

Getting engaged: dialogistic positioning in novice academic discussion writing*

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1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter builds on a proposal put forward in Swain (2007a), that in effective academic argumentation, a very important role is played by the ENGAGEMENT system (White, 1998, 2003; Martin & White, 2005) of appraisal theory (Feez et al, 2008; Martin, 2000; White, 2005; Martin & White, 2005). Applications of appraisal theory in educational contexts thus far have tended to focus on the systems of ATTITUDE (Coffin, 2002, 2003; Rothery & Stenglin, 2000; Hood, 2004) and GRADUATION (Hood, 2006). My analysis for attitude and engagement of discussion essays by non-native speaker undergraduates suggested that students of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) may experience less difficulty with effective deployment of the resources of ATTITUDE than with those of dialogistic positioning. From this it followed that increased attention to and awareness of the latter's forms and functions could prove beneficial in EAP contexts. Here I report on a subsequent quantitative and qualitative analysis for engagement and attitude of a small corpus of non-native English speaker (NNS) undergraduate discussion essays, first presented at the ISFLC in Odense (Swain, 2007b).

The chapter is organised into 7 sections. The next section 2 sets out some reasons for attending to engagement in academic discussion writing. Section 3 explains the ENGAGEMENT system in more detail. Section 4 anticipates some dif-

ferences between media discourse, from which the engagement framework was developed, and academic discourse. Section 5 describes the corpus, method and results of the study. Section 6 discusses the implications of the results for voice description and for EAP writing pedagogy. Section 7 draws together the main points.

2. WHY ENGAGEMENT?

ENGAGEMENT is one of the three systems of appraisal theory, a development of the affect dimension within the situational variable of tenor (Poynton, 1989). The other two are ATTITUDE and GRADUATION. ATTITUDE comprises those lexicogrammatical resources which, to quote Martin & White (2005: 35) directly, are concerned with 'our feelings, including emotional reactions, judgements of behaviour and evaluations of things'. Resources grouped under GRADUATION have to do with 'grading phenomena whereby feelings are amplified and categories blurred'. Last but not least, ENGAGEMENT comprises those resources concerned with '*sourcing attitudes and the play of voices around opinions in discourse*' (my italics). These resources include different kinds of reporting verbs, modal verbs, frequency adverbs, negatives, contrastive discourse markers and some kinds of comment adjuncts. The ENGAGEMENT system will be described in more detail in 3. below.

Swain (2007a) compared and contrasted two EAP undergraduate discussion¹ essays, A and B, one high and one low scoring, for their deployment of ATTITUDE and ENGAGEMENT resources. The essays answered the same question: 'What are the arguments for and against the death penalty?' and adopted a similar macrostructure, arguments, and conclusion. The results of the analysis for authorial and non-authorial inscribed and evoked attitude (affect, judgement, appreciation) in each essay showed a relatively slight difference in the type, range and relative proportions of inscribed and evoked judgement (social sanction and esteem) and appreciation (social valuation). By contrast, the analysis for engagement showed considerable qualitative and quantitative differences between the two essays. The high-scoring essay drew on a much wider range of resources from the different subsystems of ENGAGEMENT, and also showed a more even balance between expanding and contracting resources. The less successful essay relied heavily on the contracting resource DISCLAIM: DENY, and was lacking in the expanding resources of ATTRIBUTE, creating confusion as to the source of the contrasting views expressed. The analysis thus showed that ATTITUDE resources were less pivotal in distinguishing the well argued from the less well argued essay than ENGAGEMENT resources.

The findings of this small investigation complemented those of previous, more extensive SFL-based research on APPRAISAL resources in the context of written discourse in secondary and tertiary education. This research includes work on graduation in academic writing (Hood, 2006) and investigations of appraisal in school essays on history (Coffin, 2002, 2003) and literature (Rothery & Stenglin, 2000). Coffin's research showed that student essays using high frequencies of inscribed attitude from the system of judgement found favour with examiners, and Rothery & Stenglin noted an unexpectedly extensive use of judgement rather than appreciation in a selected 'Typical Excellent Response' secondary

school English literature essay, attributable to a Leavisite approach to teaching literature (2000:222-3, 241-3).

My proposal concerning the centrality of engagement in discussion writing is based on a small-scale survey of NNS undergraduate essays written at the end of an EAP programme, and cannot by any means claim to be the last word on the subject. It is feasible for instance that two argumentative essay answers to the same question, one high and one low scoring, might show a comparable range and frequency of ENGAGEMENT resources, but differ markedly in their choice of ATTITUDE resources, or even show a comparable use of both, pointing to other causes of success or failure, such as the perceived value of the reasons and arguments put forward, the degree of evaluative coherence (see below), and / or the essay structure². A much larger empirical study, investigating also published, professional academic writing, would be necessary to explore in more depth the correlation between perceived quality of discussion and the deployment of ENGAGEMENT resources.

However, even without such a study, there are grounds for attending to engagement in EAP. Firstly, support comes from Ken Hyland, whose reservations about the value of appraisal theory for the analysis of academic discourse would seem paradoxically to uphold the more prominent role in it of ENGAGEMENT than of the ATTITUDE resources of AFFECT, JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION. He writes, backed by his extensive corpus research:

'It seems, for example, that 'attitude' in academic texts more often concerns *writers' judgements of epistemic probability* and estimations of value, with affective meanings less prominent (Hyland, 1999, 2000).' (Hyland, 2005: 175, my italics).

In appraisal theory, expressions of epistemic probability, together with a range of expressions known and widely taught in the EAP pedagogical literature as hedges and boosters, are comprised within the ENGAGEMENT framework, though their functions are theorised rather differently. They are grouped under the sub-systems ENTERTAIN (e.g. *may, perhaps, must*) and PROCLAIM: CONCUR (e.g. *certainly, of course, obviously*; see the discussion in Martin & White, 2005: 104-11;132-3, and in 3. below). Hyland's estimation of the prominence in academic discourse of resources belonging to the ENGAGEMENT system, and of the lower incidence of affective meanings, would support the claim concerning the relevance of this system in academic contexts.

My second, third and fourth arguments for attending to ENGAGEMENT resources in academic discussion writing on EAP programmes are the result of observation and experience. I will develop these arguments below, using some excerpts of student writing by way of illustration.

Pedagogically speaking, it seems reasonable to see argumentation as entailing a set of increasingly complex linguistic and discourse skills which are progressively acquired, with dialogistic positioning located towards the upper end of the scale of difficulty. (Derewianka, 2007:162, referring to writing in secondary education, talks about the 'movement from a relatively undialogized writer position which sees the field as unproblematic to a writer position which is more explicitly open to other voices and possibilities and which recognises the need to negotiate with these voices'). In other words, before collocating propositions

in the communicative context represented by an essay, writers must be able to articulate experiential ‘topics’ or ‘subject matter’, e.g.

1. Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction.

They must also be able to evaluate people, things and ideas through attitudinal lexis:

2. Saddam Hussein, *the evil dictator*, had weapons of mass destruction [- JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL SANCTION]. OR

3. Saddam Hussein had *dangerous* weapons of mass destruction [- APPRECIATION: SOCIAL VALUATION].

and adjust force and focus through the resources of GRADUATION, e.g.:

4. Saddam Hussein had **huge stockpiles of** [GRADUATION: FORCE] weapons of mass destruction.

Student writers will need to be aware too of implicit, contextually inferable evaluation in the case of non-evaluative propositions such as example 1 above, which may be read as implying, if not actually stating, that Saddam Hussein is evil and / or dangerous. They will also need to be aware, as Hyland points out in his assessment of appraisal theory’s applicability to EAP, that academic contexts place constraints on the expression of attitude:

‘.. much of [the work on evaluation and stance] has tended to concentrate on mass audience texts, such as journalism, politics and media discourses, which are likely to yield the richest crop of explicitly evaluative examples. *Yet these public genres tend to offer writers far more freedom to position themselves interpersonally than academic genres.*’ (Hyland, 2005: 175, my italics)

These constraints on attitudinal meanings in academic discourse are sometimes not adhered to by novice writers. The following introduction to an EFL undergraduate essay discussing the death penalty illustrates some naivety in this area:

5. The death penalty represents one of the *most terrible problems* [- APPRECIATION: SOCIAL EVALUATION] which still affects a lot of countries worldwide. But this tragic reality [- APPRECIATION: SOCIAL EVALUATION] does not concern only some of the countries belonging to the ‘Third World’, which are still affected by dictatorial regimes, but also developed countries such as the USA, which represents a democratic model for many countries, and which is still *the most powerful country in the world* [+ JUDGEMENT: CAPACITY]

Some of the attitude in these opening sentences would need to be neutralised in order to achieve greater conformity with the stylistic conventions of academic discourse. It can be seen, however, if we substitute ‘most terrible problems’ and ‘this tragic reality’ with more neutral items, that achieving this goal is a relatively simple matter:

5.1 The death penalty is a **contentious issue**, which still affects a lot of countries worldwide. But the issue does not concern only some of the countries belonging to the ‘Third World’, which are still affected by dictatorial regimes, but also developed countries such as the USA, which represents a democratic model for many countries, and which is still the most powerful country in the world.

Thus altered, the introduction nonetheless remains ‘noisy’, because it exhibits an inappropriate use of contracting resources of the ENGAGEMENT system (underlined), from the COUNTER category: *still, but, still, but, still* (see below). This has the effect of immediately ‘crowding’ the context by anticipating and deflecting alternative views towards propositions which many readers would consider unproblematic. The first, counter-expectational *still* anticipates the view that the death penalty is no longer widely used; twice-used *but* counters the expectation that only third world countries use the death penalty; the second *still* that third world countries no longer have dictatorial regimes, and the third *still*, that the USA is no longer the world’s most powerful country. I suggest that understanding these unfortunate rhetorical effects, and de-problematizing this excerpt’s unproblematic propositions, are more complex tasks than the previous one of perceiving and toning down affective volume: they entail rather closer attention to the type of prose and reader-writer relationship being constructed. Here, the reader is construed as potentially misinformed about, or forgetful of basic facts, and a ‘persuade that’ type of analytical exposition is unfolding, where a more monologic, report type of writing (Martin, 1989:6-9;16-21) would be more appropriate in English academic writing. The function of these opening sentences is to inform rather than to contest or approve: they provide uncontroversial background information to the controversial topic which will be discussed. Removal of most of the COUNTER resources brings them more into line with this conventional function of essay introductions (Oshima & Hogue, 1999:101-6):

5.2 The death penalty is a contentious issue which affects a lot of countries worldwide, not only ‘Third World’ countries affected by dictatorial regimes, but also developed ones such as the USA, which represents a democratic model for many countries, and which is the most powerful country in the world.

To sum up thus far, my second argument has been that formulating evaluative propositions, as in examples 2 and 3 above (monoglossic evaluations of people or things, see below), and abiding by the limits placed on attitudinal meanings in written academic discourse may be seen as more basic and immediate skills than those entailed in effectively and appropriately deploying the resources of dialogistic positioning, fundamental to the development of an argument or discussion.

Preparation for discussion writing in the EAP classroom is likely to focus on referencing the arguments ‘for’ and ‘against’ a particular proposition or proposal (Jordan, 1999: 76-81). This preparation will entail giving reasons, examples, and authoritative citations to support or contest a thesis, as in the following examples³:

6. G.W. Bush said that Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi leader, had weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and their proliferation had to be prevented.

7. Furthermore, as Cesare Beccaria argues in his work 'Dei Delitti e delle Pene', the punishment by death has never prevented men from injuring society.

Later stages of writing involve building the referenced opinions, the reasons and the examples into a coherent argument. This involves comparing and contrasting positions (*however, but, nevertheless, by contrast*), expressing degrees of agreement and disagreement (*certainly, of course, surely*), acknowledging and refuting other points of view (*may, possibly, not*). In this essay scaffolding process, ENGAGEMENT resources such as those aforementioned in brackets, and underlined in examples 6 and 7 above, play an important role.

A fourth point is that on completion, whether or not a discussion essay is deemed successful will depend to a considerable extent on its 'evaluative coherence'. This property refers to 'the way [] writers work to convey a consistent personal evaluation of the topic they are dealing with' (Thompson & Zhou, 2000:123). Again, it is through appropriate use of the resources of dialogistic positioning that consistency of the authorial voice is achieved. These resources serve to align or disalign the latter with referenced viewpoints in the essay, consistently with an explicitly stated or inferable authorial position. Their inappropriate use may create inconsistency of authorial alignment and confusion as to where the authorial voice stands, detracting from the essay's persuasive effectiveness (Thompson, 2001: 70-2)*.

Fifthly, essay structure, an evaluation criterion as I mentioned earlier, has implications for the deployment of ENGAGEMENT resources. A two-sided argument seems likely to select different (and more) options in the ENGAGEMENT system than a one-sided argument. In referencing, comparing and contrasting different viewpoints, for instance, it may feasibly draw more extensively on the ATTRIBUTE and COUNTER subsystems than a one-sided argument. A one-sided argument – if it is the author's – may by contrast make greater use of monoglossic formulations. Similarly, a hortatory argument which seeks to persuade the reader to do something, may select different ENGAGEMENT options than an analytical argument, which seeks to persuade the reader that something is or is not the case. Though it is not the focus of the present study to investigate specifically the relation between essay structure and ENGAGEMENT options (which would be a very interesting project), these assumptions seem plausible.

Sixthly and lastly, attention to the kinds of ENGAGEMENT resources which are typically used in academic discussion writing would respond to the gap noted by Hyland:

Because we do not yet have a model of evaluative discourse that emerges from the study of academic writing itself, we cannot say which features are *typical* in scholarly writing, rather than which are *possible*. (Hyland, 2005:175)

Having thus given some good reasons for attending to ENGAGEMENT resources in EAP programmes, I will now spend a few words outlining the ENGAGEMENT system in more detail before describing the study.

3. ENGAGEMENT THEORY

Within appraisal theory, the ENGAGEMENT system is concerned with the resources of 'dialogistic positioning', namely those resources 'by which speakers / writers adopt a stance towards the value positions being referenced by a text and with respect to those they address' (Martin & White, 2005:92).

The ENGAGEMENT system in appraisal theory has enjoyed perhaps less publicity than the ATTITUDE systems of AFFECT, JUDGEMENT, APPRECIATION and GRADUATION. Unlike the first three, it has not figured prominently in the characterisations of 'voice' in journalistic (Feez et al, 2008; White, 1998), history (Coffin, 2003) and legal discourse (Heffer, 2007; 2009)⁵. Hyland's above-cited scepticism about the usefulness of appraisal theory for the analysis of academic discourse (2005: 173-4) appears to consider only the ATTITUDE and GRADUATION systems of appraisal theory, leaving the ENGAGEMENT system out of the picture⁶. Furthermore, although the ENGAGEMENT system is included in Martin and White's more recent study of voice in media discourse, it is only briefly discussed (2005: 181-4)⁷: ATTITUDE systems remain the key ones for describing voice.

The description of the ENGAGEMENT system has undergone some revisions from the version presented in White (1998), to that in White (2003), and to a more recent description in Martin and White (2005: 92-135). My summary of it in this section is based on the more recent, 2005 account.

The resources of dialogistic positioning are so-called because they are understood within a Bakhtinian, 'dialogistic' perspective on texts. This perspective sees all texts as 'heteroglossic' or multi-voiced, in the sense that all texts and utterances evoke previously expressed points of view and anticipate those of potential readers / listeners: they are both backward- and forward-looking. The resources of dialogistic positioning encode this property of dialogicity, aligning and disaligning writers with readers and both vis a vis the propositions and proposals in texts. They comprise a disparate group of lexicogrammatical forms, which have been grouped under subsystems. A brief overview follows.

In categorising ENGAGEMENT resources Martin & White operate a first distinction between monoglossic and heteroglossic propositions. Monoglossic propositions are 'univocal', and otherwise known as 'bare assertions', like this declarative from the conclusion of a NNS undergraduate essay:

8. The US invasion of Iraq was *a violation of international law*.

The unmodalized, unattributed proposition is seen to emanate from the authorial voice, and has a fact-like ring to it, though it makes a negative evaluation of US behaviour ('a violation of international law') with which not everyone would agree. The assertion is treated however as unproblematic, in the sense that it does not appear to anticipate any objection from the potential reader concerning its truth validity. The reader is thus aligned with the authorial view through this monoglossic formulation.

The next example is also monoglossic, but not explicitly evaluative like the former. It is typical of 'factual' exposition of the explanatory type (Martin, 1989: 6-8), and categorises some general causes of the invasion:

9. The invasion of Iraq had economic, political and social reasons.

Heteroglossic propositions on the other hand are ‘multivocal’ in the sense that they do suggest the presence of voices other than that of the author. The most obvious resource implied here is reporting verbs which attribute a proposition to a non-authorial source, as in example 6 above:

G.W. Bush said that Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi leader, might have weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and their proliferation had to be prevented.

Among heteroglossic resources, a broad, two-part distinction is made between expanding and contracting resources, a distinction which has to do with their function of including or excluding alternative viewpoints from the communicative context. A summary of each type of heteroglossic resource is provided, with examples, in tables 1 and 2 below. I will start with the expanding resources, whose function is to include alternative viewpoints.

Expanding resources fall into two main categories: ENTERTAIN and ATTRIBUTE. The ENTERTAIN category as mentioned earlier comprises those resources commonly taught on EAP programmes as part of the category ‘hedges and ‘boosters’, and which are typically theorised as estimations of epistemic probability. Consider ‘may’ in example 10 below:

10. The large-scale application of economic, trade or communication sanctions, as happened with Italy in 1935 or more recently with Libya, Iraq or the former Yugoslavia, may represent a failure of the United Nations⁸.

In traditional EAP pedagogy (e.g. Jordan, 1999:88-92), the function of ‘may’ here would be described as expressing authorial caution towards the proposition that sanctions have shown the UN’s ineffectiveness. In the engagement framework, however, ‘may’ here would be seen as allowing for the view that sanctions do not constitute proof of the UN’s ineffectiveness. Thus, through ‘may’, a dissenting view is ‘included’. Other resources which have this function of opening up the communicative context to alternative voices include modal adjuncts (*possibly, definitely*) and attributes (*it’s probable that, it’s unlikely that*) some mental verb / attribute projections (*I think/believe that..*) or Circumstances of Angle (*in my view*), evidentials (*it seems / appears; apparently; the evidence suggests*) and frequency adverbs (*sometimes, often, always*). ENTERTAIN resources also include rhetorical questions of the ‘expository’ type, i.e. which do not assume a specific answer. Such ‘open’ questions are commonly used in newspaper headlines, and in essay titles too, e.g.

11. Has the UN been a failure?

Notably, rhetorical questions are not often dealt with in EAP textbooks, nor are they frequent in undergraduate academic writing (Hyland, 2002b: 532, 536, 551, 554).

The category ATTRIBUTE is concerned with those resources for attributing propositions to external sources. However, whereas the resources for citing and quot-

ing are commonly taught on EAP programmes (Oshima & Hogue, 1999:82-98; Jordan, 1999:96, 102; Thurstun & Candlin, 2002: 39-60) as a single category, the system ATTRIBUTE comprises two subcategories: ACKNOWLEDGE and DISTANCE. The resources in the ACKNOWLEDGE grouping are so-called because they are attitudinally 'neutral', in the sense that they do not allow inference of the author's position with respect to the proposition they project. They include reporting verbs (*say, report, believe, state, observe*), their nominalisations (*the belief / view / observation / statement that*) and Circumstances of Angle (*according to; in this perspective; in this view*). DISTANCE, on the other hand, covers those reporting resources which suggest non-alignment of the authorial voice with the attributed proposition. These resources include formulations such as *claim, it is alleged / said that*, commonly used in journalistic discourse to avoid legal action for defamation. (Other report verbs such as *show, demonstrate* are comprised under the PROCLAIM: ENDORSE system; also, the 1st person use of some other report verbs, such as *I contend, I hold that ...*, is included in the PROCLAIM: PRONOUNCE system. Both are described below.)

DIALOGIC EXPANSION

ATTRIBUTE	ACKNOWLEDGE	<i>Some argue</i> that the physical elimination of very dangerous people is the only possible solution to defend society from tremendous injury.
	DISTANCE	<i>It is claimed</i> that a remarkable monument, such as the electric chair, symbolizes the power of the legal system or the state.
ENTERTAIN		<p><i>What are the real problems that immigration creates?</i></p> <p>When the criminals have the intention of committing a crime, the fear of death <u>can</u> stop them.</p> <p>The cost of the UN administration is unbelievable, and the discussions are <u>often</u> senseless.</p>

Table 1. ENGAGEMENT: dialogic expansion (following White, 2003)

Contracting resources are so-called because they narrow the dialogic space by 'fending off' potentially conflicting views, more or less robustly. They comprise two broad categories (see the table below): DISCLAIM and PROCLAIM. DISCLAIM is subdivided into DENY and COUNTER. DISCLAIM: DENY is perhaps the most obvious means of excluding alternative views, through negation:

12. Unfortunately, the UN has failed in its major goals. It did not stop any war; it did not prevent any crisis from breaking out, and it did not reach an internationally respected political and military position.

DISCLAIM: COUNTER resources are 'dialogistic in the same way as denials in that they invoke a contrary position which is then said not to hold. [] countering is typically conveyed via conjunctions and connectives such as *although*, *however*, *yet* and *but*.' (Martin & White 2005: 120). They differ from DENY by supplanting or replacing an otherwise expected proposition. We saw examples of (excessive) countering in essay excerpt 5 above. This excerpt further illustrates the function:

13. Usually radioactive waste is buried, but everybody knows that it causes serious environmental and health problems, which raises the problem of where to put it. Nevertheless, energy resources are becoming scarce.

More obviously attitudinal expressions such as *surprisingly*, *unfortunately* (as in example 12 above) may also have this function of countering the addressee's expectations.

The PROCLAIM system divides into three subsystems: CONCUR, PRONOUNCE and ENDORSE. CONCUR formulations 'overtly announce the addresser as agreeing with, or having the same knowledge as, some projected dialogic partner' (Martin & White, 2005: 122). As well as expressions such as *certainly*, *of course*, *naturally* as in

14. The development of the world wide web is certainly one of the most important achievements of the last century in the field of communication. ('Has the Internet changed our lives for better or for worse?')

the category includes rhetorical questions which assume a specific response, like this (rather colloquial, for academic discourse) interrogative:

15. Who cares what the UN Secretary General says?

CONCUR resources often appear with COUNTER resources in rhetorical pairs of the kind *Certainly X, but Y..* (Martin & White, 2005: 124-6), as in this excerpt:

16. Naturally, Malthus's theories need to be revised and corrected, but it is undeniable that they contain some truths.

The PROCLAIM: PRONOUNCE category includes formulations expressing authorial emphasis or intervention in the context, aimed at challenging some assumed or directly referenced alternative viewpoint. These include expressions like *indeed*, *really*, *in fact*⁹. This student challenges the implied view that the death penalty is a constructive solution:

17. The fact is, that by means of his death, a prisoner cannot try to be a better person.

Other resources include typographical emphasis of auxiliary verbs, and formulations elsewhere described as intrusions of the author's personality into the text

(Hyland, 2005), such as *I hold / contend / maintain that*, sometimes warned against in EAP. Such ‘pronouncing’ formulations are distinguished from dialogically expansive assessments of probability such as *I am convinced that* or *I think / believe that* or the ubiquitous phrases (in student essays) *in my view / opinion; my opinion / view is that*, which are grouped within the system ENTERTAIN (see Martin & White, 2005: 132-3, and above).

Finally, the PROCLAIM: ENDORSE category entails a fairly restricted group of resources, typically verbal processes such as *show, demonstrate, prove*, or their nominalisations. These formulations are distinct from dialogically expansive reporting verbs of the ‘ATTRIBUTE’ category because they imply authorial alignment with the source of the attributed material. Here a student has used a more complex formulation with this function, *clear evidence of this is the fact that*:

18. Clear evidence of [the catastrophic effect of the Iraq invasion on the oil market] is the fact that even nine months after the war, Iraq produced less than two-thirds of what it was producing before the invasion.

By construing the proposition as ‘maximally warrantable’, alternative viewpoints (here, that the 2003 invasion of Iraq did not have a catastrophic effect on the oil market, and therefore could not be ascribed to US oil interests) are excluded from the debate.

DIALOGIC CONTRACTION

DISCLAIM	DENY	But this tragic reality does <u>not</u> concern only some of the countries belonging to the ‘Third World..’
	COUNTER	Most people do not agree with the death penalty, <u>however</u> , for a number of reasons.
PROCLAIM	CONCUR	It is popularly believed that the state is always right. But if it is not? If it is wrong? <u>How could it manage to withdraw its condemnation, after a death?</u>
	PRONOUNCE	The development of the ‘World Wide Web’ is <u>really</u> one of the most important achievements of the last century in the field of communication.
	ENDORSE	Research <u>has shown</u> that advertising affects people’s mindsets.

Table 2. ENGAGEMENT: dialogic contraction

4. ENGAGEMENT IN MEDIA AND IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

The examples given in the above account are taken from NNS undergraduate essays written in the context of an EAP programme. However, the typology of ENGAGEMENT resources has been derived mainly from studies of media discourse (White, 1998; Feez et al, 2008). As Hyland (2005:175) has observed, academic discourse differs from media discourse in the lesser freedom it allows writers to position themselves interpersonally. Thus, we might expect some differences between academic and media discourse, in both the ENGAGEMENT system preferences and in the lexicogrammatical forms typically selected from the different subsystems¹⁰. Academic discourse for example makes wide use of attitudinally neutral reporting verbs from the ATTRIBUTE: ACKNOWLEDGE category - *said, stated, maintained, observed, noted, argued* (Jordan, 1989: 96-7) - whereas media discourse, in addition to *say, tell, report*, may also use more attitudinal verbs like *demanded, screamed*¹¹. Media discourse draws frequently on the ATTRIBUTE: DISTANCE category (*claimed, reportedly, is said/alleged to*), in order to avoid journalists and their employers being sued for defamation, whereas academic discourse seems less likely to do so. Also, the use of resources from the PROCLAIM: PRONOUNCE system seems less probable in academic than in media discourse, given the former's convention of self-effacement, and the latter's scope for personal views in comment articles and editorials. The use of rhetorical questions of the CONCUR category - those which assume a specific response - also seems more likely in media discourse (e.g. in editorials) than in academic discourse (see Hyland, 2002b¹²), and so on.

Interestingly, within the different 'keys' (voices) of journalistic discourse, Martin & White (2005: 182-3) found that, towards the more subjective end of the cline (editorials, comment articles), there was an increase in unattributed contexts in the range of ENGAGEMENT resources used. They also report that in the more 'objective', reporter voice category, more use was made of the ATTRIBUTE system (in order to attribute evaluations to others). Since academic discussion writing is also 'subjective' in its function of persuading addressees to agree and disagree with propositions and / or proposals, we might expect it also to show a fuller range of ENGAGEMENT resources than, say, factual report writing (Martin, 1989). We might also expect the values instantiating the different subsystems to differ between academic and media discourse. Although EAP undergraduate discussion writing cannot generally be taken as a model, my survey uncovered several values for engagement which were acceptable in the academic domain, but not typical of journalistic discourse.

Given the reasons set out in 2. above, the results and discussion sections below will focus mainly on the findings of the analysis for engagement in my corpus of ESL undergraduate discussion essay writing, and less on those for attitude. I will report among other things on the order of frequency with which the different ENGAGEMENT systems are used overall and also point out some differences which emerged between high scoring and low scoring essays concerning their use of ENGAGEMENT resources.

5. THE STUDY

The study was based on 26 discussion type essays (see note 2) of varying lengths (from 450-1,000 words), written under exam conditions between 1999-2003 by EFL first year undergraduate students of international relations at Trieste University, at the end of a 30 hour academic writing skills programme. The corpus includes 13 high and 13 lower-scoring essay answers to questions on a range of controversial though relatively non-specialised topics, chosen for the feasibility of their discussion in the educational context. The questions were:

1. What arguments were given in favour and against the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq? Was the invasion justified, in your view?
2. What are the arguments for and against nuclear power? Give your view.
3. Advertising has been described as 'a necessary evil'. Do you agree?
4. Has the Internet changed our lives for better or for worse?
5. Should the number of student places on Italian university degree courses be limited?
6. The United Nations has been a failure. Discuss.
7. Do Malthus's population theories have relevance in today's context?
8. The EU should place stricter controls on immigration from poor countries. Do you agree?
9. Every country gets the government it deserves. Discuss.

Although the questions do not all specifically ask for the presentation of different viewpoints around the topic, the students had been taught that this was the preferred style of argumentation in academic contexts. The essays were marked and graded by myself and an English language teaching assistant. As well as spelling and grammar, essay structure and quality of supporting arguments, the evaluation criteria included the extent to which the writer referenced and engaged with different points of view. The high-scoring essays in the corpus achieved a mark of 28-30+ out of 30; the lower scoring essays, between 22-26.

5.1 METHOD

All the essays underwent an appraisal analysis for both attitude (inscribed and evoked¹³ judgement and appreciation) and engagement (entertain and attribute: acknowledge and distance; disclaim and proclaim and subsystems thereof). All values and tokens of attributed and unattributed attitude and instances of engagement, were annotated and counted, and calculated as proportions of the total instances of attitude and engagement for each essay and for the corpus as a whole. In this way, the proportional distribution of ATTITUDE and ENGAGEMENT resources for each individual essay could be compared with the essay topic and evaluation. The distribution of these resources was then calculated for the corpus as a whole, enabling an overview of system preferences overall. Their distribution was further calculated for the group of high-scoring and for the group

of lower-scoring essays, with a view to investigating any differences in system preferences overall between the two groups, and the possibility of identifying an ‘engagement profile’ for the better essays.

By way of example, two analyses are provided below of the opening paragraphs respectively of a high-scoring (A) and a lower scoring (B) essay, and of the concluding paragraph also of (B). As in earlier analyses, ENGAGEMENT resources are underlined, ATTITUDE resources are italicised and in bold. Tokens of implicit attitude are pre-fixed by a t.

Analysis A: high-scoring essay
‘Has the Internet changed our lives for better or for worse’?

The development of the World Wide Web is *really* [PROCLAIM: PRONOUNCE] *one of the most important achievements of the last century in the field of communication* [APPRECIATION: + SOCIAL VALUATION] through it, *everyone can* [ENTERTAIN] *have quick access to a huge amount of information of all kinds from all over the world, just by sitting in front of their personal computer, at costs which are getting lower and lower every day* [t APPRECIATION: + SOCIAL VALUATION].

The Internet is a *useful* [APPRECIATION: + SOCIAL VALUATION] and *endless source of information for all kinds of purposes*: [t APPRECIATION: + SOCIAL VALUATION] study, work and leisure activities, *but* [DISCLAIM: COUNTER] *it must be noted* [ENTERTAIN] that *sometimes* [ENTERTAIN], *the user can* [ENTERTAIN] *be hit by an incredible amount of stimuli which may* [ENTERTAIN] *disorientate them* [t APPRECIATION: - SOCIAL VALUATION]; this is even *more alarming* [APPRECIATION: - REACTION] on account of the fact that there are *still* [DISCLAIM: COUNTER] *few means to control the quality of the information put about on the web, since it is quite different to intervene between the source and the user* [t APPRECIATION: - SOCIAL VALUATION].

However [DISCLAIM: COUNTER], *many people find* [ATTRIBUTE: ACKNOWLEDGE] the internet *essential for their job* [APPRECIATION: + SOCIAL VALUATION], especially when it is concerned with trade: it is an *excellent way* [APPRECIATION: + SOCIAL VALUATION] for lots of small businesses to make themselves known to a wide public, to advertise and *even* [DISCLAIM: COUNTER] to sell their products. *On the other hand* [DISCLAIM: COUNTER], *it seems* [ENTERTAIN] very easy to buy things on the Internet and *this may* [ENTERTAIN] *lead some not to ponder appropriately their purchasing* [t APPRECIATION: - SOCIAL VALUATION].

In this excerpt, there are:

- 5 tokens of implicit, unattributed attitude: appreciation
- 4 values of explicit, unattributed attitude: appreciation
- 1 value of explicit, attributed attitude: appreciation
- 14 values of engagement, of which 8 expanding (7 entertain; 1 attribute: acknowledge) and
- 6 contracting (5 disclaim: counter; 1 proclaim: pronounce)

From the above we can see that in essay excerpt A, almost all the attitude is unattributed. All the attitude is from the system APPRECIATION: SOCIAL VALUATION save

one value for APPRECIATION: REACTION. There is an even balance between tokenised (implicit) and evoked (explicit) attitude (5:5). Concerning engagement, there is a fairly even balance between expanding and contracting resources (8:6). The most represented ENGAGEMENT systems here are ENTERTAIN and DISCLAIM: COUNTER.

Analysis B: lower-scoring essay
‘Should places in Italian university degree courses be limited?’

The law 264/1999, also called law Zecchino-D’Alema, has introduced the respect of so-called ‘standards of quality and minimum requirements’ and of ‘acknowledgement thresholds’ for every Italian university degree courses. These (together with a cutback in funding) have caused the introduction of the programmed number in more than 60 of the 77 Italian athenaeums. Courses with limited places make up by now one-third of all university degree courses. Recently there has been a lively debate about this change.

In this essay I am going to examine the arguments for and against [ATTRIBUTE : ACKNOWLEDGE] the limited number in Italian university. Firstly, I intend to deal with the arguments in its favour [ATTRIBUTE : ACKNOWLEDGE].

The Nobel prize winner Modigliani [Franco, for economics, 1985] has perfectly defined the two main arguments [ATTRIBUTE : ACKNOWLEDGE] in favour of the limited number. Firstly, the Italian university needs *a transparent and meritocratic selection of its students* [APPRECIATION: + SOCIAL VALUATION] in order to oppose *the well-known phenomenon of nepotism* [APPRECIATION: - SOCIAL VALUATION]. Secondly, it is *absurd to have hundreds of students and most of them doing nothing* [APPRECIATION: - SOCIAL VALUATION]. The number must [ENTERTAIN] be limited [t APPRECIATION: + SOCIAL VALUATION], but *high quality* [APPRECIATION: + SOCIAL VALUATION], because *many people decide to leave their studies* [t APPRECIATION: - SOCIAL VALUATION]. Do you really want a ballast ? [PROCLAIM: CONCUR] [APPRECIATION: - SOCIAL VALUATION] [...]

In my opinion [ENTERTAIN], it is not [DISCLAIM: DENY] *democratic to have a university for an elite* [APPRECIATION: - SOCIAL VALUATION], but [DISCLAIM: COUNTER] university education (if [ENTERTAIN] well done) can [ENTERTAIN] be *of service to everybody and contribute to the progress of the country as a whole* [t APPRECIATION: + SOCIAL VALUATION].

In the excerpts from lower-scoring essay B above, there are:

- 6 values and 3 tokens of unattributed attitude: appreciation: social valuation¹⁴
- 9 values of engagement, of which 6 expanding (3 entertain; 3 attribute: acknowledge) and
- 3 contracting (1 disclaim: deny; 1 disclaim: counter; 1 proclaim: concur)

From the above we can see that, as in the excerpt from high-scoring essay A (on the value of the Internet), all the attitude in B is APPRECIATION: SOCIAL VALUATION. Furthermore, it is all unattributed (cf all but one case in A). The attitude in B is also, as in A, more often inscribed (explicit) than evoked (implicit): 5:2. If we consider

engagement, by contrast, we find that the proportion of expanding to contracting resources in essay excerpt B is less even than in A: 6:3 as against 7:6. The most represented ENGAGEMENT systems in B are ENTERTAIN and ACKNOWLEDGE, as against ENTERTAIN and DISCLAIM: COUNTER in A. Essay B was considered argumentatively weak because the ideas in it were insufficiently developed (it was one of the shortest essays). However, it also lacked evaluative coherence. The concluding paragraph has been included to illustrate this. In it, the author appears not to agree with the limitation of university places on the grounds that it is an undemocratic and elitist practice. Yet in the third paragraph, by not reiterating their ascribed source, Modigliani (see note 16) she appears to align herself whilst developing them, with the arguments in favour. Thus, the evaluations ‘*the Italian university needs a transparent and meritocratic selection*’; ‘*it is absurd to have ..*’ and ‘*the number must be limited*’ all appear to emanate either from the authorial voice, or from the authorial voice and the previously cited source.

5.2 RESULTS

Analyses like the above were performed on every essay. A brief summary of the main results of the attitude analysis will be followed by a more detailed account of the results of the engagement analysis (see table 3. below), which is the main focus of attention here.

Attitude tended throughout to appear more often in attributed than unattributed contexts. The system APPRECIATION (mainly SOCIAL VALUATION) was more widely used than JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL ESTEEM and than JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL SANCTION, which was the least used. System choices appeared to be related to the essay topic. For example, JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL SANCTION appeared in essays which discussed legally and morally controversial matters, such as the invasion of Iraq, as in example 8 reported earlier:

The US invasion of Iraq was *a violation of international law* [unattributed JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL SANCTION: PROPRIETY]

and here:

19. Moreover, the co-founders of the Project for the New American Century R. Kagan and W. Kristol affirmed that one of Bush’s reasons for Iraq’s invasion was to free the Iraqi people *long brutalised by Saddam’s rule* [attributed JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL SANCTION: PROPRIETY].

It also appeared in essays on the death penalty:

20. By contrast, arguments against are based on consideration of the dignity of human beings (all of them, even if they are *guilty of atrocious homicide*) [attributed JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL SANCTION: PROPRIETY].

The essays on less life-threatening topics, on the other hand, such as the value of advertising or of the Internet, the effectiveness of the UN, and the wisdom or fairness of limiting university places drew partly on the ATTITUDE subsystems of JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL ESTEEM, as in this excerpt on UN efficacy:

21. The last example is more recent: the war in Bosnia. Many journalists wrote that in Yugoslavia *the UN found its death* [- JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL ESTEEM: CAPACITY] and maybe *the EU also lost its dignity* [- JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL ESTEEM: NORMALITY]. After two years of struggling, in fact, the UN understood *the impossibility for it to help the population and stop the war* [- JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL ESTEEM: CAPACITY]; *only the NATO bombs in 1995 reached these targets* [t + JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL ESTEEM: CAPACITY]. All these facts show us that the UN can be considered *a failure* [- JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL ESTEEM: CAPACITY].

The essays on non-life-threatening topics drew most often however on the system of APPRECIATION: SOCIAL VALUATION, as in analyses A and B in 5.1 above, and in this, further example:

22. Story advertisements are *informative as well as persuasive* [+ APPRECIATION: SOCIAL VALUATION]. *They provide us with up-to-date information about the latest products* [t + APPRECIATION: SOCIAL VALUATION]. Some of them are *so well-presented that we are inspired or even moved* [+ APPRECIATION: SOCIAL VALUATION]

Same-topic essays showed similar selections of ATTITUDE resources across both the high scoring (HS) and low scoring (LS) essay groups. HS essays tended to use attitude in attributed contexts more frequently than in unattributed ones, as in 19, 20 and 21 above ('co-founders affirmed that ..'; 'arguments against are based on consideration of ..'; 'Many journalists wrote that ..; the UN can be considered ..'). LS essays showed the reverse tendency overall.

I turn now to the results for engagement. Table 3 below shows the number of values per ENGAGEMENT system for each of the 26 essays, labelled A-Z. The lines corresponding to the HS essays are shaded grey. The total values for each system are provided at the bottom of each column, both for the corpus as a whole, and for the 2 groups of HS and LS essays separately. The ratio of expanding (<) to contracting (>) resources for each essay is provided in the far-right column.

	EXPANDING <			CONTRACTING >					RATIO <>
	ATTRIBUTE		ENTERTAIN	DISCLAIM		PROCLAIM			
	ACKNOWLEDGE	CLAIM	ENTERTAIN	DENY	COUNTER	PRONOUNCE	CONCUR	ENDORSE	
A	15	4	0	5	1	1	0	2	19:10
B	9	0	2	3	4	1	0	0	11:8
C	3	0	3	2	2	1	1	1	6:7
D	2	0	3	1	2	1	1	0	5:5
E	6	2	10	2	5	1	1	2	18:11
F	8	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	10:3
G	5	1	7	1	2	0	0	2	13:5
H	9	0	5	0	1	0	3	2	14:6
I	12	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	12:5
J	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	3:2
K	4	0	3	3	3	0	0	1	7:7
L	4	0	8	2	7	1	0	0	12:10
M	12	0	11	1	5	3	0	0	23:9
N	9	4	4	5	3	2	2	4	16:17
O	6	0	5	10	4	2	1	1	18:11
P	3	0	8	6	12	0	2	1	11:21
Q	1	0	6	6	12	0	0	1	7:19
R	10	0	13	1	6	0	0	0	23:7
S	2	0	4	11	9	0	4	1	6:25
T	3	0	8	5	6	1	1	0	11:13
U	1	0	18	2	3	2	0	0	19:7
V	1	0	9	2	3	1	3	0	10:9
W	0	0	2	8	1	1	0	0	2:10
X	2	0	11	2	2	0	1	0	13:4
Y	4	0	8	3	4	0	1	0	12:7
Z	3	0	4	8	7	0	0	0	7:15

Total

All	137	11	154	92	108	18	21	21	302:260
HS	58	6	105	47	76	12	14	10	169:159
LS	79	5	49	45	32	6	7	11	133:101

Table 3. Number of values for different ENGAGEMENT systems in essays A-Z; totals for all, for high-scoring essays and for low-scoring essays.

Considering the corpus as a whole, expanding resources are more frequent than contracting resources (302:260). The most widely used system is ENTERTAIN, closely followed by ATTRIBUTE: ACKNOWLEDGE. These expanding resources are followed in order of frequency by the contracting resources of DISCLAIM: COUNTER, DENY, and those of PROCLAIM: ENDORSE, CONCUR, PRONOUNCE, and lastly by the expanding resource ATTRIBUTE: DISTANCE (the least used system of all).

If we compare the totals for the HS and LS essays separately, we can note some differences¹⁵. Concerning total ENGAGEMENT resources and the balance between expanding and contracting resources we can note that:

- The HS essays use over one third more ENGAGEMENT resources than the LS essays (328:234).
- HS essays as a whole show a more even balance than LS essays between expanding and contracting resources (169:159 as against 133:101).
- LS essays overall use about one third more expanding than contracting resources.

Comparing for the range of systems drawn on out of 8, it emerges that on average:

- HS essays draw on 5.8 systems
- LS essays draw on 5 systems

Concerning the system preferences, it emerges that:

- The order of preference for HS essays is: ENTERTAIN, COUNTER, ACKNOWLEDGE, DENY, CONCUR, PRONOUNCE, ENDORSE, DISTANCE
- The order of preference for LS essays is: ACKNOWLEDGE, ENTERTAIN, DENY, COUNTER, ENDORSE, CONCUR, PRONOUNCE, DISTANCE
- HS have double the score of LS essays for ENTERTAIN (105:49), COUNTER (76:32), PRONOUNCE (12:6) and CONCUR (14:7), whereas they use about a quarter less of ATTRIBUTE: ACKNOWLEDGE (58:79)
- DISTANCE was similarly rarely used in either group
- DENY (47:45) and ENDORSE (10:11) show similar scores in the HS and LS groups.

To sum up, the comparative survey of attitude and engagement in the corpus of HS and LS essays, including attention to local context of use, suggested that an HS essay is more likely to show:

- a greater quantity and wider range of ENGAGEMENT resources
- a more extensive use of ENTERTAIN, COUNTER, PRONOUNCE and CONCUR
- a distinction between information and evaluation (and non-problematisation of the former)
- a preference for attributed rather than unattributed contexts for attitude

LS essays by contrast appear more likely to show one or more of the following:

- a more limited range of ENGAGEMENT resources
- a preference for the systems ACKNOWLEDGE, ENTERTAIN and DENY
- a greater use of expanding than contracting resources
- non-sourcing of evaluative propositions (even contradictory ones)
- the problematisation of unproblematic propositions

6. DISCUSSION

The discussion is selective, focusing on the results which in my view have the most interesting implications for future research and for teaching. It is also illustrated with further examples from the corpus, to better contextualise the findings.

The results have implications, I think, for the role of ENGAGEMENT in a description of voice, or evaluative key, in academic discussion (and other genres). In journalistic discourse, patterns based on the type of ATTITUDE resources deployed, and the use of attributed or unattributed contexts for the latter, are basic to distinguishing different types of voice related to different journalistic text types. The link in this corpus between ATTITUDE resources and topic rather than genre (discussion essay), and the widespread use of attributed contexts (in good and less-good essays alike) for attitude in what is nonetheless a more ‘subjective’ form of academic writing, make these attitude-centred criteria seem less applicable to any characterisation of voice for academic discussion. Patterns of deployment of ENGAGEMENT resources may prove more significant indicators of voice. To verify this, and whether there are patterns of appraisal resources which can be held typical of discussion or other academic genres, further research on all APPRAISAL systems in different genres of professional academic writing would be necessary and useful.

The similar patterns of deployment of ATTITUDE resources between HS and LS same-topic essays lent support to the finding (Swain, 2007a) that ATTITUDE resources were not a differentiating factor between good and less good essays.

The engagement profiles which emerge for HS and LS essays have pedagogical implications. The preference in HS essays for attributed over unattributed contexts for attitude, is in line with the convention in academic writing, in anglophone contexts, of limiting authorial affect (see Hyland cited in the introduction to this chapter), and more specifically with the discussion genre requirement of including non-authorial points of view. HS essays also tended to use a wider range of ENGAGEMENT resources to engage with the evaluative propositions referenced. The following short excerpt for instance uses COUNTER, ATTRIBUTE: ACKNOWLEDGE (twice) and PROCLAIM: PRONOUNCE to engage with the initial, monoglossic / authorial evaluative proposition (italicised):

23. Another great advantage offered by these new media [the internet] is the opportunity to get in touch easily with people in the whole world in real time, thanks to the email system. Nevertheless [COUNTER] critics argue [ACKNOWLEDGE] that this kind of communication does not [DENY] allow people to establish direct human contact with the people they are writing to. Indeed [PROCLAIM:

PRONOUNCE], one of the main arguments [ACKNOWLEDGE] against the diffusion of these new media is that they tend to lead people to self-isolation. (HS)

LS essays by contrast tend to use a smaller number of systems. In particular, the contracting resources from the systems COUNTER, PRONOUNCE and CONCUR, are used much less often than in the HS essays, with a consequent preference in LS essays overall for expanding resources, particularly ATTRIBUTE: ACKNOWLEDGE. This finding suggests the need to familiarise novice writers with the full range of engagement options which are available to them.

Many LS essays for example which used ACKNOWLEDGE to source evaluative propositions, and DENY and COUNTER to contrast them, were weakened because they tended to avoid authorial commitment, leaving the author's position unclear until the final paragraph, typically expressed with 'In my view / opinion ...'. These tendencies resulted in texts more akin to explanatory reports than to discussion. Excerpt 24 below for example merely lists and contrasts others' arguments in the style of a report, giving no hint of where the author stands on the matter:

24. Several social and political arguments [ACKNOWLEDGE] can [ENTERTAIN] be given for the war. Firstly, the US President, G.W. Bush said [ACKNOWLEDGE] that Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi leader, could [ENTERTAIN] have WMD and that their proliferation had to [ENTERTAIN] be prevented. Critics of the war believed [ACKNOWLEDGE] that there were no [DENY] WMDs in Iraq and thus no [DENY] reason for an invasion. Secondly the US-led coalition affirmed [ACKNOWLEDGE] that Iraq was linked to Al-Qaeda. Bush said [ACKNOWLEDGE] that if [ENTERTAIN] Bin Laden got control of Iraq they would create other terrorist attacks. However, [COUNTER] after the invasion documents concerning agreements with this group were never [DENY] found. Then Iraq was accused [ACKNOWLEDGE] of violations of UN resolutions concerning human rights and Kurdish genocide. On the other hand [COUNTER], some criticize [ACKNOWLEDGE] this view [ACKNOWLEDGE] because the war may [ENTERTAIN] cause a greater number of killed people. (LS)

The excerpt lacks the persuasive thrust conferred by, say, monoglossic evaluations or authorial interpolations and strategies of alignment drawing on the PROCLAIM: ENDORSE, CONCUR and PRONOUNCE systems (see excerpt 25 below).

The low frequency of the contracting resources from the PROCLAIM subsystems (particularly PRONOUNCE and CONCUR) overall corresponds to a tendency, often in weak essays, to avoid bold authorial interventions in the text. Infrequent use of PROCLAIM resources may reflect any of the following: student writer perceptions of the much-cited need – in the traditional anglophone pedagogical literature – for 'caution' and 'objectivity'; a basic reluctance towards taking up a clearly stated position on the issue under discussion, or a lack of knowledge of the resources available for doing this. Attention to the local context however of these infrequently used contracting resources in the corpus showed that they can be particularly effective in terms of persuasive power. The following excerpt 25, from a HS essay on the death penalty illustrates effective challenging of an attributed viewpoint (italicised) using these resources.

In it, the contracting COUNTER resource *but* introduces two expanding rhetorical questions (ENTERTAIN) followed by a contracting one (CONCUR); the reader is then aligned with a monoglossic evaluative formulation about the state's power to kill, and the counter-argument that it might resuscitate a victim, is anticipated and re-butted with the resource DENY:

25. It is popularly believed [ACKNOWLEDGE] that *the state is always* [ENTERTAIN] *right*. But [COUNTER] if it is not? (ENTERTAIN) But [COUNTER] if it is wrong? [ENTERTAIN] How could it manage to withdraw its condemnation after a death? [CONCUR] Or better, *the state has the power to kill a person, **not*** [DENY] *to bring an innocent back to life.*

In a few lines this writer powerfully invokes and counters a popular belief, invites speculation as to its validity, invites the conclusion of its invalidity, and rebuts an impossible claim, drawing on resources from five ENGAGEMENT subsystems to do so.

It will be noticed, that the attitude expressed towards the state in example 24 is mostly attributed (*It is popularly believed that the state is always right*) or evoked (JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL ESTEEM: CAPACITY (if it is *not* [right]? If it is *wrong*?). The only authorial, explicit attitude is the reference in the concluding sentence to the state's power to kill and its inability to resurrect (JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL ESTEEM: CAPACITY), in which a stronger moral evaluation, that killing is wrong (JUDGEMENT: SOCIAL SANCTION: PROPRIETY), is also implied. I suggest, in keeping with the general line of argument in this chapter, that if excerpt 25 has persuasive power, then it lies less in the implicit and explicit attitudinal meanings, than in the author's skilful management, through a range of ENGAGEMENT resources, of the different voices expressing them in this written debate on the value of the death penalty. The foregoing observations would not only confirm the need to familiarise students with the range of options available to them, but further suggest the value of close attention in the writing class to how ENGAGEMENT resources are used in combination, to good persuasive effect.

Another characteristic of weaker essays was the use of ENGAGEMENT resources with non-controversial observations. We saw earlier in example 5 how this tendency to overuse ENGAGEMENT resources can create a fussy, 'much ado about nothing' impression. An effect of redundancy is created in excerpt 26 below:

26. It is clear, therefore, that there are arguments for, and arguments against.

The writer here could be seen as 'wasting' the PROCLAIM: PRONOUNCE resource, 'it is clear [] that' on a non-evaluative, unproblematic proposition: 'there are arguments for, and arguments against'. Like the propositions in example 5. above, this is a relatively uncontroversial statement (since the author goes on to describe the arguments, without contesting or endorsing them). If the writer had proposed:

26.1 It is clear, therefore, that the arguments against are weaker and fewer than the arguments in favour.

then the use of this ENGAGEMENT resource might have been more persuasively effective, in terms of aligning the author and addressee with a position on the issue in question. Thus, attention in the writing class to the informative or evaluative functions of propositions in the essay context, appears to be a useful precondition for the effective teaching and learning of ENGAGEMENT resources.

To conclude our discussion of the implications for teaching, overall, the quantitative and qualitative analysis for attitude and engagement in HS and LS essays suggested that effective discussion writing (as evaluated in this corpus) entails ability to:

- exploit the full range of available ENGAGEMENT resources
- source different evaluative propositions (crucial to evaluative coherence)
- use attitude in attributed contexts
- limit explicit authorial attitude
- use effective combinations of ENGAGEMENT resources
- distinguish between problematic and unproblematic propositions

7. CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this chapter I suggested the relation between ENGAGEMENT resources and essay structure, and argued that other key aspects of successful discussion writing also rely significantly on resources of the ENGAGEMENT system. These key aspects include evaluative coherence; the degree to which the writer engages with the referenced arguments, coherently with the authorial position adopted; the inclusion of other viewpoints, and the mediation of attitude. The corpus study of ENGAGEMENT and ATTITUDE resources in EFL discussion writing reported here was prompted by these arguments for the centrality of the engagement system, and aimed at exploring their value through empirical investigation. The results appear to have upheld them.

The conventional practice of mediating attitude in academic discourse was reflected in the study, and the results generally appeared to confirm that the ENGAGEMENT system plays a more pivotal role than ATTITUDE in the persuasive efficacy of discussion. Unlike ENGAGEMENT, ATTITUDE resources seemed to depend on the discussion topic, and are not so dissimilar between same topic HS and LS essays. Good essays furthermore tended to prefer attitude mediated by resources from the ATTRIBUTE: ACKNOWLEDGE system. Comparison of patterns of use in HS and LS essays showed that the HS essays tended to deploy a fuller range of ENGAGEMENT resources, including those of the generally less (or under-)used systems of PROCLAIM: CONCUR, PRONOUNCE; that good essays discriminate between informative and evaluative propositions, and rely less on authorial attitude to persuade than on skilful use of ENGAGEMENT resources to orchestrate the play of voices around propositions.

From this it follows that the ENGAGEMENT framework has implications for EAP course content and methodology. Grouping together disparate lexicogrammatical expressions which perform a range of rhetorical functions in discourse, the framework includes expressions and structures either ignored in traditional EAP

programmes or taught with little attention to their dialogic, rhetorical functionality. Focus on engagement enables awareness of a fuller range of resources for persuasion and of their dialogic functions than is traditionally envisaged, providing help with perhaps one of the most challenging forms of academic writing for students. It seems logical then, not to take these resources for granted in the writing class, but to capture and teach the lexicogrammatical expressions and structures available in academic discourse for engagement, and explore ways in which they can be used and combined to create effective discussion writing.

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1 I use the term 'discussion' here to refer to a two-sided as opposed to a one-sided argument (known in SFL as 'exposition'). A further distinction is made between analytical arguments, which seek to persuade the addressee to agree with a particular *position* (hence, between analytical exposition and analytical discussion), and hortatory arguments, which seek to persuade the addressee to *do* something (hence, between hortatory exposition and hortatory discussion). See Coffin (2004) for a fuller account.

2 Coffin (2004) discusses the relation between essay structure and the grading of discussion writing by candidates for the IELTS test, and notes with some surprise that, in spite of the expectation that examiners might favour two-sided, analytical argument (discussion), candidates were still able to achieve high grades with one-sided hortatory argument (exposition) 'more reminiscent of letters to the press than of academic prose' (2004:243). The type of argument structure chosen will however imply certain preferences in choice of ENGAGEMENT resources.

3 Respectively from essays entitled 'Was the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq justified?' and 'Is the death penalty ever justifiable?'

4 Experience shows that evaluative incoherence is a common problem in EFL undergraduate discussion writing. See Thompson & Zhou (2000) and Thompson (2001) for a discussion.

5 Voice might be described as a typical configuration of evaluative resources. For Coffin (2002: 519) it is 'a descriptive tool for exploring interpersonal styles'. Martin & Rose

(2003: 54) define it as 'a prosodic pattern of appraisal choices'. Martin & White (2005: 164-209) prefer instead the term 'evaluative key'.

6 White (2003) is listed in Hyland's references, however.

7 They note a decreasing use of ATTRIBUTE from 'objective' reporter voice to 'subjective' commentator voice; lower frequency of ENTERTAIN and DENY in unattributed contexts in reporter than in writer voice.

8 essay title: *Has the UN been a failure? Discuss*

9 Note that *in fact, indeed, really* can also *confirm* a previously referenced position.

10 It might also be the case, that the theory thus far developed does not account for some important dialogistic features of academic discourse. As mentioned, an important rhetorical function in discussion writing for example is the use of reasons to support propositions. A system accounting for this function is posited in White (1998) and labelled 'PROCLAIM: EXPECT'; in White (2003), it goes by the name of 'JUSTIFICATION'. However, this system is left out of the discussion in Martin & White (2005). See Swain (forthcoming).

11 In appraisal theory, verbs such as these – and others like *wail, cry, whine* etc. express affect and are known as 'surges' (Martin, 2000; Martin & White, 2005: 47-51).

12 Hyland (2002b) deals almost exclusively with 'expository' questions, which do not assume a specific answer, and which in the ENGAGEMENT framework are grouped under the ENTERTAIN system.

13 By 'inscribed' is meant explicit attitude, e.g. 'Saddam Hussein was an evil dictator'. By 'evoked' is meant implicit attitude, e.g. with 'Saddam Hussein gassed thousands of Kurds' it can be inferred that Hussein is evil. The proposition in this case would be coded as tokenised (evoked) JUDGEMENT.

14 I have classified the values and tokens of appreciation in paragraph 3 (*transparent, meritocratic, nepotism, absurd, limited but high quality, many people decide to leave their studies, ballast*) as unattributed, even if they may be understood as explications of arguments attributed in a prior proposition to Modigliani. This is because their source is obscured by not being reiterated. As a result, these evaluative propositions appear to be authorial, or at best, imply authorial alignment with Modigliani.

15 As noted in section 5. earlier, the essays may vary in length (from 1 to 3 sides of lined A4 paper), but this is unlikely to be a significant difference across the two groups: good essays are not necessarily longer essays.

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