Abstract:

Interpreting research findings in doctoral thesis discussions is a demanding rhetorical task for writers, as it requires themto both make propositions of their own findings and engage with previous scholarship by evaluating others' findings in a way that their academicdiscourse community finds acceptable. Although many studies have examined thesis writers' use of evaluative language, they have often focused on a quantitative analysis of its frequency and type within clause boundaries. Our study, in contrast, is based on a qualitative analysis ofthe co-articulation of different evaluative items across clause boundaries. Wefindthree main patterns of discussing the author's own results combined with critical engagement with previous literatureand we present typical examples to illustrate the construction of interpersonal positioning as the text unfolds. We then discuss some workshops in which we used these findings to help Masters student writers become aware of different strategies for effectively interpreting research findings in writing discussion sections.

Keywords: Evaluation, Appraisal, Academic writing, Corpus-based research, Writing pedagogy

How do thesis writers evaluate their own and others' findings? An Appraisal analysis and a pedagogical intervention[1]

1   Introduction

The view that academic writing is a purely objective process of reporting knowledge has been challenged by a number of studies on academic and professional discourses within the traditions of Genre, English for Academic Purposes, and Evaluation (Bhatia, 1993; Connor, 2004; Hood, 2010; Hyland, 2000, 2004, 2013; Swales, 2004;). It is now widely agreed that academic writing is a process of knowledge building with the main purpose of explicitly or implicitly

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persuading the reader in the discourse community of the knowledge claims being made (Hyland, 1999a, 1999b, 2000, 2004; 2013; Thompson, 2001). In this sense, academic writing is interactive and academic knowledge is socially constructed. Therefore, the successful construction of academic knowledge relies on strategic deployment of interpersonal language that has a primary function of expressing 'attitudinal positioning',which indicates writers' emotional expressions as well as ethical and aesthetic evaluation,and 'dialogic positioning',which indicateswriters' evaluation of propositions and the projection of authorial voice with respect to alternative voices and the imagined reader (see examples in Section 2) (Martin & White, 2005).

Previous research on writer expertise with interpersonal language in academic discourse has found that the deployment of such linguistic resources is problematic for novice writers.Hood (2005) found that when reviewing research in the introductions of dissertations, undergraduate students use vague evaluative coding, make shifts in evaluative attitude without signaling, and create unclear phase boundaries causing difficulty interpreting authorial attitude. These problems suggest the writers' difficulty in managing a proper interpersonal stance towards literature across a phase of text.

Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) noted that the challenge for novice writers to evaluate literature is also reflected in writing discussion sections of Masters' dissertations, as they found that these writers tend to interpret their research findings without sufficient links with literature, which may be attributed to their incomplete understanding of the functions of the discussion section. Similarly, Petrić (2007: 247) discovered in lower-rated Masters' dissertations few uses of 'rhetorically more complex citation types requiring analytical skills', suggesting these writers' weakness in evaluating knowledge.Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) further noticed that Masters' students are likely to overstate or understate the significance of their research findings, resulting from unsuccessful use of the appropriate modal verbs.Gabrielatos and McEnery (2005) also found that Masters' students infrequently use modal adverbs and adjectives when making knowledge claims.

It is clear from the above review that in the thesis discussion section writers need to fulfill an interwoven task of interpreting and evaluating their own research findings and linking these findings with those of others. This requires a sophisticated use of different interpersonal resources in combination and across a span of text so as to negotiate writers' propositions and build solidarity with the reader in the targeted discourse community (Flowerdew, 2000; Hyland, 2002). However, this requirement sometimes is not explained to novice writers as 'supervisors themselves tend to have tacit rather than explicit knowledgeof the features of the thesis in their own disciplines' (Bitchener&Basturkmen, 2006: 6). Many thesis writing guidebooks (e.g. Cooley &Lewkowicz, 2003; Murray, 2011) to which novice writers may turn for advice tend to focus on separate description of modal verbs, adverbs and adjectives as hedging devices. Such guidebooks provide littledescription of the use of interpersonal language at the interface between presenting the writers' own claims and projecting claims from other research, which is seen as a central task for doctoral students in writing discussion sections (Chatterjee, 2008; Thompson, 2005).There is a need for raising novice writers' awareness of a repertoire of interpersonal resources and how interpersonal meanings are achieved by the use of different resources in combination across text spans.

TheAPPRAISALsystem, especially the ENGAGEMENT sub-system is potentially powerfulas it categorizes interpersonal resources into semantic options covering a wide range of lexico-grammatical items and describes the evaluation of authorial and others' propositions through the choice of different options or combinations of options (see example in Section 2). In Chang and Schleppergrell's (2011) study,analysis of the results of the co-articulations of ENGAGEMENT options and their linguistic realizations for achieving different moves in introduction sections of research articles was incorporated into a corpus, which was then used by postgraduates to improve the writing of their own introductions. Chang and Schleppergrell'sfindings showed that novice writers' linguistic inventory of ENGAGEMENT options wasexpanded, and their awareness of patterns for the co-articulations of ENGAGEMENT options that achieve key moves in introduction sections wasenhanced.

The research presented in this paper has two aims. The first is to conduct a qualitative analysis of interpersonal language used in a small, specialized corpus of doctoral thesis discussions in the discipline of Applied Linguistics for the purpose of exploring how some successful doctoral writers have approached the rhetorical task of evaluation.Unlike many previous studies thatexamine interpersonal language within clause boundaries and focus on the quantitative aspects offrequency and type of interpersonal language used (e.g.: Lancaster, 2014; Swain, 2010), the present study, drawing upon Appraisal theory and taking a qualitative angle, investigates the construction of interpersonal positioning across clause boundaries by analyzing the co-articulation of different Appraisal options used by writers as they evaluate their own and others' research findings.This element of the research asks the question: What Appraisal options, or co-articulations of Appraisal options, are used by writers to achieve the rhetorical purpose of evaluating their own and others' research findings? The second aim of this research is to explore the responses of some thesis writers within the discipline when some data and interpretations from our corpus are presented to them. Here, the question is: What are the reflections of a group of thesis writers who are offered these data as a stimulus for reflection about the writing of discussion sections?

2   Research design

Our research is based on a small corpus, totaling 118,971 words, consisting of the separate discussion chapters of twelve completed Ph.D. theses in Applied Linguisticswhich all successfully passed the viva. These data werecollected from the free accessible research archive portal of the authors' university. Authors (2016) explain that this was a corpus specifically designed for qualitative, manual annotation. Texts in the corpus were annotated at the clause level and across clauses in order to interpret and categorise the interpersonal language resources used by the twelve authors.

Our annotations were based on Appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005), which has been applied to studying interpersonal meanings in a range of discourse domains,

such as news texts (White, 2003, 2012), business texts (Fuoli 2013, 2015) and academic texts (Authors 2016; Hood, 2010).Appraisal theory evolved within Systemic Functional Linguistics, which recognizes language as a meaning-making resource simultaneously construing ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings sensitive to its context of use (Halliday &Matthiessen, 2004). Appraisal theory deals with interpersonal meanings from the functional perspective by exploring attitudinal meanings (via the ATTITUDE sub-system, e.g. *a **good** evidence,* Text 3: 197), the projection of authorial voice with respect to alternative voices and the imagined reader (via the ENGAGEMENT sub-system, e.g. *The challenges for whole-class teaching **may** encourage the teacher…,* Text 7: 273), and the adjustment of the strength of attitudinal meanings and author-reader alignment (GRADUATION, e.g. ***extremely** important…,* Text 8: 252).

The ENGAGEMENTsub-system, in particular, categorises resources by which writers deploy the level of commitment to propositional statements andnegotiate the dialogic space for propositions made with prior voice on the same subject and with the anticipated response. Therefore, the ENGAGEMENT frameworkis a good fit for the analysis of discussion sections of doctoral theses whose purpose is to critically discuss the researcher's findings and situate them in the context of the findings of others (Bunton, 1999; Authors, 2016).

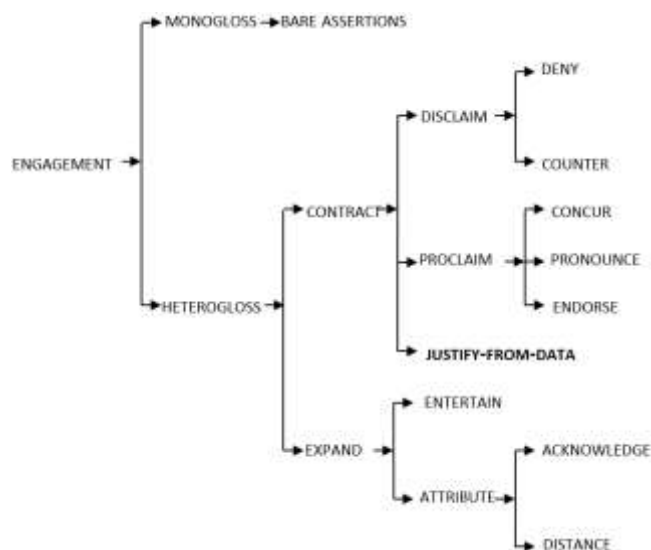The analytical framework used in this study is outlined as follows:

Figure 1. Analytical framework used in this study, adapted from Martin & White (2005)

As shown in Figure 1, ENGAGEMENT[2]comprisesa range ofsemantic options (e.g. ENTERTAIN)which are realized by a diverse array of lexico-grammatical structures.The function of the ENGAGEMENT options is interpreted from a 'dialogic' perspective which views any communicative act as a process of 'interaction between the various participants who enact the communication' (White, 2001b, p. 3). From this dialogic perspective, the ENGAGEMENTsub-system is essentially classified into MONOGLOSS and HETEROGLOSS. MONOGLOSS refers to resources that present propositions as unproblematic and do not acknowledge the possibility of alternative opinions (non-dialogic). For example, *…the effects of exams on learner motivation depend on how teachers present them in the classroom* [BAREASSERTION](Text 5: 209)*.* This proposition about exams is construed as unlikely to be disputed by the readership of the thesis.

HETEROGLOSSrefers to options that construe a backdrop of diverse views for propositions being advanced (dialogic). However, given the dialogic space allowed for alternative views, HETEROGLOSSis further classified into EXPAND and CONTRACTwith the former category consisting of options (ENTERTAIN and ATTRIBUTE) that increase dialogic space for different viewpoints and the latter of options (DISCLAIM and PROCLAIM) thatreducesuch space. For example, *A failure to recognise teachers' past achievements, experiences and challenges is **likely**[ENTERTAIN] to alienate them and/orreduce their commitment towards a new reform agenda*(Text 7: 276). The semantics of ***likely*** invokes possible dissenting views and construes the proposition as but one of a range of views. The dialogic space is hence opened up. However, in the example, *The findings in this area of 'reasons' are therefore **not**[DISCLAIM: DENY] generalizable and require further investigation, **although**[DISCLAIM: COUNTER] theyare of some interest in shedding light on an unexplored area*(Text 1: 210),the use of DENY (**not**) invokes a contrary positive position that the findings are generalizable, but

which at the same time is rejected directly. Similarly, the use of COUNTER(**although**) invokes an expected view that the findings are not useful, if they are not generalizable, but this expectation is acknowledged only for being countered by the suggestion that they could still shed light on an unexplored area. In both cases, the contrary positions are given very littledialogic space.

The CONTRACT sub-system used in our analytical framework, as outlined in Figure 1, includes an option, JUSTIFY-FROM-DATA, which is not part of Martin and White's (2005) original framework. This is a category which emerged from our investigation, as shown by the following example.

> Students reported they were rather confused by the whole thing. **As one student commented: "**I write the hook[name of a specific writing technique] in the Mr. Sun's class, he said no, you can't write this on it, so I think maybe it'snot a part of academic writing." (Text 8: 254)

In this example, reference to the writer's own data (usually data from interviews, questionnaires, and teaching journals) isa resource used to close down dialogue about a proposition being put forward, or to support a writer distancing him/herself from an argument in the literature (see Section 4.1).Our new category has some elements in common with White's (2012) proposal of anew dialogic contractive option of JUSTIFY in the genre of newspaper editorials.

Appraisal theory not only focuses on the interpersonal dimension of individual utterances, but also accounts for the cumulative development of interpersonal stance throughout a text (Martin & White, 2005). In our data, different ENGAGEMENT categories can be deployed in combination by thesis writers in order to evaluate propositions of their own findings, discuss them against the backdrop of others' findings discovered in previous research, and ultimately generate solidarity with thesis readers. The example below shows such a simple combination of different ENGAGEMENT options.

> **Although**[COUNTER] willingness is commonly recognized as a key component in learner autonomy **(e.g. Little, 1991; Sinclair, 2000; Benson, 2001)**[ACKNOWLEDGE], there **seems to**[ENTERTAIN] be insufficient literature discussing adjusted attitude, for example, as mentioned by students in the present study. (Text 2: 282)

Thissentence combines three Appraisal options to set up a gap for the research which the thesis goes on to discuss. The co-articulation of COUNTER, ACKNOWLEDGE, and ENTERTAIN position the writer's finding in the relevant literature by introducing prior researchers' views on willingness in learner autonomy, but meanwhile construes such views as countering expectation of the authorial one and indicated a subtle negative attitude towards the literature by expanding the dialogic space for possible alternative views on this issue.

In Section 4, we discuss more examples of co-articulations of ENGAGEMENT options across clause boundaries by which writers discuss their own findings against a backdrop of relevant literature.

3   Annotation process and coding

Clearly, the analysis of interpersonal language using a functional Appraisal framework is an interpretive act, involving some subjectivity of the two authors. In order to ensure the reliability and consistency of our annotation, we incorporated the coding scheme (as shown in Figure 1) into a coding software, UAM CorpusTool. We then read carefully each text, manually selected any span of text that realizedan Appraisal function, and assigned the corresponding semantic category label.Importantly, from the point of view of consistency, the UAM tool enables a quick retrieval of a coded item and thus makes it easy to examine any item with its co-text when necessary.Following Fryer (2013) and Fuoli (2015) we did not code all items independently and then compare codings; rather, we worked collaboratively, documenting all the problematic items that we encountered in coding and then discussedthem in order to work out principles for annotating such items. The use of UAM CorpusTool and our detailed documentation of coding problems and decisionshelped us to arrive at a robust and consistent series of annotations.Although we looked for each stretch of text that fulfilled an interpersonal function and coded such stretches one by one, this does not imply an assumption that the items worked in isolation.In fact, Martin and White (2005)argued for 'a more dynamic perspective on evaluation as it unfolded

prosodically indiscourse' (p. xi); following Halliday (1979), they use the term 'prosodic' to refer to the *cumulative* effect of interpersonal resources 'distributed likea prosody throughout a continuous stretch of discourse …' (Halliday 1979 as cited in Martin & White, 2005: 19).

We observed in the corpus that ENGAGEMENTitems that spread across clauses work together to create an interpersonal tone in discussion chapters. The rhetorical effect of these items is cumulatively created in a continuous stretch of text which goes beyond the clause boundaries. In the next section, in response to the first research aim presented in the introduction, we focus on the prosodic construal of interpersonal tone.

4   Patterns of thesis writers interpreting their own and others' findings

To explore how writers in the current corpus achieve their rhetorical purposes in discussion sections through their reference to relevant literature and their own' propositions about their own findings we closely examine the most frequently recurring co-articulations of Appraisal options used across stretches of text.

In Appraisal theory, potentialinteractions between anauthorial voice and anexternal voice have been broadly categorized as disalignment, neutral, or alignment. However, in discussing the systemic representation of Appraisal meanings, Martin and White (2005) argued that it can be useful to 'interpret some systems as scaled' rather than as categorical. White (2001a: 10)proposed the potential for seeing Engagement resources as 'lying along a cline between most contracting (Disclaim) and most expanding (endorsement-neutral Attribution)'.Similarly, we argue that the stances of author voice towards external voice are realized in this corpus on a continuum from DISTANCE through ACKNOWLEDGE to ENDORSE, the two extreme ends of which signal strong authorial disalignment and alignment.

The following sections present detailed, qualitative analysis of stretches of text where DISTANCE, ACKNOWLEDGE, and ENDORSEare co-articulated with other Appraisal optionsacross clause boundaries in order tohelp writers establish a backdrop of

relevant literature that is different from or similar to their own findings, and thereby fulfill the major communicative purpose of discussion sections.Further examples of analysed data are provided in a supplementary file which accompanies this article.Since our research involved pedagogy as well as analysis, pedagogical implications of our findings regarding co-articulations are also discussed where relevant in the following sections.

4.1 Arguing against previous literature – co-articulations with DISTANCE

This section discusses the most frequentco-articulations of DISTANCEand other Appraisal options,used by thesis writers in the current corpusas they argued against findings from previous research and promoted their own findings. Among 37 instancesof DISTANCEfound in the corpus, we observed a practice of explicitly signaling authorialdisalignment from previous literature via the co-articulation of DISTANCE with a range of other Appraisal options including: COUNTER (n=15, e.g. *however, instead*), DENY (n=3, e.g. *no, not*), COUNTER and DENY (n=3, e.g. *However…not…*), negative ATTITUDE (n=5, e.g. *problematic, detrimental*), COUNTER and negative ATTITUDE (n=2, e.g. *However, this often neglects different stages of learning…*)and semantic contrast (n=6, e.g. *different from…, of a contrast with…*). The fact that the instancesof DISTANCEwithout signal are outnumbered by those with signal suggests that when these thesis writers engaged with different findings from other research they preferred to explicitly indicate their disalignment.

There are only 2 instances of DISTANCE in which there was no such clear signal.Example1 below shows one of such two instances. A glossaryof Appraisal labels usedis presented in appendix.

1. **As my review of previous studies shows (section 2.8) and as Pennycook (2009) pointsout, conventional approaches to materials evaluation have tended to avoid culturalissues**[DISTANCE]**.Data from my investigation showed that**[PRONOUNCE] Taiwanese teachers welcome the input from both foreign and local cultures (section 6.1.6) rather than avoiding cultural issues. (Text 1: 207)

As can be seen from example1,the writer seems to disalign herself from the proposition that cultural issues tend to be avoided in materials evaluation and

usesPRONOUNCE to highlight her own different finding. However, the lack of a signal canmake it difficult for the readerto identify the author's positioning towards the previous studies. This may reflect the commonly reported problem of unclear or insufficientevaluation of cited work in novice writers' texts(e.g. Hood, 2005; 2010). From a pedagogical perspective, it can be beneficial tohelpstudents become aware of how to establishDISTANCEvia a comparison of examples with and without an explicitsignal for authorial stance. In this way, students can explore more effective ways of using the option of DISTANCE when they try to argue against previous literature and discuss their new findings.

According to Appraisal theory, DISTANCEis a matter of the authorial voice stepping back from a givenproposition and explicitly disassociating from that proposition. While this disassociation can help absolve the author from responsibility for the attributed proposition and thus prevent a potential challenge by others, in the genre of doctoral theses, overt disalignment from other published views and sometimes even dominant views in a discipline can be riskydue to the potential status difference between student writers and established members of the discipline.In light of this, authors need to make their own propositions appealing to at least the examiners and perhaps members of relevant discourse community when their researchispublished in future.

In the current corpus, the qualitative analysis of the co-occurrences with the items of DISTANCE found that the most frequent combination was DISTANCE and PRONOUNCE (n=22), compared to the less frequent combinations of DISTANCE and ENDORSE (n=7) and DISTANCE and ENTERTAIN (n=9). These results showed that contractive resources (PRONOUNCE and ENDORSE) were more favored than expansive resources (ENTERTAIN) when these writers positioned different findings or views against the previous ones from which they disaligned themselves. The remainderof this section presents some examples of different types of co-articulations withDISTANCE and explains how the authors disassociate themselves from theviews of others and then emphasize their own views.

Example 2 is from a thesis aimed at exploring Chinese students' conceptions of learner autonomy. In this excerpt the author sets out to discuss one aspect of learner autonomy as a capacity to take responsibility for learning.

2. Third, the ability to find appropriate methods…**According to Wenden (1991; 2002), learner autonomy is pre-conditioned by necessary learning strategies. Therefore, to have proper learning strategies is seen as compulsory to the capacity for learner autonomy**[DISTANCE]**.However**[COUNTER]**,with a further examination of the data, it was revealed that**[PRONOUNCE]what often happened was not that students did not have the capacity to know or to use certain learning methods but that they tended to become suspicious of the usefulness of their methods if they did not see the expected learning efficiency. (Text 2: 277)

The author refers to Wenden's (1991, 2002) proposition about the necessity of having learning strategies for achieving learner autonomy, and does sofor the purpose of disaligning herself from that view, which is signaled by COUNTER (**However**). The presentation of Wenden's proposition paves the way for the author's own argument to be developed later, which was construed by PRONOUNCE (**with a further examination of the data, it was revealed that…**) as valid and compelling, which in turn reduces the possibility of rejection from the reader.

Sometimes, ENDORSE was used to promote an authorial assertion which contradicted previous research. Functioning similarly to PRONOUNCE, ENDORSE seeks to suppress potential disagreement by construing the authorial assertion as highly warrantable by the use of an 'authority source' in the relevant discourse community (White, 2001d: 5).

3. …caution should be taken to avoid another type of essentialist view, that is to overgeneralize so called 'cultural particularity'.**For example, strong will or persistence are often associated with Chinese culture by researchers such as Hu (2002), Jin and Cortazzi (1996).Similarly, Chinese learning mottos are considered as Chinese specific (e.g. Cortazzi and Jin, 2007; Wang, 2001)**[DISTANCE]before an appropriate comparative study is undertaken. As discussed in section 7.2.3 and 7.4.5, the present study provides **no**[DENY]evidence for such a claim. **Instead**[COUNTER]**,the present study supports a contextualized understanding of concepts of learner autonomy that is suggested by researchers such as Aoki (2001) and Palfreyman (2003a)**…[ENDORSE] (Text 2: 308)

In example 3, whichis from the same thesis as example2, the author triesto argue for a reconsideration of the current conceptions of learner autonomy in light of her research findings.The author first puts forth her proposition about avoiding taking the essentialist approach and overgeneralizing cultural particularity. She then makes specific references to other researchers who currently hold that essentialist view, but indicates her disalignment from those researchers by indicating that there is no supporting evidence from her own study and by introducing anopposingview (**Instead**). This view is presented as being shared by the author and the researchers Aoki (2001) and Palfreyman (2003a) in the relevant discourse community, which has the effect of suppressingdifferent voices.

Example 4 shows the use of negative ATTITUDE (**sweeping**) as signal for authorial disalignment from a view that was attributed to Hu (2002, 2005).

4. More importantly,**the emerging thoughts that CLT [communicative language teaching] can be seen as fundamentally harmonious with Confucianism critically challenges**[BARE ASSERTION]the **sweeping**[NEGATIVE ATTITUDE]**assessment presented by Hu (2002, 2005) that cultural resistance has served as a key factor in hindering CLT promotion in the Chinese EFL setting**[DISTANCE]**.** This means,**according to insights provided by some informants (such as Sam, Mary, Daisy, Judy, and Patrick)**[JUSTIFY-FROM-DATA]**,**that the constraints of CLT implementation in the Chinese tertiary EFL context are mainly at a technical level (namely, lack of proficiency in English) rather than at a broad cultural level. (Text 6: 260)

After distancing herself from Hu's (2002, 2005) view, the author strongly argues for a different view that Chinese culture does not hinder CLT implementation. Instead of presentingthis new proposition by means of PRONOUNCE or ENDORSE, as in examples 2and3,the author chooses to construe it as warrantable, i.e. as being supported bythe author's research data (**according to insights provided by some informants (such as Sam, Mary, Daisy, Judy, and Patrick…**) and thus suppressed any prospective challenge. However, in the whole corpus, this is the only instance of JUSTIFY-FROM-DATA that was implementedin coordination with DISTANCEto promote the author's finding, which is different from those ofprevious studies.

The above examples illustrate the co-articulation of DISTANCE with PRONOUNCE, ENDORSE, and JUSTIFY-FROM-DATA, which the authors employ to argue for their own

research findings in relation to previous knowledge with whichthey disagreed. As can be seen from the explanations, in all examples the authors opened up dialogic space by distancing themselves from prior claims,which they then countered to set up authorial propositions about their different findings.When making new assertions, the authors preferred to use the contractive resources of PROCLAIM (PRONOUNCE/ENDORSE). This DISTANCE-COUNTER-PROCLAIM strategy acts to create an authorial stance that critically engages with the previous cited literature and the imagined reader who may need to be convinced aboutthe claims. The co-articulation with PROCLAIM also works to compel the reader to accept rather than question the author's propositions that are different from those ofprevious scholars, which can help to support the main goals of the discussion section. This pattern also shows a change in authorial intersubjective positioning from dialogic expansive to contractive. The rhetorical effect is to initially make more space for providing other views from which the author disalignswhileultimately shutting down the space for questioningthe author's propositions.

4.2 Standing neutral towards previous literature – co-articulations with ACKNOWLEDGE

Far more frequent than the choice of DISTANCE(n=37)as a means of engaging with existing knowledge was the choice of ACKNOWLEDGE(n=225). This choice created an intersubjectively neutral stance,whichshows neither alignment with nor disalignment from previous views. This finding parallels Coffin (2009) and Petrić (2007) who both identified that ACKNOWLEDGE is taken as the main stance for engaging with relevant literature in doctoral theses and Masters' dissertations, respectively.

In our corpus, counter to what might have been expected,40 instances of ACKNOWLEDGE were realized not by specifically reporting the claims and findings of other scholars, but by borrowing terms, concepts, models or theories from them. This tendency was also documented in Petrić's (2007: 243) analysis of citations in Masters' dissertations where the category of attribution functions to attribute 'a

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proposition, a term, or a stretch of text, a research, discourse or cognitive act' to an external author. This use of ᴀᴄᴋɴᴏᴡʟᴇᴅɢᴇ was also suggested by Heppner and Heppner (2004: 346), who in their thesis writing guidebook advised writers to acknowledge any 'idea, empirical finding, methodological procedure, or scholarly contribution of another professional'. Some examples from the current corpus are presented as follows:

5. He is a **person-oriented teacher(Garton, 2004)**[ᴀᴄᴋɴᴏᴡʟᴇᴅɢᴇ]... (Text 9: 311)
6. I incorporated the **theory of self system (Dörnyei 2009 and Kubanyiova 2009)** [ᴀᴄᴋɴᴏᴡʟᴇᴅɢᴇ]with self-efficacy and merged them into a more general category—self concept. (Text 5: 186)

Although thesedo not present a complete proposition attributed to an external voice, by borrowing the name of another's termas in example 5or that of another's theory as in example6, the author actively bringsin an external voice to their own texts. It is exactly this function that makes such instances fall within the system of ᴀᴄᴋɴᴏᴡʟᴇᴅɢᴇ. In this regard White (2001d:1) has argued that, 'By referencing the words of another, the writer, at the very least, indicates that these words are in some way relevant to his/her current communicative purposes'.Given this effect, these representations of ᴀᴄᴋɴᴏᴡʟᴇᴅɢᴇ appear to create an interpersonal stance of implied relevance.

In addition to the 40 instances of ᴀᴄᴋɴᴏᴡʟᴇᴅɢᴇas explained in examples 5 and 6, the analysis observed that the remaining 185 (about 5 times as many) instances of ᴀᴄᴋɴᴏᴡʟᴇᴅɢᴇwere realized by reported speech that paraphrased or summarized the attributed materials. Of these nearly all (176) were co-articulated with a range of Appraisal options that positioned new findings in relation to the citedliterature. ᴀᴄᴋɴᴏᴡʟᴇᴅɢᴇ was frequently co-articulated withᴇɴᴛᴇʀᴛᴀɪɴ (n=49), ʙᴀʀᴇᴀssᴇʀᴛɪᴏɴ (n=45), ᴄᴏᴜɴᴛᴇʀ (n=38), ᴅᴇɴʏ (n=29), and ᴘʀᴏɴᴏᴜɴᴄᴇ (n=21). However, it is not the case that ᴀᴄᴋɴᴏᴡʟᴇᴅɢᴇ was co-articulated with these five categories only or that ᴀᴄᴋɴᴏᴡʟᴇᴅɢᴇ was co-articulated with only one of the five categories at one time. In most instances, ᴀᴄᴋɴᴏᴡʟᴇᴅɢᴇ was found to be co-articulated with several of the five categories mentioned above, for example, the combination of ᴀᴄᴋɴᴏᴡʟᴇᴅɢᴇ, ᴄᴏᴜɴᴛᴇʀ, and ᴘʀᴏɴᴏᴜɴᴄᴇ:**In the literature, Oxford (2003) summarizes** [ᴀᴄᴋɴᴏᴡʟᴇᴅɢᴇ]...

While[COUNTER] these dimensions are found in students' accounts…, **data findings show that**[PRONOUNCE]... (Text 2: 307-8).The remainder of this section presents a detailed discussion of frequent patterns of co-articulation with ACKNOWLEDGE and discusses how these patterns worked to position the authors' own findings in the context of previous literature towards which the authors adopted a dialogic neutral stance.

The following example shows quite a complex co-articulation with ACKNOWLEDGE which was used across a long span of text.

7. Looking in particular at New Lee sections of the word history chapters that were presented above, **it appears that**[ENTERTAIN]contributors to many of the very earliest communicative discussions in the Journal are pre-occupied with the impact of new concepts, and in particular the notions of 'function' and 'communicative competence', as those ideas have been introduced and framed via the Council of Europe team's output. The CoE, and the work, particularly David Wilkins' Notional Syllabuses, undertaken in the wake of the project's activity, **appear to**[ENTERTAIN]be by far the most influential in the early communicative discourse of the Journal. This finding is somewhat at odds with the **"history of ideas" approach common in existing literature**[ACKNOWLEDGE]. The CoE appears in the discourse of the Journal as the major conduit—and **perhaps**[ENTERTAIN]the source itself— of ideas impacting on the early movement. In general, and as was noted in the literature review, the work of the Council of Europe's 'Threshold Project' in the early communicative movement is generally well acknowledged in the existing literature, in which it is often described as an important agent in the advancement of the movement's popularity.**Many works, notablyencyclopaedia entries such as Johnson's,and Richard and Rogers' (Richards, Rodgers 2001: p.154) historical sketch, refer to the important role of the CoE project team**[ACKNOWLEDGE]in providing an impetus to the new movement. **Howatt, too, describes the work of the team, and explains its basic work**[ACKNOWLEDGE]at comparative length (e.g. pp. 337—340). In one sense, therefore, the finding that the CoE was massively influential in the early communicative discourse of the Journal **seems**[ENTERTAIN]merely **to** reinforce the veracity of the accounts furnished in the existing literature.
    However[COUNTER]there is **in my opinion**[PRONOUNCE] a need to make an important, if rather nuanced adjustment to these descriptions.
    Whereas[COUNTER] the CoE is almost ubiquitously acknowledged as important in serious accounts of the early approach, much of the discussion in the Journal articles **suggest** that [ENTERTAIN] it was chief mediator, and **even**[COUNTER] originator of early communicative principles. **In the Journal the Project is frequently referred to not merely as an important stimulus to the new approach —an exemplar of its ideas and a provider of helpful materials —but in a way that suggests that it is the principle source of new concepts**[ACKNOWLEDGE].**In my view**[PRONOUNCE] this reassessment is important as

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it challenges the depiction, ubiquitous in the literature, of the influence of complex, extra-disciplinary theory on the new approach. (Text 10: 249-250)

In example 7, the author's main proposition about thefinding, as construed by the two instances of ENTERTAIN (**itappearsthat…; appear to…**) at the beginning of this example,is that the work of Council of Europe (CoE) has the most influential impact on the early communicative discourse of the ELT Journal. The author then asserts the connection between this finding and the view of the CoE that was introduced by acknowledging 'history of ideas approach' to studying the communicative language teaching. The author seems to restate thefinding about the influence of CoE again by qualifying the proposition via **perhaps**. After a cross-reference to the literature review chapter, the author introduces Johnson, Richard and Rogers, and Howatt, all of whom regard the CoE as influential in communicative movement (**Many works…such as Johnson's, and Richard and Rogers'…; Howatt, too, describes…**).The first paragraph of this example mainly displaysan expansive authorial stance towards both the writer's own findings and the relevant literature, as construed by a serial use of ENTERTAIN and ACKNOWLEDGE.In other words, the writer presents an open stanceand showsa willingness to negotiate propositions fromprevious scholarship and potential responses from imaginary or real readers.

The expansive stance spreads across the second paragraph where theauthor suggests a possible response of a potential reader (**seems**…**to**…) who may think that the author's finding is similar to and supportive ofthese scholars' opinions. The author's stance, however, shifts to one of a dialogic contractionas the author counters(**However**) that potential response and establishesthe need for anadjustment to the previous scholars' understanding by explicit authorial intervention (**in my opinion**). This can be seen as an interpersonal stance of authority similar to the metadiscourse of self mention (Hyland, 2005) and emphasizes the contribution of the author's findings. Although the author's stance remains contractive at the textual moment, which countered early accounts ofthe influence of CoE(**whereas**), interestingly, the stance returns to expansive when the authorspresents his finding as contingent on his own research evidence, thus opening space for alternative voices (**much of the discussion in the Journal articles**

suggest that…). Despite this shift, the dialogic space isimmediately reduced by use of JUSTIFY-FROM-DATA which provides specifically supportive evidencefor the authorial claim about the CoE Project as the original source of communicative approach from the author's research data(**IntheJournal the Project is frequently referred to…**). This in turn reinforces the previously entertained proposition (**…much of the discussion in the Journal articles suggest that…**). The author continues to close down the dialogic space through hisexplicit personal emphasis (**Inmyview**) on the positive attitude towards the reassessment of the impact of CoE, based on his findings. In doing so, the author promotes his argument that the work of CoE rather than the extra-disciplinary theory has a central impact on communicative approach.

The above explanations show the co-articulation of ACKNOWLEDGE with ENTERTAIN, COUNTER, PRONOUNCE and JUSTIFY-FROM-DATA across an extended stretch of discourse. The interpersonal meanings construed in each sentence worktogether to create a dynamic authorial stance. The encodings of ACKNOWLEDGE reveal an intersubjectively neutral stance towards the previous literature, while ENTERTAINtogether withPRONOUNCE and JUSTIFY-FROM-DATA indicate a changing stance from expansive to contractive towards the author's claims about his own findings. The expansive stance can help to build solidarity with those who hold alternative positions and the contractive stance can help to increase the argumentative power of propositions, both of which ultimately can diminish the possibility of rejection of the authorial claims (Martin & White, 2005). As Coffin (2002: 518) stated, '[writer and reader] solidarity may be best achieved either by construing the addressee as sharing a similar worldview or by acknowledging a diversity and multiplicity of standpoints, beliefs and attitudes as constituted in discursive practices'. The co-articulations with ACKNOWLEDGE shown in example7are supportive of this statement and achieve good writer-reader solidarity, thusfulfilling the rhetorical purpose in the discussion section topersuade the reader of significance of findings in relation to literature.

Moreover, the interpersonal value of COUNTER functioned to break the interpersonal prosody, which then realizes the shift in authorial stance and can potentially achieve the rhetorical goal of leading the reader to interpret the writer's intended stance.This phenomenon was also noted in Hood (2005: 54; 2006: 45)

where counter-expectancy expressions were used to mark the change ina 'prosodic domain' or 'prosodic key'. Overall, example 7 presents a highly heteroglossic text in which the complex co-articulations with ACKNOWLEDGE demonstrates the author's strategic engagement with the relevant literature while promotingthe significance of his research findings.

Examinations of suchinstances of heteroglossic text can be pedagogically beneficial to enlarge thesis writers' repertoire of interpersonal resources for taking a subtle critical stance towards previous research, but also prevent potential criticism of their claims. As Parry (1998: 291) has argued, 'doctoral students certainly cannot afford to make offensivejudgements about their senior colleagues, whose approval may be sought in the examination process'.Awareness-raising of these instances will also be useful for novice writers who may be unsure of whether and how to manage authorial positioning when discussing their research findings.

4.3   Aligning with previous literature – co-articulations with ENDORSE

Section 4.1 and 4.2 have presented two types of expansive authorial positioning (DISTANCE and ACKNOWLEDGE)towards previous literature and their co-articulations with other Appraisal options. This section highlightscontractive positioning which is realized by ENDORSE and indicatesthe writers' alignment with the citedpropositions. It further illustrates, with examples from the data, how ENDORSEisco-articulated with other Appraisal options when authors establish that their findings are similar to those of other research.

The annotation of the whole corpus identified346 instances of ENDORSE. Given the high number, we followed Wynne's (2009: 711) recommended procedure, to 'select every n^{th} example' from the total in order to achieve a manageable and unbiased sample. Wetrimmed the instance roughly by half, choosing every second instance of ENDORSE from each text so that the instances selected for qualitative analysis would be representative of the corpus as a whole.

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Our analysis of the 170 selected instances of ᴇɴᴅᴏʀsᴇ first revealedthat ᴇɴᴅᴏʀsᴇ more frequently (n=72) followed authorial propositions about research rather thanbeing presented prior to (n=42) them. In a small number of ᴇɴᴅᴏʀsᴇcases (N=10)the authorial propositions about research findings were presented both beforeand aftereach instance.The remaining 46 instances were found to function as a way for the authors to present a point of view viathe voice of other scholars, without making overt reference to their own research. That is, the internal authorial voice is conflated with the external voice and thereby is presented as aligning with value positions which in the cited material.

8. In 3.2.3, I noted the examination-oriented nature of schooling in Hong Kong…The TOC framework attempts to overthrow these societal views of competitive examination elements by proposing a paradigm shift from summative to formative, and from norm-referenced to criterion-referenced assessment **(Clark et al., 1994; Morris et al., 1999)** [ᴇɴᴅᴏʀsᴇ]. (Text 7: 288)

Example8is taken from a thesis that explored the implementation of Hong Kong's TOC (Target-Oriented Curriculum) in primary English illustratesa conflation of voices.The author first refers to a previous view in literature, which has been discussed in an earlier chapter of the thesis, about the examination-oriented nature of Hong Kong's education and then elaborates the local context's emphasis on the importance of competitive examinations. She then argues that the TOC is a challenge to this established view by referring to several scholars (**Clark et al., 1994; Morris et al., 1999**) who were presented as sharing the proposition currently being advanced. In this example ᴇɴᴅᴏʀsᴇ adds to the argumentative force of the proposition by characterizingit as one which is not the author's alone, but is shared with relevant experts and by the 'purported authoritativeness of the cited external source' (White, 2003: 270). The rhetorical consequence of this is to fend off any actual or potential dialogic alternatives and thus to position the reader to align with the author's proposition.

A further analysis of the 124 instances of ᴇɴᴅᴏʀsᴇ which were co-articulated with the authors' propositions about their findings showed that ᴇɴᴅᴏʀsᴇ was most frequently combined withᴇɴᴛᴇʀᴛᴀɪɴ (n=60), ʙᴀʀᴇᴀssᴇʀᴛɪᴏɴ (n=37), ᴘʀᴏɴᴏᴜɴᴄᴇ (n=45), ᴄᴏᴜɴᴛᴇʀ (n=23), and ᴅᴇɴʏ (n=21). It has to be pointed out that any of the five Appraisal options mentioned above can be used prior or subsequent to ᴇɴᴅᴏʀsᴇ,

either alone or with another option, to present authorial propositions. The rest of this section presents examples of different co-articulations with ENDORSE and discusses how the authors persuaded the reader of their propositions about research findings by aligning with similar previous views.

9. As we can see from the findings presented in section 6.3, the majority of teachers had not taken any training course on evaluating materials. Therefore, teachers **might**[ENTERTAIN] be unaware that published checklists specifically designed to help them to select a textbook exist. **Kao and Huang (2005) also found that**[ENDORSE] more than half of the teachers they interviewed admitted that they do not have clear teaching goals in their minds and have not been trained in the textbook selection process. (Text 1: 201)

Example 9 presents the co-articulation of ENDORSE with ENTERTAIN where the external proposition follows the authorial proposition. The author, based on her findings, proposed that there isalack of awareness among the teachers in her study for how to select textbooks and guides available to support this activity.In this excerpt the author actively opens up the dialogic space (**might**) to alternative views. At the same time, however, the author includes an attributed proposition which presentsa similar view (**Kao and Huang (2005) also found that…**) andthus indicates alignment with that presumably authoritative external voice. In shifting from the initial entertainments of views different from her ownto a dialogic contractive stancethe authors fends off alternativeviews. Since the textual voice is now aligned with external authority, the likelihood of the reader challenging the initial proposition is arguably reduced.

This example also seems to align with Oliver's (2004: 15) thesis writing guidebook,which states thatone typical way of justifying authorial propositions is to 'point toprevious research and to argue that the new assertion can be seen as reasonable in the light of that'.As mentioned earlier, in the corpus, themajority of instances of this type of co-articulation, where ENDORSEfollows authorial propositions and supportsthem. This finding to a degree supports Bloch and Chi (1995: 256) who revealed that authors of social science research articles 'used more citations for supporting their arguments, which could indicate a greater use of source texts for their rhetorical power'.

10. **The results of the post-course questionnaires, learner interviews and learner reflective diaries show that**[PRONOUNCE] the observed competence of teachers **may**[ENTERTAIN] influence the value learners attach to the teacher, their affect for the teacher as well as their attitudes toward the course tasks (see 4.1.3.2). **The result is in line with Banfield, Richmond and McCroskey's (2006) study in which they claim that** [ENDORSE] incompetent teachers may negatively impact learners' affect for the teacher and decrease their motivation to take a class with the teacher. (Text 5: 197)

Example 10also reveals the co-articulation ofENDORSE with PRONOUNCE and ENTERTAIN.In this example the author combines her result with the external material which she explicitly presented as in alignment. This seems to reflect Murray's (2011) suggestion thatwriting about one's work and published work in the same sentence is an effective strategy for reinforcing one'sargument. However, in our corpus we saw only few instances of this, as the total of 9 instances, including example 10, all came from one particular text, reflecting a very limited use of this recommended strategy. This result may indicate that the writers in the corpus are unaware of the strategy, or may indicate that they preferred other techniques.

A different strategy is revealed when the author put forward the proposition for which she contracts dialogic space regarding alternatives. The author does so through PRONOUNCE and enacted by means of a matrix-clause (**The results of the post-course questionnaires, learner interviews and learner reflective diaries show that…**), but then chooses to expand the limited space through ENTERTAIN enacted by means of a sub-clausal element (**may**), which represents a shift in interpersonal positioning. The strategy here construes the author as positioning the reader to take up the authorial proposition, but then openingthe dialogic relationship of alignment with the reader, who might view matters differently.

Instead of simultaneously expressing the author's and external work in one sentence, our analysis revealeda tendency of explicitly signaling positive connection between the author's own research and previous work in the sentence following the introduction of cited external material. This is revealed in Examples 11, 12, and 13.

11. **Morris (1999b) identifies this aspect as being one of the significant impacts of TOC**:[ENDORSE]

Some teachers claimed that they had been trying to use pedagogies which promoted task-based learning, interaction and group-work prior to the introduction of TOC but had found this difficult to sustain as it was in tension with the established patterns of schooling. The introduction of TOC served to change this scenario. (p.9)

The comments of teachers A and C (5.4.4) are able to provide further confirming evidence[BARE ASSERTION] of this impact of TOC. (Text 7: 275)

12. In a discussion of the difficulties inherent in attempting complex change, **Fullan (1991a) suggests that** [ENDORSE] "the answer seems to be to break complex changes into components and implement them in a divisible and/or incremental manner" (p. 72). This **seems to**[ENTERTAIN] be in line with teacher C's suggestion in 5.4.1 that for TOC it is preferable to implement the teaching part before changing the assessment aspects. (Text 7: 277)

13. **The following conceptualization–formulated by Widdowson (2003:115)in respect of L2 learning**[ENDORSE]–serves **I think**[PRONOUNCE] as a useful point of departure in this connection: … (Text 11: 272-3)

In these examples, the authors point out apositive connection between their own research and the view of previous scholars by means of BAREASSERTION(**…are able to provide further confirming evidence**), ENTERTAIN (**appears to**),and PRONOUNCE (**I think**), respectively.We observed a total of 11 instances ofsuch examples where the connection was most frequently made via the three options (ENTERTAIN n=4, PRONOUNCE n=3, and BAREASSERTION n=2).

In summary, we analyzed three recurring patterns of combinations of Appraisal options which are used across stretches of text in theses to evaluate the writers' propositions about their own findings in relation to previous knowledge.The analysis shows that DISTANCEtends to be combined with contractive ENGAGEMENT options (PRONOUNCE and ENDORSE). This result suggests that when these writers distance themselves from previous findings and then present their own, they are likely to construe for their texts a reader who may raise a different view and therefore choose to shut off the space for dialogic negotiation.The analysis also shows that ACKNOWLEDGE is used to construe a neutral attitude when attributing relevant material. It is frequently co-articulated with COUNTER and DENY, and their co-articulations function to set the writers' research in relation to previous literature before they make specific claims about their own findings, which are often found to be realized by PRONOUNCE and ENTERTAIN.Lastly, the analysis shows that endorse is

often combined with expansive ENGAGEMENT options when the writers present research findings while aligning themselves with some similar previous views. Given the fact that propositions realized by ENDORSE tended to follow the writers' propositions about their own findings (see beginning of 4.3), it suggests that the writers seek to bring in support from literature via ENDORSESo as to close the dialogic space which is opened by ENTERTAIN and thereby position the reader to accept their propositions.

5   Data driven learning: a small scale pedagogic intervention

We argued in our introduction that most thesis writing guidebooks donot provide specific information on the way writers engage withrelevant literature while discussing their own findings. The corpus datapresented in Section 4and in the supplementary file can be used for complementing guidebooks or for designing new materials to support writers wishing to learn how to use interpersonal language in this genre. It is widely acknowledged that corpus-based language teaching and learning has the potential to raise learners' awareness of the target language structure and pattern through exploration of corpus data (Chang &Schleppegrell, 2011; Hyland, 2003; Lee & Swales, 2006; Römer, 2009; Weber, 2001). Our research piqued the interest ofMasters' studentsin theauthors'Universitydepartment who were in the process of writing their dissertations. Although ourresults were based on doctoral theses, they were of interestto these students since writers at the Masters'level also need to perform the rhetorical task of interpreting their own research findings in relation to previous literature and taking different authorial stances towards both their own and others' propositions.At the same time, taking an authorial stance and making claims with appropriate degree of certainty are commonly reported as problematic areas for novice writers (e.g. Hood, 2005,2010; Chang &Schleppegrell, 2011).To address the students' interest and need we offered some workshops based on our findings to help thembecome aware of different strategies for achieving the two rhetorical effects in writing discussion sections.

Institutional Ethical Clearance was obtained before running these sessions. Student participants were invited via a consent email (see Appendix), which was sent by the second author (who delivered the session).Two sets of materials were designed.Set 1 wasa PowerPoint file presenting information about Appraisal options for taking an interpersonal stance in the discussion section of a thesis, the likely effect of different choices, and the corpus-based findings about the most frequent patterns of using these options. Set 2 contained5 different tasks with an increasing degree of complexity, using a list of authentic examples extracted from our corpus for each task (seeSupplementary File).

Task 1 involves identifying authorial stance towards previous literature while Task 2 focuses on identifyinga stance towards the author's own research. The remaining three tasks are more complex and require students to deal with longer extracts which combine authorial stance with regard toothers' and one's own research. For example, in Task 3 students looked at extracts that showed a combination of positioning an authorial stance toward research results and distancing the authorial stance from the literature (see Supplementary File).

Before each task, the students were given basicinstruction on the types of authorial stance to be identified, for instance in Task 2: ***'In these extracts, writers are talking about their own research. In each case, do you find their stance more tentative, or more assertive?'***(seeSupplementary File). This ensured that they had some appropriate metalanguage with which to discuss the extracts. After they completed each task and discussed their opinions, they were given more explanations about the rhetorical purposes of different authorial stances in that task in light of Appraisal theory and about the distribution of those stances in the current corpus.

During the sessions, the students worked through handouts containing examples which we had selected from the corpus, rather than directly on a computer with access to the full corpus. This type of learning can be seen as a weaker version as opposed to a stronger version of data-driven learning (DDL)where learners would directly access corpora in order to investigate language problems by

themselves (Thompson, 2006).In the workshop extractswhich follow, studentsin the workshopsare referred to by lettersfor the purpose of anonymity, for example student A (SA), student B (SB) and so on.

A general observation is that all students seemed to have a good level of awareness of the need to have an authorial stance while reviewing literature or discussing their own findings. They seemed to have no difficulty in identifying authorial stance in all five tasks, although they showed different degrees of consensus on the stance that was expressed in the different extracts. To identify the stance moststudents tended to rely on reporting verbs in the extracts as linguistic clues,although some mentioned referring to the context while commenting on some extracts.

Discussing Task 1, student SH asked about[3] the appropriateness of distancing oneself from the literature by indicating a negative attitude, as in extract 5 (see Supplementary File):

> ***is it ok to (define) somebody else's work with such adjectives, appraisal? […] I know you have to take a stance, but I mean the word choice, you know that some words are more neutral than that one?****(SH)*

This comment seems to reflect Parry's (1998) statement about the risk that doctoral studentsfeel theytake by making offendingjudgmentsabout their senior colleagues. While this concern is understandable, the more importantquestionhere is, in fact,how novice writers can avoid being accused of making inappropriately negative or even offending judgments while disaligning themselves from previous researchers. The answer that emerged from the current corpus is that students can comfortablyco-articulateDISTANCE with dialogic contractive options (e.g. PRONOUNCE/ENDORSE) in order to increase the interpersonal cost of anyone who might challenge the writer and thus reject the potentially disagreeing voice.

Task 2, which focused identifying authorial stance towards the writer'sown findings, seemed to be easier for the students, as both groups reached consensus on

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[3]The workshops were recorded and students' questions and comments were transcribed based on the recordings.

the stance expressed in all four extracts. This observation suggests that these students were familiar with the strategies used.As for Tasks 3 to 5, two students' comments are worth mentioning. One interesting comment was madeabout extract 3 in Task 3,whichhasacombination of many Appraisal options:

Extract 3 in Task 3
…strong will or persistence are often associated with Chinese culture by researchers such as Hu (2002), Jin and Cortazzi (1996). The present study provides no evidence for such a claim. Instead, the present study supports a contextualized understanding of concepts of learner autonomy that is suggested by researchers such as Aoki (2001) and Palfreyman (2003a).

When students were asked about how in Extract 3 the author pronounce their own findings, while establishing distance from the literature, SAanswered that:

assertive […] by negating a previous thing, no such evidence, instead, and supports a different view […] it's not their own research, but their referencing something else, (opposing) with different research, other research (SA)

SA's analysis is consistent with the pattern of co-articulating ENDORSE with DISTANCE identified in the current corpus (see Section4.3). This comment indicates her high awareness of the way of arguing forone'sown findings by invoking the support of similar results in other research.

SN noticed the different sequences of combining the writers' reference to the literature and the writers' reference to their own findings:

as far as the organizations concerned, maybe distanc(ing) the literature review comes first and then research findings next. But in the immediate exercise the research findings come first and then it then presents supportive literature review. (SN)

This student's comment reflects one finding from the current corpus (see Section4.3)that ENDORSE was more frequently used after reportingthe author's findingsthan before. Students' observations from eventhe limited data provided suggest that theyhave been made aware of different patterns of combining Appraisal options to evaluate one's own and others' research findings, which would benefit their writing. In fact, some students commented in the post-session evaluation that: 'results found in the corpus research included in the session are most useful' and 'It was good to get a sense of real practice'.

Overall, the students provided a highly positive evaluation of the two sessions as indicated by their answers to the 7 Likert-scale questions that probe their opinions about mainly the topics, materials, tasks, and presentation of the session (see Appendix). About 70% of them strongly agreed that the session enhanced their understanding of the options and strategies for discussing results of research. This evaluation also seems to be reflected by many students' answers to question 8 about what was most useful for their writing (see Appendix). For example, they commented: 'understanding a mix of stance is vital', 'how to bring other voices and our textual voice', 'reminded me that am I consciously avoiding certain stance', 'stance towards research findings', and 'understanding of different type of stance'etc. All these comments suggest a good result of awareness-raising which may be beneficial to their writing of dissertation.

6   Conclusion

Our corpus-based analysis explained some major patterns of authors' engagement with previous literature while discussing their own research findings, and our account of a pedagogic intervention that illustrates how the findings may be used by students. Our analyses and explanationshave shown different patterns of co-articulations with DISTANCE, ACKNOWLEDGE, and ENDORSE according to authorial propositions about their research findings. Our qualitative approach, in which interpersonal language is examined qualitatively across clause boundaries, has allowed us to see patterns which would not be visible had we looked only within clause boundaries. The analysis showed a tendency for writers to combineDISTANCE and PRONOUNCE. This indicates that when these writers chose to disalign themselves from claims in previous literature and made claims about their own different findings they tended to employ a dialogic contractive voice so as to fend off the reader who might have raise questions. The analysis also revealed a tendency to implement acombination of ENDORSE and ENTERTAIN. It seems that when these writers discussed findings that are consistent with existing knowledge they tended to present their claims in a dialogic expansive voice and then to align themselves with previous

literature. This functioned tosupport their own propositions. Moreover, the analysis observed that even when these writers adopted a dialogically neutral positioning towards previous literature, as realized by ACKNOWLEDGE, they tended to show an invoked alignment or disalignment often realized by BAREASSERTION or ENTERTAIN which points out the positive or negative connection between the literature and the authors' own findings.Students who were offered the opportunity to interact with these findings during the workshops were able to reflect critically on the likely rhetorical consequences of different linguistic choices, and to draw conclusions relevant to their own writing.

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Appendix:

1.   Gloss of Appraisal options investigated

Appraisal option	Definition	Example
BARE ASSERTION	utterances that ignore any actual or potential divergent voices within a given communication	***Teachers are given freedom to*** select their preferred materials, as has been discussed in section 2.2. (Text 1: 197)
DENY	linguistic realizations that invoke an opposite position for the purpose of completely refuting it	its [COMMUNICATIVE] definition is ***not*** stable over time. (Text 10: 242)
COUNTER	linguistic realizations that invoke alternative views for the purpose of replacing them	They seemed to agree with the course requirement ***though*** they felt bored with the prescribed course book. (Text 3: 97)
CONCUR	linguistic realizations that present a position as generally shared within a given community	***Normally*** learners' engagement or participation in a task is measured by some observable behaviour such as speaking or writing. (Text 3: 200)
PRONOUNCE	linguistic realizations that present a position as highly convincing and thus simultaneously refute any challenging position	***In fact,*** throughout the project, the real value of collocation data to analysis was extremely variable. (Text 10: 272)
ENDORSE	linguistic realizations that present the author's overt alignment with an external voice that is often construed as highly credible	Teaching in the classroom is a complex job which is both academic and social in nature. ***As Dörnyei (2005) says,*** 'the classroom, is also a social arena…' (Text 3: 261**)**
ENTERTAIN	linguistic realizations that present a position as but one of a set of various possible positions	⋯***it seems that there could be*** additional pedagogic opportunities offered by adding more system to choices of words and their uses within the courses. (Text 12: 245)
ACKNOWLEDGE	linguistic realizationsthat disassociate the authorial voice from the position being currently advanced but do not explicitly mark the authorial stance towards that position	For example, ***Shoaib and Dörnyei (2005) focus on*** language learners' long-term motivational moves and shifts in their study (reviewed in 4.1.3.4). (Text 3: 271)

DISTANCE	linguistic realizationsthat present the author's overt disalignment from an attributed position	Third, the ability to find appropriate methods… ***According to Wenden (1991; 2002),*** learner autonomy is pre-conditioned by necessary learning strategies. Therefore, to have proper learning strategies is seen as compulsory to the capacity for learner autonomy. However, with a further examination of the data, it was revealed that what often happened was not that students did not have the capacity to know or to use certain learning methods but that they tended to become suspicious of the usefulness of their methods if they did not see the expected learning efficiency. (Text 2: 277)
JUSTIFY-FROM-DATA	linguistic realizations that make overt reference to the author's specific research data such as interviews, questionnaires, and teaching journals in order to support an authorial proposition that is usually presented prior to this reference	Students reported they were rather confused by the whole thing. ***As one student commented:*** "I write the hook [name of a specific writing technique] in the Mr. Sun's class, he said no, you can't write this on it, so I think maybe it's not a part of academic writing." (Text 8: 254)

2. Consent email: sent by the second author, to whom "I" in the text refers:

Dear MA students

I'm writing to invite you to participate in a session on *Writing the discussion section of your dissertation*. As you may remember, the first author, one of our PhD students, has been doing research based on a corpus of discussion sections of doctoral theses in TESOL/ Applied Linguistics. She has research findings which we both feel will be of interest to MA writers, and so we're offering to share them in these sessions.

I will be the person delivering the sessions, and she will be present as a researcher – observing, taking notes, audio-recording the session and distributing a short questionnaire for participants to complete at the end.

We'd like a maximum of 10 people in each session. At the moment we have booked three time slots, but can do more if there is a demand.If you would like to join, please do sign up for your preferred time using the doodlepoll below [link].

Please bear in mind that by signing up, you give your consent for the session to be recorded and used for research purposes. Please be assured that you will not be identified in any research report, and that whether or not you choose to participate, and any feedback you may give, will have no effect on your dissertation grade. You will be free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

3. Session Evaluation Form

Date:

Title of session: Finding a textual voice: Exploring some options for the discussion section of a thesis or dissertation

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with the statements listed below in #1-7.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The topics covered were relevant to my needs.	○	○	○	○	○
2. The content was organized and easy to follow.	○	○	○	○	○
3. The materials distributed were satisfactory and effective.	○	○	○	○	○
4. The tasks helped me to understand the materials.	○	○	○	○	○
5. The session enhanced my understanding of the options and strategies for discussing results of research.	○	○	○	○	○
6. I expect to use the knowledge and skills gained from this session.	○	○	○	○	○
7. Overall, the session was helpful to my writing.	○	○	○	○	○

8. What part of the session was the **most useful** for your writing?

9. Other comments or feedback: