronounce. This suggests that many students in ESL400 seldom encode explicit alignment with the view they put forward, in order to emphasize or clarify their position. Rather, what is found statistically more in the data is the "reject[ion]" or "overruling" of alternative positions (Martin & White, 2005, p. 121) with disclaim resources (i.e., deny and counter). As seen from Table 4.1 earlier in this section, one fourth of the identified engagement instances belong to disclaim. All essays use deny and only 2 essays have no counter. Disclaim resources, especially counter resources are important for effective intersubjective

stance in the essays, and will be discussed in more detail in the qualitative results.

The quantitative overview has demonstrated both general tendencies and diversity in the corpus. The most important findings lie in the diversity of engagement. Particularly, the current data show the two sides of the dichotomy discussed in the literature: the more monogloss-oriented, assertive style of intersubjective stance versus the more heteroglossically diverse, dialogically engaged one. As summarized in Chapter 2, the latter type of stance with more consideration of different parties in the debate seems more valued in the academic context. Since these essays are written in the ESL context for the purpose of preparing novice academic writers for the university, it is interesting to investigate the ESL teacher's perspective on the two styles of intersubjective stance, particularly the stance he values and encourages in this course. This is, of course, another key phase of the study which will be presented later in this chapter.

Qualitative Findings on Engagement Patterns

The section on the qualitative findings further presents the detailed engagement patterns behind the descriptive statistics. The focus will turn to how individual engagement categories are used in the corpus and what seems to contribute to an effective stance. At the end of the section, I will summarize the findings to address my three foci stated in Chapter 3 (i.e., sequential patterns and location, lexico-grammatical realization, and further sub-types of engagement meaning).

The assertiveness of monoglossic bare assertions

Monoglossic statements present propositions as factual, absolute, and unarguable. When the writer relies heavily on these bare assertions, the result is an assertive intersubjective stance. In the corpus, monoglossic instances are mostly used to either present "facts" about drug use or the drug market, or to assert the writers' judgements or opinions on drug issues. This observation can be matched with Lee's (2006, p. 169) further subcategories of monogloss which include

"facts" and "asserts".

"Facts" are the most frequently used monoglossic statements in the corpus. Many "fact" instances are found in the argument stages, as evidences in support of the writers' arguments. They are also found in the identification stage in some essays to introduce background information on the topic. "Facts" involve the least explicit attitudes among the three categories in Lee's study (2006). The below excerpts are examples of "facts" from both groups.

- *In general, when people use marijuana, they smoke its leaves; (Robin, E7)*
- *For example, Netherland permits use of marijuana in a coffee shop (Alex, E6)*

"Asserts" are more explicitly charged with the writer's opinions, but they are still monoglossic statements and not open to negotiation. For example:

- *The negative economic effects are following: the rise of health care costs, petty crime and the lost of worker's productivity. (Ashley, E3)*
- *Drug prohibition leads to a stricter and dangerous black-market, (Charli, E2)*

An additional type of monoglossic statements is *presupposition*. As introduced in Chapter 2 with Lee's study (2006), this sub-category refers to monoglossic instances carrying value positions that are in some way taken for granted by the reader, based on contextual or intertextual clues. While presuppositions are found more frequently in high-graded essays in Lee's study, they are generally rare in the current corpus. Below are two examples from E2 and E5.

- *One chose by oneself. (Charli, E2)*
- *In the end, the legalization of drug is a controversial issue that has been fought for and against for several decades, (Dominique, E5)*

The quantitative overview has shown two highly monoglossic essays (E12 by Morgan and E2 by Charli). Figure 4.2 is the argument stage of Morgan's E12, with monoglossic instances underlined and entertain resources bolded. In almost half the excerpt, Morgan uses the simple present tense to depict the situations of the drug market (e.g., unregulated, involving criminal organizations) as facts, leaving no dialogic space for alternative perspectives on the situations. There are also instances where Morgan monoglossically asserts the positive effects of drug legalization (e.g., *This context change eliminates directly the crime market place for drugs.*) instead of making predictions or assumptions using modals. In a similar way, E2 combines factual description and assertions of opinions to challenge the prohibition of drugs (Figure 4.3). It also involves non-sourced statistical information as "fact". The prosody accumulated by multiple monoglossic instances as "facts" and "asserts" realizes a highly assertive style of argument. Dialogic engagement is rather limited.

In summary, the use of monogloss is characterized by a commonality across the data. Patterns combining monoglossic "facts" and "asserts" are found in all essays and at different stages. In comparison, monoglossic presuppositions are not common. The excerpts from E2 and E12 have demonstrated the assertiveness realized by heavy use of monogloss. Such assertiveness will be discussed in Chapter 5 after the presentation of teacher comments.

Drugs are today an unregulated market. This market is led by the demand and prices are very expensive. In order to buy their daily dose, many drug users commits crimes or steals in order to get the money to buy this precious gift. By legalizing drugs and creating a regulated market, the price for drugs **will** decrease. A lower price **will** make it more affordable to users and could reduce drastically the crime in general.

If there is tomorrow a regulated market place, it means that the production distribution and use **will** be controlled. This context change eliminates directly the crime market place for drugs. In the current situation, major criminal organizations are involved in the illegal drugs market because it generates millions of dollars for them.

In addition, by moving towards the legalization of this market, benefits to end-users **could** increase greatly by providing them more transparency, warranty and information on those products. Today, drug users take huge risks in buying undefined products without clear information on their composition and have to rely on their ability to find a "trustable" dealer. By regulating this market, policy maker enforce, for example, drug producers to label their product.

Figure 4.2: Monoglossic Statements in the Argument Stage of Essay 12 (Morgan)

Drug prohibition leads to a stricter and dangerous black-market, and costs taxpayers a billion of dollars every year. [FACT] Prohibition makes drugs valuable and criminals get a monopoly over the supplies. [ASSERT] The business is driven by huge profits and criminal gangs bribe and kill each other, [FACT] it is a black business beyond control. [ASSERT] All the savings on drug-related law enforcement could give medical help and information to the drug users and provide addiction and overdose deaths. Prohibition is waste of time, [ASSERT] the amount of drug users have increased drastic in the past years. [FACT] ln 1970 15 % of young people had used an illegal drug, in l995 the figures were 45%. [FACT] Prohibition does not work.

Figure 4.3: the Combination of "Facts" and "Asserts" in Essay 2 (Charli)

Entertaining alternative positions

The entertain category presents the author's view as one among many other possibilities. As all student writers chose to construct their arguments by discussing the potential results of drug legalization, negotiation of possibilities is widely found in the data. Modals of probability (sometimes together with conditionals) is the most typical type of entertain resources. Whether high- or low-probability modals are used, such instances present the writer's prediction or judgement as one possibility among others.

- ***If*** *there is tomorrow a regulated market place, it means that the production distribution and use* ***will*** *be controlled. (Morgan, E12)*
- *Further, side effects of using marijuana* ***could*** *be less harmful than other ones. (Alex, E6)*

Parallel to the "truth probability" type of entertain is that of obligation. Namely, some students express their opinion on drug legalization with proposals. Negotiating how necessary an action is implies the possibility of alternative actions (e.g., not doing it). This type of *entertainment* mostly involves modals of obligation, but also includes other grammatical forms such as the adjective "necessary".

- *That percentage of prisoners* ***should*** *be free to work and produce benefits to a society as a person who enjoys drink beer or smokes cigarette at night. (Alex, E6)*
- *Since its effectiveness has been revealed steadily, taking advantage of it is* ***necessary.*** *(Joey, E13)*

An observed pattern of effective use of modals is the strategic choice of high- and low-probability according to the positions involved. When supporting their own positions with the

potential consequences of drug legalization, modals of high probability, such as the modal verb "will", help construe a confident authorial persona. In contrast, when presenting alternative possibilities, modals of lower probability such as "could" or "would" help limit the writer's commitment. Figure 4.2 (above) from E12 shows such strategic choice of modal verbs.

Entertain resources are not limited to modals. Another important formulation of entertain is what Lancaster (2012, p. 92) calls "personaliz[ation]". By presenting a view as "just my own" with mental verb projection (e.g., *I think*) or adverbials (e.g., *in my view*), alternative positions held by others are acknowledged. Such personalizing entertain resources are often found in the thesis and reiteration stages. Below are examples from the thesis stages of E9 and E6. The students use similar adverbials to personalize their positions.

- ***As far as I am concerned,*** *drug legalization* ***would*** *be a terrible mistake because it* ***would*** *arouse more crimes and more deaths. (Taylor, E9)*
- ***In my opinion,*** *marijuana is less dangerous than other drugs including alcohol and tobacco. Therefore, marijuana* ***should*** *be legalized. (Alex, E6)*

Other types of entertain include "appearance-based evidentials" (Lancaster, 2012, p. 277) (e.g., *It looks like a failure.*) and rhetorical "expository" questions (Martin & White, 2005, p. 105). These types are less frequent than the modalizing and personalizing entertain in the corpus.

A number of expository questions are found in the identification/thesis stages of E2 and E6. In such context, the questions present viewpoints as unsettled, debatable, and to raise the reader's interest or attention to the arguments that follow. A possible trade-off in such strategy may be that the author's position is not clarified at the beginning stage of the essay. This indeed seems the case from the instructor-grader's perspective, as John suggested writing declarative thesis statements instead.

- *Does more lives become destroyed now than if it had been legalized? (Charli, E2)*
- *All drugs have the same result and addiction? (Alex, E6)*

In sum, students in ESL400 seem to mainly draw on modalizing and personalizing types of entertain to open space for alternative possibilities and opinions.

Challenging alternative positions: the options of deny and counter

Disclaim resources engage with alternative views by rejecting them (deny) or replacing them with another one (counter). They are key resources to narrow down dialogic space and to dis-align with or challenge alternative views.

The engagement option of deny is mostly realized by the grammar of negation in the data (e.g., *not*, *no one*, *never*), with only two instances realized morphologically (e.g., by the negating prefix "un-", as in *it remains unproved that …*) and one by the verb "fail" (as in *I failed to find the logical explanation of ...*).

Deny in the current data can be further categorized as either direct or indirect rejection of alternative views. Most deny instances in the essays belong to the former type, where the writers simply negate propositions (e.g., *Prohibition does not work;* or *the drug use is not a problem*.). In contrast, the small number of indirect deny instance shows more subtle treatment of alternative views. In the below examples, viewpoints of the alternative positions are not directly negated, but evaluated as "unproved" or "not taking into account of the lessons."

- *Even, if we talk about marijuana only, it remains **unproved** that it is harmless. (Ashley, E3)*
- *Those statements are **not** taking into account the lessons learned from the legalization of other dangerous product such as cigarettes, alcohol, etc. (Taylor,*

E12)

Similarly in the concluding paragraph of E13, Joey uses such indirect deny to dis-align with extreme viewpoints using the phrases "I am not suggesting" and "it does not mean". With the counter move that follows with some clarification, the writer's position is more subtly presented.

- *I am **not** suggesting legalizing all street drugs but marijuana should be resurfaced.*
- *It does **not** mean we need radical change but now is the time to move forward with continual observation of the results. (Joey, E13)*

The other disclaim category, counter, is another key resource for challenging alternative positions in that they present a statement as in contradiction with the reader's expectation. Lexico-grammatically counter meanings are realized by the typical contrastive conjunctions such as "but", "although", some "comment adjuncts/adverbials" (e.g., *ironically*), and counter-expectational adjuncts (e.g., *just*, *only*, *still*) (Martin & White, 2005, p. 121). The current data show all these lexico-grammatical forms of counter.

The various counter instances can be categorized into two types. The first type counters reader expectations that are invoked in pre-text. Together with the pre-text these counter moves form contrastive rhetorical pairs. In Lancaster's (2012, p. 229) study such contrastive pairs were considered as an element to show novice academic writers' "dialogic control". Effective use of these patterns realizes a contrastive stance which is seen as an important feature of successful academic texts (e.g., Lancaster, 2012; Pascual & Unger, 2010; Wu, 2007). Like Lancaster's study, the current study has identified several contrastive pairs, including "entertain-counter", "assert (monogloss)-counter", "acknowledge-counter", "distance-counter", "deny-counter", and

"concur-counter".

An "entertain-counter" pair invites the reader to expect a view to be possibly valid or arguable, then replaces it with the author's own opinion.

- ***[ENTERTAIN]*** *Drug legalization* ***may*** *boost the economy*

  [DISCLAIM: COUNTER] but *the government will have to heal drug addicts …*

  (Taylor, E9)

An "acknowledge-counter" pair brings views from an external voice, and challenges it with another proposition. Particularly, the current data show a small number of more complex use of such sequence, namely the contrast between different external views. As exemplified below, Joey (E13) counters "many people['s]" view by attributing the view of "health authority". Dialogic space is first expanded for an attributed opinion by the non-authoritative "many people", then narrowed to align the reader to with the authoritative position. Such engagement sequence with multiple external views can be related to what Wu (2007, p. 263) calls "contrastive data" which is found to be a feature of high-graded academic texts.

- ***[ATTRIBUTE: ACKNOWLEDGE] Many people argue that*** *even it is effective in medical use it is too risky to legalize because it can lead to strong drugs.*
- ***[DISCLAIM: COUNTER] However,*** *after Nederland partially legalized marijuana, usage rate of it has decreased 5%* ***[ATTRIBUTE: ACKNOWLEDGE] according to the health authority in 2003.*** *(Joey, E13)*

The "distance-counter" pairs, which are only found in E10, make a step further than "acknowledge-counter" to encode explicit avoidance of alignment with the attributed view. The contrast is somehow strengthened as the writer's distance from the attributed view is clarified. In

the following example, Hayden (E10) uses the phrase "be supposed to" to attribute an unspecified source of opinion and distance from it. Then it challenges the attributed views with a counter-argument.

- ***[ATTRIBUTE: DISTANCE]*** *Once the legalized drug is on market, its price* ***is supposed to*** *go down,*
- ***[DISCLAIM: COUNTER]+ [DISCLAIM: DENY] but*** *there is no specific calculated value that could show the percentage of decrease. (Hayden, E10)*

"Entertain-counter", "acknowledge-counter", and "distance-counter" pairs all begin by introducing alternative views or positions. But these alternative positions are not initially aligned with or dis-aligned from. A fourth type of contrastive pair, concur-counter, aligns with alternative views first (e.g., *Yes. I agree that …*) before countering them (e.g., *but…*). In such a rhetorical pair, the writer construes a reader holding some natural assumption or opposing position, strategically establishing solidarity with the reader, only to guide them later towards the author's argued position (Martin & White, 2005). Below is a complex "concur-counter" pair that also contains modalization of alternative positions (entertain) and pronouncement of the author's own position, resulting in a rather multivoiced contrastive stance.

- ***[PROCLAIM: CONCUR] Everyone agrees that*** *the main benefit of drug legalization is economical.*

  [PROCLAIM: CONCUR]+*[ENTERTAIN]* ***In fact,*** *if drug is legalized it* ***will*** *exert a heavy boost to the economy by offering a lot of jobs. [ENTERTAIN] Also, releasing prisoners* ***will*** *allow them to work and contribute to the economic activity.*

[DISCLAIM: COUNTER]*+[PROCLAIM: PRONOUNCE]* ***But I strongly see*** *this economic boost as bad. (Taylor, E9)*

The "deny-counter" pairs reject (i.e., dis-align from) a proposition and replace it with another. The alternative positions are given very little space for negotiation.

- *The drug use is* ***not [DISCLAIM: DENY]*** *a problem,* ***rather [DISCLAIM: COUNTER]*** *prisoning people is a serious problem as shown above. (Terry, E8)*

Finally, there is also the contrastive pattern of "monoglossic-counter" in the data. In the below excerpt, the monoglossic propositions are "factual" description of situations. The contrast between the high expense of drug prohibition and the unsatisfactory results is intensified by *attitude* (e.g., *destroyed*) and *graduation* (e.g., *thousand, billions*) resources.

- ***[MONOGLOSSIC: FACT]*** *A third of the American prisoners are held on drug-related business, thousands of families destroyed and drug abusers fall in the hands of criminal justice system instead of help from medical professionals. The drug use and gang murders increases,* ***[DISCLAIM: COUNTER]*** *but still taxpayers pay billions of dollars to prohibition, ... (Charli, E2)*

While strategic deployment of the above presented rhetorical pairs represents a key feature of contrastive stance, there are also instances in the corpus where such contrast is not as effectively achieved. Figure 4.4 extracted from the identification stage of E13 presents a possibly unnecessary "double counter" pattern, switching alignment back and forth from the two sides of the debate on drug legalization. The first counter move contracts dialogic space with the conjunction "but" and seems to present some alignment with the attributed pro-legalization

position. But immediately another counter move draws the reader away from the "for" position before listing the two sides of the argument again. Such "double switch" of alignment might be unnecessary and even confusing for a paragraph devoted to the identification of the topic.

Attributing "against" position	**Attributing "for" position**
When people were asked whether marijuana should be legalized, most of them would say no few years ago	
	[DISCLAIM: COUNTER] **but** things are changing these days.
[DISCLAIM: COUNTER] **However,** some people still express their concerns over regulations related to weed are loosening because of its addiction and possibility of "gate way" drug.	
	Others, on the other hand, assert its effectiveness has been underestimated.

Figure 4.4: the "Double Countering" Pattern in E13

Also, a counter move might be problematic when it does not seem to be in conflict with its precedent proposition, as shown in the below example.

- *Drugs have a major influence force in our country today.*

  ***[DISCLAIM: COUNTER] However,** some people think drug should be legalized, other don't. (Dominique, E5)*

So far we have explored the more or less effective counter resources that are part of

contrastive rhetorical pairs. These counter moves interact with alternative positions or reader expectations in different ways. As summarized in Figure 4.5, alternative positions or reader expectations may be overtly aligned (as in "concur-counter") or dis-aligned (as in "deny-counter") before they are challenged and replaced by an alternative proposition, or such (dis-)alignment can be can be implicit, depending on the context, and left for the reader to interpret. Strategic choice of these types of contrastive pairs helps the writer adjust the "weight" given to alternative positions and realize a fine-tuned stance.

Type of contrastive pair	**Alignment with alternative position/ reader expectation**
concur-counter	explicit tentative alignment
entertain-counter	no explicit alignment
acknowledge-counter	no explicit alignment
monoglossic-counter	no explicit alignment
distance-counter	explicit avoidance of alignment
deny-counter	explicit dis-alignment

Figure 4.5: Types of Contrastive Moves in the Essays

As shown in the above rhetorical pairs, adjustment of reader expectation can occur in sequences of two or more propositions. To introduce the second type of disclaim: counter meanings, reader expectation can also be adjusted or countered within the proposition with counter-expectational adjuncts such as "only", "even", "in fact", or "just". In the example below, the listed negative results of drug consumption is commented by Ashley as "just a few", countering the potential expectation of opponents that the negative results are limited in number.

- *Family abuse, inability to work and generate steady income, leading to serious*

*crime are **just** a few negative factors to be taken into account. (Ashley, E3)*

Disclaim: counter resources of this type demonstrate the writer's awareness of potential challenging voices as s/he develops her/his own argument, contributing to the dialogic diversity in the text.

Emphasizing a position: pronouncement in the essays

The proclaim: pronounce option is used to emphasize the truth value of or the writer's insistence on a proposition. To emphasize or insist that something is true implies the existence of alternative views. Therefore pronounce is heteroglossic and dialogically contractive (Martin & White, 2005). In terms of lexico-grammatical realization, Martin and White (2005) have elaborated two "axes of variation" for pronounce: the variation from explicit to implicit, and the variation from subjective to objective. Adopting this typology, the types of pronouncement in the essays can be demonstrated as Figure 4.6.

Most pronounce instances are *subjective explicit* in the corpus. This means that the propositions are "explicitly grounded in the speaker/writer's subjectivity" using personal pronouns, and that emphasis is realized by matrix clauses (e.g., *I strongly believe that ...*) (Martin & White, 2005, p. 130). E1, E9, and E10 show a small number of "objective" authorial emphases with adjuncts such as "actually" or "in fact", or the matrix clause "it's a fact that", setting the writer her/himself as against the background of alternative positions without overtly involving her/his subjectivity. Therefore some of these formulations also encode the engagement meaning of counter at the same time.

	Subjective	**Objective**
Explicit (emphasis via a matrix/top level clause)	- However, **I strongly believe that** marijuana should be legalized …(E3) - **For me the answer is clear,** there is a huge business behind the drug traffic … (E6)	- **The fact is that** drugs are more damageable for health than alcohol or cigarettes. (E9) - At last, **it's** the physical and mental health of people **that** are at stake (E10).
Implicit (emphasis via a sub-clausal element)	None identified (Example: Drug legalization **IS** a mistake.)	- **In fact,** if drug were legalized, drug consumption would increase. (E9)

Figure 4.6: Types of Pronouncement in the Essays

E4 also shows an arguably "objective" instance of pronouncement (as seen below) where the author's "subjective role" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 130) is in some way "hidden" with an interpersonal metaphor (*it is important to remind you that …*). But the reader pronoun "you" construes some direct confrontation between the author's position and the reader's. The authorial presence is more salient than the "in fact" examples of E9. As a result, the author's subjective role in such intersubjective positioning may still be interpreted as salient.

- ***It is important to remind you that*** *[name of country] is one of the richest countries in the world, … (Chris, E4)*

"Subjective" realization of pronouncement mainly involves mental, verbal, or relational processes in the essays. As shown in Figure 4.7 below, some process verbs encode attitudinal positioning in themselves (i.e., *support*, *advocate*), while other pronouncement instances encode

positioning in phrases (e.g., *really want to say*, *strongly see … as bad*) rather than in a single process verb. In the former case, attitudinal meanings are compressed in shorter texts, which contributes to conciseness.

Position-encoding processes	support, advocate
Other processes	remind (you), (really want to) say, (strongly) see (as bad), be (against), (strongly) believe

Figure 4.7: Process Verbs Realizing Pronouncement

A further finding on the strategic use of pronouncement is that some essays (E3, E7, E9, and E10) used the option to present or reiterate the writer's main positions either in the thesis or reiteration stage, or as topic sentences in the argument stage. The strategic emphasis of overall positions in these locations can "radiate" (Hood, 2006) through the whole text and connect to specific sub-arguments, realizing more cohesive arguments. In contrast, when pronouncement is used with specific ideas rather than general positions. The radiation effect may be limited. As exemplified below, the ending sentence of E4 pronounces a specific proposal on government action. The writer's emphasis might not extend beyond this specific point to connect with other independent arguments.

- *Finally, **I really want to say** [country name]'s government has to have the courage to promote a bold reform looking to get public opinion support. (Chris, E4)*

Introducing external opinions: acknowledge, distance, and endorse resources in the corpus

In many forms of academic writing, sourcing external opinions is a rather common practice. While the current argumentative essay assignment does not require citation, 12 out of the total 14 essays have at least one instance involving external opinions through attribute:

acknowledge, attribute: distance, or proclaim: endorse resources.

The attribute: acknowledge category refers to sourcing of external opinions without encoding explicit attitudes towards them within the proposition. Certainly, these neutrally introduced views may be supported or challenged at a later point (Martin & White, 2005). In the corpus, a typical location where external views are acknowledged is the identification/thesis stage. For example, Claude (E1) chooses to list the two sides of the argument on drug legalization by attributing views from two "parts of the society".

- ***[ATTRIBUTE: ACKNOWLEDGE] a part of the society,*** *strongly supported by the church,* ***rejects*** *even the possible idea of any kind of legalization of marijuana in the near future;*
- ***[ATTRIBUTE: ACKNOWLEDGE] another part vigorously advocates and backs*** *up this objective.*

In the below example from the identification stage of E6, Alex draws on a survey to identify drug consumption as a common and noteworthy issue. The attributed propositions set out to provide a background for discussion do not involve a position towards drug legalization at that point.

- ***According to National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2010)*** *in the US 22 millions of citizens recognize to be a consumer. Moreover, 2 million people are arrested for using or selling drugs. (Alex, E6)*

The distance category is similar to acknowledge, except that it involves the writer's explicit avoidance of alignment with the attributed view. It has been introduced in the previous section on counter resources, particularly regarding the "distance-counter" rhetorical pairs which

only exist in E10, and will not be discussed separately here.

In contrast with distance, the endorse category encodes explicit alignment with the attributed view. Such alignment is typically indicated by specific lexical items. In the below example, endorsement-encoding words are underlined.

- ***The recent research <u>demonstrated</u>*** *that the use of marijuana paves the road to the use of hard drugs. (Ashley, E3)*
- ***On the National Cancer Institute (NlH)*** *proposes several* ***<u>well-documented</u>*** *beneficial effects of marijuana like amelioration of nausea, vomit and stimulation of hunger. (Alex, E6)*

The pattern of contrastive views/data, as also presented in the previous section on disclaim: counter, involves the contrastive pairing of two attributed views. E13 shows particularly advanced use of the "acknowledge-counter+endorse*"* pattern of contrastive views, as seen below. Such pattern not only contrasts two attributed views with a counter move, but also encodes explicit alignment on the latter view, strategically emphasizing the writer's position.

- ***[ATTRIBUTE: ACKNOWLEDGE]*** *When there were less studies about marijuana,* ***scientists regulated*** *it was harmful*
- ***[DISCLAIM: COUNTER] but*** *due to advanced technology and continuing research, they* ***found [PROCLAIM: ENDORSE]*** *it is beneficial to reduce pains of cancer and rheumatism. (Joey, E13)*

Lexico-grammatically the three categories for introducing external views are associated with a few lexico-grammatical forms in the corpus, including mental/verbal process verbs (e.g., *reject*, *advocate, think*), which are perhaps the typical type, the adjunct "according to",

nominalized mental or verbal process (e.g., *the main argument ... is ...*), and direct quotes. As for sub-types of these categories, the sources of external views are either specified or unspecified in the essays. In the latter case, passive voice is used in a few instances to further avoid naming these sources. Omitting the textual presence of other knowers contributes to an impersonalized, "objective" stance, which can be related to the quality of "critical distance" in Lancaster's discussion (2012, p. 229). Figure 4.8 summarizes three types of external opinion.

Source of external opinion	**Example**
Specified	*According to National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2010) in the US 22 millions of citizens recognize to be a consumer. (Alex, E6)*
Unspecified but named	*However, some people think drug should be legalized, other don't. (Dominique, E5)*
Unspecified, unnamed	*Marijuana has been considered as an addictive drug. (Joey, E13)*

Figure 4.8: Types of External Views According to Specification and Naming of Sources

Aligning with positions: concur resources

In our previous discussion on contrastive pairs we have already explored the category of concur as tentative alignment with alternative positions. Five of the 23 concur instances are found in "concur-counter" pairs. The rest can be divided into a three types according to their locations. The first type mainly functions to present the proposition as shared knowledge by the reader or the larger discourse community. Such concur instances do not form specific sequences with neighbouring propositions.

- *Finally, **as it is well known**, drug leads to a serious problem of dependence which makes us irresponsible. lt is preciously this irresponsibility government should fight*

against. (Jamie, E14)

The second type of concur follows one or more propositions and indicate the author's agreement with them.

- *[MONOGLOSSIC] The forbidden fruit tastes the sweetest.*
  ***[PROCLAIM: CONCUR] Indeed,** human being's nature has the temptation to try the taste of the things that are either prohibited by law, or harmful for health. (Claude, E1)*

The third type of concur identified involves acknowledgement of alternative possibilities or exceptional cases. This falls in the further sub-category of "*concede*" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 134). The writer's agreement with alternatives is characterized by a certain degree of reluctance. Only one instance as such can be found in the data.

- *For example, the alcohol consumption takes part of the French culture, and the majority of French has a moderated consumption*
  *(**[PROCLAIM: CONCUR] of course** there always are some people who unfortunately don't have any limits). (Jamie, E14)*

Lexico-grammatically, concur meanings in the current data are mainly realized by adjuncts (e.g., *indeed*, *as we know*, *undoubtedly*), a number of matrix clauses (e.g., *everyone agrees that; it is obvious that*), and rhetorical "leading questions" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 98). Rhetorical leading questions assume answers that are evident for the reader. In this way, the reader is aligned to accept the writer's position.

- ***Can you imagine that** people will make money by selling drugs and destroying*

lives? (Taylor, E9)

- *For example, Netherland permits use of marijuana in a coffee shop as a result; they almost do not have prisoners.* ***Is it a coincidence?*** *(Alex, E6)*

The important function of concur resources is to establish solidarity with the reader. As solidarity is built by sharing the same opinions, it is essential for the student writers to concur with views that are at least not in conflict with the potential reader's position. In this regard, despite that some views might be overemphasized as agreed by or obvious to everyone, concur resources are generally used effectively for their purposes.

Summary of qualitative analysis

As explained in Chapter 3, the qualitative analysis had been guided by 3 foci: sequential patterns and location, lexico-grammatical realization, and further sub-types within each engagement category. The analysis has revealed patterns and variations that would not have been discovered with the quantitative overview only. Below I will summarize the findings in relation to the 3 foci.

First, regarding sequential patterns and locations, the concern is with where certain engagement meanings occur and how engagement instances work together in sequences or prosodies. The current analysis has captured the co-patterning of engagement and positions (e.g., high- and low- modals for different positions), co-patterning of engagement and argument stages, as well as the interaction between different engagement options. A major theme in the findings for this focus is the contrastive pairs formed by counter and a few other options. Strategic use of such contrastiveness is considered valued in other engagement analyses in the academic context, and also seem the case in the current analysis.

Second, in terms of lexico-grammatical realization, the current corpus shows rather

diverse forms of engagement. The students in ESL400 were able to engage with dialogic alternatives with the majority of forms introduced in the engagement literature (Lancaster, 2012; Martin & White, 2005; White, 2003), if not all of them. However, some forms occur more frequently than others. For example, the "evidentializ[ing]" type of entertain (Lancaster, 2012, p. 92) (e.g., *It seems that*…) is rare in the corpus. Furthermore, while the diverse forms are found mainly with the guidance of the literature, there is also further grouping emerging from the current analysis: the small set of "position-encoding" mental/verbal process verbs (e.g., *advocate*) realizing pronouncement meanings are discussed in terms of conciseness in comparison with pronounce forms in phrases.

As for further types of engagement meanings, the current corpus has also shown a few sub-types described in the literature, such as "objective" versus "subjective" pronouncement. A further grouping emerging from the current analysis is that of direct versus indirect deny. In the latter type, the denial of counter-arguments/alternative views may be interpreted as more prudent and specific.

Figure 4.9 summarizes the main qualitative findings. Drawing on the engagement literature or my own rationalization, I have associated some patterns with effective intersubjective stance. These patterns are highlighted in bold in the table. Certainly, this does not mean that other (non-bolded) patterns are ineffective. Some of these patterns will be discussed with the teacher's comments in the next section.

Category	**Sequential patterns/location**	**Lexico-grammatical realization**	**Further sub-types**
Monoglossic	- highly assertive argument with consecutive monoglossic instances		- combination of *fact* and *assert* - Infrequent presupposition
Entertain	- **strategic choice of high- and low-modals according to position** - **entertain-counter**	- modals - personalization (e.g., *I think*) - rhetorical expository questions - infrequent evidentialization (e.g., *It looks like …*)	
Deny	- **deny-counter**	- negation (grammatical, morphological) - negation-encoding lexis (fail)	- direct / **indirect** rejection of alternative viewpoints
Counter	- **various contrastive pairs**	- contrastive conjunctions (e.g., *but*) - expectation-adjusting adjuncts (e.g., *even*, *just*) - comment adjuncts (e.g., *ironically*)	- **contrastive pairs** - **expectation-adjusting propositions**

<table>
<tr><th>Category</th><th>Sequential patterns/location</th><th>Lexico-grammatical realization</th><th>Further sub-types</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Pronounce</td><td rowspan="2">- pronouncing main/key arguments / pronouncing sub-arguments</td><td colspan="2">- “objective” versus “subjective” pronounce</td></tr>
<tr><td>- position-encoding mental/verbal process verbs (e.g., advocate)</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Endorse</td><td></td><td rowspan="3">- mental/verbal process verb (e.g., reject)
- adjuncts (e.g., according to …)
- nominalized mental/verbal process (e.g., argument)
- direct quotes</td><td rowspan="3">- specified or unspecified source of opinion
- unnamed and unspecified source of opinion</td></tr>
<tr><td>Acknowledge</td><td>- contrasting multiple external views
- listing different opinions to identify topic in identification/thesis stage</td></tr>
<tr><td>Distance</td><td>- distance-counter</td></tr>
<tr><td>Concur</td><td>- concur-counter
- presenting a position as widely accepted
- aligning with previously presented views
- acknowledging exceptions/alternative possibilities</td><td>- adjuncts (e.g., indeed)
- matrix clauses (e.g., everyone agrees that)
- rhetorical “leading questions”</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Figure 4.9: Summary of key Qualitative Findings

Teacher Perspective on Engagement in ESL Argumentative Writing

From this section on, I turn to my analysis of the teacher John's perspectives. I will first briefly report on John's written comments on the student essays. Then I will focus on findings in the interview. In both parts, the findings will be presented in themes.

The written comments

It should be first noted that more than half of John's in-text feedback is on grammar, vocabulary and punctuation. John would correct the essays directly, or mark the type of grammatical/vocabulary issues (e.g., word form) in-text so that the students could make corrections themselves. It is rather clear that lexico-grammar was a key focus in the context.

For the purposes of this study, the rest of the written feedback can be categorized as comments related to the discourse level. Most these comments are short phrases of less than 5 words. They are found either at the end of the essays, or on the "discursive competence" or "comment" sections in the feedback sheet (see Appendix B). Table 4.2 provides a brief summary of recurrent themes in the comments on the 14 essays. The count column indicates the number of essays with comments on a given theme.

It is probably clear from these themes that John emphasized a clear, direct, coherent, and concise argument style. This idea was also mentioned at multiple points in the interview. It can also be seen that the listed themes are rather interrelated than independent. Even in the comments, for example, John talked about "shorter" and "clearer" together, and "thesis statement" and "clear" together. Among all identified themes, thesis statement seems the most emphasized. Where an essay opens with an identification stage (e.g., E2, E13), John would point out the lack of a clear thesis statement. Positive comments such as "good" or "excellent" were also found where the thesis statements are clearly written (e.g., E6, E12). Other identified themes

include “organization”, “coherence”, and “directness”.

Theme	Count	Examples
Thesis statement	10	- Good thesis statement. - Be sure to have a thesis statement. - Thesis statement, what is your position? - Thesis statement- write declarative sentence.
Clarity	9	- Clarity at sentence level is an issue at times. - Make a clear thesis statement. - Not clear why.
Organization	7	- This needs work on paragraph structure. - Well organized at essay level. - Well arranged.
Conciseness	4	- Focus on shorter, clearer writing. - Be more concise.
Directness	2	- Try to write more directly.
Coherence	2	- Link between sentences. - Coherent

Table 4.2: Summary of Recurrent Themes in John’s Written Comments

While these themes reflect what John looked for in a good argumentative essay, most of them do not seem related to intersubjective positioning or stance. For example, “organization” and “coherence” can be most directly associated with the textual (text-organizing) metafunction of language in SFL. Among all themes, “clarity” and “directness” may be related to interpersonal meanings and specifically engagement. This point will be further discussed later.

Overview of the interview structure

As mentioned in Chapter 3, this study has two phases, including text analysis presented

above and the interview with John. The interview was conducted after the quantitative coding and some preliminary analysis of the essays (including quantitative overview and some preliminary interpretation of engagement patterns). Due to the limited time for the interview, I chose a subset of preliminary findings in 8 essays to discuss with John. Figure 4.10 summarizes the themes discussed in each essay. This interview structure has been designed to cover as many engagement resources as possible in limited time, as well as to enable contrast of the two stance styles emerging from the quantitative analysis.

Essay	**Focused themes/engagement categories**
E12 & E9	- comparison of "assertive" vs "heteroglossically diverse" patterns - introducing engagement categories - specific examples of pronounce, entertain, and deny
E10	- distance
E2	- high proportion/extensive use of monogloss - entertain
E3	- entertain - authorial emphasis (pronounce) and self-mentioning
E13	- extensive use of acknowledge - low proportion/infrequent use of monogloss - extensive use of counter
E6	- entertain as modals of low intensity - acknowledge - concur as rhetorical leading question
E4	- authorial emphasis and self-mentioning

Figure 4.10: Selected Essays and Focused Themes in the Interview

The following sections present John's talk in themes in order to address Research questions 2 and 3.

"Assertive" versus "nuanced" argumentation.

One of the most intriguing findings in the text analysis is the monogloss-dependent, highly assertive pattern found in E2 and E12. Therefore I decided that starting the interview by comparing E12 with a heteroglossically diverse and multivoiced one would be an effective way to clearly and quickly bring in the contrast. I chose E9, a highly heteroglossic, multivoiced piece of text, for this comparison.

As I pointed out the extensive use of "assertive statements" in E12 and dichotomized them with the various heteroglossic instances in both E12 and E9, which I described as "recognizing what others in the argument might say or what they actually say", John soon labelled the opposite side of assertiveness as "nuance", a term which he used at multiple points throughout the interview. In the below, I will explore John's position between "assertiveness" versus "nuance" in argumentative writing, two headings that can be interpreted as closely related to monogloss and heterogloss in engagement.

John's overall position seems to lean towards assertiveness in his response. The following excerpt in Figure 4.11 shows his comment when I first introduced the two "styles" of intersubjective stance. To demonstrate his position more clearly, I put his comment related to "assertiveness" on the left column with key words and phrases in bold, and "nuance" on the right with key words and phrases underlined.

“assertiveness”	**“nuance”**
... I think partially her/his personality is coming out. S/he’s a very assertive person. Secondly, I do encourage, in a persuasive essay, **getting the essentials down.** The first thing to say in a persuasive essay is that they have to persuade.	
	So I emphasize using things like “this might be a good idea”, or “this could be” is not necessarily the best way to persuade. I agree that you can go to the opposite extreme.
But usually for writers becoming familiar with an advanced level of English but still also dealing with the cultural aspects of the writing, **asserting something** is often something that is difficult for them to do. So I often spend a lot of time saying first of all, you can **use the simple present to simply state something as a fact.**	
	And it becomes stronger if you don’t say **“**in my opinion”, or “despite what others might say” So most of the students need that because either they don’t have complete control of the language enough to make the nuances between, for example, “this might be true”, or **“this is true.”**
And they need that **more categorical push** to then later go to, ok, now that you’re clear on how to **state things emphatically** now let’s work in the other possibilities.	

Figure 4.11: John’s Comparison Between “Assertiveness” and “Nuance”

As John’s first response on this theme, the excerpt in the above table clearly shows a more positive evaluation towards the more assertive style of argumentative writing. In contrast, “nuance”, which he exemplified here with what engagement would categorize as entertain (e.g., *this might be true*) and counter (e.g., *despite what others might say*), are seen as less important or even less suitable for the students in the course. This latter point was complicated by John’s other

comments on different heteroglossic categories in engagement. But at multiple instances where we returned to the contrast between the two styles of argumentation, he restated the necessity to encourage students to use assertive language. Through analysis of the interview transcript, two of his key reasons for this view can be summarized. The first reason is students' unfamiliarity with the "cultural aspect" of writing. He further mentioned the notion of "culture" later in the interview (key points are underlined):

> *JOHN: And, if you really want to persuade, you can't say you're fifty-fifty because then the other argument has 50% too. You have to say your position is right. You can recognize facets or parts of the opposing argument, but ultimately to persuade you have to say you're right. Otherwise it's no longer a persuasive essay. It's maybe "compare and contrast", "descriptive". So, they need to get that through. And again, [in] some cultures, the idea of saying "this is true" or "this is how it is" is uncomfortable for them in writing.*

In the above excerpt, John again contrasted assertive statements such as "this is how it is" with "fifty-fifty", giving preference to the former. Similarly, he explained this preference with the cultural difference he had observed in some students, which could hinder their success in argumentation. Therefore John found it necessary to emphasize assertiveness in this pedagogical context in order to accustom students to the culture of directness and assertiveness in argumentative writing in English, a language which he considered as "fairly prosaic direct" nowadays. In another instance, he extended this assumption to a broader sense of "culture" which includes gender:

> *JOHN: And gender might be another issue too. I'm just speculating on that but in some*

cultures where women are considered subordinate, for them to strongly express opinions is not always something that they necessarily feel comfortable or used to.

Besides the "cultural aspects", a second reason why John found assertiveness suitable for the current context involves the nature of the current ESL assignment. When asked to comment on the difference between ESL argumentative writing and more advanced academic writing, John pointed out that "nuance" is more important in advanced academic writing, especially when more textual space is allowed (engagement-related language is bolded and key viewpoints are underlined):

JOHN: I would say if going into an academic situation/context, yeah, generally more ***nuance*** *is important. And in fact that's (nuance) one of the things they're looking at, because you have to* ***go into more detail about the arguments of another position****. ..... When we're dealing with a four- to five-paragraph writing piece, you just don't have the space to do very much. You can* ***mention the other side*** *but ..... just we're still working with this thing of clearly expressing position and belief in English. If you don't express your opinion clearly, it's either a weak essay or it's not a persuasive essay. So you need to be able to say* ***"I think X"*** *or "****X is true****". If they can't do that, then either they're not writing a really persuasive essay because people would read it and say "Okay, so* ***there're two sides to this.*** *So I'm not convinced." It comes across that the person's* ***showed the two sides to this question****, he might think this but I'm not really convinced. So they need to learn the skill of convincing, persuading.*

Therefore, having a relatively shorter text where students needed to work on less

complex but clear arguments is another reason why assertiveness was accepted and even preferred. On the other hand, the notion of "nuance" was mainly associated with bringing other views into text here. It was seen as a strategy that potentially weakens the argument if clarity is not achieved in the first place.

While it had been reaffirmed that being "assertive" was more encouraged in ESL400 for the students' learning needs such as expressing strong opinions and arguing clearly, heteroglossic diversity was not simply disregarded. When discussing on E9, I demonstrated the diverse engagement strategies used by the student writer and asked for John's comment on the resulted multivoicedness in comparison with the assertiveness in E12. His evaluation was positive, as shown below. Relevant terms are in bold and key viewpoints are underlined.

> *JOHN: I guess I would need to preface a bit and this is making a general statement. One of the issues is with language learners particularly in writing is they learn* ***transition devices*** *and then they feel that they need to throw them in. So you sometimes get paragraphs with "however", "moreover", "furthermore", "consequently", "thus", etc. They don't always make sense. This one (E9) is much more* ***controlled*** *I think, and does a fairly good job on that level. This again is more* ***nuanced*** *than the other one (E12), for example, I think it has a better control or* ***sense of nuance.*** *Again, partly that previous essay (E12) might have something to do with the writer's personality. But in general, I guess* ***this strategy of the nuance*** *is relatively well carried out. I think the person understood and linguistically or grammatically [.] it doesn't completely always work, but the sense is there and this is how it's done.*

John described E9 as more "controlled" and "nuanced". He briefly explained the successful nuanced argument with the student writer's good linguistic or grammatical

competence, that is to say, the student fully understood the meanings of the lexico-grammatical resources needed to construct the nuanced stance, which might not have always been the case for other students. In his "preface" above, he gave examples of newly learned transitional devices which he had seen students "throw" in their texts without necessarily making sense. This seems an important reason why John expressed some reservation regarding the more "nuanced" way to argue. In other words, while nuanced persuasion is also valued in this context, it requires good control over the related lexico-grammatical resources, which some students at this level might not yet have. In our later discussions on specific engagement categories, especially on the use of modals as devices for *entertaining* alternative views, John mentioned such observation at multiple points, for example:

> *JOHN: So sometimes they get modals and they toss them in because they think it's a little bit more sophisticated rather than that's the appropriate verb tense. I don't have a solution for that. But I am quite convinced that it is true that they learn some grammatical forms without completely understanding when it's appropriate, when it's not.*

Again this comment points to the students' learning needs at this level, which is more accurate control over lexico-grammatical items needed for their later more complex and "nuanced" stancetaking. Therefore, to sum up John's position between "assertiveness" and "nuance" which I have related to the broad distinction between monogloss and heterogloss in engagement, although nuanced persuasion with different views attended was valued, the argumentative essays in ESL400 (as a controlled exercise with limited textual space) had prioritized students' learning needs in lexico-grammatical control, as well as direct, clear expression of opinions. Therefore, an assertive argument strategy can be appropriate.

Figure 4.12 summarizes the key terms John used around the notions of "assertiveness" and "nuance". Since these terms were extracted from a natural and unprepared exchange, it is understandable that they do not always mean the same things, and certainly not necessarily relevant to or consistent with the engagement framework. For example, the modal verb "would" was at one point said to be "assertive enough", while in engagement, such modal is a typical lexical item for entertaining dialogic alternatives. In such context simply interpreting the word "assertive" in technical terms in engagement would be misleading. The summary of these terms and notions are meant to capture what monogloss and heterogloss (or heteroglossic diversity) might mean for an ESL writing teacher or what he or she might associate the notions with.

It is interesting to see that "assertiveness" and "nuance" were linked with notions that are not considered within engagement. For example, assertiveness was associated with a "clear position", and "nuance" was connected with "creativity" and "depth" in argument. It should also be pointed out that our discussion of "assertiveness" sometimes went beyond the monogloss-dependent way of stancetaking. For example, John's notions of "affirm[ing] your own position", or "show[ing] their opinion is right" can be related to the pronounce category.

Figure 4.12 also summarizes John's interpretation or explanation of some observed ("assertive" or "nuanced") patterns. "Personality" was one that is beyond the scope of engagement. But it was the first explanation given by John in the interview. It is also interesting to point out that lexico-grammatical control was the explanation for more or less successful "nuance".

	“assertiveness”	**“nuance”**
engagement-equivalent notions	- use the simple present to simply state something as a fact - state things emphatically - “This is true.” - “This is how it is.” - categorical black and white” - categorical push	- work in the other possibilities - mention the opposite - go to the opposite extreme - recognize facets or parts of the opposing argument - (opposing view as) straw man (to shoot down) - go into more detail about the arguments of another position - mention the other side - there’re two sides to this - look at both sides in depth - explore others’ opinions more
surrounding notions	- to persuade - state a clear position - strong statement - strongly express opinions - affirm your own position - clearly expressing position and belief - getting the essentials down” - expressing their opinion” - affirm something” - “I think X.” or “X is true.” - show their opinion is right	- creativity and play - go into more depth - more subtle writing form
Interpretation regarding observed patterns	- priority for clarity and lexico-grammar - cultural background and/or gender - personality - limited textual space - (non-academic) communicative context	- good/lack of control over (newly learned) lexico-grammar

Figure 4.12: John’s Terms Equivalent to or Surrounding Monogloss and Heterogloss and His Interpretation/Explanation

"Nuance" as heteroglossic contraction

So far this section has explored John's perspective on the broader distinction between monogloss and heterogloss, which was discussed under the main heading of "assertiveness" and "nuance" in the interview. This distinction was a major theme in our talk. The following will address our discussion on the more specific categories of engagement, starting with categories in heteroglossic contraction. The interview covered four heteroglossically contractive categories: deny, counter, concur, pronounce. Due to the relatively small amount of answers on these categories, they will be presented all within this sub-section. When asked about examples of heteroglossically contractive instances, John's comment was in general supportive, except deny and the subjective type of pronounce with the first person pronoun "I".

Starting with the counter category, I asked John to comment on E13's extensive use of counter. He commented that the use of "although" (in E13) as "a big step forward sometimes" in his comment on "transition devices". He elaborated that while they might have been overused, the use of concessions was "heading towards the direction [they]'d really like them to get to."

As another interesting comment relevant to counter, John suggested that when contrasting two propositions, it is preferred to put the less emphasized proposition in the subordinate clause. He exemplified that there is a "subtle difference" between "although he is lazy, he always succeeds" and "he's lazy but he always succeeds". Such subtle difference may also be articulated from an engagement point of view: the former case is a "concur-counter" pair which encodes concession (concur: concede) in the subordinate clause (*although…*) to signal tentative alignment before countering, realizing more overt contrastiveness of the two positions than the "assert-counter" pair.

For the category of proclaim: concur, I only chose the rhetorical leading question in E6

for the interview. I commented that this type of resources presents a view as shared by the reader. The instance was given a highly positive comment. John also saw rhetorical question as a way to "involve the reader" (see Figure 4.13).

Text	**Comment**
For example, Netherland permits use of marijuana in a coffee shop as a result; they almost do not have prisoners. **Is it a coincidence?** (E6)	Oh, it's definitely a good strategy. It's a **sophisticated strategy** again that not all native speakers will use well. By asking the question you're **inciting the reader to answer** and **assuming the reader would agree with you**, because a rhetorical question, by definition is that the **answer is evident**. So you don't need to actually ask it, but you're doing this to **involve the reader.** The **reader shares a view**. That's a very good strategy.

Figure 4.13: John's Comment on Concur as Rhetorical Leading Question

To set up a discussion on the category of pronounce, a third heteroglossic contractive category explored, I chose three instances from different essays, as well as a whole essay (E9), for John's comments. Following Martin and White (2005, p. 127), I labelled the instances "authorial emphases" when introducing the notion and explained that such resources are used to insist on the truth values of a view. While asked to comment on the effectiveness or appropriateness of the pronounce instance, three of them were problematized for the use of "I". The self-mentioning was seen as "too personal", more suitable for oral forms, "emotional", and even possibly "extreme". E9 as a whole with six pronounce instances was commented more positively (see Figure 4.14). One reason may be that four of the six pronounce instances in E9 are the "in fact" (objective) type of pronounce (Martin & White, 2005, p. 197). John also

interpreted adjuncts like “in fact” as “transitions”, which he suspected possible overuse due to the lack of control of these newly learned forms. Finally, no engagement-equivalent terms are found in John’s answer for the pronounce category. Below is a summary of the four pronounce instances and the comments they received (key points in John’s comments are underlined and engagement-related terms are bolded).

Pronounce instance	**Comment**
In other words, **I do support** a legalization of drugs that could reduce crime in general, suppress the crime market place and provide more transparency and information to the consumers. (E12, “subjective”)	... I would tend to avoid it simply because there’s an “I”. I would generally encourage students to say “while many people still support the criminalization of drug use, it is clear that legalization is the only way forward” or something like that. That is a very strong statement and again I think it’s partially her personality coming through.
Therefore **I’m strongly against** it. (E3, “subjective”)	Personally, I would encourage them not to use this because I tend to remove “I”. Even if they said “in my opinion, the drawbacks considerably outweigh the benefits”, I would probably say something like “it is clear that this policy or legalization would bring very bad results to something”. I would remove the “I” from here. It’s also a bit redundant, they’ve already said the same thing that’s said before. So I would go from, if he wants to keep **the personal** here, I would go to a **general statement** after. So I don’t think it’s a good sentence here.
Finally, **I really want to say** [country name]'s government has to have the courage to promote a bold reform looking to get public opinion support ... (E4, “subjective”)	I would probably not encourage it in writing. I would probably say to that student that this will be better if you were making a speech other than as a written form. Just saying “finally, the XXXXX government has to have the courage would remove that “I” from there. Again, some people could say that “well, you really want to say this, so say it, but... who cares what you really want to say? Prove something to me, show me something.” So I would say it weakens it a little bit. It’s clear

	almost that the writer is getting **emotional** about this. This is something the person **feels really strongly about.** Again, that is really good oral form. You could be emotional, much more emotional when you're speaking. But in writing, that emotion often can be interpreted in different ways and seem **extreme** or **too personalized**. So I would not go for that. Rather I'd encourage them to drop that.
..... **In fact,** if drug were legalized, drug consumption would increase. ..... **The fact is that** drugs are more damageable for health than alcohol or cigarettes. ..... **In fact,** if drug is legalized it will exert a heavy boost to the economy by offering a lot of jobs. ..... **But I strongly see** this economic boost as bad. ..... **In fact,** it is fundamental that the law and government support parents' education. ..... For all these reasons and there are more, **I advocate that** all governments must be strong when it comes to this topic. ..... (E9, "objective" and "subjective")	I think it's an appropriate strategy, and I think it's well done because there is this nuanced thesis statement, for example. But then they do come in strong with the other thing so it's not "bam, bam, bam." Yes, there can be other things but in fact I feel this. I think it might be a little bit overdone. And that goes back to this thing where students started with simple or complex sentences but then they get more complex in their writing, then they learn all these different **transitions** so they feel they have to use them all the time. So partly I think the student just felt they had to throw in these. And when you highlight it like this it's clear it's probably too much. But I understand why they're doing it and I'm actually happy they're doing it because that's something you can take and say "okay, good you used it six times or five times or next time maybe three times, and that will be a very strong piece of writing", because again, by repetition, and overuse it **dilutes the fact.**

Figure 4.14: John's Comments on "Subjective" and "Objective" Pronounce Instances

Lastly, as for disclaim: deny, I asked John to comment on the observation that negation is generally infrequent in the corpus. John described negation as a "more subtle writing form" associated with the introduction of other viewpoints. At another point of the interview, he stated that the challenge for the students at this level was to put forward their viewpoints. Therefore "affirmative language" was reasonably more frequent in the context.

In summary, the interview covered four heteroglossic contractive categories of engagement: counter, concur (rhetorical leading question only), pronounce, and deny. John expressed clear support for counter and concur, as "sophisticated" strategies or "a big step forward". Pronouncement realized objectively (e.g., the "in fact" types of formulations) was valued unless overused, although self-mentioning, subjective types of pronounce (e.g., *I do support* ....) were generally problematized. Deny was not discussed in detail. But from John's short comment, this category was seen more on the "nuance" side. As I introduced these engagement categories and asked for John's opinions, not all categories were given an equivalent label in the teacher's own language. But a number of "surrounding notions" were identified to provide insights on what John associated these linguistic resources with. Figure 4.15 summarizes the equivalent and surrounding notions identified in the interview, as well as John's comments or interpretation on them.

Engagement category	Equivalent notions	Surrounding notions	Comment/interpretation
Disclaim: counter	- concession, - contrast	- transition, - coordination and subordination	- big step forwards - possibly overused (E13) - "the direction we'd really like them to get to"
Proclaim: concur (rhetorical question)	- "The answer is evident."	- inciting the reader to answer - involve the reader	- sophisticated, good strategy
Proclaim: pronounce		- transition (e.g., in fact), - oral form - emotional - personalized - extreme	- subjective type: emotional, too personalized, extreme - objective type: appropriate, but diluting the fact when overused
Disclaim: deny	- use of "not"	- introduce other points of views - affirmative language	- more subtle writing form

Figure 4.15: Summary of John's Responses Related to Dialogic Contraction

"Nuance" as heteroglossic expansion

The dialogically expansive categories in the current study include entertain, acknowledge, and distance. These resources bring dialogic diversity in the text by actively opening space for other views and voices.

Entertain resources are found to make up the largest proportion in the corpus and most entertain instances are realized by modals. In the analysis of the essays, modals of high and low intensity were further distinguished for the degree of certainty, confidence, or commitment given to the propositions. From the previous discussion on "assertiveness" and "nuance", it can be inferred that John would encourage students' to construct a certain and confident authorial persona. Predictably, hedging or reducing certainty with low modals was not encouraged in this context. Below, John contrasted the low modal "might" (entertain) and the simple present (monoglossic), giving preference to the latter.

> *JOHN: ..... you're trying to persuade me, so say it right. You can't say "this **might** be true" because if you're trying to persuade me, you say "it **is** true."*

Another excerpt below further explains his preference for the assertive simple present as opposed to the entertaining modals. In brief, he was concerned with the inappropriate use of modals where statements are supposed to be "factual".

> *JOHN: ..... 30 to 40 percent of the verbs we use (are simple present) because we often talk about facts, we often talk about habitual action. So don't neglect the simple present.*

Also, as already analyzed earlier, John suspected that students might not always fully understand the nuances made by certain lexico-grammatical items.

JOHN: .... use of modals, there we have to go into that and say why you're using the modals here. Is it simply because you've learned them or you think they're a little more sophisticated than ***"will"****.* ***"Would"*** *sounds better than* ***"will"****, that's not enough. You have to understand the nuance there. So then it goes back to the whole vocabulary connection.*

It can be seen that the frequently used high modal "will" was not interpreted the same way as low modals by John. Rather, in our talk, it seems a separate category from low modals, which is closer to monoglossic bare assertions. I tried to confirm this point by asking John whether the word "will" sounded absolute to him. He stated that using "will" to predict the future in English is to state a "definite result".

Furthermore, although I presented other ways of "acknowledging space for alternative views" at the beginning, the discussion of entertain mainly stayed around the use of modal. The only comment on the "in my view", subjective type of entertain resources was briefly given to the thesis statement in E9 (*As far as I am concerned, drug legalization would be a terrible mistake ...*), which was simply evaluated as "well done" and "nuanced".

Turning to the category of attribute: acknowledge, the strategy was unsurprisingly welcomed and encouraged by the teacher:

JOHN: ..... Your opinion is only as valid as anyone else's. You need outside sources. And there, even if you use simple present, you're then kind of saying (with external sources) "this is not me", "this is not simply my opinion", "this is a fact or truth." We look at examples of outside sources, references, anecdotes, etc. All of those are important in terms of writing.

John distinguished sourcing or referencing here from that in more advanced academic writing. In the current practicing argumentative essays, it was acceptable to “make up a source”, because in such texts, students’ priority was to learn the “form” of argumentative writing.

Finally, I reserved time in my interview to explore attribute: distance, which can only be found in E10. John thought highly of these instances, although again, he doubted that these nuanced linguistic choices had been conscious.

Figure 4.16 summarizes John’s talk on heteroglossic expansive categories of engagement. Both acknowledge and entertain were associated with nuanced argument. Although it appears that such nuance was not a focus in the current pedagogical context, attributing other opinions (acknowledge and distance) was considered a good way to support arguments. In contrast, although entertain resources such as modals, conditionals were at many points associated with nuance in our interview, they were not always encouraged for the concern that it could weaken the arguments, and that students might not always have used the entertain-related forms consciously and appropriately.

Category	Equivalent notions	Surrounding notions	Comments/interpretation
Entertain	- "fifty-fifty"	- modal - conditional	- not necessarily the best way to persuade - nuanced, sophisticated - possibly weakening the argument
Attribute: acknowledge	- present other things	- research - outside sources - statistic - "this is not me" - references - anecdotes - information	- nuanced - acceptable to make up a source - useful in supporting the argument
Attribute: distance		- indicate possibility that it is not true	- good strategy, but not necessarily conscious

Figure 4.16: Summary of John's Talk on Heteroglossic Expansive Categories

Summary of teacher perspective analysis

In this section, I have demonstrated the engagement choices and patterns that were valued or problematized in John's interview response, and how he interpreted these linguistic choices and patterns using terms and notions related or unrelated to the engagement framework. Overall, John favored what we called "assertiveness" in interview, which I mainly associated with the frequent use of monoglossic bare assertions, and sometimes with heteroglossic meanings. He pointed out that due to linguistic or cultural factors, it could often be a challenge for students at this level to clearly express their opinions in a strong voice, and simply stating views assertively

would help them tackle this challenge. On the other hand, while engaging other views was considered a more "nuanced" and "sophisticated" way of arguing, it was not always valued or encouraged by John for students in this context. It seems in the interview that John considered the "nuanced" way of stancetaking as more complex, and more suitable for writers with better lexico-grammatical control, and/or in longer and more complex arguments such as undergraduate and more advanced academic writing. More specifically, sufficient evidence of John's support can be found for the counter, concur, acknowledge, and distance options in the essays. However, entertaining other views and the subjective type of pronounce resources were given less preference in certain occasions. John also reminded that students might not necessarily have been conscious of some seemingly sophisticated strategies of dialogic engagement. Instead, they might have been practicing using newly learned lexico-grammatical forms without fully understanding the subtle meaning differences at this stage. Besides the engagement-related terms I introduced for our discussion, John also put forward a series of engagement-equivalent notions and other "surrounding" notions that he associated with the engagement options I described. As already pointed out, it is natural that many of the notions extend beyond what is considered within the engagement framework. But in a similar way with engagement, many of these equivalent or surrounding notions used in our interview clearly point to the dialogic nature of writing and persuasion. In addition, it is found that distinct types of lexico-grammatical realization of the same engagement option could receive very different comments. For example, the objective realization of pronounce (e.g., *The fact is that* ...) received more positive comments than its subjective counterpart (e.g., *I do support the legalization* ...). This suggests that it might not be intuitive to categorize these two different forms under the same heading. In addition, different engagement categories might be associated with the same lexico-grammatical heading.

For example, “transition” was mentioned in our discussion on both counter and pronounce.

Chapter 5: Revisiting the Research Questions

Overview

This chapter discusses the findings in specific reference to the research questions. It is composed of two parts. The first part is concerned with Research Question 1 and 2. Together they correspond to the study's purpose to understand the nature of stance in the current context: what does it mean to take an effective intersubjective stance in ESL400? The second part of my discussion corresponds to the purpose of exploring the connection between linguistic and teacher perspectives on intersubjective stance. The underlying motivation of this exploration is to identify the pedagogical potential of engagement in a pre-university ESL context like ESL400. The two parts of discussion will provide a basis for the implications in Chapter 6.

Research Question 1 and 2: The Effective Stance in ESL400

The first key purpose in this study was to explore the nature of effective intersubjective stance in an ESL argumentative essay assignment, not only by analyzing the student texts linguistically, but also by discussing with the teacher about the texts. The first two research questions have aimed at this goal. They are:

1) What are the patterns of engagement resources in the short argumentative essays?
2) What engagement choices or patterns does the teacher identify as valued or problematic in the current context of ESL argumentative essay writing?

The detailed analysis of engagement resources has revealed multiple patterns. I have argued in Chapter 4 how these patterns contribute to more or less effective stance, based on the literature as well as my own justification. In the interview, John responded to a selected subset of these findings and provided his opinions on them, which I integrate in the discussion below together with the small set of findings on the marking sheets.

The finding that has been underlined on multiple occasions in this thesis is that of a highly "assertive", monogloss-oriented intersubjective stance style as represented by E2 and E12. In Chapter 2, I have reviewed multiple studies that tend to associate the monoglossic assertiveness with less successful, or "non-native" writing (Coffin and Hewings, 2004, as cited in Myskow & Gordon, 2012). However, as presented in Chapter 4, John explicitly supported the idea of being assertive as appropriate for students' learning focus in ESL400: clear, direct, and affirmative argumentation.

At the same time, the study has also revealed findings on the strategic use of heteroglossic resources and patterns, which tend to align with previous engagement studies on academic writing. In the interview, John and I associated the use of heteroglossic resources with "nuance". The "nuance" resources such as entertain, concur, counter, acknowledge were often given positive comments by John, although there was concern with whether these resources had been deployed strategically and consciously.

What can be inferred from the two sides of the findings is that an effective stance in ESL400 can be either "nuanced" as one may expect from more complex academic writing, or just "assertive" and direct with less consideration of dialogic alternatives. Reasons for the coexistence of the two possibilities have been contextualized by John's interview response. The current data are from a short assignment where the learning of both argumentative discourse and the required lexico-grammatical forms were taken into account. Here it will be helpful to recap what has been explicitly emphasized at the discourse level for this assignment. The marking rubrics (see Appendix B) have made this rather clear: clarity, coherence, conciseness, and thesis statement. Below is John's summary of what he called "the Three Cs", at the end of the interview.

*JOHN: … the secret is **coherence, conciseness,** and **clarity.** If you get those, you'll be a good writer. Maybe not a great writer, but you will be able to function in the workplace or university if you have a **clear, organized form of writing.***

While both "assertive" and "nuanced" argumentative writing can be clear, coherent, and concise, it could be more challenging for some student writers to achieve multivoiced, dialogically diverse arguments while satisfying the three expectations at the same time. In the current study, such a challenge can mainly be discussed in relation to clarity and coherence. As one can infer from the heteroglossic examples in Chapter 4, student writers may need a larger repertoire of lexico-grammatical forms to realize "nuanced" argument, such as modal verbs, the grammar of reported speech, and various comment or modal adjuncts. Not all students at this level, as John pointed out, have sufficient control of these required forms of "nuance". Even when certain "nuanced" or "sophisticated" forms are found in students' texts, they may not always be used consciously or strategically. Non-strategic use of these forms could affect the clarity of positions, as shown in the use of modals in some essays, for example. Secondly, in terms of coherence in "nuanced" arguments, one of the challenges lies in strategically organizing own and alternative positions in the text. This is most related to the sequential patterns of engagement. As an example from the literature, Hood's detailed analysis of engagement as alignment (2004) has shown that even senior undergraduate writers may have problematic patterns of alignment and dis-alignment, which result in the interruption of coherent argumentative flows. Similarly, the current study has also identified problematic dynamics of alignment through the small scale analysis of contrastive pairs. This suggests that constructing a contrastive stance while maintaining coherence may pose certain challenges for some students at this level.

On the other hand, achieving a clear and coherent argument with an assertive intersubjective stance would perhaps involve less of such challenge. Grammatically, to state opinions as facts or absolute, the student writers can use the more familiar tenses (e.g., the simple present, past tenses, etc.). Making bare assertions would also help by avoiding the use of potentially unfamiliar heteroglossic resources such as adjuncts, modals, the grammar of reported speech, etc. There would also be less demand in organizing the shifts of alignment in the argument flows if alternative positions are not (or less) addressed in the text. In this regard, John's encouragement for "assertiveness", "affirmativeness" or "directness" can be considered a practical strategy to facilitate students' focus on at least two of the "Three Cs": clarity and coherence.

Beyond the level of lexico-grammar and discourse, there are of course the cultural aspects of writing in John's consideration, namely some students' difficulties in being expressive and affirmative due to their cultural backgrounds, which need to be addressed by encouragement. For this context, being able to confidently articulate a position seems an important step before students can start to think and write more critically and to "look at the other side." Therefore, compared to more advanced academic contexts, a critical stance addressing different knowledge and knowers is expected to a much smaller extent.

Up to this point, John's support for "assertiveness" has been discussed at a number of levels. Turning to his comments on the "nuanced" type of stance, the guiding question for discussion can be what qualities a successful "nuanced" argument possesses. As reviewed in Chapter 2, Lancaster's study (2012, p. 229) concluded with four qualities of effective "novice academic stance": "contrastiveness", "dialogic control", "critical distance", and "discoursal alignment". Below I briefly compare and match the findings with these notions to explore the

valued features of nuanced argument in ESL400. Only the first three notions are found relevant to the current findings.

Findings related to contrastiveness are rather salient: they first include the strategic use of contrastive sequences of engagement, especially the more sophisticated ones such as the "concur-counter" pairs, and the contrasted views from multiple external sources (i.e., the "acknowledge-counter+acknowledge/endorse" patterns in E13). Also, the strategic choice of modals of different intensity (high versus low) according to positions may also be interpreted in terms of contrastiveness. Unsurprisingly, contrasting different sides of the argument is a rather elemental but useful way to realize heteroglossic diversity stance in the essays.

Dialogic control is concerned with the strategic sequencing of engagement resources (Lancaster, 2012). To some extent this quality overlaps with contrastiveness discussed above. The first finding listed above regarding contrastiveness may also be interpreted as a kind of dialogic control, in that it is concerned with the strategic "alternation" (p. 230) between dialogic expansion and contraction. This basically means that the more effective writers are able to bring in alternative positions or voices (dialogic expansion, i.e., entertain, acknowledge, distance) but at a later point return to their own positions with some stress (using dialogic contraction such as counter, deny, endorse, etc.) to "have their voices heard" in the multivoicedness. This could be an important factor that contributes to the quality of "clarity" emphasized in the course, as the writer's positions can be effectively clarified in such expansion-contraction alternations.

Critical distance in the current data are mainly related to two findings: first, in Lancaster's study it is found that high-graded texts use less "personalizing" moves (i.e., "subjective" realization of entertain or pronounce). Somehow consistently, the rare instances of "objective" realizations of pronounce meanings (e.g., *the fact is that ...)* were preferred by John,

and personalizing opinions was often problematized in the interview. Second, the use of passive voice to attribute unspecified and unnamed external opinions (e.g., *Marijuana has been considered as an addictive drug.*) in a few essays can also be considered an example of critical distance, as personalization of other knowers can be avoided with such strategy. Critical distance is relatively less present than the first two qualities (contrastiveness and dialogic control) in the current corpus.

For the findings that have not yet been covered in these three qualities above, I put them in a broader cover term, "dialogic awareness". By this I mean the awareness of the dialogic, interpersonal nature of writing demonstrated by the strategic use of heteroglossic resources not listed above. This includes the use of expectation-adjusting adjuncts when presenting positions (e.g., *even*, *just*, *only*, *already*, etc., belonging to the counter category), the indirect rejection (deny) of other views, position-invoking mental verbs (e.g., *advocate*), and other qualitative findings that are reported in Chapter 4 (summary in Figure 4.16). These engagement choices or patterns demonstrate the effective student writers' continuous efforts in encoding their consideration of dialogic alternatives, making their arguments more multivoiced and interactive.

Figure 5.1 summarizes the main qualities of successful "nuanced" arguments listed above. It should be noted that while some of the current findings match those in Lancaster's (2012) four-quality framework, Lancaster's categories are supported by his more diverse findings based on his larger data. The key findings of the current small data can be considered in three of Lancaster's four categories. My choice of the umbrella term "dialogic awareness" is intended to point out the nature of successful "nuanced" stance in a broader sense and to cover all relevant patterns found in the current corpus.

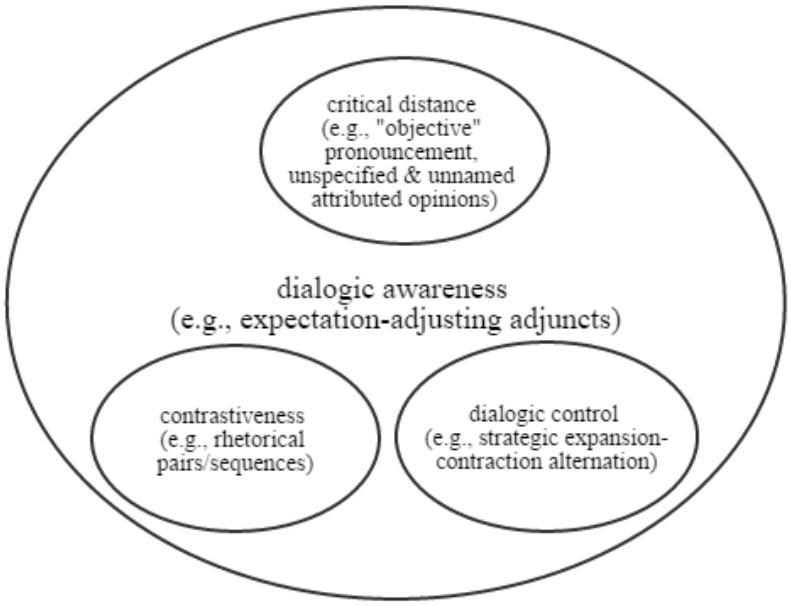


Figure 5.1: the Qualities of Successful "Nuanced" Stance in ESL400

So far I have explored the two broad possibilities of effective intersubjective stance in ESL400: one that is strategically appropriate for the learning focus in the course (i.e., assertiveness), and one that is more consistent with expectations in more advanced academic contexts (i.e., "nuance"). It has been made clear in Chapter 2 that heteroglossic diversity and strategic patterns of engagement are valued features in more advanced academic writing. The co-existence of these two possible stance styles in ESL400 represents a context of transition from direct, straightforward to more complex written arguments. As many pre-university ESL students will eventually enter their tertiary studies, they will need the skills of nuanced stancetaking to fulfill course requirements and to succeed in their academic life. Since these skills are to be learned sooner or later, the question remains to what extent the "nuanced" stance should be encouraged or emphasized at a learning stage like ESL400. Before providing my views and suggestions regarding the current context in Chapter 6, it is necessary to turn to a discussion of Research Question 3, which is concerned with the connection between linguistic and teacher

perspectives in this study.

Research Question 3: Examining the Connections Between Linguistic and Teacher Perspectives on the Resources of Intersubjective Stance

The discussion in this section is concerned with the connections between the linguistic perspective (i.e., engagement) and the teacher's perspective. To explore such connection, I asked Research Question 3: in what ways does the teacher describe students' language use for engaging with alternative views and voices, using what metalanguage or principles that are equivalent or relevant to notions in the engagement framework?

My investigation regarding RQ3 has focused on the terms and notions used by John that are interpretable in engagement terms. The main findings are summarized in Figure 4.12 and Figure 4.15. In Chapter 4 and the last section, I have brought up John's basic distinction of "assertive" versus "nuanced" types of argument, which have been respectively associated with the dependence on monogloss and the diverse deployment of heteroglossic meanings. In this section I continue the discussion on the terms and notions that can be associated with the 9 individual engagement categories adopted in this study. Particularly, I have divided John's terms into "equivalent notions" and "surrounding notions" depending on whether they are directly interpretable in engagement terms, or can be related to engagement indirectly. The approach in the current discussion will be mainly comparative.

The engagement framework is about categorizing intersubjective meanings. John's comments too reflects his categorization on the language patterns we discussed. Some of John's notions corresponding to particular engagement categories tend to reflect only part of what is covered in the categories. Sometimes this is because I only used one or two examples to represent a category. As a result, not all types of lexico-grammatical realizations were shown to

John. For example, I only brought up rhetorical leading questions when discussing the notion of concur and did not cover other lexico-grammatical realizations of the category. Consequently, John just briefly commented that it is a question for which the answer is evident, and that it is a good, sophisticated strategy that involves the reader. But sometimes even when I introduced an engagement category with more examples reflecting different types of lexico-grammatical realization, John's comments still focused on certain types. When talking about the category of entertain, I not only introduced modal examples, but also talked about the personalizing types (e.g., *In my view ...)* and the evidentializing type (e.g., *It looks like a failure.*). However, only the modal type (together with conditionals) of entertain was mentioned and given equivalent notions in John's response. This may imply that, at least at a first glance during a natural conversation, some forms of an engagement category are intuitively more salient than others to someone who is new to the conceptualization. From the above example of entertain, it could perhaps be inferred that the grammaticized forms (e.g., modal verbs) had been more salient to John than the forms without a unified grammar (e.g., the evidentializing type of entertain with grammatically diverse examples such as the framer "it looks like" or the adverbial adjunct "at first glance"), although this assumption would need to be explored with a larger data set.

The categories of pronounce, which I introduced as "authorial emphasis", were not given equivalent terms in John's response. As shown in Chapter 4, he tended to consider the "subjective" (e.g., *I do support ...*) and the "objective" (e.g., *In fact ...*) types of authorial emphasis quite differently. The former was commented upon as being too personal, and the latter seemed more accepted and encouraged. For engagement, the two types of realization are sub-types of the same kind of intersubjective meanings. For John, the subjective-objective distinction was so much more salient than their common meaning of authorial emphasis that the latter had

not been given much weight in his comments. This is another example where lexico-grammatical realization raises more attention from the ESL instructor.

The category of disclaim: counter had been associated with "transition" at multiple points of the interview. By transition John mainly referred to the contrastive conjunctions (e.g., *however*, *but*) we discussed in the essays, as well as a few instances of "in fact" which encodes both pronounce and counter meanings at the same time. Here the discourse organizing feature (i.e., transition) of these lexico-grammatical resources were emphasized, rather than their function of intersubjective positioning. We may associate John's such emphasis with his goal of developing coherence in his students. For him, the more important or salient function of these words and phrases is to establish connections between different parts of the argument.

While not to generalize the views of only one teacher, the main point to extract from the above should be clear: certain concepts proposed by engagement are not always salient and intuitive for those from non-SFL backgrounds. In the current study, it has been shown that the lexico-grammatical forms may especially take over when considering the nuance of meanings between engagement categories. Even when the function or meanings were considered by the teacher, other foci or analytical perspectives might emerge. For example, contrastive conjunctions can be counter resources in SFL, but can also be "transitions" in studies of metadiscourse (e.g., Hyland & Tse, 2004). The latter function is probably more salient for those like John who are more concerned with coherence in their students' writing.

In this regard, while concepts of engagement are able to effectively reveal and demonstrate interpersonal meaning patterns that contribute to effective stances, they present a certain degree of unfamiliarity for those who have no prior knowledge of the framework. This is an important issue that would potentially limit the pedagogical potentials of the linguistic

framework, which needs to be considered. Lancaster (2012) argues that analyzing interpersonal meaning patterns is "itself an unfamiliar task," and that understanding certain linguistic features of writing require "non-commonsense terminology" (p. 237). Despite some challenges demonstrated by the current small data of teacher perspectives, further exploration of the potential of engagement would still seem worthwhile. In the current study, for example, I would argue that at least the sophisticated use of the concur-counter, and "acknowledge-counter+endorse" sequences would not have been as salient without a systemic consideration of how the dynamics of alignment are encoded in the essays.

The question should then turn to how the two perspectives can work together in the pre-university ESL context to develop student writers' dialogic awareness in writing. For linguistic researchers, this has always been a task of providing accessible and useful modelling of texts and realistic ways to share them with teachers and students in the pedagogical context. To do so it is necessary to consider the characteristics of the context, especially the students' learning needs at their level. Many characteristics of the current context have been demonstrated earlier in this thesis. I will return to my pedagogical suggestions in the next concluding chapter taking these characteristics into account.

Summary of Chapter

In this chapter, I have discussed the findings in relation to the research questions, as well as the two key purposes this study set out to achieve. In the first part (addressing RQ1 and RQ2), I have attempted to contextualize the text findings in John's talk and have provided explanations for the coexistence of two distinct styles of intersubjective stance in ESL400 which can both be effective. In a nutshell, this is related to the nature of the pedagogical context, one that gives consideration of both students' basic need for clear, coherent expression of ideas and their further

need for a transition from ESL writing learners to novice academic writers. In the second part, I have discussed some potential issues of unfamiliarity and accessibility of the engagement framework. These discussions will be taken into consideration in the next concluding chapter.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Overview

This final chapter discusses the tentative conclusions and implications of the study. I begin by summarizing the key points of the study and identifying the contributions of each. Then I point out a number of considerations and limitations for interpretation of the results, and make suggestions for future research. Finally, I consider the study's implications for linguistic research and writing pedagogy.

Research Summary and Contribution

This study was motivated by an explicit, language-focused approach to writing pedagogy. It set out to achieve two goals: to make explicit the resources and patterns of effective intersubjective stance in ESL argumentative writing, and to explore the teacher's perspectives related to the current linguistic analysis of intersubjective stance, particularly within the SFL framework of engagement. Studies using engagement to investigate intersubjective stance have often focused on text analysis, with pedagogical implications mainly or solely based on text findings. The current study, drawing on this literature, attempted to establish a dialogue between the linguistic research and ESL writing education. As such, the study contributes to a better understanding of the connections between the two parties, and especially on how linguistic analyses of learner language can be contextualized with teachers' views.

The study drew on a number of methodological approaches from the literature, using a two-phased design and collecting both student text data and a small set of teacher-produced data. The diverse data were analyzed with both quantitative and qualitative techniques, and all coding criteria and procedures were described in detail. The research design was able to address the study's mixed purposes. Hopefully, the detailed considerations in each step can provide an

example for future research in this area.

The study revealed a series of text findings that contribute to the knowledge of intersubjective stance in writing specifically in the pre-university ESL context which has been relatively less researched. As I argued in Chapter 1 and 2, intersubjective positioning is an essential while abstract and challenging aspect of academic writing which needs to be made explicit to students. The current engagement analysis revealed some important resources that students would need in order to construct their stance effectively. Among the diverse findings in the student texts, I placed emphasis on the distinction between what John and I called "assertiveness" and "nuance" in the interview. While John's encouragement for "assertiveness" might have seemed unexpected based on the literature, it was effectively contextualized and explained by John's emphasis on clarity and coherence for students at the pre-university ESL level. The study also revealed a number of qualities of effective "nuanced" argument following previous research. The current findings on "assertiveness" and "nuance" represent both alignment with and extension from existing knowledge on intersubjective stance in academic writing.

The text findings also pointed to the subtle differences between sub-types of engagement, such as "objective" versus "subjective" pronounce, direct versus indirect deny, and entertain with modals of different intensity. These sub-types suggest the need for more detailed consideration in future theorization, empirical analyses, and pedagogical application of engagement.

The last point to reiterate in this study is the examination of how the engagement framework can be interpreted by an experienced ESL teacher. The findings indicate a difference in categorization and focus between engagement and the teacher's views. This implies that some of the concepts and distinctions of meanings are not intuitive for writing teachers. This may

suggest refinement or re-contextualization of the theoretical perspective for the purpose of ESL writing instruction.

In sum, this study has made a series of contributions to the knowledge of relevant fields: it explored a relatively less studied context; it used a detailed and innovative multiphase mixed methods research design; and most importantly, it attempted to establish a connection between linguistic and teacher perspectives.

Considerations When Interpreting Results and Limitations

While this study has provided a set of meaningful findings, a number of considerations need to be pointed out for valid interpretation of the results. This includes the nature of this study and a number of limitations with the interview design.

One should be reminded that this exploratory study is not to be interpreted from an experimental perspective. Especially, the current findings are not meant to be generalized to other contexts. Given the time and resources available, I chose an in-depth approach to the topic, working with a small class of only 14 students and 1 teacher. Quantitatively, the number of participants and the size of the texts did not allow meaningful inferential statistics, such as the statistical differences between given groups of texts (e.g., high- versus low-graded) in the corpus. Therefore the focus of discussion was instead the overall quantitative patterns emerging from the corpus as a whole, as well as my qualitative exploration of both the student text and teacher data. In addition, the data were collected from a natural environment with no research intervention. This means that there was no additional attempt to control the factors that might have influenced students' writing performance, other than my choice of working with the same group of students who wrote on the same topic. Neither were John's comments "guided" by any of the current linguistic scope. The assumption behind such a naturalistic approach was that in reality, the use

of language, including that of stance, varies considerably across contexts (e.g., disciplines, levels of education), writing tasks, and individual writers. A reader's evaluation of a text is also based on a complex combination of different factors, many of which are beyond a study of language. Therefore instead of attempting to control the various factors in a small scale study, I aimed for more ecologically valid results for the research questions, which are the student language and teacher opinions in an authentic ESL context like many in North America and beyond. For the same reasons, the exploratory analyses of the student text and teacher interview data, which was mostly done only by myself, were not intended for replication, and did not address issues such as inter-rater reliability. Taking the study's exploratory nature into account, the findings can be used to consider possible directions in analyzing writing in another context, whether for research or pedagogical purposes. For example, one may draw on findings of the current study (together with many others in the literature) to consider the diversity of engagement resources in another context of writing, and discuss such diversity in terms of more or less successful stancetaking.

While the thesis has much discussion on the effectiveness of stance as perceived by the teacher and suggested by previous studies, it was not my goal to assess the effectiveness of ESL400's teaching on the students' stance patterns. As just mentioned, the students' stance patterns could have resulted from many factors within and beyond the 6-week course (e.g., previous learning experience). This exploratory study was not designed to delve into these factors or to evaluate the pedagogy in ESL400.

Another consideration when interpreting the results is the challenge in coding engagement quantitatively. In Chapter 3, I was as transparent as possible about the coding criteria used in this study. This is meant to open future debates on the decisions made for these criteria and the challenges during the coding process. Among other possible issues, one challenge

is the criterion for coding sentences with compound predicates, which was also mentioned in Chapter 3. In the below example from E2, I coded the sentence as two monoglossic propositions, as the two verbs (bolded) represent two separate experiential meanings about drug legalization (the black drug market and the high cost for government, which seem to be two different things in a causal relation).

- *Drug prohibition **leads** to a stricter and dangerous black-market, and **costs** taxpayers a billion of dollars every year. (Charli, E2)*

But coding as such involves context-based, subjective judgement, and not always can a clear decision be made easily. For example, one may say that it is really a personal style whether a writer encodes multiple different propositions about a subject into compound predicates like the above. Such messiness in the coding process suggests that to measure propositional meanings in countable units from a text as an organic whole might just be an expedient strategy to understand whether some engagement meanings are more perceivable than others in a text. Therefore the current coding and the corresponding results (which have been useful for the current context) should be seen as one possibility instead of the only, and the discussion on such interpretive coding should continue to enable analyses that are meaningful to other contexts.

Finally, a number of limitations are to be acknowledged here particularly regarding the design of the interview with John. First, due to timing issues as mentioned in Chapter 4, the interview was conducted half way during the text analysis. Therefore, not all reported text findings were in place when preparing the interview. Second, due to the limited time (100 minutes) for the interview, I only selected a number of distinct patterns in a few texts for the discussion with John. For the same reason, many topics were only covered briefly and not all of his responses were followed up with further questions. If more findings had been covered in

more depth, with more time and better arranged timeline, the study might have had richer results regarding John's opinions and views especially regarding his interpretation of the analytical framework. Lastly, the research design could have included a member check procedure after the interview for John's clarification on his response. The results of this study should also be interpreted with these limitations in consideration.

Suggested Future Research Orientations

Based on the contributions, challenges, and limitations of the study, I point out here some possible research directions and make suggestions for future research designs. Most importantly, this study has supported the potential of combining linguistic stance analysis and teacher perspectives. To expand its results, a dialogue between stance analysts and writing teachers could be explored in a larger scale context. With larger data, future research would also be expected to provide more evidence for the stance resources that are valued in their respective contexts, and how different pedagogical contexts are connected in terms of their respective goals and needs.

Future studies with a stronger interest in teacher perspectives may focus on a smaller number of texts and invite a larger number of teacher participants for their grading, written or spoken comments. It would be most insightful if patterns can be found in grades and comments by a larger number of teachers. This would draw a larger picture of how stance is understood among writing educators and how teachers and linguistic researchers can work together to advance pedagogy related to stance in writing.

This study has begun to address the question of how teachers see the concepts discussed in the engagement framework. There seems to be much potential in this direction in that it directly explores the possibilities in introducing a semantically-oriented perspective on stance (i.e., engagement) in writing pedagogy. Further studies in this direction may design questions

that cover and expand on the engagement framework more systematically and comprehensively.

While the current study focuses on the intersubjective aspect of stance (i.e., engagement), future studies may explore all three systems of appraisal (attitude, graduation, and engagement) in text data, especially how these systems interact with each other, and how the appraisal systems interact with other linguistic features. Studies such as Lee (2006) and Hood (2004) have provided valuable models for this direction. It would be a promising direction to include both a comprehensive appraisal analysis and an investigation of teacher-graders' opinions. Certainly, studies of this kind would involve much more time and resources, as a much larger-scale text analysis and interviews with more teachers would be involved.

Future studies may also adopt a stronger quantitative orientation to include inferential statistics with a large corpus. Comparison between high- and low-graded texts is a direction provided by the literature (e.g., Lancaster, 2012; Wu, 2007). Although the small data of the current study have not allowed statistical tests for such comparison, there are indications in the data regarding what engagement resources and patterns occur more often in high- and low-graded essays. For example, the few instances of indirect rejection, as discussed in Chapter 4, exist only in the higher-graded (top 5) essays. The two lowest-graded essays (E2 and E4) are the only ones without any attribution or endorsement of external opinions. Tendencies as such are not reported in this thesis, but were suggested throughout the analysis of texts. Another possible direction in the quantitative orientation is to explore the potential correlations between grades and engagement choices, or between different engagement choices. One potential relationship found in the current study is the student writers' dependence on monogloss and the diversity of engagement: the correlation (Pearson's r) between the percentage of monogloss and the number of engagement categories used in the essays is close to statistical significance. With a larger data

and statistical tests, these tendencies can be further tested and provide statistical evidence of effective engagement choices and patterns.

Finally, the current study is situated in a pre-university ESL context. Future research may also connect linguistic and teacher perspectives in other contexts, especially more advanced academic contexts where stancetaking is potentially more complex and challenging.

Implications of the Study

The purpose of this study was to address both parties who may be interested in the topic of stance (i.e., the linguistics researchers and the ESL writing teachers), and to begin a dialogue between them. This last section discusses the implications of this study to this effect.

Implications for linguistic theorization and analysis of intersubjective stance

One implication for linguistic theorists of stance from this study is to further consider and systemize the sub-types of engagement meanings, as the distinction between sub-types may be salient and useful to teachers and researchers in contexts such as the current one. As I discussed in Chapter 4, some sub-types of engagement are noticed by researchers, such as the further categories of entertain by Lancaster (2012) based on the different lexico-grammatical realizations of entertain in Martin and White (2005), and the further types of monoglossic statements discussed in Lee (2006) based on White (1998). The current study showed that some sub-types of deny and counter can also be further categorized (see summary of findings in Figure 4.16 in Chapter 4). As discussed in Chapter 4, these sub-categories can be associated with more sophisticated intersubjective positioning, or the writer's dialogic awareness. Further attention to them would enable richer analyses and pedagogical implications.

Another implication for engagement theorists is the consideration of modals of high and low intensity. In the line of stance research that discusses modals in terms of certainty (e.g.,

Conrad & Biber, 2000) or commitment (e.g., Hyland, 1998), the distinction between high and low modals is clear. In engagement, Martin and White (2005) pointed out that both these modal resources function to actively allow space for alternative opinions or options from a dialogic point of view. The current study suggests that analyzing all modals using only a single category of entertain does not reveal some student writers' strategic choice between high and low modals. As reported in Chapter 4, John also distinguished the high modal verb "will" from the "fifty-fifty" low modal verbs such as "might". Therefore while from Martin and White's (2005) dialogism-focused theorization, the intensity of modals might not be the central focus, the potential difference it involves is noticeable at least in the current context and should be taken into account in future engagement analyses.

What is more, of course, the current study has raised issues with quantitatively-oriented coding, which was discussed in the last section as well as in Chapter 3. Not much is agreed upon at this point about quantifying engagement meanings. More transparent description of coding procedures would be helpful for the development of this literature, if a quantitative direction is to be further explored.

Implications for pre-university ESL writing pedagogy

The other question turns to what pre-university ESL education can do with this growing body of knowledge on intersubjective stance in the pedagogical context. Previous studies focusing on more advanced academic contexts have provided pedagogical suggestions related to their respective contexts. Hood (2004) discussed the modelling of stance in a way that is accessible within the university EAP context and the possibilities of providing "functional feedback" (p. 244) for students. Lancaster (2012) discussed the use of an effective metalanguage in discipline courses. In addition, he suggests faculty development workshops where discipline

course instructors can obtain a stance-related metalanguage as a tool of stance analysis. Both Hood and Lancaster have contextualized their suggestions with learner and teacher needs taken into account.

As pointed out in multiple chapters, the level of pre-university ESL is characterized by both students' need for control over the essential lexico-grammar for clear and coherent expression of ideas, and their incoming and potentially challenging demands of more sophisticated argument skills including "nuance". In Chapter 5, I raised the question regarding the extent to which students should be prepared for "nuanced", heteroglossically diverse argumentation at the level of pre-university ESL. I would argue here that enhancing dialogic awareness would be a helpful exercise for students who will need such awareness soon. Especially given that some students were found to already use some heteroglossic ("nuance") resources effectively, it seems feasible to push them forward with closer attention to the dialogic aspect of writing.

Perhaps one feasible possibility in discussing the dialogic nature of argumentative writing is to compare and contrast the meanings of different propositions as was done in this study. The starting point can be the basic distinction between the "assertive" monogloss and the "nuanced" heterogloss. Instead of using the abstract concepts and non-commonsense metalanguage presented in engagement, the teacher may use commonsense plain language and have students identify sentences in an essay that present ideas as "absolute", "factual", or "tentative", "negotiable". Such distinction may then be discussed further, for example, from a reader-oriented perspective. The students may be reminded that the reader might not always feel the same way as they do, and when ideas are presented too strongly without thinking of what others may say or think, they may sound awkward and may weaken their academic argument.

In the discussion of clarity in arguments, the idea of dialogic control (the strategic alternation between dialogic contraction and distinction to balance other and own positions) and contrastiveness may be very helpful. In his context, Lancaster (2012) has also made recommendations for these two notions as practical tools to make explicit the effective stance. For example, in introducing the idea of dialogic control, the teacher can raise the question of how to realize a clear argument while bringing in different points of views. The teacher may present an excerpt (e.g., a short paragraph) from a model essay and have students identify the writers' own views/positions (monogloss and dialogic contraction), others' views/positions (acknowledge), and positions that the writer is not sure about (entertain); then the teacher may explain the dynamics in which the author talks about other views or views that s/he is not sure about (dialogic expansion), return to her/his own positions (dialogic contraction) so as to achieve her/his clarity of position. This might start with relatively simple contrastive pairs (and at the same time pointing to contrastiveness) like the below demonstration with E12 in Figure 6.1, then proceed with longer and more complex sequences such as a whole paragraph.

Others' positions / tentative positions	**The author's position**
On the contrary, **as mentioned in the article** "What if we legalized all drugs?" you **could** argue that legalizing drug will generate more addiction and more hooked kids.	
	Those statements are **not** taking into account the lessons learned from the legalization of other dangerous product such as cigarettes, alcohol, etc.

Figure 6.1: Demonstrating Dialogic Control with a Contrastive Pair

Comparing the nuance between different lexico-grammatical realizations of engagement

meanings may also be feasible, given that lexico-grammar often has an important role in ESL classrooms. What has probably been done in many classrooms may be the comparison between "objective" and "subjective" forms of entertain or pronounce (e.g., *I think that* versus *It is possible that*). With the findings in this study, teachers and students may also compare the direct and indirect types of deny, for example. Again, the metalanguage may need to be translated to more commonsense language.

The above suggested analytical methods for the classroom are mostly related to modelling and deconstruction of texts for writing learners. In the "teaching/learning cycle" (Martin & Rose, 2005, p. 1) proposed by SFL genre pedagogy researchers, this is only the first step of the ongoing writing apprenticeship. Modelling and deconstruction can be followed by joint construction activities (e.g., filling in the blank with engagement-invoking words in a modified model text), and eventually students' independent construction of texts with the linguistic resources learned.

Last but not least, with some of the above engagement notions introduced in the classroom, there can also be further considerations on writing task description and marking rubrics. These materials are important in guiding students towards the expected learning directions. Providing a proper amount of details about the teachers' expectations related to stance in these materials will be a most useful way to enhance students' awareness of intersubjective stance in their own texts.

Final Remarks

This study has enriched and expanded the knowledge of second language and literacy education by bringing together linguistic exploration of a specific discourse aspect (intersubjective positioning) of L2 learner language and a teacher's contextualized,

pedagogically-oriented input regarding this aspect of language. It has also integrated a number of research tools available in the literature to realize a detailed and innovative multiphase mixed-methods design. The study has depicted the nature of intersubjective stance as an important component of successful argumentative writing in pre-university ESL. As a concluding remark, I argue that closer attention to this aspect of language and an ongoing exchange between teacher and linguistic perspectives would be of considerable benefit in supporting novice and/or L2 student writers in exploring the relationship between self and other in academic discourse, in engaging with knowledge effectively by writing, and eventually in pursuing a rewarding learning experience.

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Appendix A: Description of Engagement Categories

The below description serves as a quick reference on the categorization of engagement used in this study. It is mainly based on the description in White (2003), Martin and Rose (2003), and Martin and White (2005). Examples below are selected from the student essays, with key engagement-invoking words and phrases highlighted in bold.

Monoglossic

A proposition which is presented as absolute, factual, or needless to negotiate. Such a bare assertion does not engage with any dialogic alternatives, and are therefore monoglossic.

- *The issue of drug legalization is a complex one.*
- *The people are given responsibility to control how much cigarettes they can smoke, and keep their health in good condition.*

Disclaim: deny

A deny utterance directly rejects a view. Such rejection implies acknowledgement of a dialogic alternative (i.e., the rejected view) but the space for this alternative is closed down (contracted). Grammatically, this category is typically realized by negation. Some lexis encoding meanings of negative polarity (e.g., *fail*) are also discussed in this category.

- *Prohibition does **not** work.*
- *I **failed** to find the logical explanation of how the drugs decriminalization can eliminate the root cause of the problem - people's lazy approach to stimulate production of endorphins by using chemicals.*

Disclaim: counter

An utterance that construes some expectation from the listener/reader and counters it. It engages with the expected proposition and narrows down the space for it. Typical lexico-grammatical resources for this category include contrastive conjunctions such as *but, however, although, while,* some adverbials such as *unfortunately*, *surprisingly*, and other counter-expectation adjuncts such as *even*, *still*, *only*, and *just*.

- ***However,*** *there are countries, for example the Netherlands, where drugs are available under controlled circumstances.*
- *Family abuse, inability to work and generate steady income, leading to serious crime are* ***just a few*** *negative factors to be taken into account.*
- ***In spite of this,*** *those governments have poured billions of dollars to prop up the farm crops eradication and the anti-narcotis operations of the military and police authorities in order to destroy cocaine labs and fight against drug cartels*

Proclaim: concur

An utterance which construes the reader or listener as sharing the same view. Such construal can be realized by directly agreeing with a proposition (*indeed*, *admittedly, yes,* etc.), or asking rhetorical "leading questions" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 123) that presumes a specific answer. Dialogic space is acknowledged as it brings the addressee's view into the text, but contracted in that it is given support from the writer/speaker.

- ***As we know****, drugs mentally and physically harm human's health, and marijuana is one of them.*
- *The Netherlands* ***indeed*** *now consume less hard drugs such as heroin or cocaine, ...*

Proclaim: pronounce

An utterance which expresses explicit "authorial emphases" or "intervention" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 127) in support of a view. The speaker/writer's insistence or commitment on the proposition's truth value can be interpreted. This option is heteroglossic and contractive in that it is explicitly presented as in opposition with any alternative views and possibilities.

- *In other words,* ***I do support*** *a legalization of drugs ...*
- ***It's a fact that*** *a country in debts becomes weaker;*
- ***I strongly see*** *this economic boost as bad.*

Proclaim: endorse

An utterance which attributes a proposition from an external source, and overtly presents it as true, correct or valid (Martin & White, 2005). The dialogic space in such utterance is acknowledged but contracted in that it shows the writer's alignment with the attributed view.

- ***The recent research demonstrated that*** *the use of marijuana paves the road to the use of hard drugs.*
- *Since its effectiveness* ***has been revealed steadily,*** *...*

Entertain

An utterance that expands dialogic space by acknowledging a proposition as "but one among a potential diversity of viewpoints" (White, 2003, p. 264). This category includes modals (*might, could, would,* etc.), the "I think" type of projections (*I think that*, *I believe that*, etc.), and "appearance-based postulations" (Martin & White, 2005, p. 105) such as "*at a glance*", *"it appears/seems that"*, "*it looks like*", etc. Rhetorical "expository questions" (p. 134) raised regarding a certain proposition without presuming an answer are also seen as entertain resources.

- ***In my opinion***, *marijuana is less dangerous than other drugs including alcohol and tobacco.*
- *All drugs have the same result and addiction?*
- *People **should** be aware of the importance of forbidden drugs*
- *The uses of drugs **may** cause in increase of unexpected pregnancies and transmission STDs,*

Attribute: acknowledge

An utterance which expands dialogic space by attributing an external view. But different from the proclaim: endorse category, an attribute: acknowledge does not encode explicit alignment with the proposition.

- *... **a lot of people believe** that is useful for those who have cancer.*
- ***According to National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2010)** in the US 22 millions of citizens recognize to be a consumer.*

Attribute: distance

Like acknowledge and endorse, a distance utterance also attributes an external proposition. But such an utterance explicitly encodes some denial of responsibility for the attributed proposition.

- ***The supporters of this idea rambler** (ramble) with an example of the Netherlands, ...*

Appendix B: Marking Sheet (Example from Essay 3)

MARKING GRID FOR WRITTEN PRODUCTION

Notice to students: The purpose of this coded grid is to allow you to identify your strengths and weaknesses in this written activity. The total mark reflects your overall performance.

Name: 3 Ashley	Date:	Type of production: Persuasive essay	ESL400

		Qualitative	Details
3.8 / 5	Linguistic Competence		
	Verbs (tense, form, agreement) Sentence structure/word order Mechanics (punctuation, spelling, capitalization) Other:	E VG G S U E VG G S U E VG G S U E VG G S U	Article use Word order
4 / 5	Lexico competence		
	Precision Variety Degree of formality, register, tone Collocation, idiomatic phrasing Risk-taking	E VG G S U E VG G S U E VG G S U E VG G S U E VG G S U	Good vocabulary Word forms
7.2 / 10	Discursive competence		
	Clarity Conciseness Coherence Thesis statement – clear and focused	E VG G S U E VG G S U E VG G S U E VG G S U	Clarity is good

Comments:
Well organized
Be sure to have thesis statement
For your use: list areas for improvement
Articles
punctuation
Mark
3.75 / 5

Appendix C: Sample of Coding Transcript from Essay 7 (Paragraph 1 and 2)

TITLE: MARIJUANA SHOULD BE LEGALIZED IN XXXXXX

E7-1-Thesis
PARAGRAPH ONE
1. **[PROCLAIM: CONCUR]** As we know, drugs mentally and physically harm human's health,
[MONOGLOSSIC] and marijuana is one of them.
2. **[MONOGLOSSIC]** Consequently, it's banned by most countries.
3. **[DISCLAIM: COUNTER]+[PROCLAIM: PRONOUNCE]+[ENTERTAIN]** However, I strongly believe that marijuana should be legalized in XXXXXX for several reasons, such as:
[MONOGLOSSIC] it's a soft drug,
[MONOGLOSSIC] it is socially accepted in XXXXXX,
[MONOGLOSSIC] and it's easier for the government to control it.

E7-2-Argument
PARAGRAPH TWO
4. **[MONOGLOSSIC]** First of all, compare to the other drugs, marijuana is less harmful to the health,
[MONOGLOSSIC] and it's easier to get rid of it.
5. **[ATTRIBUTE: ACKNOWLEDGE]** According to the scientists, the difference of marijuana and the other drugs is due to the way of consuming.
6. **[MONOGLOSSIC]** In general, when people use marijuana, they smoke its leaves;
[DISCLAIM: COUNTER] however for the other drugs, for example, heroin, they inject the concentrate powder directly into blood.
[MONOGLOSSIC] As a result, using marijuana is less dangerous.

Explanation of highlighting colours

Red: monoglossic resource
Yellow: dialogically contractive resources
Green: dialogically expansive resources
Fuchsia: Stage labels

Appendix D. Outline of Interview

Part 1: Sharing of Text Analysis and Discussion on Specific Texts

In this part, I shared my analysis with John and asked for his opinions. I provided detailed explanations with examples when introducing engagement-related concepts. Figure 4.10 (Chapter 4) is a summary of the essays discussed in the interview and their related focused themes. Apart from these themes, I also asked for John's overall comments on each essay's quality of argument.

Part 2: Discussion on Stance/Engagement-related Notions

In this part, I first recapped and listed the engagement notions I introduced in Part 1, then asked the following more general questions.

1. Have you analyzed texts in a similar way with your students?
2. Which one of the skills (engagement category) do you find more important or more challenging aspect for students who write ESL essays at this level?
3. Despite our focus on these headings today, what aspects of argumentative writing do you emphasize in the ESL course?
4. The research literature tends to find that in academic writing, texts with a variety of these different resources to engage with other views are seen as better writing. But in our analysis here, we also see that well written (positively evaluated) essays can be very assertive, using only a few types of engagement resources, and the more "balanced" or "diverse" ("nuanced") types of argument may not necessarily be good (positively evaluated) ones. What do you think of this (difference)?

Part 3: Background and Context

In this part, I asked for background information about the course and the teacher himself.

The below points were covered:

1. The number of argumentative essays written in the course
2. The pedagogical purposes of the assignment
3. The role of the assignment in developing students' writing skills across contexts
4. The rhetorical stages/structure taught for argumentative essays
5. The problems observed in students' argumentative essays
6. Marking rubrics of the assignment
7. The students' English proficiency
8. The role of cultural background in students' argumentative writing
9. The teacher's educational background and teaching experience