SAYING 'I' AND MEANING IT: THE TRANSFORMATIVE PROCESS OF

PRODUCING THE AUDIO ESSAY

by

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mom. While our paths in life were once rocky, I wouldn't have made it this far without you. You never discouraged me from trying any one of my maniacal ideas. And no matter how whacky the idea, you laughed, shook your head, said *Renea* and encouraged me without judgment. Thanks for letting me be me.

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ABSTRACT

There is much debate in composition theory about how students use features of speech in their writing. Proponents of allowing students to use speech features in writing suggest it promotes productivity; critics suggest that doing so is detrimental to students' understanding of academic writing. In this study, the author compares two student assignments: the audio essay, an assignment that asks students to compose an essay that is recorded, and the research-based essay, which is composed as a text only. Using Corpus Linguistics computer software tools, grammar features are analyzed for similarities and differences between the essays. Grammar features are also examined to understand if the use of certain speech features indicates better rhetorical understanding of audience by students, and to see if speech features in writing diminish the academic quality of writing.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AWL   Academic Word List

BSU   Boise State University

CLAWS   Constituent Likelihood Automatic Word-tagging System

GSL   General Service List

LGSWE   Longman Grammar of Written and Spoken English

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Something that isn't new in the field of composition is a student's struggle to understand his or her audience. Students have a difficult time envisioning their audience; no matter how many writing exercises we give them, they still can't transcend this notion of a fake audience: ultimately students often end up writing for the teacher. What does it look like when a student is writing just for the teacher or giving the teacher what he or she thinks the teacher wants to hear? Generally, the prose I receive can often be described as lifeless. There is little use of first-person pronouns, and the writing doesn't reflect the kinds of personalities students exhibit in real life while participating in the course or when talking about their writing to me or their peers. The writing assignments I receive don't "sound" anything like my smart students who can communicate much more effectively using their speaking voices. Students seem to more clearly articulate their ideas while speaking, with more conviction, and sometimes with more confidence than when they have to put words to paper.

Not surprisingly, recent research by Melanie Sperling in "Revisiting the Writing-Speaking Connection: Challenges for Research on Writing and Writing Instruction," suggests that when students consider the teacher as their audience it "has less effect on writing than do audiences other than the teacher" (63) and that students who have a clear understanding of their audience often produce better writing (64-65). In addition to Sperling, many scholars have written about this speaking versus writing issue (Yancey,

Elbow, Klaus, Chafe, Biber, Murray). While this problem of "audience" might not be easily resolved, is there a better assignment than the traditional essay that might improve student understanding of audience when composing?

The Audio Essay

My experience as a radio listener and as an undergraduate student working with Dr. Bruce Ballenger helped me to create an assignment in my English 101 classroom that helped students begin to truly see and understand their audience: the audio essay. As a radio listener and fan of the show *This American Life*, I was thrilled when I had an independent study with Dr. Bruce Ballenger in which he told us his plans for developing an audio essay course; a course in which we would learn to write essays much like the ones featured on *This American Life*. In my work with Dr. Bruce Ballenger as an undergraduate, I composed audio essays. While the course I took was an upper-division English course and much different than the English 101 course I teach, I realized that the audio essay form was something that would be beneficial to the students in English 101.

Definitions of the audio essay can vary greatly, but for my purposes in English 101, the audio essay I assign, and I am speaking of, is slightly different than a regular essay, but follows the same general form. First, students compose a script in which they start with some kind of anecdote or problem—sometimes something they are trying to explain—then the essay follows the natural progression of a narrative, in which they tell a story of "this happened, then this happened, then this happened." At the end, the students come to some kind of understanding through reflection or coming to a "what does it all mean?" moment. Next, using the open-source software, Audacity, the students record their essays. While I don't require it of my students, some choose to use music to

"punctuate" their essays. What students find as they record the essay is that what is on the page doesn't necessarily sound good once they are speaking it out loud. Then the self-editing and revision often begins. While there isn't anything new about asking students to read their work out loud, this form of reading out loud is a different method of composition to them. Students become invested because they know that their classmates are going to hear their essays and not just read them—in this way, their audience becomes real in a different way—so they spend a lot of time revising for clarity with their audience in mind.

While we often ask our students to read their drafts aloud to one another, the recorded voice is much different. There is something about the permanence of the recorded voice that affects students. When we ask students to read their work in class, they can hide behind the words, and the moment of workshop is ephemeral. To them, the writing they normally produce for workshop is something that a faceless, voiceless author could have written. The recorded voice, though it can be deleted, carries a certain amount of vulnerability for students because their embodied voice, the voice that is connected to their work is the same voice that is connected to their person. When my students listen to each other's work, the work becomes associated with them in a way that a written piece doesn't, and they can't hide behind their audio work. Students are more invested because other students judge their audio work in a different way than their traditional writing, so they want it to be good since the writing is associated with their embodied voices. Students can't hide from their embodied voices, and the quality of the work becomes more important to students.

In my own experience as a student, my audio essays were some of the best pieces of writing I had ever composed. It seemed I was more clear, concise, and the rhetorical skills I learned while composing an audio essay and learning how my writing was perceived by my audience, has seemed to change the ways in which I compose for a purely "readable" text. In being forced to script something to be read, seeing the audience's reaction as the piece was played, seeing the moments in the essay where the piece lulled the audience to sleep, and seeing the faces of the audience when the audience didn't understand, I feel like the audio essay gave me a tremendous understanding of what it means to compose a written text in a way that is rhetorically effective. Composing the written text and then speaking it gave me a better understanding of my embodied voice and how my work ultimately came across to my "readers." And it felt like my writing got better, though I am wary to use the term "better" because it is hard to quantify, so that is why I am preferably going to say that the audio essay made my writing different.

When I first heard my own students' audio essays, I was astounded at the differences. All of the things I had been begging for: active language, audience awareness, coherence, and transitions all suddenly came to life. And that is when I became interested in the differences between having our students compose a traditional text versus using a multimodal project like the audio essay to engage their rhetorical senses.

Speaking versus Writing

It's hard to exactly put my finger on why the student writing changes, though I feel that most of the reasons fall under the umbrella of "speaking versus writing." There

has been a long debate in composition about how much or how little we should let our students' speech acts and speech patterns influence their writing (Ong, Elbow, Cayer, Zoellner, Connors, Sperling, Snipes, Spector, Biber, Chafe, Halpern, Newman and Horowitz). This debate of the differences in speaking and writing and how much speaking should or should not influence writing has followed a pretty even resurgence each decade. Recently, in 2012, Peter Elbow published *Vernacular Eloquence,* which addresses this debate once again, so it seems that my research is particularly pertinent at the potential apex of this decade's current revival of the speaking and writing debate that will come from the publishing of Elbow's scholarship.

I suspect some of these differences in audio essays my students produce can be attributed to something that Robert Zoellner called "The Principle of Intermodal Integration" in his 1969 essay "Talk-Write: A Behavioral Pedagogy for Composition." As Zoellner claims, students " 'sound' one way when talking, and quite another way when writing" and that when allowed to use more speaking features in their writing, "the student's written 'voice' begins to take on some of the characteristics of his speaking 'voice'" (301). Zoellner continues that "the cross-modal influences should also operate in the other direction, so that the topography of his vocal emissions begins to take on some of the 'literate' characteristics which distinguish the trained speaker from the mere talker. Writing, in short, should improve talk, and talk, writing" (301). In exploiting spoken characteristics that students are familiar with and integrating them into the audio essay, student writing and speaking, according to Zoellner, gets better. With the advent of new technologies and the ever increasing change and instability of old forms of the written

word, it may be time for us to implement a new pedagogical model that accounts for these changes.

Corpus Linguistics

In my research, I stumbled upon the field of Corpus Linguistics—which is actually a large field, considering, so I should have noticed it long before I did. While I am about as much a linguist as I am the next Miss Universe, this study uses tools from Corpus Linguistics to attempt to inform my research questions and to study how students compose written texts versus scripted or "written-to-be-heard" texts. While there has been much debate in composition about written and spoken features of writing, there is little scholarship using corpus tools to get definitive empirical and quantitative data exploring each in the field of Rhetoric and Composition. It seems there is a lot of room for Rhetoric and Composition to use these tools to help us understand how students are using language. In Corpus Linguistics, one of the known issues is that we often make a lot of assumptions about what is happening in language, and our intuition is often wrong. While there has been much debate in composition about the differences of speech and writing, that is exactly the problem, most of the research has been qualitative and more importantly, speculative.

This thesis is important in that it can begin to explain the different linguistic differences of students when they expect their writing to be read by their reader and conversely, how they compose when they expect to read their writing out loud to a listener. It is important to use these corpus tools to address these issues because our intuition that speaking and writing, as a lot of linguists have suggested, isn't as different

as we assume. Also, there seems to be an assumption that when students use spoken features in their writing that their writing is somehow less academic.

In using Corpus Linguistic tools, I will begin to try and examine features of student written texts versus their audio essays to determine if the texts are, in fact, different. Does the audio essay, exhibit more features that suggest that when students compose something that is written-to-be-heard that they have a better sense of their audience? Are the grammar features of the language the type that highlight student understanding of audience, or do the features of the audio essay exhibit signs that the student has no improved understanding of audience? Do students use more academic language in their written texts than in their audio essays?

Limitations in previous research in the field of Rhetoric and Composition have been that while researchers may examine student texts by hand, it's hard to examine large collections of texts (or *corpora* in linguistics), one-by-one. Corpus Linguistics provides us many computer-based tools to get accurate information using computer programs to provide data that can then be interpreted. Though I have a limitation to the amount of research I can do here—especially as someone who is not thoroughly versed or trained in corpus linguistics—I did work closely with a highly-trained Corpus Linguist, Dr. Casey Keck, in completing this research. So, while I do have limited understanding of the tools, I feel I have a strong enough understanding to complete the scale of research required here. Another limitation, of course, is presenting information from Linguistics in a way that others in the field of Rhetoric and Composition can understand. Dr. Keck offered suggestions as to how to make my research here accessible to all in the field that may

come across it, and to tailor this research specifically to my field while staying small-scale enough.

In my experience not only producing my own audio essays but in hearing the audio essays my students produce, I have become increasingly more aware of a difference in language that seems to be happening. Through producing the audio projects, students seemed to have a better sense of rhetorical awareness—particularly of their audience—and it seems that this awareness came from the shift between producing a research-based essay that was meant to be read, as opposed to the audio essay, which is meant to be heard.

While I attempt to find what the differences between the essays here, this proves to be a very large task, and I can only begin to look at this on a very small scale. In attempting to look at some grammar and vocabulary use in its very basic form, I try to see what the differences are between the research-based essay and audio essays my students produced if any.

My hope is to make recommendations on my findings for our field on what teaching the audio essay can bring to the first-year writing classroom (as well as other composition classes, too). In addition to making recommendations, I hope this research will show how employing Corpus Linguistics tools might help us in the field of composition to explain the differences in student writing and how we might look at these differences and use the research to help students make conscious and deliberate decisions in their writing.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There is little scholarship about using the audio essay as a means of creating narrative essays in first-year composition classes or upper-division classes; however, there is a lot of literature from other areas within the field of composition studies that inform this topic in productive and useful ways. Also, Corpus Linguistics, a branch of linguistics that examines different corpora, or collections of texts, also helps to inform what is happening in the audio essay. These areas with explanations of their importance are as follows:

1. Within the realm of multimodal composition studies, there is brief mention of podcasting in the composition classroom. While not all of the scholarship on different multimodalities will be reviewed here, those articles that specifically discuss podcasting, or the audio essay will be discussed. 2. Much can be gained by reviewing the literature about the differences and similarities between speech and writing: this is a very important facet in thinking about the audio essay because though we compose scripts for an audio essay, these scripts are composed specifically to be heard, and we are also using the embodied voice to convey meaning, which is different than composition that is strictly intended to be read by an audience. 3. The final field that is not often used as a lens in Rhetoric and Composition is that of Corpus Linguistics. Corpus Linguistics very broadly is a field that examines different corpora, or collections of texts, for different linguistic features using computer programs to find out information about how those linguistic

features are used. Once these quantitative analyses are completed via computer program, linguists begin to infer what the features mean through qualitative explanation, and Corpus Linguistics is a field that we in Rhetoric and Composition can use by employing methods and frameworks from the field of Corpus Linguistics to how students use language in composition.

Podcasting in the Composition Classroom

The first area of literature to look at is the very small amount of scholarship that talks about podcasting via multimodal composition theory as a means of teaching composition in the classroom. In her article, "Podcasting and Perfomativity: Multimodal Invention in an Advanced Writing Class," Leigh A. Jones discusses how podcasting "has become a popular project for students at the end of a semester," but Jones "wondered how it would work as a prelude to drafting rather than a presentation of their finished work" (76). Jones found when her students participated in the podcasting project they "jumped into the assignment, took creative risks—the kind they feared with writing assignments—and seemed to enjoy doing so. Not only did students enjoy the podcasting, but as they proceeded through the drafting process of their research papers, they formed useful workshop groups in which they became invested in their own and each other's work" (76). As Jones continues, we see the kind of effect that podcasting had on her students:

> [T]hey ultimately produced more authoritative, sophisticated writing, taking ownership over their academic voices and earning higher grades than students in the same course during prior semesters. Making the initial risk taking production an aural performance rather than a paper draft seemed to benefit students. It was

one of those moments writing instructors hope for. And it happened again the next semester. (76)

Though Jones' experience is similar to the experience I had in my own classroom, though I was using the audio essay as a way of constructing a narrative essay and not as a means of invention, the audio essay has only gained a certain popularity in our field. Though there are some professors throughout the field of Composition that are using podcasting, the audio essay, or another form of a spoken form as a means of teaching composition (Ballenger, Lunsford), the form seems to have yet to be fully researched. It is quite popular with students as shown in Love, but instructors are reluctant to use it often, though as Selfe explains in "The Movement of Air, the Breath of Meaning," "new software and hardware applications—video and audio editing systems and...multimodal composing environments, and digital audio recorders, among many, many more—have provided increasing numbers of people the means of producing and distributing communications that take advantage of multiple expressive modalities" (637). So, if podcasting or the audio essay as a means of composing is responsible for students producing writing that seems more lively and engaged with the audience, why are so many people reluctant to use it? In looking at the differences and similarities to writing, we might understand historically why people are opposed to an aural form of composing. The division between speaking and writing offers on explanation for why pedagogy of sound hasn't achieved much popularity.

Speaking and Writing

As presented in 1978, Thomas J. Farrell stated in his article "Differentiating Writing from Talking, "Although the writing system is derived from, and dependent

upon, the talking system for its significance and meaning, the two systems nevertheless *function* independently of one another as systems of communication…" (346). Though recent research has proven that aural and written systems do not function independently of each other, Selfe states that during the "17th-19th century, writing became separated from spoken word in educational settings" (623). As Selfe dicusses scholarship about the distinction between writing and speech, she notes of many scholars who have written about the topic that "Many of these works associated speaking and talking with less reflective, more 'haphazard' communication (Snipes) and with popular culture, while writing was considered 'inherently more self-reliant' (Emig 353), a 'more deliberate mode of expression' and inherently more intellectual' (Newman and Horowitz 160)" (Selfe 629). As Elbow notes in *Vernacular Eloquence*, however, "People commonly assume that the language that comes from their people's fingers is not like the language that comes from their mouths. But linguists have shown that strictly considered, there is no difference between them. That is, any kind of language is sometimes spoken and sometimes written" (14).

What some of these composition scholars may be noticing is that the assumed difference is related to what Walter Ong and Robert J. Connors refer to in their writing. In the essay "The Differences Between Speech and Writing: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos," Robert J. Connors seems to be a proponent for writing as an advantageous means of composition over speaking, as he states that "Writing also has the advantage over speech in the precision it allows in word structure formulations…Unless a speaker is working for a text that has been written beforehand, it will be impossible for him or her to make the kind of choices of words and sentence structures that the writing usually has the leisure to

make" (289). So, naturally, if a person has more time to compose something that is written-to-be-read, they have more time to consider the language; whereas, oftentimes in speech—especially spontaneous speech—people don't have the leisure of time.

Walter Ong describes how written and oral discourse differ in *Orality & Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*: "Written discourse develops more elaborate and fixed grammar than oral discourse does because to provide meaning it is more dependent simply upon linguistic structure, since it lacks the normal full existential contexts which surround oral discourse and help determine meaning in oral discourse somewhat independently of grammar" (38). As Ong notices, in writing, writers must produce the "sound" and cadence in writing through rhetorical grammar; there is no oral context for writing to exist in: readers don't get any kind of the prosodic qualities of speech, and meaning is completely dependent on what is written, not what can be implied by prosodic qualities in a speaker's voice.

As exemplified in the essay by Jones, students took naturally to podcasting, it seemed. Not only did it lessen their fears, it made their writing better, and their response to each other better as well. This could be in part due to how we experience speech and writing when we are young. As Peter Elbow explains in "The Shifting Relationships between Speech and Writing,"

> We learn speech as infants--from parents who love us and naturally reward us for speaking at all. Our first audience works overtime to hear the faintest intention in our every utterance, no matter how hidden or garbled that meaning may be. Children aren't so much criticized for getting something wrong as praised for having anything at all to say—indeed they are often praised even for emitting

speech as pure play with no message intended. What a contrast between that introduction to speech and the introduction to writing which most children get in school. Students can never feel writing as an activity they engage in as freely, frequently, or spontaneously as they do in speech. Indeed because writing is almost always a requirement set by the teacher, the act of writing takes on a 'required' quality, sometimes even the aspect of punishment. (285)

Students are most comfortable with speaking, as it is something most humans have experienced since a young age. When students are forced to emulate academic language and are required to abandon any of their speech patterns in writing, writing becomes harder for them.

As Selfe states:

The increasingly limited role aurality within U.S. English and composition programs during the last half of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was intimately tied to the emerging influence of writing as the primary mode of form academic work...This trend, influenced by the rise of manufacturing and science, as well as the growing culture value on professionalism, was instantiated in various ways---in formal education contexts, writing and reading increasingly became separated from speech and were understood as activities to be enacted for the most part, in silence. (625)

And Selfe continues, "By the end of the twentieth century, the ideological privileging of writing was so firmly establish that it had become almost fully naturalized" (627). However, as Elbow points out in his essay, "What Do We Mean When We Talk about Voice in Texts," "speech contains more channels for carrying meaning, more room

for the play of difference… For example there is volume …, pitch…,speed…, accent…, intensity" (5). And as Darsie Bowden states in "The Rise of a Metaphor: 'Voice' in Composition Pedagogy," "Spoken language is naturally closer than writing to the lifespring, to consciousness, and to presence" (182). When someone speaks with their embodied voice, prosodic quality comes across, and this prosodic quality is something that helps students understand their audience, as they can see the affect their audio essays have on their classmates in the classroom.

<u>The Embodied Voice in the Audio Essay</u>

In thinking about how we are focused mainly on writing, the audio essay is a form of speech—generally speech that is scripted-to-be-spoken. This form is a true embodiment of voice—that can help students develop as better writers as a means of composing through using embodied voice, not just voice as a metaphor. In thinking about voice, Elbow explains many constructions of literal voice, such as how we can identify people by the sound of their voice, how people most always learn to speak before they write, etc. ("What" 4-5). And voice is an important metaphor to consider in the audio essay because audio essays require students to use their embodied voices, though the metaphor of voice is highly contested in composition studies. Elbow defines voice in its simplest terms "the life and rhythms of speech" ("Shifting" 291). And in thinking about writing, Elbow suggests "One of the best directions for coaching freewriting is to tell oneself or one's students to 'talk onto the paper'" ("Shifting" 299). However, according to Darsie Bowden, "In written text there is no literal voice; writing is marks strung out across a page. Oral features like stress and intonation may be keyed or suggested through word order, underlining, or italics, but voice in writing can only be metaphoric in nature"

("Rise" 185). However, Matsuda and Tardy examine how an author constructs voice, and in doing so explain that "voice is the reader's impression derived from the particular combination of the ways in which both discursive and non-discursive features are used" (239). In this way, there are syntactic features that authors can use to make writing have and portray voice as well as non-discursive features such as form.

In addition, in a study performed by Chenoweth and Hayes, described in their article "The Inner Voice in Writing," they found that "The results of this study show that articulatory rehearsal, which appears to correspond to the inner voice we experience when writing, plays an important role in the writing process. In particular, it plays a role in the translation process that converts ideas into language" (116). In this study then, it is proved that the inner voice, or the voice we hear in our heads does make it onto the page, unlike what Bowden has suggested.

Also, in the literature Ivanic and Camps contest Bowden, and according to Roz Ivanič and David Camps in "I Am How I Sound: Voice as Self-Representation in L2 Writing," writing "does not carry the phonetic and prosodic qualities of speech" (3). However, they claim that "lexical, syntactic, organizational, and even material aspects of writing construct identity…and thus writing always conveys a representation of the self of the writer" (3).

This idea of the the representation of the self is part of the problem that Elbow sees when thinking about the metaphor of voice, and he thinks this is the source of contention that people have with the metaphor. As Elbow explains, the trouble and dispute comes from the "the arena of 'authenticity,' 'presence,' sincerity, identy, self, and what I called 'real voice' in *Writing With Power*" ("What" 16). However Elbow explains

that the contention could be annuled if people think of the metaphor of voice not in terms of identity but "resonant voice" ("What" 19).

> Once we see that resonance comes from getting more of ourselves behind the words, we realize that unity or singleness is not the goal. Of course we don't have simple, neatly coherent or unchanging selves…Selves tend to evolve, change, take on new voices and assimilate them…One reason writing is particularly important...—and why writing provides a site for resonant voice or presence—is that writing, particularly with its possibilities for privacy has always served as a crucial place for trying out parts of the self or unconscious that have been hidden or neglected or undeveloped… ("What" 19)

And in going back to Bowden, in her book *Mythology of Voice*, she claims that "voice has served an important function in the movement away from current-traditional rhetoric, but that, as a metaphor, it has outlived its usefulness" (viii). However, in conjunction with other facets of composition studies, such as performance studies and its intersection with composition studies which follows, it seems that voice applied literally to composition of a narrative essay via the mode of podcasting, or producing the audio essay, voice could be applied literally and not just as a metaphor and we may find voice in composition useful once again.

Performing Writing

Newkirk states in *The Performance of Self in Student Writing* "that all forms of 'self-expression,' all of our ways of 'being personal' are forms of performance, in Erving Goffman's terms, 'a presentation of self'" (3). As students write, they are performing a piece of themselves on the page or aurally when it comes to producing the audio essay.

Each time a student composes, both orally and in writing, they are performing themselves on the page. And how can we define this exactly? As Meredith Love states in "Composing through the Performative Screen: Translating Performance Studies into Writing Pedagogy," "thus performance may be thought of as a type of terministic screen or what I call 'a performative screen' that we can use to view the construction of identity in writing" (14). And this notion of performativity can be helpful to students. As Jones states of her successful experience with student podcasting "performativity in this classroom context can help alleviate the counter-productive anxiety that many students feel at the beginning of a writing class, even though they may have strong aural communication and critical thinking skills" (78). Jones continues, "Podcasting differs from written and visual methods of invention…because it requires students to articulate their topic aloud, but more importantly, it is a public performance not solely for the writer and instructor's eyes" (79). As Fishman, Lunsford, McGregor and Otutye state in Performing Writing, Performing Literacy," "One of the ways to get students to a place where they truly understand the importance of 'how words are said' is to work with self-performed texts in which this distinction is literally embodied and personified" (239). We see a successful integration of performance in the classroom as explained again by Jones:

> Through their performance of an authoritative role, students were able to practice asserting themselves actively in the class. Rather than perpetuating the traditional discursive exchange between the students and the instructor, the podcasting performance disrupted the space of the class and made us all audience members. Along with this shift in authority, there was also an element of creative

ownership, or perhaps even subversion, which took place during the podcasting
assignment. (81)

One of the most important aspects of the audio essayment that Jones taps into here
is the notion that the assignment unsettles the power structure in the classroom. This, I
think is the core of how we begin to get students to understand the audience isn't only the
teacher. When the environment becomes subversive, students feel a real investment in
their work, and they aren't just completing the assignment as per their teacher's
instructions. As Fishman et al. go on to explain, "Perhaps it is the immediacy of
performance that makes it a medium well suited to teaching students important lessons
about writing" (234). However, not only is it the immediacy of performance that makes
podcasting a successful means of composition, it is also the notion of audience. As Love
states, "Many students know how to reiterate the role of the student. What they need help
with, what we should be teaching these students, is *acting*… But in order to do this work,
students must leave the spectator position behind and learn how to perform effective
characters that will enable them to connect with various audiences across the disciplines"
(22). Love continues, "The construction of self has less to do with *who the actor really is*
and more to do with how to *make the most effectual connection* in a particular situation
with a particular audience" (17). And in podcasting this audience becomes a real
construction for the students. As Elbow states, "When we are speaking we are less likely
to put our heads down and forget about the structural needs of our audience because our
audience is right there before us" ("Shifting" 295), and "Excellent writing conveys some
kind of involvement with the audience…This ability to connect with the audience is *not*
lacking in most students—contrary to much recent received opinion" ("Shifting" 298).

The best part of understanding of audience for the student producing an audio essay is that they don't have to imagine their audience as Farrell suggests: "In order to begin to write effectively rather than simply transcribe something like oral discourse, beginning writers must learn to imagine a fictional audience for their writing and to anticipate that audience's need to know certain information that might not have to be made explicit in live talk" (348). And as Ong suggests in "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction," "If the writer succeeds in writing, it is generally because he can fictionalize in his imagination an audience he has learned to know not from daily life but from earlier writers who were fictionalizing in their imagination audiences they had learned to know in still earlier writers and so on back to the dawn of written narrative" (11). What seems to be the point here is that in producing the audio essay, students have a real audience they imagine—their classmates. This becomes more important during the audio essay because though students do read their work aloud to each other in peer review and other classroom situations, when a student produces an audio essay, their embodied voice—the voice that belongs to them—is suddenly attached to their work in a different way. They can't hide from their writing selves, much like they can hide behind the written word. A student's embodied voice forces them to be accountable to their audience. "When people produce language *as* they are engaged in the mental event it expresses, they produce language with particular features—features which make an audience feel the meanings very much *in* those words" ("Shifting" 299). Sometimes practitioners of radio give advice to new audio producers that when they are producing, instead of imagining a whole audience, to imagine an audience of one. Something Elbow seems to notice here, is when people are producing, the intimacy of producing audio

comes through in the prosodic qualities of speech, and these qualities can make an audience member feel meaning. Through their embodied voice, students know they are engaging the audience and, it increases their investment in the classroom experience as exemplified by Jones' experience: "With almost no exceptions, students wanted to have their podcasts well-received by their peers as indicated through their questions to me in class and over email, through the time they invested in the assignment, and in their eagerness to hear class members' responses to their podcasts" (88).

While the literature seems to suggest that students do struggle to understand their audience (Chafe, Connors, Elbow, Glaser, Yancey), the problem stems from them not experiencing an authentic audience. And even when an instructor makes up a fictional audience for the student, they still follow the teacher-as-audience mentality. Elbow argues that "forgetting audience is probably the main cause of weakness in student essays—a failure to create thinking and language that connect well with readers" (*Vernacular Eloquence* 69). The audio essay, however, provides a good way to help students keep audience in mind.

<div align="center">

Corpus Linguistics

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<u>A Brief History of Corpus Linguistics</u>

Corpus Linguistics is the study of language through use of corpora, or collections of texts. Once a corpus is compiled, many language features can be analyzed in a variety of ways using different computer programs. Some of the analyses done on language are frequency counts of word use, concordance line analysis (used to look at how words interact syntactically and lexicographically), grammar tagging (used to see what grammar features are prevalent in certain genres), and collocation analysis (used to see which

words co-occur at the same times or which grammar features co-occur in language). According to Graeme D. Kennedy in *An Introduction to Corpus Linguistics*, corpus-based research began in the 18th century with the collection of pre-electronic corpora—mainly biblical texts. In the 1960s, electronic corpora were collected and computer analysis began (13-14). Corpora have long held a pedagogical purpose: mainly to see how students use language in their writing, and many corpora have been developed to find how students use language in writing and in speaking (Kennedy 17). While Corpus Linguistics is used to study many language issues, it has most recently been used to study nonnative English speakers' use of language. As Keck notes in her article "Corpus Linguistics in Language Teaching,"

> Prior to the development of electronically stored corpora, it was not feasible to identify patterns of language use in, for example, American English conversation, as analyzing millions of words by hand was impossible to accomplish in a timely manner. Now, however, computer programs allow for automatic language analysis, and corpus-based findings have emerged which both enrich and challenge previous notions about language use. Specifically, the past few decades have seen an explosion in information available regarding (a) the frequency with which particular words or linguistic features occur in a language, (b) the ways in which lexis and grammar work together to create meaning, and (c) the ways in which situational factors, such as the mode and purpose of communication, impact the choices we make as writers and speakers of a language. (1-2)

Corpus linguistics provides a great lens to consider student writing in the audio essay and quantifiable research data to explain what might be happening.

Register in Corpus Linguistics

     In Biber and Conrad's essay "Multi-dimensional Analysis and the Study of Register Variation," "*register* is used as a cover term for any language variety defined in terms of a particular constellation of situational characteristics. That is, register distinctions are defined in non-lingusitic terms, including the speaker's purpose in communication, the topic, the relationship between the speaker and hearer, and the production circumstances" (3). Some examples of register include academic spoken language, newspaper articles, psychology texts, fiction genres, narrative accounts, and many, nearly infinite others.

Multidimensional Analysis in Corpus Linguistics

     To begin to define what Multidimensional Analysis in Corpus Linguistics is and how this framework can be applied to Composition Studies, first a dimension in Corpus Linguistics needs to be defined. In his article "Integration and Involvement in Speaking, Writing, and Oral Literature," Wallace Chafe describes a dimension as a term often used and discussed in Corpus Linguistics and can be defined by co-occuring linguistic features; or grammar features in writing that tend to happen simultaneously (38). Some examples of dimensions in Corpus Linguistics are narrative/non-narrative, involved/detached, informational/involved amond many others.

     In order to being a Multidimensional Analysis, the first step is grammar-tagging a text using special software called the CLAWS grammar. CLAWS is a corpus annotation system "developed at Lancaster University for grammatical and semantic analysis" (Xiao 447). Essentially, what CLAWS does is analyze a text for grammar features and tag them using special codes that can be read for frequency by other corpus analysis software. For

example, a sample of text might look like this once grammar-tagged: *I <PPIS1> was <VBDZ> surprised <JJ> to <TO> find <VVI> that <CST> the <AT> book <NN1> on <II> > my <APPGE> shelf <NN1> is <VBZ> five <MC> editions <NN2> out <JJ31> of <JJ32> date <JJ33>*. As you can see, there are codes in angle brackets. For example, the first code to the right of *I* in this example sentence is <PPIS1>. The CLAWS site provides a key for each of these codes: in the case of <PPIS1>, this code means that *I* in this instance is a 1st person singular subjective personal pronoun. The grammar features that are tagged in CLAWS can further be described in Biber's *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*, in which he describes each feature's purpose, uses, and meanings.

Once the texts are grammar tagged, raw frequency counts are performed to find how often features are happening amongst registers. Then factor analysis, a process of descriptive statistics is used to find how each feature across registers is either highly frequent or not frequent. Based on these statistics, registers are then plotted on a dimension line. Dimensions run on a continuum, and certain types of writing fall somewhere along this continuum. For example, children's books are considered to be highly narrative; whereas, academic texts are considered non-narrative.

According to Biber and Conrad, "The multi-dimensional (MD) analytical approach was developed for comprehensive analysis of register variation. Early MD Studies investigated the comprehensive analysis of register variation. Early MD studies investigated the relations among spoken and written registers in English (for example, Biber 1984, 1986, 1988), while later studies investigated the patterns of register variation in other languages" (4). While for quite some time, MD couldn't be used to its fullest

extent because accomplishing coding of texts by hand was impossible, but as Biber and Conrad suggest, large-scale studies are now possible because of "computational analytic tools" (4). While a full MD analytical approach is not done here, this is an important concept to have a basic understanding of, as it provides insight for further research possibilities.

Chafe Influence

Based on a study in 1982 by Wallace Chafe, explained in his essay, "Integration and Involvement in Speaking, Writing, and Oral Literature," I plan to use the dimension of Involvement vs. Detachment as a guiding concept in analyzing student writing. Involved writing can best be described as writing that implements grammar features that exhibit a writer has a good understanding of their audience. Some of these grammar features are first person pronouns; second person pronouns; emphatic particles; colloquial expressions like "well I," "you know," and "I mean" and direct quotes. Detached writing is writing that can best be described as writing that might miss-the-mark in regards to an audience. The student might not exhibit rhetorical effectiveness in dealing with their audience, and thus, their writing isn't as effective. Detached writing exhibits grammar features like passive voice and nomilizations. As explained in her article "Nominalizations are Zombie Nouns," author Helen Sword, who specializes in research about academic writing and higher-education pedagogy, explains nominalizations as "Nouns formed from other parts of speech are called nominalizations. Academics love them; so do lawyers, bureaucrats and business writers. I call them "zombie nouns" because they cannibalize active verbs, suck the lifeblood from adjectives and substitute abstract entities for human beings" (1). Here is her example of a phrase that is detached:

"The *proliferation* of *nominalizations* in a discursive *formation* may be an *indication* of a *tendency* toward *pomposity* and *abstraction*" (1). As she says the nominalizations in this phrase take away the active verbs and "fails to tell us *who* is doing *what*" (1). However, here is a sentence that is involved: "Writers who overload their sentences with nominalizations tend to sound pompous and abstract" (Sword 1). This sentence has clearer, concise language, more active verbs, and the audience clearly understands who is doing what.

This dimension is particularly important in student writing because often students use detached writing when they don't feel ownership of a text and when they are unclear of what they are trying to say; however, often when we ask students to say aloud what they are trying to write, they are able to. Also, another reason for "detachment" in student writing seems to be the sense that this quality of "detachment" is what academic prose is, in theory, supposed to achieve. In a way, students try to fake this voice of an academic, and the writing often sounds "detached." Also, according to Biber, "Writing [compared to speech] has a more detached style—shown, for example, by the frequency of passives and nomilizations" (*Spoken and Written* 388). In this way, the audio essay is a way for students to experience this dimension of involvement, and their writing becomes more direct and their audience often understands their writing better once they see the kind of affect the scripted-to-be heard writing has on a specific audience.

The General Service List in Corpus Linguistics

In thinking about the differences between speaking and writing while analyzing student scripted-to-be heard texts and written-to-be read texts, an important area to look

at in Corpus Linguistics is the kind of language being used. A lot of critics of speech

practices informing writing practices claim that speech patterns that bleed into writing

diminish writing, and students need to learn academic ways of writing. Often our speech

features are seen as common, and the reason students go to school is to learn the

academic style of writing. Students are taught that this detached way of writing sounds

more academic: academic writing is often seen as having no personality and no feeling,

and as presented earlier in this literature review, speech features can sometimes give

emotion to writing. And while it may be true that certain speech features diminish writing

quality, how do we truly know what is considered academic speech and non-academic

speech?

In 1953, an English instructor named Michael West developed a corpora intended

to help learners of English. "The General Services List (GSL) (West, 1953), developed

from a corpus of 5 million words with the needs of ESL/EFL learners in mind, contains

the most wide useful 2,000 word families in English" (as noted and cited in Coxhead

215). The list was based on frequency of use of the words, "ease of learning," "useful

concepts," and "stylistic level" (Coxhead 215). Though there have been critics of

employing speech patterns in writing, the GSL can help us quantitatively see what our

intuition can't tell us: what the most common words in the English language are and how

our students use them.

<u>The AWL list</u>

In 2000, linguist Averil Coxhead developed the Academic Word List (AWL)—a list similar to the GSL but using academic language. She originally did this because, like West, she thought that pedagogically, developing a list of academic words that occur frequently would be helpful to analyze and describe student writing, as well as use this list to help students. "The Academic Word List includes 570 word families that constitute a specialized vocabulary with good coverage of academic texts, regardless of the subject area. It accounts for 10% of the total tokens in the Academic Corpus, and more than 94% of the words in the list occur in 20 or more of the 28 subject areas of the Academic Corpus" (Coxhead 226). As Coxhead noted in 2000, "These findings are useful in teaching English and point to directions for future research" (226). The AWL that Coxhead developed is particularly helpful in thinking about the speaking writing connection especially when considering how some critics of speech features in student texts believe these can degrade the academic language in a text. In using the AWL in conjunction with the GSL, we can see and not just intuit how language is *truly* being used and can come to some quantitatively supported research as opposed to purely describing the language using qualitative methods.

<u>Application to Composition Research</u>

Biber discusses how multidimensional analysis is ideally suited to composition research because "it enables a comparison of good and poor writing from several different composition tasks in a single, coherent analysis" (*Variation* 203). Current research in Corpus Linguistics and Composition Studies, though it focuses some on student writing, doesn't focus specifically on first-year composition within English

programs in Composition. There is much room for Corpus Linguistics and Composition Studies to join in creating further research using Corpus tools to analyze student writing. Biber himself discusses how rhetoric and composition can benefit from using MD frameworks and tools to find more complete answers in the field.

Conclusion

The impetus for this thesis was to study whether there are differences in how students compose a research-based essay versus an audio essay and how those differences might influence the way students understand particular rhetorical issues, such as audience, while composing. It is hard to say what might be happening exactly, but in looking at my students' writing, it seems their understanding of audience does seem to improve in producing audio essays. However, there is very little literature about this topic specifically, so I drew from other areas in composition to inform this study, while also drawing from Corpus Linguistics to help uncover the relevance of these issues.

In looking at the literature, there has been and interesting resurgence of importance in the debate between speaking and writing in compostion at least every decade. During the 1960s, authors like Robert Zoellner (as well as many corpus linguists) discussed the differences between speaking and writing. In the 1970s, Robert Connors and Thomas Farrell brought back the speech and writing debate, in which Connors suggested that writing was advantageous over speaking, and Farrell claimed there really was no difference between the two. In the 1980s, Ong discussed the importance of orality in writing, and in the 1990s, Sperling wrote her article, "Revisiting the Writing-Speaking Connection: Challenges for Research on Writing and Writing Instruction."

Also in the 1990s Bowden published her article, "The Rise of a Metaphor: 'Voice' In Composition Pedagogy," an article whose metaphor of voice is closely connected to the notion of writing and speaking. While Bowden is a critic of the metaphor of voice in writing, others like Elbow have been strong proponents and have tried to find ways to describe voice as more real-life tangible theory as opposed to just a metaphor, and he does this through discussion and analysis of speech and writing features. In these most recent decades, scholars such as Selfe, Jones, and Fishman et al. discuss ways in which podcasting in its different incarnations can help students to realize how speaking and producing multimodal projects such as audio essays can give students a better understanding of voice.

In looking at the final piece of this study, Corpus Linguistics, Biber is the front-runner in scholarship related to analyzing corpora. Dr. Casey Keck, an instructor at Boise State University and a mentee of Biber, also provides insight into a field that is complex and complicated that I otherwise wouldn't have understood if it wasn't for the writing and scholarship she has done on the subject. While Corpus Linguistics indeed provides a frame for this study, and the tools are most useful as quantitative analysis tools, I would like to take the opportunity to emphasize that while these tools are helpful, without the qualitative interpretation of my background in composition, this study wouldn't have been possible. I would have never found Corpus Linguistics as a tool had I not stumbled upon what I saw as a difference in the way my students compose for writing versus audio essays.

While as we can see from these long-held debates on speaking and writing, my study will surely not provide an answer. I do hope it adds another layer of understanding

to how students compose and make rhetorical choices, and potentially provides

inspiration for further study on the subject.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Corpus Design

The corpus I have compiled is a small corpus of two out of the four student assignments my English 101 (Introduction to College Writing), Fall 2012 students from Boise State University have composed as their course assignments. Students were recruited according to IRB standards for participation in this research, and I have 25 participants. (See Appendix A: Recruitment Script and Appendix B: Informed Consent) The texts were collected electronically via Blackboard, a Learning Management Software system that Boise State University uses campus-wide.

Text Collection

The first texts I collected are not audio projects; instead, they are a version of a research-based essay not unlike the essays featured in *This I Believe,* the radio show started by Edward R. Murrow in the 1950s. In this assignment, the third in the course's sequence of assignments, students were asked to write a 4-5 page research-based essay about a core belief they have. The page length is significantly longer than a true *This I Believe* essay, which is normally 350-500 words, but the students will be freer to generate more material from which to work for their audio essay.

I collected the third assignment as opposed to the first assignment to account for the variable that student ability might be different at the beginning of the semester. After completing two units, the students will be more familiar with writing and my

expectations in the classroom, and this will hopefully reduce the number of variables arising that deal with ability to compose a college-level essay.

Another variable I had to account for was the Boise State University First-Year Writing Department outcomes. In English 101, students are required to complete a minor-amount of research for their coursework. While students aren't expected to be experts in research practices, English 102 at Boise State University is "Introduction to College Research Writing," and in preparation for this course, students need to have a small amount of experience in primary and secondary research practices; thus, this research requirement was something I had to work in as a component to the third writing assignment.

While a typical research paper might be a piece of writing in which students are asked to report facts on a subject they are assigned, and then are asked to be objective about their topics, a research-based essay is a different kind of assignment that students aren't completely familiar with. As Ballenger says, "Teaching the research essay must begin by challenging some of the 'rules' of research writing students assume are already scripted..." (100). "What the research essay can do that the research paper can't is shift students' roles as researchers. They are jolted out of a passive role and become much more active agents in the negotiation about what might be true" (106). The kind of research-based essay Ballenger suggests is one that is in line with the First-Year Writing Program outcomes at Boise State University. While students might not show mastery at using research methods, they do need to exhibit some skill before moving on to English 102. However, this research component did present other challenges to this study that I would like to present a bit later in this methodology.

The final draft of the assignment was handed in on 11/2/12. Figure 3.1 below shows the prompt the students were given. In addition to completing a lot of prompts to build material to lead up the research-essay, as a class, we read many example essays from the collections *This I Believe: The Personal Philosophies of Remarkable Men and Women* and *This I Believe: More Personal Philosophies of Remarkable Men and Women*, both of which were published by NPR. In addition to reading and examining these essays to see how published writers constructed their essays, we also listened to many *This I Believe* essays from the site www.thisibelieve.org, which helped us transition to our next assignment.

Genre: Your goal in this Unit is to produce a research-based essay that draws on a direct belief of your own. Additionally you will use specific evidence in conjunction with your personal experience to define what you believe. You will need to support or enrich your opinion with evidence you find—this could be other scholarly works, readings from class, magazine articles, books you have found, information from primary research sources (interview, observation, surveying), etc. The goal is to help you understand how you might integrate evidence into your writing in interesting ways that might not seem like the traditional research you are used to.

Audience: You should try and appeal to anyone who might read this. I know this is a broad description of an audience, but we will talk about defining your audience more in class.

Purpose: Write a 4-5 page essay which answers the statement "This I Believe." Though our assignment is modified from a traditional "This I Believe" essay, part of our

purpose in this assignment is using research to discover what it is we believe. Sometimes research can lead us to a new or different kind of understanding about a subject. In figuring out how to incorporate research here, you will hopefully find it easier to incorporate evidence-based writing into your other coursework. The "This I Believe" website offers this information about writing an essay in this genre: 1.) Communal Relevance: At the end of the essay, the reader has the right to ask "So What?" And have it answered. A writer does not merely tell a story for personal reasons, but in order to communicate a larger idea to the reader. 2.) Authentic Voice: The writer must create a narrative persona (or stance) that the reader believes authentic, or else the text risks coming off as trite or condescending. Here are some tips that they offer: 1.) Tell a story. 2.) Name your belief. 3.) Be positive (avoid stating what you don't believe and avoid preaching or editorializing). 4.) Be personal.

Figure 3.1   "This I Believe" Research-Based Essay Prompt

The second texts I collected are the transcripts of the students' radio essays. The second texts contained a mix of two options: 1.) Essays in which the students re-envisioned their written *This I Believe* essay but cut the word length to fit a recorded length of 3-5 minutes (about 350-500 words); 2. Essays in which students produced a new audio essay, a "commentary" either in the *This I Believe* form or another form similar to a radio essay heard on *This American Life*. The commentary audio essay is an idea that I adapted from Dr. Bruce Ballenger, in which I ask students to explore an idea or belief they have in the audio essay form. This assignment has proved particularly helpful for first-year writers, as the form asks them to be concise, and in doing so,

students have to pay particular attention to their rhetorical choices because they have to present their ideas verbally and in such a short amount of time.

Two options—to either revise or make anew—were given because one of the assignment curricula for the Boise State University First-Year Writing Program is to have students repurpose their work. To do this, students must take a previously written essay, and radically revise it into another form (which usually takes the form of a digital project as a repurposed piece). The purpose is for students to understand their intended audience in a new way, so for my thesis, most of my students used their previously written essays and revised them as an audio essay; however, I gave the option for students to produce a new essay because once some become more familiar with the genre, they think of a new idea, and this kind of writing is productive for them as well.

In letting students pick a new essay topic for the audio essay, this presents some issues with variability in comparing the written and spoken product. The critique might be that in revision students are more tied to the original texts than are students who start fresh. The students who start fresh seem more likely to incorporate features of the audio essay because they are less bound to an original written text. While I acknowledge this variable as a major problem with this thesis, it was unavoidable. The differences presented in the next chapter could exist not only because the spoken and written features of writing are different, but these differences could also be dependent on whether or not students revised from their original drafts, wrote a new essay entirely, or the issue of difference might even be that the genre for each of these essays is significantly different. While I understand and acknowledge that this does present a problem for the study, in further research, a more accurate comparison could be reasoned out, and I present

different methodological approaches in the study conclusion. If I were to complete this again, I may compare genres that are more similar, but as I stated earlier, I was restricted by the confines of the First-Year Writing Program outcomes to an extent, and this is where the variables seem to present the biggest problem.

In this case, I preferred my students find the project as a useful way to learn different rhetorical skills, and so the variability, though important, was pushed aside in this case. I did, however, ask students to use the narrative form for both essays to account for some of the variables that arise in regards to genre. The final draft of the second assignment was handed in on 11/28/12. Figure 3.2 below shows the prompt the students were given.

Genre: Your goal in this Unit is to produce a 3-5 minute commentary podcast. This can be tricky. Something you will have to think specifically about is that in radio, you only get one shot to grab your audience's attention and make them listen. If they get bored, they tune out. So, your audience is key here, as are your rhetorical choices, because you only have 3-5 minutes, which seems like a long time, but it can go by pretty quickly. You have two options for this assignment: 1.) You can redo your "This I Believe" essay so that it is recorded and is 3-5 minutes. It should be similar in format to the ones we have listened to so far. 2.) You may pick a new topic and produce an audio commentary on that topic in 3-5 minutes. Some definitions of a commentary are as follows: 1. The expression of opinions or explanations about an event or situation: "an editorial **commentary**." 2. Anything serving to illustrate a point, prompt a realization, or exemplify. 3. A series of

comments, explanations, or annotations. If you want to write a commentary based on something new, you're welcome to do so, but please keep in mind that you only have two weeks (not including Thanksgiving) for this project.

Audience: People that would listen to a show like *This American Life* or *This I Believe*. Remember, these people can't see you or read your work, so you have depend a lot on your rhetorical choices, your delivery, and your performance.

Purpose: Your goal in this unit is to produce a 3-5 minute podcast addressing a general radio audience using the open-source software Audacity, which is available for free download to any laptop. Some of the computer labs on campus have the software to use, too. Alternatively, if you are more familiar with a program such as ProTools or GarageBand or any other digital audio program, you can use this, too. The project just needs to be in mp3 format so we can listen to them in class. You do not need to incorporate any voice except your own or use music unless you choose to do so.

Figure 3.2   Radio Essay Prompt

Table 3.1 below shows the data of the corpus that was collected. As you will see, two sets of essays were collected from 25 students for each essay. The average number of words per essay is also shown, as is the total word count for each collection of essays.

Table 3.1   Corpus Data

	Total Number of Essays Collected	Average Number of Words Per Essay	Total Word Count
This I Believe Research-Essay	25	1407	35,168
This I Believe Scripted-to-be-Heard Essay	25	760	19,232
Total	50	1,080	54,000

In this corpus design, balance is two fold:

1.) Having a large enough corpus to see results. If there are too few texts, then counts of words might not represent a trend because there aren't enough words in a corpus to represent an accurate trend. Essentially, we don't know that patterns are true patterns if there aren't enough words to represent the patterns over time or across genres. While my corpus is quite small compared to some larger corpora, I'd argue that it still provides a limited—but useful—snapshot of linguistic features in student writing. This study also provides a framework for using corpus linguistics for analyzing students texts that should be helpful for future, larger studies.

2.) As you can see from the data in Table 3.1, the word balance in average number of words and total word count is not balanced, or even. Balance in that word counts should be equal to get even analyses is important. Though the data shows that there is, in fact, an imbalance in the word counts here, in my data analysis, I normed the word counts so that features would show numbers that accurately represent features on a balanced basis. In corpus linguistics, there is a raw count of features (how many times a word or feature occur per text) and a normed count of features (how many times a word

or feature occurs per a certain amount of words). For example, Figure 3.3 is an explanation of norming in Corpus Linguistics by Dr. Casey Keck.

Norming is done by dividing the total number of occurrences (raw count) by the total number of words in the corpus/subcorpus, and then multiplying by the number you want to norm to. For example, if you wanted to norm the raw counts of [deal] in the Spoken subcorpus, you would do the following:

$$\frac{40{,}194 \text{ (FREQ raw count)}}{95{,}565{,}075 \text{ (total Spoken words)}} \quad X \quad 1 \text{ million} \ = \ 420 \text{ times per million words}$$

Figure 3.3   Norming Instructions

Since 1 million words wasn't a realistic count for my thesis, as most of my student essays were around 1,000 words, I normed to 1,000 words. This was done in a similar way as Figure 3.3 provides above; however, the numbers were changed to match my data.

Corpus Analysis Tools

After collecting the samples, I removed any identifiable student information, assigned file numbers to the essays, and then converted the student essays to .txt (plain text) files and cleaned up any inconsistencies that might prevent the software from reading the texts correctly. Corpus analysis computer software requires that texts be in plain text files to function correctly. While there are many possible analyses I can do, I have chosen three analysis methods to not only get some specifics about the language

first-year writers use when comparing written texts to scripted-to-be heard texts but also to get a holistic overview of the texts: 1.) Grammar tagging the texts using the CLAWS Grammar Tagger; 2.) Taking the grammar tagged texts and running them through another frequency count and using *AntConc* to see the frequency of grammar tags; 3.) a Vocabulary Profile using Lextutor's VocabProfile to find out the percentages of academic language to non-academic language that is being used.

Constituent-Likelihood Automatic Word-Tagging System (CLAWS) Grammar Tagger

While analyzing word choice can only provide us a certain amount of explanation for the way students use language, what can begin to help us see how language is working a little more explicitly, however, is grammar-tagged texts. As described by Roger Garside in *The Computational Analysis of English: A Corpus-based Approach*, the CLAWS grammar-tagger is "a system for tagging English-language texts: that is, for assigning to each word in a text an unambiguous indication of the grammatical class to which this word belongs in this context. The first version of this system was developed over the period l98l to l983 at the Universities of Lancaster, Oslo, and Bergen" (30). As referred to in the Review of Literature, CLAWS is a corpus annotation system "developed at Lancaster University for grammatical and semantic analysis" (Xiao 447). Essentially, what CLAWS does is analyze a text for grammar features and tag them using special codes that can be read for frequency by other corpus analysis software, and the CLAWS site provides a key for each of these codes. The grammar features that are tagged in CLAWS can further be described in Biber's *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*, in which he describes each features purpose, uses, and meanings.

Using the free web-based online CLAWS Grammar Tagger provided by University of Lancaster, I ran the student papers through the software. The computer program then provided the text as a marked-up text with grammar tags, accounting for each word and grammar feature (i.e., first person pronouns, nominalizations, prepositions). See Figure 3.3 below for a section of a student text that has been grammar-tagged with the CLAWS software. Then, I checked the tagged texts for accuracy to make sure the tagger identified the grammar features appropriately, though the program can complete analyses with 97% accuracy (Garside 30).

I <PPIS1> noticed <VVD> I <PPIS1> was <VBDZ> n't <XX> alone <JJ> in <II> the <AT> room <NN1> , <,> > and <CC> that <CST> the <AT> foul <JJ> smell <NN1> was <VBDZ> actually <RR> coming <VVG> > from <II> right <NN1> there <RL> in <II> the <AT> bed <NN1> with <IW> me <PPIO1> . <.> > It <PPH1> was <VBDZ> my <APPGE> roommate <NN1> 's <GE> feet <NN2> ! <!> > He <PPHS1> jokingly <RR> refers <VVZ> to <II> them <PPHO2> as <CSA> his <APPGE> " <"> > stinky <JJ> dawgs <NN2> . <.> " <"> > He <PPHS1> was <VBDZ> laying <VVG> upside <RL21> down <RL22> , <,> head <NN1> under <II> > the <AT> covers <NN2> , <,> feet <NN2> on <II> my <APPGE> pillow <NN1> . <.> > I <PPIS1> jumped <VVD> out <II21> of <II22> bed <NN1> , <,> demanding <VVG> to <TO> know <VVI> > why <RRQ> he <PPHS1> was <VBDZ> sleeping <VVG> in <II> my <APPGE> room <NN1> , <,> and <CC> > more <RGR> importantly <RR> , <,> why <RRQ> were <VBDR> his <APPGE> " <"> stinky <JJ> dogs <NN2> > " <"> on <II> my <APPGE> pillow <NN1> .

Figure 3.4   Example grammar-tagged student text

AntConc and Initial Frequency Count

According to Laurence Anthony's (the creator of AntConc) homepage, "*AntConc* is a freeware, multiplatform tool for carrying out corpus linguistics research and data-driven learning" (Anthony). AntConc is a concordancing software that can perform multiple functions, but I mainly used it to run frequency list analyses, which show each word used in a text, how many times the words are used in a text, and the frequency of word use across a range of texts—in this case, the two student assignments I have collected. Picture 1 shows an example graphic of the appearance of a frequency list of grammar features for the first student texts.

My first corpus analysis was generating a frequency list of grammar tagged texts used in the first student texts of their "This I Believe" research-based essay and comparing the frequency of grammar features in these essays to the frequency of the grammar features used in the second student text, the audio essays. Producing frequency lists for words and grammar features used in each text provides a comparison of the kind of language being used. While a frequency list obviously shows function words such as articles, determiners, and conjunctions, it also shows the frequency of lexical grammar features, too, such as nouns and adjectives. Comparing the different frequency lists for each essay can help me to infer how students are using language in general and how students use language differently across the two essay types.

These lists will just include the grammar features (identified by tags) that are most prevalent in the texts for both the research-based essay and the audio essay. Then, I will analyze how the grammar features are similar and different in each essay. While I cannot

complete a study in the same way as Biber's multidimensional analysis studies, I am

using these as framework examples from which to draw from in this study.
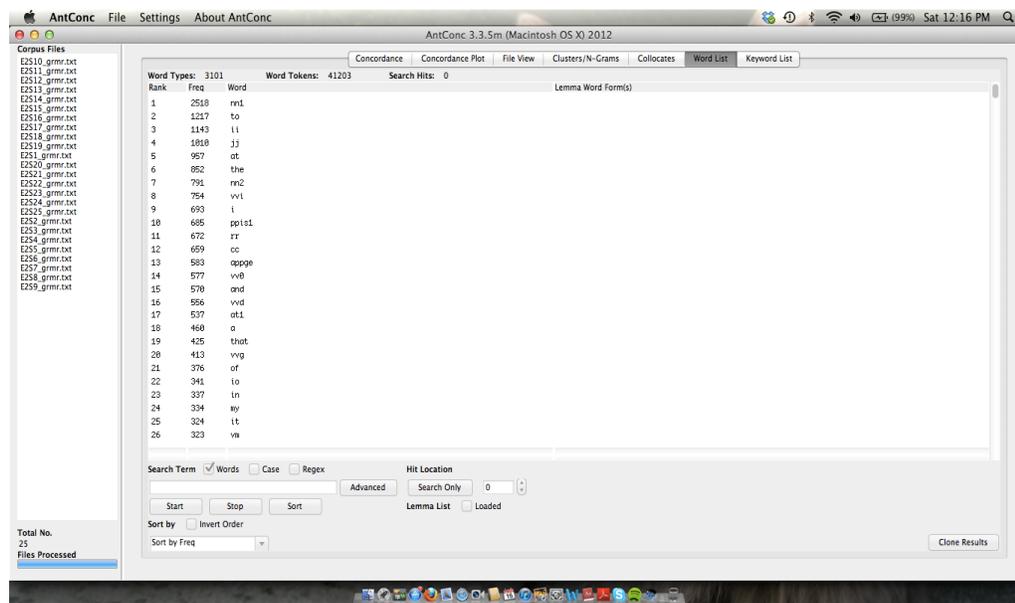
Picture 1   Example grammar tag frequency list

VocabProfile

The next step I completed was doing an analysis of the kinds of language students

use in their writing in both their research-based essays and their audio essays. Often in

Corpus Linguistics, a distinction is made between high-frequency or "general"

vocabulary, and lower-frequency academic vocabulary.

The General Service List (GSL) was developed by Michael West, an English

teacher in 1953 to represent the top 2,000 words most frequently used in the English

language, with the intent being to help English language learners become more fluent by

providing them with a comprehensive list of the most needed-to-know words to function

more easily as non-native speakers. In response to the 1950s list, Averil Coxhead created

the Academic Word List (AWL) in 2000 to be an extension of the GSL. Coxhead's list

spans 570 semantic fields over a broad range of academic sub-disciplines. Coxhead picked words that were highly frequent across fields in an effort to help teachers assist learners in acquiring vocabulary words they would need at the university level (213).

At http://www.lextutor.ca/, created by Tom Cobb from the University of Quebec at Montreal, there is a web-based version of a VocabProfile program designed much like Paul Nation's *Range* program. *Range* was created to run analyses of writing to determine how many words in a text are from the GSL, AWL, or how many words are off-list (aren't included in either list). I used VocabProfile to run each of the two student texts— the research-based essay and audio essay—to determine how students use language and what percentage of the vocabulary in each essay students are using are from the GSL, AWL, or off-word list. See Picture 2 below of a screen-shot of a sample analysis of student texts and the output of the web-based VocabProfile.
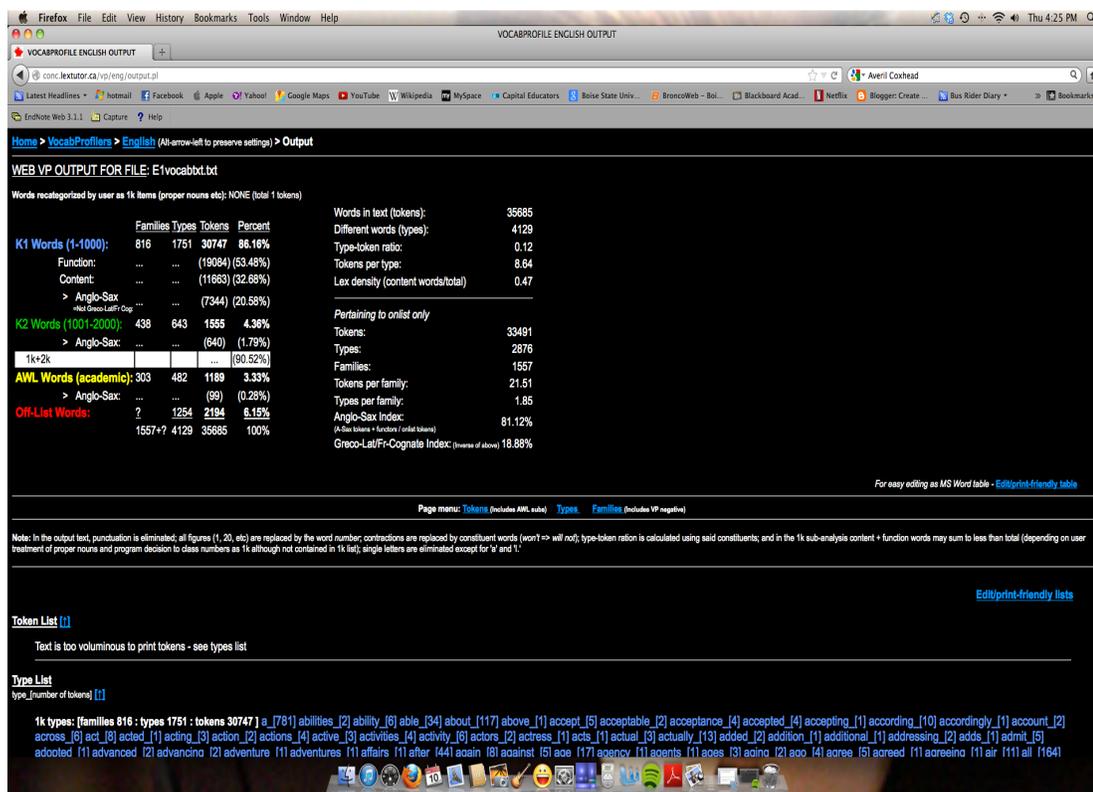
Picture 2   Example VocabProfile web-based output

Pedagogical Implications

Despite the limitations of this study (the relatively small sample size, the large

number variables I can't control, and my inexperience with linguistic analysis, to name

just a few), I believe there is much to be learned from a close, quantitative analysis of

student texts. In the field of composition, there aren't many studies that involve using

Corpus Linguistics to study student language; though, even though for someone quite as

inexperienced as myself, it's relatively simple to begin to navigate the software the

linguists use to study language. Of course, I am not trying to minimize the work it

requires to become a highly-trained corpus linguist, but in conjunction with linguists, one

of my hopes is that this might inspire further work in our field with corpus linguists.

While this study is obviously not going to solve the "speaking and writing" debate, it

might help to illuminate and inform our pedagogical practices. Currently, there is a strategic shift in some university curricula to get students to more fully understand real-world implications of their understanding of audience and their communities. I hope this study might provide insight into how students compose texts with spoken features in mind and how these spoken features influence or change language use.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In looking at the data using a corpus analysis framework, certain trends emerge. While this study isn't a full-scope Corpus Linguistics analysis, it provides some insight into how students are using language in their writing. As stated previously in the study Methodology, frequency of grammar features was normed to a count of per 1,000 words. While this sample is relatively small, on average, each essay had approximately 1,000 words. The features I picked, then, happened at least 1 or more times across each essay. Though, of course, in future studies, a analysis that examines grammar features that occur less frequently than per 1,000 words.

Similarities

As you can see in Table 4.1, below, these are the seven most commonly occuring grammar features in both types of essays. The grammar features from most frequently occurring to least frequently occuring are as follows: 1.) singular common nouns, 2.) the infinitive marker *to*, 3.) general prepositions, 4.) general adjectives, 5.) the article *the*, 6.) plural common nouns, and 7.) infinitive verbs.

Table 4.1   Similarities Between Student Essays

Grammar Feature	Description	Example	Raw Frequency Count (Written)	Normed Frequency Count (Written) (per 1,000 words)	Raw Frequency Count (Spoken)	Normed Frequency Count (Spoken) (per 1,000 words)
NN1	singular common noun	ability, life, zombie	4,319	123	2,518	131
TO	infinitive marker	"to" stand, "to" see	2,037	58	1,217	63
II	general preposition	from, in, on	1,994	57	1,143	59
JJ	general adjective	ample, slight, whole	1,934	55	1,010	53
AT	article	the	1,645	47	957	50
NN2	plural common noun	dreams, memories, students,	1,484	42	791	41
VVI	infinitive	to dream, may fail, will go	1,330	38	754	39

Singular Common Noun

It is not surprising that these texts, while different, share some of the same

structure, mainly the most frequently occurring grammar features. According to the

Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (*LGSWE*), "Words can be broadly

grouped into three classes according to their main functions and their grammatical

behavior: lexical words, function words, and inserts" (Biber 55). Lexical words are best

described as words that carry meaning in English. Function words usually carry little

meaning, but they are best described as the glue that holds lexical words together. While

inserts are a newer class in English, they are words that are more frequent in spoken English that carry emotional meaning. The most common type of insert discussed in English is the interjection: for example "uh" or "um." Insert words are a lexical class that vary greatly from speaking to writing.

As you can see, the most prevalent grammar feature in the student texts across writing and speaking are singular common nouns. Nouns are considered lexical words. *LGSWE* further states "there are four main classes of lexical words: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs" (55). Thus, it isn't surprising that the most common grammar feature in student texts is singular common nouns; and further, the sixth most common frequent feature is plural common nouns.

I believe in the <u>pursuit</u> of <u>happiness.</u>

Think briefly about the gay <u>community.</u>

The <u>song</u> that was played at the <u>funeral</u>

The <u>connection</u> I had to my <u>father</u>

Figure 4.1   Example of Singular Common Nouns

<u>*To* Infinitive Marker and *the* Infinitive</u>

As the data shows, the *to infinitive marker* is the second most frequent grammar feature and the *infinitive* is the most frequently grammar feature; these two features together are two of the most highly frequently occurring grammar features in both texts. *To-clauses* or "infinitive clauses can have a range of syntactic roles" (*LGSWE* 198). While infinitive clauses function in roles other than complement clauses, in most of the

student writing in this study, infinitive clauses mostly function in the complement clause role.

See, below, Figure 4.2 for examples of infinitive verb forms in the complement clause role.

I believe that *to pursue* happiness

To conclude, I would like to

and less likely <u>to die</u> of any disease

She was scared *to hear* the truth.

Figure 4.2   Example of *to*-infinitive and infinitive verbs from student work

As the *LGSWE* explains, "Infinitivial complement clauses serve a wide range of functions: in addition to reporting speech and cognitive states, they are commonly used to report intentions, desires, efforts, perpetual states, and various other general actions" (693). *To-clauses* occurring frequently across texts is not strange, as *to-clauses* follow several high frequency verbs, such as "like" and "want." We use *to-clauses* as complements to these verbs because they suggest action on the part of the subject. As LGSWE also states, "the verbs taking *to*-clauses in post predicate position can be usefully grouped into ten major semantic classes" (693). Figure 4.3, below, shows these semantic classes and examples.

VERB TYPE	EXAMPLE
speech act verbs	*act, tell, warn*
other communication verbs	*show, prove*
cognition verbs	*assume, consider, expect, find*
perception verbs	*feel, see, hear*
verbs of desire	*hope, wish, like*
verbs of intention or decision	*decide, choose, plan*
verbs of effort	*try, manage, fail*
verbs of modality or causation	*help, let, persuade, get*
aspectual verbs	*start, continue, cease*
verbs of existence/occurrence	*seem, appear, happen, turn out*

Figure 4.3   Adapted from *LGSWE* (693)

As we can see from the following student examples, in Figure 4.4, students are using infinitive clauses predicted by the *LGSWE.* Since *that-clauses* "are commonly used to report the speech, thoughts, attitudes, or emotions of humans," we might expect to see more *that-clauses* appearing commonly across these texts. However, that doesn't appear to be the case (*LGSWE* 660). It's surprising that both texts use infinitive clauses frequently and are not more different, but infinitive verbs are very common in the English language across registers in general. Obviously, this would be a place for further research to see why students choose *to-clause* complement constructions over *that-clause* complement constructions; however, one possibility is that there are fewer semantic classes of *that-clause* constructions, and this restriction on verb choice explains why students are using *to-clause* constructions

In order *to see* and be able *to say*

likely *to die* of any cause

he is great *to live* with

anxious and excited *to start* on

Figure 4.4   Examples of *to-clauses* from student work

Prepositions

Prepositions belong to the second class of words: function words. In Table 4.1, above, prepositions are the third most frequently occurring grammar feature in student texts. This makes sense because "Prepositions are links which introduce prepositional phrases. As the most typical complement in a prepositional phrase is a noun phrase, they can be regarded as a device which connects noun phrases with other structures" (*LGSWE* 74). If nouns are the most frequent grammar feature in the lexical class, it only makes sense that a function word whose main job is to connect noun phrases is the second most frequent grammar feature in the texts. Also, it is not strange that we see prepositions happening frequently in both texts, as nouns are the most common types of words in English, so it makes sense that prepositions are also common in each text.

I'm <u>in</u> college.

I walked <u>along</u> the beautiful streets.

He looked <u>at</u> me and said

The hero comes <u>on</u> stage

Figure 4.5   Examples of Prepositions from student work

<u>Adjectives</u>

Adjectives are the fourth most common feature the research essays and audio essays share. While "adjectives are most frequent in the written registers, especially academic prose, while adverbs are most frequent in conversation and fiction," this is not true in this study (*LGSWE* 504). While the scripted-to-be heard radio essays are not necessarily part of the conversation register, the audio essay exhibits some features of spoken prose (*LGSWE* 504). This could be because students use more adjectives in general across the essays. In this way, the two essays are more similar than different, when *LGSWE* explains they should be different. In this way, the audio essay reflects features of academic writing that might be useful to further explore. If we look at the first grammar feature in Table 4.1, above, it makes sense that adjectives are closely frequent in the fourth place, as "Adjectives are frequently used to modify nouns, thus adding to the informational density of expository registers such as news and academic prose" (*LGSWE* 504). Adjectives give depth to writing in providing descriptive qualities to nouns, and this is why they may be frequent in both student texts, as nouns are the most frequent feature.

the first <u>professional</u> rock climber

the <u>little</u> kid

beginning of <u>recorded</u> history

I saw the <u>red</u> dot.

Figure 4.6   **Examples of adjectives from student work**

<u>Articles</u>

While articles can encompass a few function words in the English language, the most frequent article amongst student texts in this study was the definite article, *the*. *The* is also referred to as a determiner and is "used to narrow down the reference of a noun" (*LGSWE* 69). The definite article "specifies that the referent is assumed to be known to the speaker and the addressee" (*LGSWE* 69). *LGSWE* states "The proportional use of definite and indefinite articles varies greatly depending upon syntactic role, [but] the relative frequency of definite articles is much higher in subject position and as a complement/object of a preposition than in object position" (269). *The* is the most frequent determiner in the English language, so it makes sense that it is the one that these texts share in common as the fifth most common feature in Table 4.1, above.

It was *the* thirtieth Olympics and not *the* porn Olympics.

The images portrayed make it seem like

The universe makes up for it sooner or later.

Figure 4.7   **Examples of determiner *the* from student essays**

Differences in the Texts

There are seven significant differences across texts: 1.) singular proper nouns; 2.) prepositional adverbs; 3.) 2nd person personal pronouns; 4). 1st person singular objective pronouns; 5.) plural determiners; 6.) locative adverbs; and 7.) *being* as a verb form. While there were many differences across the texts, these were the ones that showed the most difference in frequency and occurred at least once per 1,000 words. See Appendix C for a complete table of differences. See Appendix D for the CLAWS Tagset 7 grammar code key.

Table 4.2   Differences Between Student Essays

Grammar Feature	Description	Example	Raw Frequency Count (Written)	Normed Frequency Count (Written) (per1,000 words)	Raw Frequency Count (Spoken)	Normed Frequency Count (Spoken) (per1,000 words)
NP1	singular proper noun	America, Boise, Eminem, Jesus,	481	14	148	8
RP	prepositional adverb	about, around, down, in, off	388	11	269	14
PPY	2nd person personal pronoun	you	301	9	225	12
PPIO1	1st person singular objective pronoun	we,	221	6	160	8
DD2	plural determiner	these, those	125	4	47	2

| RL | locative adverb | ahead, forward, here, there | 105 | 3 | 107 | 6 |
| VBG | being | being a, being able, | 78 | 2 | 25 | 1 |

Proper Nouns

Some of the proper nouns we see in the data make sense; for example, Eminem as a proper noun. Students often write about music as one of their topics, so seeing this is not strange; however, proper nouns were not something I expected as a difference across the texts. And it's not out of the ordinary to see the use of proper nouns like Jesus, Christ, and God. The demographics of the students in English 101 at Boise State University are not unlike that of some other state universities. Students are away from their families for the first time, and something they hold very closely is their religion—it's a thread to the community they come from and often comforts students while they are feeling homesick, out of place, or unsettled by the college experience. I have affectionately come to call my first-year students' papers of this genre "The God Paper," and so it wasn't unusual to receive some "God Papers" from students this semester. However, what is unusual is the shift in proper noun use from the written essay to the audio essay. Proper nouns are more prevalent in the research-based essay—1.75 times more prevalent than the audio essay, in fact, as shown in Table 4.2, above.

The state of Idaho, where Boise State University is located, has a large population of LDS students who openly talk about their religion. What seems to be happening, however, is that when faced with an audience the students can easily envision—their

classmates that will hear this essay—they are more reluctant to compose an audio topic on something as private to them that they are so passionate about. It seems what students come to understand when they are speaking aloud is that the general population might not understand their chosen subject matter, and they have switched topics for the second essay in some cases. They know that their audience might not respond as well to it. In other words, an audio essay to students is more of a public performance, while a written essay is less of a public performance.

Another reason this shift might occur, of course, is because students just aren't happy with their topics anymore. I have seen a lot of "God Papers" in my day, and while some are well done, the topic is often overdone and can become trite. Students sense this sometimes when they begin to record and opt for a different topic that leads them to bigger reflection and is more interesting for listeners.

---

rejoice in <u>Christ</u>

believing in <u>God</u>

<u>Eminem</u> wrote that

Once the <u>LDS</u> church was
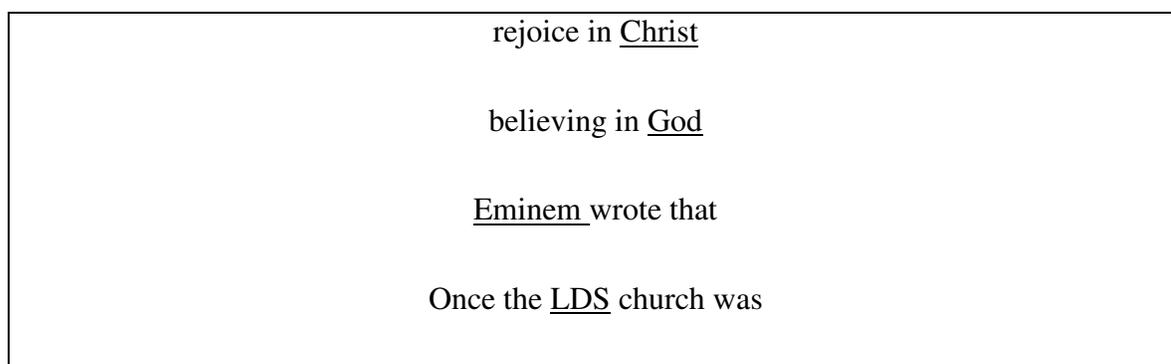
Figure 4.8   Proper Nouns in the research-based essay

<u>Prepositional Adverbs</u>

The study data shows that prepositional adverbs are approximately 1.25 times more likely in the audio essay than in the written essay, as shown in Table 4.2, above. This could be attributed to what the *LGSWE* says of prepositional adverbs: "the adverbs serving as complements of prepositions usually denote place...or time..." (549). In

thinking about how students perceive their readers, or audience, in this data students are demonstrating an understanding that a listener (in the case of the audio essay) needs to be situated in time or place for the essay to make sense, and thus, this is why prepositional adverbs are a common feature of the audio essay. In the written essay, readers can easily find their place in a text, as they have the texts before them. In the audio essay, however, listeners can only keep track of a certain amount of information, and it becomes the author's duty to place their reader in the moment by using these prepositional adverbs. In this way, the data shows that students do have a better understanding of audience, as they realize their audience needs situating—something the audience can't necessarily do while listening and need the writer to do for them.

Do you ever sit *back* and reevaluate your life?

They took off *running* to their cars

And relationships are literally being voted *on*

Where I grew *up*

Figure 4.9   Examples of Prepositional Adverbs 2nd Person Personal Pronoun

In the audio essay, students use the 2nd person personal pronoun *you* approximately 1.3 more times than in the written essay, as shown in Table 4.2, above. When students are composing the audio essay, they understand that the essay is scripted-to-be heard, and in using *you*, they are demonstrating an awareness of speaking directly to their audience. In *Sound Reporting: The Npr Guide to Audio Journalism and Production,* by Jonathan Kern, he discusses how it is important to not imagine an audience of listeners, but to imagine that you are speaking to a single person (27). This technique used by radio practioners is often a discussion I have with my students before

they produce their audio essays, and I think this is an additional reason 2nd person personal pronouns are prevalent in the audio essays. As the *LGSWE* states, "Personal pronouns are many times more common than the other pronoun types" (333); "personal pronouns are function words which make it possible to refer succinctly to the speaker/writer" (328), and most importantly "the user of personal pronouns...normally assumes that we share knowledge of the intended reference...This sharing of situational knowledge is most obvious in the case of first and second person pronouns (especially *I* and *you*) which, referring directly to participants in the conversation, are the most common in this variety" (1042). This attention to personal pronouns is further proof students have an audience in mind because this difference in the data between essays proves that students feel a need to directly address their audience, as shown in the student examples in Figure 4.10 below. When students compose audio essays, they envision a situation in which the essay becomes a space for this shared knowledge *LGSWE* discusses.

You may ask where

You might have

It can help you express

I believe, do you?
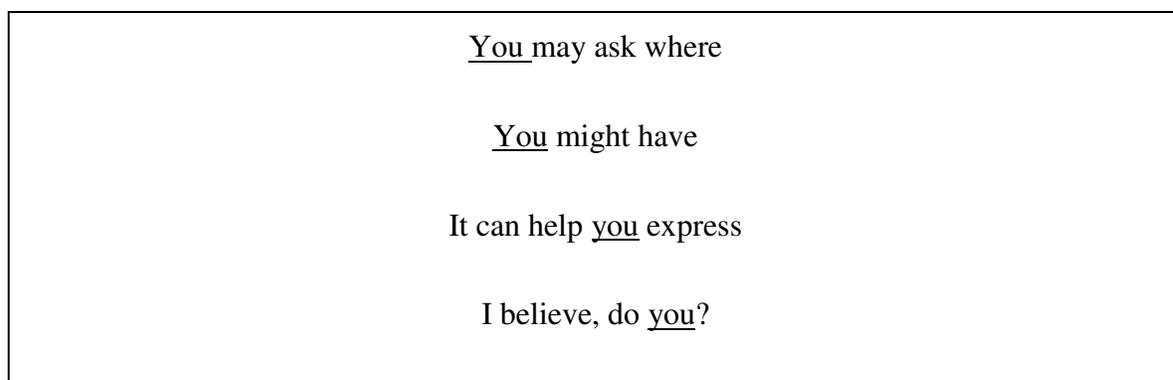
Figure 4.10   Examples of the 2nd Person Personal Pronoun in the Audio Essay

<u>1st Person Singular Objective Pronoun *Me*</u>

The 1st person singular objective pronoun, *me*, happens approximately 1.33 times more in the audio essays than in the research-based essays, as shown in Table 42, above. *Me* is considered the *accusative* form of a personal pronoun and "is used in object position and as the complement to prepositions" (*LGSWE* 335). While *me* as an accusative form occurs in some cases in the student texts, and as a complement to prepositions in other cases, something that isn't prevalent in this study is that the accusative form of *me* is followed by a form of *to be*. This is an important distinction, as the form of *to be* is sometimes seen as a weak verb. As Joe Glaser says in *Understanding Style: Practical Ways to Improve Your Writing*, "Far and away the weakest verb in English is *to be* in one of its many forms: *am, is, are, was, were, shall be, will be, have been, has been, had been, will have been being, etc.*" (112). What is interesting, however, is though students are using *me* frequently in the audio essay, they use very few forms of *to-be* with *me*. Figure 4.11 below shows some examples of how students use *me* in the writing. While *me* is often in the object position, students seem to use more active *–ed forms* of verbs instead of *to be*. The construction of verbs with *me* in the object position may have a few explanations, but one is that in the audio essays, students are generally telling a narrative. Narrative is often in past-tense form, so it makes sense that students are using the *–ed form* more in this case.

Another explanation, though, is that students understand the language in the audio essay must be active. Students understand the weight words must carry, as they can only have five minutes less in the audio essay assignment, and they understand that complicated constructions that are less direct might bog down their reader. This is yet

another difference in the data that exemplifies how students have a better understanding of audience in the audio essay.

I just felt that the pink and black plaid betrayed _me_

My parents asked _me_ about it

The man informed _me_

Figure 4.11   Examples of *me* in the Audio Essay

Plural Determiners These and Those

It is not uncommon that the plural determiners *these* and *those* are twice as frequent in the research-based essay than in the audio essay. As *LGSWE* states "*this*, *these*, and *those* are slightly more common in academic prose than in the other registers" (349). It makes sense that *these* and *those* are more common in writing, as *these* and *those* function often as transitions in academic or traditional writing. While students are using features like locative adjectives in the audio essays, plural determiners are often used as a referent to a particular subject in sentences, and a reader following a written text could easily identify the referent to what *these* or *those* referred to, or as LGSWE says "the high frequency of *this/these* both as determiners and as pronouns in academic prose is due to their use in marking immediate textual reference" (349).

all of <u>these</u> examples

<u>These</u> are all part of

dismissed <u>those</u> signs because

I'll always have <u>those</u> horrible memories

Figure 4.12   Examples of Plural Determiners in the research-based essay

<u>Locative Adverb</u>

As *LGSWE* states, "In conversation, the majority of common adverbs fall into three semantic domains: time, degree, and stance. In contrast, a greater number of the common adverbs in academic prose are from the semantic domains of degree and linking" (560). In the audio essay, the locative adverb grammar feature is twice as frequent than in the research-based essay, as seen in Table 4.2, above. Since the audio essay is scripted-to-be heard, it makes sense that there are more locative adverbs as students are using mainly time and place adverbs such as ahead, forward, here, and there. In the written essays, there seem to be more adverbs that are of degree and linking as *LGSWE* suggests. This is an important difference between the texts that indicates students understand that their audience can't as easily follow along with the audio essay as they could a written essay, so being placed in time is important; thus, locative adverbs are common in the audio essay.

the conditions <u>outside</u>

she stepped <u>forward</u>

From <u>afar</u> the beauty

I was sitting <u>alongside</u>

Figure 4.13   Examples of Locative Adverbs in the Audio Essay

<u>*Being*</u>

The –*ing* forms of a verb are called progressive tense or as *LGSWE* calls them, the progessive aspect: "The progressive aspect designates an event or state of affairs which is in progress, or continuing, at the time indicated by the rest of the verb phrase" (460). *LGSWE* continues, "progressive aspect is marked by the auxillary verb *be + ing-participle*" (460). *Being* is used twice as frequently in the research-based essay than in the audio essay, as shown in Table 4.2, above. While more research and analysis would be needed to see exactly why this might be, one explanation is that in the audio essay, the narrative form is prevalent, and most students told their narratives using the –*ed* past tense form of verbs. In the research-based essay, students seem more comfortable using the progressive construction, maybe as they feel their subjects are continuing, as opposed to having already happened, like the narratives they told in the audio essays. Another reason is that –*ing* forms aren't as active as their –*ed* counterparts, and one of the issues in the audio essays that sets it apart is students understand a need for more active language, and that is why –*ing* forms are more prevalent in the research-based essay.

with him <u>being</u> my first passing

to avoid <u>being</u> seen and heard

it was obnoxious <u>being</u> asked

<u>Being</u> with friends

Figure 4.14   Examples of *Being* in the research-based essay

General Service List and the Academic Word List

In the Literature Review, you'll recall there was discussion about what the General Service List and Academic Word Lists are. In addition to similarities and differences in the grammar features in the two texts examined here, it seemed important to look at how the language compares across texts to see if students use less academic language when writing the audio essay, as there have been arguments that when spoken features find their way into student writing, the writing becomes less academic and less sophisticated in some way.

The tables below show each text's language analysis breakdown. Table 4.3, below, shows the VocabProfile analysis output of the research-based essay, and Table 4.4 shows the VocabProfile analysis output of the audio essay. As you can see, there are 3 categories. The K1 and K2 combined percentages show the language that is on the General Service List (GSL), or the top 2,000 most frequently used words in the English language. The Academic Word List percentages are shown in the AWL words line. The Off-List Words give a percentage of words that are neither in the GSL or AWL.

In looking at this data, the total percentage of GSL words used in the research-based essay is 90.52%, while the audio essay has a total percentage of 91.80%. While there was no descriptive statistics done in this study, we can see that the two essays have almost the same percentage of GSL words comparatively. This similarity is significant because since the GSL is common amongst these essays, and the percentage is relatively high, it shows that students mostly use words included in the GSL across the two texts. This might be unexpected, as it might be assumed that the research-based essay would be more academic.

Then, when we look at the AWL, the research-based essay has a total percentage of 3.33%, as the audio essay has a total percentage of 2.32% . These numbers don't show a significant difference, either, which is one of the most interesting parts of this study that suggests further research in Composition would be useful using a framework of Corpus Linguistics. Some argue that when students use features of speech in writing, they write less academically. While I cannot claim this study proves the language used in the audio essay and research-based essay are equally academic, the numbers here do suggest that speech features might not be as detrimental to academic language as some composition theorists have suggested in the past. While more research is needed to determine precisely how students use academic language, another explanation by Peter Elbow (and others), as to how students construct sentences in a certain way to make them sound more academic is compelling and deserves some attention here and could be a potential focus for further study using corpus tools with composition in mind.

Table 4.3   Research-Based Essay VocabProfile Output

	Families	Types	Tokens	Percent
K1 Words (1-1000):	816	1751	30747	86.16%
Function:	...	...	(19084)	(53.48%)
Content:	...	...	(11663)	(32.68%)
> Anglo-Sax =Not Greco-Lat/Fr Cog:	...	...	(7344)	(20.58%)
K2 Words (1001-2000):	438	643	1555	4.36%
> Anglo-Sax:	...	...	(640)	(1.79%)
1k+2k		...	...	(90.52%)
AWL Words (academic):	303	482	1189	3.33%
> Anglo-Sax:	...	...	(99)	(0.28%)
Off-List Words:	?	1254	2194	6.15%
	1557	4129	35685	100%

Table 4.4   Audio Essay VocabProfile Output

	Families	Types	Tokens	Percent
K1 Words (1-1000):	736	1372	17037	86.87%
Function:	...	...	(10637)	(54.23%)
Content:	...	...	(6400)	(32.63%)
> Anglo-Sax =Not Greco-Lat/Fr Cog:	...	...	(4330)	(22.08%)

K2 Words (1001-2000):	339	450	967	4.93%
> Anglo-Sax:	...	...	(420)	(2.14%)
1k+2k		...	...	(91.80%)
AWL Words (academic):	167	228	455	2.32%
> Anglo-Sax:	...	...	(53)	(0.27%)
Off-List Words:	<u>?</u>	<u>784</u>	<u>1154</u>	<u>5.88%</u>
	1242	2834	19613	100%

A Call for Further Research

The impetus for this thesis was the difference I perceived in writing when comparing the research-based essays and the audio essays. To me, the audio essays students produce seem to contain better writing than that of their research-based essays. Defining what is "better" writing is problematic, however, and I won't try to do so here. I do know, however, that it felt as though there was a difference in the two kinds of essays. I thought this thesis might be a way to quantify that difference and explain what is happening when students compose a research-based essay versus a scripted-to-be-heard essay in the audio format. In looking at the quantifiable data, though, even though there are some differences that suggest that students are, in fact, more aware of their rhetorical choices, particularly the notion of audience in writing, the differences I discovered between the essays are fewer than expected.

However, a more in-depth analysis of the essays not just at the grammar level, or at the essays as a whole, but at the sentence-level, might help us begin to identify more clearly what is happening between the essays grammatically, though there is not room to

perform such an analysis here. In Corpus Linguistics, a concordancing program like *AntConc* can help organize sentences in a way so they can be grouped into "concordance lines" and analyzed and compared at the sentence level to see what features are prevalent or uncommon.

While a full-scale concordance line analysis is something I did not do in this study, there is some important literature that suggests something that might be happening across essays that doesn't have to do with the grammar features at the simplest level or with academic and non-academic language in its more basic form. The difference might be more in how students are constructing these grammar features, and putting them together in sentence structure—something that a concordance analysis could potentially help with—and I would like to take a moment to address this moment in literature, as this seems an important dimension for future research.

Parataxis and Hypotaxis

In *Vernacular Eloquence: What Speech Can Bring to Writing*, Peter Elbow describes these composition phenomena: parataxis and hypotaxis. These are Greek technical terms, which will make more sense if I describe first the importance of right-branching and left-branching sentences. Left-branching and right-branching sentence constructions hail from the field of *generative rhetoric*, a term coined by composition theorist Francis Christensen in his book *Generative Rhetoric*. As Elbow describes of the left-branching and right-branching method "Right-branching sentences start with the main clause and then add phrases or clauses *afterward*. If you diagram such sentences, the added bits will be to the right. In contrast, left-branching sentences "pre-add" phrases or clauses—they come *before* the main clause—and so they are to the left when the

sentence is diagrammed" (*Vernacular* 85-86). In student writing, often there are a lot of left-branching sentences, and this might make writing seem non-academic, indirect, or robot-like. Conversely, when students script something to be heard, like the audio essay, they understand their audience must follow them closely, as they only have (in theory) once chance to get the audiences' attention and keep them listening: if their listener at any point becomes confused or bogged down in a mental process in which they have to deconstruct a sentence for meaning, the audio essay has already moved on while the listener is trying to process information. Students understand that speaking directly to an audience must be direct. See, Figure 4.15, below, for an example of right-branching and left-branching.

Right-Branching: "The cumulative sentence serves the needs of both the writer and the reader; the writer by compelling him to examine his thought, the reader by letting him into the writer's thought" (Christensen 6).

Left-Branching: "Compelling the writer to examine his thought and letting the reader into his thought, the cumulative sentence serves the needs of both parties in the transaction" (Elbow 86).

Figure 4.15   Example of right-branching and left-branching sentences

As Elbow suggests, right-branching sentences are easier to understand than left-branching ones because in a left-branching sentence, readers have to "store the opening bits of the sentence in mind before we can process them; we have to wait before we learn what these bits are going to be *about*" (*Vernacular* 86). In the audio essays, then, if listeners have to store the information before the actors of a sentence, or the subject of a

sentence, performs any kind of action, it's harder for listeners to pay attention. But, if a student uses the right-branching construction, the listener can follow more easily.

So, how does all of this right-branching and left-branching relate to the terms hypotaxis and parataxis? Hypotaxis and parataxis relate to how words are arranged in a sentence syntactically. As Elbow says,

> In parataxis, the elements sit 'side by side' (para= 'next to'). But in hypotaxis the elements are hierarchical so that one gets to be on top and the other must lie 'under' ('hypo'='under'). So hypotaxis insists on *articulating the relationship* between the two elements and usually insists that one element is dominant and the other embedded. The paratactic form is simpler and leaves the relationship unexpressed or implied—setting the elements democratically side by side rather than with one on top. (*Vernacular* 88)

Thinking about parataxis and hypotaxis in this study is important because although there may not be many differences in grammar features, something of further study might be to examine these essays at the sentence level to look for examples of parataxis, hypotaxis, and to see how students are composing sentences. While looking at the grammar features of speaking and writing is useful, as we can see here that the student relationship to audience in the audio essay is much more defined than when students wrote their research-based essay, further research could help us understand a students' notion of academic writing. As Elbow states,

> linguists note, side by side paratactic structure is more common in everyday speech than hierarchical hypotactic structure. We say one thing; and then we say another (as in right-branching syntax). As we converse, we don't take planning

time to work out hierarchical or subordinate relationships between elements

before opening our mouths. But when we write, we can take more planning time.

As children get older, parataxis turns up more frequently in writing. Perhaps it's

not surprising then that hypotaxis and embedding came to be generally accepted

as representing 'syntactic maturity'. (*Vernacular* 88)

What Elbow seems to suggest is as students practice writing throughout their

education, hypotaxis is often presented as the correct and mature way: the academic way.

He continues that "In our present culture of literacy, there seems to be a solid consensus

that essayist and academic writing should have lots of hypotaxis" (*Vernacular* 88). As

students learn that hypotaxis is considered more academic, they begin to write more left-

branching sentences, and this is one way the audio essay seems different, with its

emphasis on the right-branching sentence.

Though academic language use in each of the essays was relatively similar—

3.33% in the research-based essay and 2.32% in the audio essay. The actual vocabulary

might be the important factor; however, the construction of the language might hold the

key difference as to how students might be using hypotaxis as a method to create what

they assume sounds like academic language, though at the grammar-level, this study

doesn't show students are using more academic language in their research-based essays.

In contrast, the audio essay employs parataxis and asks students to be direct, to

have actors and actions be at the forefront, leaving little room for hypotaxis. This also

could be an explanation for why the writing seems different. Often instructors beg their

students for lively writing, and that is exactly what the audio essay provides: writing that

is direct with a lot of clear and intentional action. So, when students get bogged down in

the notion of academic writing, they assume their professors want writing with prominent hypotaxis; however, hypotaxis is not often done well easily, even for the most skilled writers. So, when students assume hypotactic constructions is what we want, their writing-selves get lost in the mix. Instead of writing directly and concisely, they try to sound smart and academic because hypotaxis is what they have been trained to think of as academic writing, and their meaning gets buried under complicated constructions that they often don't have a mastery of. And Elbow argues, "readers are better served by syntax that's more like what comes out of people's mouths in everyday speech—something more naturally paratactic and unnominalized…," which in this case also seems like it would serve students and professors alike (*Vernacular* 89).

Conclusion

This corpus analysis did suggest some differences between grammatical features in the audio essay and the research-based essay, but these differences were less dramatic than what I expected. This kind of analysis, however, might yield more with further study.

While there were many differences across the essays, the most significantly different features were chosen for examination. These differences were 1.) singular proper nouns; 2.) prepositional adverbs; 3.) 2nd person personal pronouns; 4). 1st person singular objective pronouns; 5.) plural determiners; 6.) locative adverbs; and 7.) *being* as a verb form. While there can be multiple explanations for the differences, there would need to be more research to get a more finite explanation of the differences in each genre.

In this study, unexpected trends emerged: there were far more similarities in the research-based essays and audio essays than I expected. These similarities were 1.)

singular common nouns; 2.) the infinitive marker *to*; 3.) general prepositions; 4.) general adjectives; 5.) the article *the*; 6.) plural common nouns; and 7.) infinitive verbs.

However, once I examined LGSWE, the similarities made sense, as the similarities happened to be some of the most frequent grammar features used in general in the English language.

What seemed to emerge as the most important trend, however, is the examination of academic language versus general language in the student writing. The use of academic language and general language across the essays was more similar than different. As I expected, I thought the research-based essays would provide significantly more academic language than in the audio essays; however, there was no significant difference in the use of academic language when comparing the essays.

Elbow's discussion of parataxis and hypotaxis might explain what is occurring as students actually compose. While we can look at a simple breakdown of grammar features, it's also interesting to consider how students put these features together and how their choices can affect our impressions of what is and is not academic language. As Elbow (though others in the field of composition have examined it as well), most recently examined, students have a preconception of what academic language is. What this study suggested is that students don't necessarily use more academic language in writing—as far as academic vocabulary—but when they put grammar features together, they might do so in a way that is more hypotactic, or left-branching. As students are trained to write, they consider hypotaxis more academic "sounding," than parataxis, which is more direct. To students, it seems, hypotactic writing is synonymous with academic writing.

In a future study, it might interesting and productive to consider using Corpus Linguistics again to study the composition habits of students by performing a concordance-line analysis to study student essays at the sentence-level to understand how they construct sentences. Through Elbow's explanation of parataxis and hypotaxis in *Vernacular Eloquence*, we see that it might not be just the grammar features and the differences these present in speaking and writing that influence student writing, as I first thought, but more about how students combine these grammar features into sentence structures. In the following chapter, I will make some suggestions based on what this study suggests might be useful for further research and what we might employ in practice in the field of composition.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Future Pedagogical Implications of the Audio Essay

After looking at the data from this study, it seems there is room in teaching composition to employ some new methods of writing for our students. The students I have encountered are eager to produce audio essays. They are engaged in a way that I haven't seen before in the writing process, and this is important for their other classes. While the results showed that there aren't huge differences between the research-based essays and the audio essays in terms of the grammar features, there are subtle differences that suggest the audio essay increases or enhances student understanding of the rhetorical situation in which they are composing for, particularly that of the notion of audience.

Rhetorical Knowledge

The rhetorical knowledge and understanding a student gains about audience is helpful in all contexts in their university writing as well as in the job force when they graduate college and move on or go to graduate school. Knowledge about audience is a skill that is needed, and once students understand strategies for analyzing and understanding audience, students can begin to produce writing in their specific fields that is more rhetorically appropriate for real-life situations, other classes, and not just in the composition classroom.

While it appears that in some ways, speaking and writing are more similar than we assume, there are some differences specifically about student understanding of

rhetorical knowledge in different writing situations. When examining this study data, there are some features in the grammar that shows students understand something about audience in a new way when they produce audio essays. These features are use of personal pronouns, locative adverbs, prepositional adverbs, how students use of singular proper nouns changes from the research-based essay to the audio essay, plural determiners, and the lack of progressive *to-be* constructions in the audio essay. While more research would be needed to confirm these theories, it seems that these features indicate students are more consciously considering their audience while composing and revising. The most important information gleaned from this study, however, was about how students use academic language in writing across the two genres.

The Question of Academic Language

An argument that seems relevant here is how audio essays affect the nature of academic language in writing. While the improvement in rhetorical knowledge, particularly that of audience awareness may improve, this improvement may not help students much if their writing becomes unacademic when using features from the way they speak. In theory, some might suggest or assume that when we ask students to produce audio essays, their language might become less sophisticated and less academic. As we saw in the Results section, Elbow suggested that academic writing is marked as mature and is heavy in its use of hypotaxis.

However, when students use more constructions using parataxis and features of how they speak in their writing, their writing may sound more like real-world versions of them and less like the academics that we are guiding them to become, so they can be successful in college. However, as is shown in the study data here, academic language

does not differ significantly from the genre of research-based essay to the audio essay. It seems that what would be expected is that when students produce their audio essays and are forced to speak aloud that their language would become less academic. While more research is needed, it seems that the academic language remains the same across genres in this study.

This lack of difference is actually one of the most important aspects of this study. If the features that students use in the audio essay and research-based essay are equal in terms of academic language used, and students understand their speaking selves best, students should be allowed to use features of their speech.

More research needs to be conducted on parataxis, hypotaxis, and their relationship to academic writing, but the audio essay brings an awareness of audience to students that I haven't seen from any other assignment, and in this way, it might be an assignment to consider for this useful result.

The Vulnerability of the Embodied Voice

It isn't only the grammar features that help students to understand audience in a new way, though; students know fellow classmates will hear the essays, and though when students write essays, their fellow classmates read the essays during class workshop, the experience is different for them when other students hear their work as opposed to read it. There is something about students hearing their essays played for the other students in their class that changes the way they author texts. Students feel a certain sense of ownership that changes the way they write, but this connection between words and their literal voice also makes them feel a certain kind of vulnerability, knowing their classmates may judge their work and that the writing must be appropriate for the

audience in many ways. Students don't want to lose their readers' interest; students want to be engaging, interesting, and be well received.

In a way, when students write an essay that is meant to be read, as opposed to the audio essay, a form that is meant for listening, students can hide behind their words. There isn't as deep of a connection between the words on the page and the student. When the student's name is up in the left-hand corner of the page, this ownership of a text doesn't have the same ownership as when the audio essay is connected their voice, one of the few features of humans that can identify us from each other: our embodied voices are unique; we have unique voiceprints, and this is something students can't hide from and where the vulnerability of the embodied voice comes to affect the way students compose. This embodied voice also makes students come to an understanding of audience that is unlike any they have experienced in other writing situations.

Methodological Reconstruction

In looking back at how the methodology was constructed for this study, I realize there are some major problems. In a future study, I would consider reconstructing the methodology. Of course, one of the reasons differences and similarities may appear between the two texts is because the features might be prevalent in the genres themselves and that the similarities and differences are genre-specific and not student-specific. I understand this as a problem; however, as I said earlier in the study, there were limitations with what I could do to study my own students' writing, as there were curriculum guidelines for our program I had to adhere to.

I might consider, in the future, comparing just audio essays that students write. I have considered comparing two different groups of students' audio essays to one another

to examine what each class is producing. I could also compare lower-division student audio essays with upper-division student audio essays to see if a student's rhetorical awareness of audience and academic language change as he or she progresses through college. Students could produce audio essays as a first assignment for class, and I could compare these with audio assignments produced at the end of a class. I have also considered comparing student audio essays to professional audio essays, like those featured on *This I Believe or This American Life* to see how the language changes and see which essay group exhibits features of better rhetorical understanding. I also could compare student audio essays to academic essays written by professionals in peer-reviewed journals to see how the academic language is different, though the genre would be very different, of course.

I am sure there are other examinations that can be done, but what is important to understand here is that this study opens possibilities to what could be done using corpus tools to examine the composition classroom, and that is what I feel is the most important aspect to come from this study: the possibility.

A Final Note on the Study

When I began this study, I knew I wanted to compare the differences in student writing from the research-based essay to the audio essay. I wasn't exactly certain on how to go about the comparison other than doing a purely qualitative analysis of interviews and possibly a case-study of some students. Then, I came across an essay by Wallace Chafe, "Integration and Involvement in Speaking, Writing, and Oral Literature," in which he discusses how writing that is involved with the audience favors certain grammar features and differs from writing or speech that is detached from the notion of audience

which favors features that are nearly opposite. I naively thought I needed to build a computer program to do my analysis, and that's when I found Douglas Biber had done it all already, and that there was a field of study, Corpus Linguistics, that addresses these differences in highly-complicated ways.

While I don't claim to be a linguist, and this study is not even remotely on the same scale as the skilled and tedious Corpus Linguistic studies in the field, I do think this study proves that linguists and composition instructors could be working more closely together to understand what is happening in student writing. While there will always be speculation about what is actually happening in student writing in Corpus Linguistics, even after the quantitative analysis is done, being able to see differences so quickly using these complicated and quite accurate computer programs and tools is amazing and something composition needs to take advantage of.

I realized while I was almost all the way through the Results section that in doing an analysis like this, I hadn't mentioned student intentionality behind the grammar features used. Through the study, it seems as though I am implying that students intentionally use grammar features because they are aware of what these features mean and how these features will be perceived. This, however, is not my argument. While I think some students can be quite intentional in their word choice, I think this study gives us a glimpse at how students are unintentionally and subconsciously using language as they write. What may be important to note, however, is that if we can understand how students unintentionally use language, we may be able to better lead them to intentional, practical uses of language.

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APPENDIX A

Recruitment Script

RECRUITMENT SCRIPT FOR "SAYING I AND MEANING IT: THE TRANSFORMATIVE PROCESS OF PRODUCING THE AUDIO ESSAY

Hello, my name is Dr. Bruce Ballenger. I am working with Andrea Oyarzabal at Boise State University. She is conducting a research study about the differences between writing and speaking and is specifically interested in studying the work you produce this semester. I am here to ask you if you would like to participate in her study. I will be distributing the informed consent form, which has more information about this study, and now I will read it aloud.

Participation in this study is voluntary. There is no reward for participating (like extra credit) and no penalty for discontinuing the study at any time. Andrea would be happy to answer any questions you may have before or after class, during office hours, or via email.

Thank you for your help.

Dr. Bruce Ballenger

English Department

Boise State University

bballeng@boisestate.edu

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent

BOISE ◆ STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y

INFORMED CONSENT

Principal Investigator: Andrea Oyarzabal

Co-Principal Investigator: Dr. Bruce Ballenger

Study Title: Saying I and Meaning It: The Transformative Process of Producing the Audio Essay

This consent form will give you the information you will need to understand why this study is being done and why you are being invited to participate. It will also describe what you will need to do to participate as well as any known risks, inconveniences or discomforts that you may have while participating. I encourage you to ask questions at any time. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and it will be a record of your agreement to participate. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

➢ **PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND**

As an English 101 instructor, I have often wondered about the differences in speaking and writing. In order to answer this question, I have designed a study in which I will compare one of your writing units with your radio essay to find the differences. You are being invited to participate because you are a student in my English 101 course and are over the age of 18.

➢ **PROCEDURES**

Your English 101 class includes 4 Units. One of these units you will write a traditional essay. The second essay I collect will be a transcript of your Radio Essay you create for Unit 4. I am asking for your permission to analyze these writing samples for my research study. Your participation will not require you to do anything above and beyond what you would be doing in class anyway. If you choose not to participate, you will still complete these assignments for class credit, but I will not use your assignments in my analysis

➢ **RISKS/DISCOMFORTS**

There are minimal risks associated with this study, as you are not being asked to do anything that is not already part of your English 101 course. If, at any time, you do not wish for your data to be analyzed for this research, you may withdraw your participation. You will still be required to complete the Unit assignments as part of your course assignments, but your assignments will not be included in the study.

➢ **EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

Participation in research may involve a loss of privacy; however, my records will be handled as confidentially as possible. Only I will have access to your writing samples. When the research project is complete, the writing samples will remain on campus, stored

electronically, for three years (per federal regulations) and then destroyed. No individual identities will be used in any reports or publications that may result from this study.

➢ **BENEFITS**
There will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study. However, the information gained from this research may help education professionals better understand how students compose essays with regard to their speech patterns.

➢ **COSTS**
There will be no cost to you as a result of taking part in this study.

➢ **PAYMENT**
There will be no payment to you as a result of taking part in this study.

➢ **QUESTIONS**
If you have any questions or concerns about participation in this study, you should first talk with me at AndreaOyarzabal@boisestate.edu or my faculty advisor/co-PI, Bruce Ballenger at bballeng@boisestate.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Boise State University Institutional Review Board (IRB), which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach the board office between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, by calling (208) 426-5401 or by writing: Institutional Review Board, Office of Research Compliance, Boise State University, 1910 University Dr., Boise, ID 83725-1138.

➢ **PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY**
You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw from it at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

➢ **DOCUMENTATION OF CONSENT**
I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement and possible risks have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand I can withdraw at any time.

Printed Name of Study
Participant

Signature of Study
Participant

Date

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

APPENDIX C

Complete Table of Differences

Table A.1 Complete Table of Differences

Grammar Code	Grammar Tag Description	Grammar Tag Lexical Example from Student papers	Rank (Written)	Written Essay per 1,000 words	Rank (Spoken)	Spoken Essay per 1,000 words
NN1	singular common noun	ability, life, zombie	1	123	1	131
TO	infinitive marker	"to" stand, "to" see	2	58	2	63
II	general preposition	from, in, on	3	57	3	59
JJ	general adjective	ample, slight, whole	4	55	4	53
AT	article	the	5	47	5	50
NN2	plural common noun	dreams, memories, students,	6	42	6	41
VVI	infinitive	to dream, may fail, will go	7	38	7	39
CC	coordinating conjunction	and, or	8	33	10	34
RR	general adverb	actually, personally, never	9	33	9	35
PPIS1	pronoun	I	10	33	8	36
VV0	base form of lexical verb	believe, choose, think,want	11	29	12	30
AT1	singular article	a, an	12	26	14	28
APPGE	possessive pronoun, pre-nominal	his, hers, my, our, their, your	13	24	11	30
VVD	past tense of lexical verb	assumed, felt, indicated,	14	21	13	29

		said, wrote				
IO	of (as preposition)	most of the, summit of, victims of, years of	15	20	16	17
VM	modal auxillary	can, could, may, might, should	16	19	17	17
VVG	-ing participle of lexical verb	achieving, listening ,wondering, working	17	18	15	21
CST	that as conjunction	and that I, people that make	18	17	19	16
VBZ	is	it is easy, who is a	19	16	21	15
VVN	past participle of lexical verb	called, developed, recognized, written	20	16	20	16
PPH1	3rd person singular neuter pronoun	it	21	15	18	17
CS	subordinating conjunction	because, if, since, though	22	14	24	14
NP1	singular proper noun	America, Boise, Christ, Eminem, God, Jesus, LDS, Pennsylvania	23	14	34	8
DD1	singular determiner	another, that, this	24	13	25	14
VBDZ	was	was	25	12	22	14
XX	not, n't	not, wasn't, didn't	26	11	26	12
RP	prepositional	about,	27	11	23	14

	adverb, particle	around, down, in, off				
VVZ	-s form of lexical verb	deserves, lies, thinks	28	10	28	10
PPIS2	first person plural subjective pronoun	we	29	9	32	8
NNT1	temporal noun (singular)	day, hour, morning, night, time, year	30	9	29	10
PPY	2nd person personal pronoun	you	31	9	27	12
IW	with, without (as prepositions)	experience with friends, happiness without oppression	32	8	30	9
VBI	be (infinitive)	to be able, to be myself, will be healthier	33	7	33	8
PN1	indefinite pronoun (singular)	anyone, everything, nothing, one, something	34	7	36	7
CCB	adversative coordinating conjunction	but	35	7	37	6
PPIO1	1st person singular objective pronoun	me	36	6	31	8
DDQ	wh-determiner	what, which	37	6	38	6
VBR	are	are, 're	38	6	41	6
PPHS1	3rd person singular subjective	he, she	39	6	35	8

	personal pronoun					
PPHS2	3rd person plural subjective personal pronoun	they	40	6	39	6
VH0	have, base form	have, 've	41	5	48	5
RRQ	wh- general adverb	how, why	42	5	42	5
RG	degree adverb	pretty, quite, so, too, very	43	5	45	5
NN	common noun, neutral for number	aircraft, people, data	44	5	43	5
RT	quasi-nominal adverb of time	again, forever, now, today	45	5	47	5
MC	cardinal number, neutral for number	two, seven, nine	46	4	44	5
DB	before determiner or pre-determiner capable of pronominal function	all, half	47	4	46	5
II21 (ditto tag)	general preposition	because of, due to, such as	48	4	51	3
II22 (ditto tag)	general preposition	along with, according to, as to	49	4	52	3
DD2	plural determiner	these, those	50	4	67	2
VHI	have,	have to, have done, have	51	3	57	3

	infinitive	told				
VD0	do, base form	do	52	3	54	3
DD	determiner (capable of pronominal function	any, enough, some	53	3	50	4
VHD	had (past tense)	had been, had made, had to,	54	3	49	4
JJR	general comparative adjective	better, kinder, stronger	55	3	62	3
RL	locative adverb	ahead, forward, here, there	56	3	40	6
NNT2	temporal noun (plural)	days, hours, times, years	57	3	53	3
VBM	am	am, 'm	58	3	60	3
MC1	singular cardinal number	one	59	3	55	3
PPIO2	1st person plural objective personal pronoun	us	60	3	63	3
CSA	as (as conjunction)	as any, as everyone, as the	61	3	65	2
DA2	plural after-determiner	a few, are many, in several	62	3	58	3
VHZ	has	has been, has to, has the	63	3	68	2
DA	after-determiner or post-determiner capable of pronominal	my own, the same, made such	64	2	69	2

		function				
PPHO2		we	65	2	64	3
PPX1	singular reflexive personal pronoun	himself, itself, myself, yourself	66	2	72	2
EX	existential there	there are, there is, there was, there will	67	2	61	3
VBG	being	being a, being able, being who	68	2	82	1
RRR	comparative general adverb	better, earlier, harder, more	69	2	66	2
VBDR	were	were	70	2	59	3
GE	germanic genitive marker	girls', players' students'	71	2	84	1
MD	ordinal number	first, next, second, last	72	2	56	3
VDD	did	did	73	2	70	2
JJT	general superlative adjective	best, greenest, happiest, strongest	74	2	76	2
RR21 (ditto)	general adverb	a little, as well, at least, of course	75	2	73	2
RR22 (ditto)	general adverb	just about everything, once again	76	2	74	2
CSN	than (as conjunction)	bigger than me, more than that	77	2	83	1
VBN	been	been	78	2	79	2
ZZ1	singular letter of alphabet	X	79	1	91	1

CS21 (ditto)	subordinating conjunction	even if, now that	80	1	77	2
CS22(ditto)	subordinating conjunction	even though	81	1	78	2
VDI	do, infinitive	couldn't do it, to do with	82	1	81	1
RGR	comparative degree adverb	more	83	1	88	1
JK	catenative adjective	able	84	1	87	1
DAR	comparative after-determiner	less, more	85	1	94	1
NNU	unit of measurement, neutral for number	28%, $100,000	86	1	X	X
PPHO1	3rd person sing. objective personal pronoun	him, her	87	1	75	2
DA1	singular after-determiner	little, much	88	1	97	1
DAT	superlative after-determiner	most of	89	1	92	1
RGT	superlative degree adverb	most importantly, most likely	90	1	89	1
VDG	doing	doing this, doing well	91	1	90	1
VDZ	does	does exist, does not	92	1	86	1
VVGK	-ing participle catenative	going to	93	1	85	1
CSW	whether (as conjunction)	whether someone, whether they	94	1	93	1
RGQ	wh-degree	how many,	95	1	95	1

	adverb	how much, how poorly				
UH	interjection	boo, hooray, no, oh, yes	96	1	80	1
PPX2	plural reflexive pronoun	ourselves, themselves	97	1	98	1
VDN	done	done in, done well	98	1	X	X
VHG	having	having fun, having the	99	1	99	1
PNQS	subjective wh-pronoun	who I, who said, who wrote	X	X	71	2
RRT	superlative general adjective	best, lowest, most	X	X	96	1

APPENDIX D

CLAWS Tagset 7—Grammar Code Key

Table A.2   CLAWS Tagset 7—Grammar Code Key

APPGE	possessive pronoun, pre-nominal (e.g. my, your, our)
AT	article (e.g. the, no)
AT1	singular article (e.g. a, an, every)
BCL	before-clause marker (e.g. in order (that),in order (to))
CC	coordinating conjunction (e.g. and, or)
CCB	adversative coordinating conjunction (but)
CS	subordinating conjunction (e.g. if, because, unless, so, for)
CSA	as (as conjunction)
CSN	than (as conjunction)
CST	that (as conjunction)
CSW	whether (as conjunction)
DA	after-determiner or post-determiner capable of pronominal function (e.g. such, former, same)
DA1	singular after-determiner (e.g. little, much)
DA2	plural after-determiner (e.g. few, several, many)
DAR	comparative after-determiner (e.g. more, less, fewer)
DAT	superlative after-determiner (e.g. most, least, fewest)
DB	before determiner or pre-determiner capable of pronominal function (all, half)
DB2	plural before-determiner (both)
DD	determiner (capable of pronominal function) (e.g any, some)
DD1	singular determiner (e.g. this, that, another)
DD2	plural determiner (these,those)

DDQ	wh-determiner (which, what)
DDQGE	wh-determiner, genitive (whose)
DDQV	wh-ever determiner, (whichever, whatever)
EX	existential there
FO	formula
FU	unclassified word
FW	foreign word
GE	germanic genitive marker - (' or's)
IF	for (as preposition)
II	general preposition
IO	of (as preposition)
IW	with, without (as prepositions)
JJ	general adjective
JJR	general comparative adjective (e.g. older, better, stronger)
JJT	general superlative adjective (e.g. oldest, best, strongest)
JK	catenative adjective (able in be able to, willing in be willing to)
MC	cardinal number,neutral for number (two, three..)
MC1	singular cardinal number (one)
MC2	plural cardinal number (e.g. sixes, sevens)
MCGE	genitive cardinal number, neutral for number (two's, 100's)
MCMC	hyphenated number (40-50, 1770-1827)
MD	ordinal number (e.g. first, second, next, last)
MF	fraction, neutral for number (e.g. quarters, two-thirds)

ND1	singular noun of direction (e.g. north, southeast)
NN	common noun, neutral for number (e.g. sheep, cod, headquarters)
NN1	singular common noun (e.g. book, girl)
NN2	plural common noun (e.g. books, girls)
NNA	following noun of title (e.g. M.A.)
NNB	preceding noun of title (e.g. Mr., Prof.)
NNL1	singular locative noun (e.g. Island, Street)
NNL2	plural locative noun (e.g. Islands, Streets)
NNO	numeral noun, neutral for number (e.g. dozen, hundred)
NNO2	numeral noun, plural (e.g. hundreds, thousands)
NNT1	temporal noun, singular (e.g. day, week, year)
NNT2	temporal noun, plural (e.g. days, weeks, years)
NNU	unit of measurement, neutral for number (e.g. in, cc)
NNU1	singular unit of measurement (e.g. inch, centimetre)
NNU2	plural unit of measurement (e.g. ins., feet)
NP	proper noun, neutral for number (e.g. IBM, Andes)
NP1	singular proper noun (e.g. London, Jane, Frederick)
NP2	plural proper noun (e.g. Browns, Reagans, Koreas)
NPD1	singular weekday noun (e.g. Sunday)
NPD2	plural weekday noun (e.g. Sundays)
NPM1	singular month noun (e.g. October)
NPM2	plural month noun (e.g. Octobers)
PN	indefinite pronoun, neutral for number (none)

PN1	indefinite pronoun, singular (e.g. anyone, everything, nobody, one)
PNQO	objective wh-pronoun (whom)
PNQS	subjective wh-pronoun (who)
PNQV	wh-ever pronoun (whoever)
PNX1	reflexive indefinite pronoun (oneself)
PPGE	nominal possessive personal pronoun (e.g. mine, yours)
PPH1	3rd person sing. neuter personal pronoun (it)
PPHO1	3rd person sing. objective personal pronoun (him, her)
PPHO2	3rd person plural objective personal pronoun (them)
PPHS1	3rd person sing. subjective personal pronoun (he, she)
PPHS2	3rd person plural subjective personal pronoun (they)
PPIO1	1st person sing. objective personal pronoun (me)
PPIO2	1st person plural objective personal pronoun (us)
PPIS1	1st person sing. subjective personal pronoun (I)
PPIS2	1st person plural subjective personal pronoun (we)
PPX1	singular reflexive personal pronoun (e.g. yourself, itself)
PPX2	plural reflexive personal pronoun (e.g. yourselves, themselves)
PPY	2nd person personal pronoun (you)
RA	adverb, after nominal head (e.g. else, galore)
REX	adverb introducing appositional constructions (namely, e.g.)
RG	degree adverb (very, so, too)
RGQ	wh- degree adverb (how)
RGQV	wh-ever degree adverb (however)

RGR	comparative degree adverb (more, less)
RGT	superlative degree adverb (most, least)
RL	locative adverb (e.g. alongside, forward)
RP	prep. adverb, particle (e.g about, in)
RPK	prep. adv., catenative (about in be about to)
RR	general adverb
RRQ	wh- general adverb (where, when, why, how)
RRQV	wh-ever general adverb (wherever, whenever)
RRR	comparative general adverb (e.g. better, longer)
RRT	superlative general adverb (e.g. best, longest)
RT	quasi-nominal adverb of time (e.g. now, tomorrow)
TO	infinitive marker (to)
UH	interjection (e.g. oh, yes, um)
VB0	be, base form (finite i.e. imperative, subjunctive)
VBDR	were
VBDZ	was
VBG	being
VBI	be, infinitive (To be or not... It will be ..)
VBM	am
VBN	been
VBR	are
VBZ	is
VD0	do, base form (finite)

VDD	did
VDG	doing
VDI	do, infinitive (I may do... To do...)
VDN	done
VDZ	does
VH0	have, base form (finite)
VHD	had (past tense)
VHG	having
VHI	have, infinitive
VHN	had (past participle)
VHZ	has
VM	modal auxiliary (can, will, would, etc.)
VMK	modal catenative (ought, used)
VV0	base form of lexical verb (e.g. give, work)
VVD	past tense of lexical verb (e.g. gave, worked)
VVG	-ing participle of lexical verb (e.g. giving, working)
VVGK	-ing participle catenative (going in be going to)
VVI	infinitive (e.g. to give... It will work...)
VVN	past participle of lexical verb (e.g. given, worked)
VVNK	past participle catenative (e.g. bound in be bound to)
VVZ	-s form of lexical verb (e.g. gives, works)
XX	not, n't
ZZ1	singular letter of the alphabet (e.g. A,b)

ZZ2	plural letter of the alphabet (e.g. A's, b's)

NOTE: "DITTO TAGS"

Any of the tags listed above may in theory be modified by the addition of a pair of numbers to it: eg. **DD21, DD22** This signifies that the tag occurs as part of a sequence of similar tags, representing a sequence of words which for grammatical purposes are treated as a single unit. For example the expression *in terms of* is treated as a single preposition, receiving the tags:

in_II31 terms_II32 of_II33

The first of the two digits indicates the number of words/tags in the sequence, and the second digit the position of each word within that sequence.

Such *ditto tags* are not included in the lexicon, but are assigned automatically by a program called **IDIOMTAG** which looks for a range of multi-word sequences included in the **idiomlist**. The following sample entries from the idiomlist show that syntactic ambiguity is taken into account, and also that, depending on the context, ditto tags may or may not be required for a particular word sequence.