

“It is widely known” – dialogic features of undergraduate students’ writing in Linguistics.

**Nayia Cominos
Discipline of Linguistics
University of Adelaide**

This paper was subject to blind peer review by qualified independent experts before acceptance, in compliance with HERDC specifications for E1 publications and presented at the 2009 ASFLA Conference: Practising Theory: Expanding Understandings of Language, Literature and Literacy, held on the Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane Wednesday 30 September – Friday 2 October, 2010.

Abstract

This paper presents the initial findings of a qualitative and longitudinal study of the dialogic features of the writing of two local undergraduate students in the discipline of Linguistics. It examines the degree to which the students introduced “expert” voices into their texts and the ways in which they engaged with these voices. The assignment tasks were analysed using Genre Theory (Martin & Rose, 2008), and Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005). In particular, an analysis with reference to Engagement, that system identified by SFL theory as to do with negotiating multiple perspectives or voices in texts, was used to analyse the students’ texts to discover how they positioned themselves dialogically with respect to material attributed to these expert sources.

The Genre analysis revealed that it was not always possible to predict from the wordings of essay questions which genre would be employed by the students when they were constructing essays in response to the questions. Thus, for example, a question wording which asked the students to “explain”, would not necessarily result in an Explanation genre being produced. Students employed a range of different generic structures, depending upon their interpretation of the task directives, but the primary focus of this analysis was on essays which were in some way argumentative or which presented some form of case.

The Engagement analysis showed that the large proportion of the students' propositions were categorically asserted ('monoglossic'), without any form of justification or qualification, even though the majority of essay questions contained the directive "discuss". Where there were "heteroglossic formulations", that is statements which allowed for alternative points of view through citation or other rhetorical devices, there was a variation in the types and number used by each student. Noteworthy aspects of these heteroglossic formulations were that each student tended to favour certain types, irrespective of the content or directives of the assignment. For example, Student A had a tendency to use scare quotes, for example, like a 'sponge' (STA:P6), while Student B consistently used citation to define the terms used in the essay, for example, language acquisition is defined as "the gradual development of ability in a language by using it naturally in communicative situations with others who know the language." (Yule, 2006:163). (STB:P1).

A further finding of the study was that at times the process of classification using the Engagement system was problematic. Some formulations were not easily classified into one category or another, while others, which were functionally different, were grouped. This would suggest that it may be appropriate to consider sub-categories or clines within the existing framework, to accommodate a wider range of formulations.

Introduction

Bazerman asserts that, discursive objects, such as texts, 'provide a concrete locus for the enactment of social structure' (Bazerman, 1997: 296). He further states, 'The actual production and circulation of the discursive object of a written text provides a common site of attention for the different actions and activities each enacts with respect to the text, shaping the role and relationships of the various participants and orienting their individual perceptions and cognitions' (Bazerman, 1997: 297). With regard to academic and disciplinary discourses, texts have a particularly significant epistemological role. They are the medium through which disciplinary knowledge is constructed and recognised within and by the members of the disciplinary community. They are the object and the goal of many of the 'supporting actions' of the activities of the disciplinary community, and structure the relations and interrelations between the participants, and indeed the entire field of activity (Bazerman, 1997).

One of the primary characteristics of academic discourse is, therefore, its explicit intertextuality, expressed through the referencing and citation of expert knowledge within the

discipline (Hyland, 2000; Angelil-Carter, 2000; Cronin, 1981). Citations are, as Cronin (1981:16) poetically describes it “frozen footprints in the landscape of scholarly achievement; footprints which bear witness to the passage of ideas”. Citation is the bedrock of academic disciplinary discourse and intrinsic to the activities which surround its generation, exchange and use by participants in the discourse community. It has a variety of functions including displaying proper respect for colleagues and due regard for their views and reputations, as well as the justification of arguments, and the situation of one’s research in a larger narrative (Hyland, 2000).

Scholars’ status and credibility within the community are measured both by the production and dissemination of disciplinary texts in the relevant discursive spaces, and by how effectively through academic attribution they situate themselves in the continuity and established epistemology of the discipline. Hyland, in his analysis of texts as social interaction states, “Doing good research” means employing certain post-hoc justifications sanctioned by institutional arrangements. As a result, the rhetorical conventions of each text will reflect something of the epistemological and social assumptions of the author’s disciplinary culture’ (Hyland, 2000:11). He continues, ‘rhetorical strategies for social interactions are employed ... to help the writer create a professionally acceptable persona and an appropriate attitude, both to readers and the information being discussed. This means representing one’s self in a text in a way that demonstrates one’s flawless disciplinary credentials: showing one’s self to be a reasonable, intelligent, co-player in the community’s efforts to construct knowledge and well versed in its tribal lore. Critical here is the ability to display proper respect for colleagues and give due regard for their views and reputations” (Hyland, 2000:13).

While these comments apply primarily to professional academics, and the writers of articles for learned journals, they are of some relevance to undergraduate writers. Part of their socialization and literacy apprenticeship is the mastery of citation and referencing, to varying degrees. On University websites, and in Course Guidelines, the tendency is to focus on the mechanics of citation, i.e. formatting/style, and the avoidance of plagiarism (Petric, 2007; Hendricks & Quinn, 2000). In my experience as a tertiary educator, the difficulties that students face when referencing are less about accuracy of form, than epistemological issues, that is, how to demonstrate knowledge of the discipline and differentiate between what is regarded as “fact” or “accepted knowledge”, and what could be regarded as contentious or

otherwise problematic. It is these functional considerations which dictate to a large extent whether, and in what ways, students engaged dialogically with referenced expert opinion.

Literature review

This review discusses the relevant literature concerning the dual aspects of student referencing discussed in this paper, i.e. the rhetorical and epistemological role of academic attribution in student writing, and how it is affected by the communicative purpose of the task.

The literature on “citation signals” (referencing, bibliographies, and citation) and academic attribution in general, has focussed primarily on professional, published writing, in learned journals, with a few studies of ESL student writing , in particular, postgraduate theses and dissertations. It is dealt with briefly, as follows:

- Quantitative analysis of references – These studies use corpora of tertiary student bibliographies to identify the types of sources referenced, such as books, journals, electronic sources, and examine whether there are statistical correlations between the discipline, the number of years of tertiary study, and the type of source preferred by the students (Magrill & St. Clair, 1990; Carlson, 2000). Other criteria, such as the accuracy of citations and the average age of the sources cited have also been analysed (Clarke and Oppenheim, 2006).
- Bibliographical citations - These studies have investigated citation as a tool for the classification of disciplinary texts in libraries and as a measure of academic performance. Baker (1990), and later Howard White (2004), have analysed the rising importance of counting of citations for administrative academic purposes such as academic productivity for promotion and performance, and examined bibliographic coupling, document co-citation, author co-citation, co-word analysis as a means of categorising academic thought and defining, to some extent, inter-disciplinary boundaries.
- Undergraduate and Postgraduate ESL student writing – These studies have investigated the particular difficulties experienced by ESL students in understanding the relevance and status of different texts, and grasping the difference between plagiarism and academic attribution (Hendricks & Quinn, 2000). Petric (2007) examined rhetorical citation

functions in master's theses in gender studies written in English as a second language in the UK, with particular focus on the relationship between citation use and thesis grades, noting that there was a correlation between those theses which used accurate and frequent referencing and higher marks.

- Citation and intertextuality - These studies have analysed published articles or parts of articles by expert members of the discourse community, and although they are also quantitative, with regard to the process of identification and classification of citation signals, their primary focus is on the function of citations as intertextual elements, constructing disciplinary knowledge, and as indicators of author and writer attitudes; that is, the typology of citation signals and their communicative function within the text. Key studies for the typology of citation signals, relevant to this study are those of Swales (1986, 1990), Hyland (2000) and more recently Petric (2009). Swales drew on and adapted the categories of Moravcsik and Murugesan (1975), using a system of gradation rather than watertight opposites and incorporated the categories of “integral” and “non-integral” citation signals; integral citations being those where the names of the cited authors occur in the citing sentences, while non-integral forms make reference to the author in parentheses or by superscript numbers (Swales, 1990:148). Hyland (2000) built on Swales' system, and integrated it with an adapted version of Thompson and Ye's (1991) framework, which defined the types of citation signals in academic texts, and created a classification of reporting verbs under the larger headings of denotation and evaluative potential, to examine a corpus of articles from the journals of eight different disciplines. He concluded that “how writers choose to present information is as important as the information they choose to present” and that the different choices of citation signals between disciplines indicated that “the imperatives motivating citations are contextually variable and are related to community conventions of effective argument” (Hyland, 2000:40). Having said this, Hyland does not propose a framework for determining what these imperatives are. Petric (2009:239) proposes a further adaptation of Hyland's framework, to include some aspects of the communicative function of citation signals, such as attribution, exemplification and statement of use, although she notes that “scholars and students write for different audiences, have different goals and use different genres, all of which could affect their citation use”. (see also Swales & Feak (1994) and Clarke & Oppenheim (2006).

While these studies contribute to our understanding of the function of academic attribution as an aspect of academic literacy and as a quantifiable phenomenon, they do not address the deeper questions of how student referencing is related to dialogism and contention within disciplinary discourses. Dialogism, as informed by Voloshinov and Bakhtin's theorisation, is that "to speak or write is always to reveal the influence of, refer to, or take up in some way, what has been said/written before, and simultaneously to anticipate the responses of actual, potential or imagined readers/listeners" (Martin & White, 2005:92).

When approaching the question of dialogism in assessable tasks in undergraduate writing in the discipline of Linguistics, or indeed, any academic discipline, it is essential to take into account the nature of the text in which that positioning might or might not be occurring, and especially such issues as the communicative objectives of the text and the degree to which the material being dealt with will be regarded as contentious or otherwise problematic within the discipline. This is because, as recent studies such as Martin & White (2005) discuss, texts with, for example, a communicative purpose of arguing or persuading will typically involve substantially more dialogic positioning than texts which, for example, serve to simply report on material treated as uncontentious "knowledge" within the discipline. This has important implications when comparing and contrasting student texts with respect to their use of dialogic positioning. It is always necessary to allow for the possibility that any observed differences may result from differences in the nature of the text, that is, their communicative purpose or the nature of the material being dealt with. Equally, it will often be methodologically strategic for texts of the same type to be involved in the comparison, particularly when seeking to discover if there have been any developments in a student's use of dialogic resources over time. The notion of "genre" as variously articulated in the literature (Swales, 1990; Martin & Rose, 2008; Bhatia, 2002; Hyland, 2002) addresses this issue of communicative purpose, proposing that texts may be grouped into types according to their purposes and suggesting the arrangement of the phases or stages by which these purposes are pursued. Accordingly, the exploration of dialogic position outlined in this paper attends to the genre of the texts in which the dialogic positioning is occurring.

Since the publication of Swales' *Genre Analysis* in 1990, the notion of "communicative purpose" has been the subject of much debate in the relevant literature. While there is a fundamental agreement on the existence of text types, writers diverge on details such as their description and scope. Bhatia (2002), for example, proposes extending the definition/analysis

from text types to including their interpretation and use in specific contexts, including socio-cognitive and ethnographic parameters, while Hyland, citing Swale's (1990) notion of *prototypes* and Hasan's (1989) concept of *generic structure potential* ... suggests that texts [are] 'spread along a continuum of approximation to core genre examples with varying options and restrictions to operating in particular cases' (Hyland, 2002:120). Askehave & Swales (2001:197) admitted that in retrospect, 'purposes, goals, or public outcomes [were] more evasive, multiple, layered, and complex than originally envisaged'.

The approach which was developed in systemic functional linguistics defines genres as "a recurrent configuration of meanings and...these recurrent configurations of meaning enact the social practices of a given culture". (Martin & Rose, 2008:6). Martin and Rose's framework for identifying and describing genres was based on Halliday's emerging functional grammar of English (Halliday, 1994) and Martin's emerging descriptions of discourse semantics (Martin, 1992). Their choice to model genre at the stratum of culture, beyond register, allowed an integrated multi-functional perspective on genre, cutting across register variables. They describe their approach as:

- "social rather than cognitive;
 - social semiotic rather than ethnographic, with field, tenor and mode explored as patterns of meaning configured together as the social practices we call genres"
- (Martin & Rose, 2008:20).

It is this approach, developed by the Sydney School, which informs the present study, as it permits both a structural (organisational and co-textual) and textual (lexicogrammatical) examination of the data, taking into account their social context and function.

Context

The individual, assessable written tasks from several undergraduate students in Linguistics, collected over four consecutive semesters from 2007-2009, forms the corpus of an extended, doctoral study. These texts range from students' first essays in linguistics, in the Foundations of Linguistics course, which introduces structural linguistic concepts and analytical techniques in areas such as phonology and morphology, to their most recent assignments in Language, Communication and Society, essentially a course on Discourse Analysis. The

different objectives and focus of each of these subjects provides a broad spectrum of text types for analysis.

The group of students for the study were self-selected, with the primary criteria being their intention to continue studying Linguistics over the following three years. The tendency was that students performed well, overall, in their subjects, with most on an average credit mark or higher.

The analysis in this paper is of two texts in the same subject by two students. The students and their texts are typical and representative of the group, and so appropriate subjects for comparison. While the texts are from their first semester's work, their subsequent assignments reflect the same frequency and types of citation and referencing.

Methodology for analysis of the data

The communicative purpose, and hence the genre types employed in an academic context, particularly in undergraduate writing, are intimately linked with the pedagogical objective of a task. Academic assignments are designed to develop certain skills such as research methodology, understandings of the epistemology of the discipline, disciplinary writing conventions, academic attribution, and may have importance as tools for evaluating student progress in the course. As well, assignment questions frequently position students to pursue particular genre-related communicative purposes, such as, “describing”, “explaining” or “arguing”. The present study focuses on the manner in which students have responded to the communicative purpose as presented in the task description, with particular reference to dialogism, that is, the degree to which the student could be expected to introduce other voices, in particular expert voices into his/her writing.

The methodology for the analysis of the data was the following:

1. The categorisation of the tasks in terms of the genres and associated communicative purposes that they seem to be inviting students to produce by way of response.
2. An analysis of the case study students' texts, examining their response to the communicative purpose of the text, focussing on the formulations they use to introduce and refer to external, expert sources. Using elements of Martin & White's (2005)

Appraisal framework, the relevant categories of Engagement were referenced to discover how the students positioned themselves with regard to their cited sources.

1. Categorisation of each of the tasks, in terms of its communicative purpose.

The tasks and texts for this paper were selected to allow the best comparison possible in terms of genre and the communicative purposes being pursued. Foundations of Linguistics is a structural linguistics course offered in Semester 1 each year. The written assessments for the subject are four practical analyses (in morphology, phonology, comparative syntax and phonetic transcription) and one essay as the final task in the subject. The tasks and texts in this study are the final essays of two students: Student A and Student B.

Before moving to the specific data for analysis in this paper, some general comments about the process of genre classification, with regard to the totality of the tasks which formed the corpus of the broader study are relevant.

The tasks were categorised in terms of the communicative purposes they seemed to be encouraging the students to pursue. While some task descriptions appear to include clear, explicit directives concerning the type of response required, others seem to be more ambiguous as to the expected genre.

As an example, a question such as *What is face?. Explain using specific examples* in Essay Q6, would suggest that the task could be classified in the Descriptive report genre. Others, such as the description in FOL Essay Q7, *What is the role of...in... Discuss*, might be interpreted as inviting a Consequential Explanation or Description, but in fact requires positioning and argumentation.

Upon closer analysis of the wordings of the task questions, it becomes clear that the situation is not always so simple with respect to the communicative objectives and hence the genres they seem to be inviting the student to pursue. Thus in some cases they seem to be inviting the students to pursue a series of objectives – for example firstly to “identify” some linguistic phenomenon and only then to “discuss” theoretical issues associated with this phenomenon. Others have a “hybrid” form, such as the *review and critique* of the Cross Cultural Communication Critique, which would appear to require a comparative analysis rather than a specific communicative purpose of Challenge. Some could be classified under Martin &

Rose's concept of "macro-genre", which describes those texts which have an overarching generic structure, such as Exposition, but may have other core genres embedded within them, such as Recount. That said, it is worth bearing in mind that "genre [is] a resource for generating discourse (rather than a system of rules delimiting what we do)...[that] genre is not so much about posing structure as offering choice" (Martin & Rose, 2008:258).

What could be said is that a commonality of the tasks is the expectation that students' responses will include propositions attributed to external sources, in such a way as to acknowledge their position as contentious, novel or otherwise problematic within the discipline. This dialogism is an accepted aspect of academic literacy and consistent with some of the general pedagogical objectives which are implicit in such written tasks, such as students demonstrating that they have done the required reading, or have a working knowledge of the fundamental theories proper to the discipline.

2. An analysis of the case study students' texts examining their response to the communicative purpose of the text, focussing on heteroglossic formulations with regard to external sources.

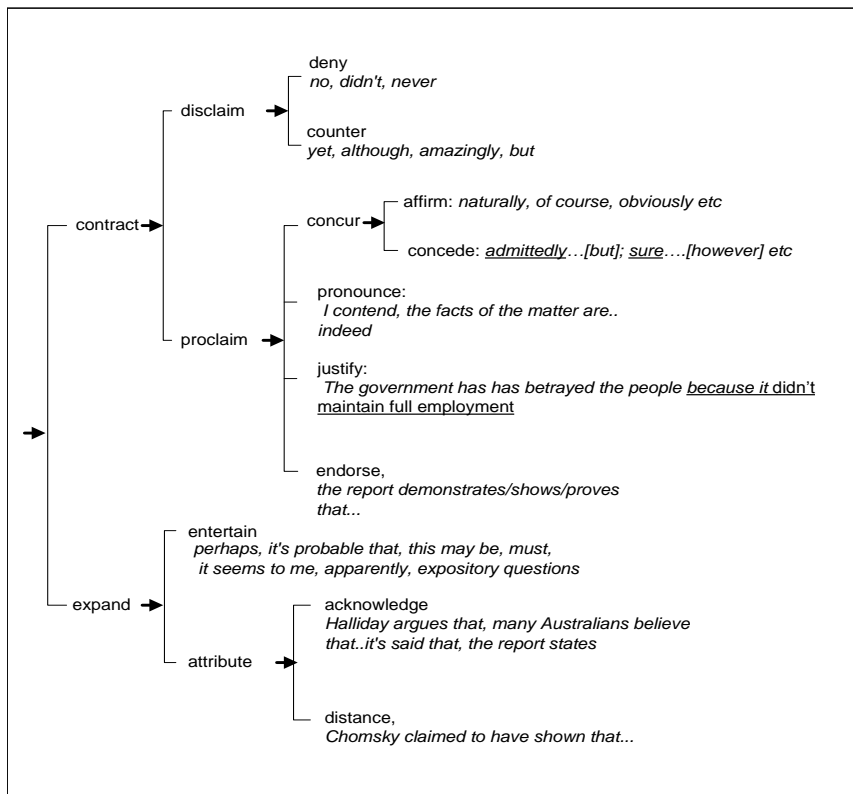
In order to understand the analysis of the text, below is a very brief overview of Appraisal, and a short description of the specific elements of the framework which were used in the analysis.

Appraisal is concerned with the interpersonal in language, "the subjective presence of writer/speakers in texts, as they adopt stances towards both the material they present and those with whom they communicate. It is concerned with how writers/speakers approve and disapprove, ... with how they position their readers/listeners to do likewise, ... [and] how they construe for themselves particular authorial identities or personae, how they align or disalign themselves with actual or potential respondents, and with how they construct for their texts an intended or ideal audience" (Martin & White, 2005:1). The framework identifies three key areas of analysis: Attitude, which is concerned with feelings, judgements of behaviour and the evaluation of things, Graduation, which attends to grading phenomena whereby feelings are amplified and categories blurred, and Engagement, which deals with sourcing attitudes and the play of voices around opinions in discourse (Martin & White, 2005:35). It is the

latter, Engagement, which has been used for analysing the texts in this study, as it is of particular relevance to academic attribution in academic writing.

Engagement groups together “all those locutions which provide the means for authorial voice to position itself with respect to, and hence to “engage” with the other voices and alternative positions construed as being in play in the current communicative context. These locutions may take the form of “monoglossic” formulations, notably monoglossic assertions, which do not overtly reference other voices or recognise alternative positions, or a range of “heteroglossic” formulations which are more or less expansive or contractive with regard to alternative voices and/or positions (Martin & White, 2005:Chapter 3).

Endorsement and Attribution are labels within the Appraisal/Engagement framework for what would traditionally be covered by such labels as “direct and indirect speech”, i.e., formulations by which the words and views of outside sources are quoted or referenced and thus introduced into the text. Attribution has two sub-systems within the Engagement system – i.e., Acknowledging and Distancing. Acknowledging involves the use of formulations such as *X says/asserts/insists/argues/believes, reportedly, according to X... and so on* by which the writer “acknowledges” that this is material coming from an external source but does not indicate either way whether they themselves favour or disfavour the attributed material. In contrast, Distancing involves the use of formulations by which the writer “distances” themselves from the attributed material – i.e., actively indicating that the material is still open to question, not yet decided. In English the term “to claim” typically performs this function, for example, *he is claiming he knew nothing about the planned robbery*, and by so-called scare quotes, for example, *‘reality’ television*. Endorsing is, in a sense, the opposite of Distancing. It covers formulations such as *X has demonstrated/proved that ...* by which the writer presents the quoted material as necessarily “true” or “factual” and thereby indicates their support for the propositions being advanced via the quotation. For a full discussion, see Martin & White (1995/97, Chapter 3).



The Engagement System, *Mapping dialogic relations in mass communicative argument*, White, Seminar Presentation, Sydney, July, 2009.

With regard to the use of the Appraisal framework, it should be noted that there is an interrelation between the various levels of analysis, so isolating one aspect is necessarily incomplete. Given the scope of this paper, however, and its particular focus on the analysis of citation and referencing, the most appropriate aspect seemed to be Engagement and within that, primarily Attribution and Endorsement. As the analysis progressed, however, other categories of Engagement, Entertain and Pronounce were also included, as the students were using these formulations. Their place in the Appraisal framework is shown in the adapted figure above.

Results of analysis – salient points

1. Categorisation of each of the tasks, in terms of its communicative purpose.

Foundations of Linguistics (FOL): Essay. 1000-1200 words

(A choice of 9 questions on various topics from the curriculum.)

Student A chose: What is the 'Critical Period' for the acquisition of language? Critically discuss evidence assembled in support of the 'Critical Period' notion.

Student B chose: What role does a learner's first language play in their acquisition of a second language? Discuss.

Both questions seem to be inviting the student to describe and discuss, but with slight differences. The first question could be interpreted as inviting or positioning the student to produce a descriptive report/discussion genre, as the initial directive is essentially to define/describe **the** 'critical period', which would imply that the notion under discussion is not contentious. The second directive, however, to *critically discuss evidence assembled in support of the Critical Period notion*, could be interpreted as inviting or positioning the student to perhaps see claims about the "Critical Period" as in some way contentious, or at least the evidence being presented in support as in some way contentious or disputed. It could, therefore, be argued that it is really asking the student to respond using argumentation, as the directive *discuss* would imply. In the second question, the communicative purpose involves description, but asks the student to describe a causal relationship between L1 and L2. The directive *discuss* invites the response of argumentation, for example, expert writing for and against the importance of the role.

2. An analysis of the case study students' texts examining their response to the communicative purpose of the text, focussing on heteroglossic formulations with regard to external sources.

Student A/Text A

As discussed earlier, this question could invite an Exposition or Discussion response from the student, as the task description is ambiguous with regard to the contentiousness of the Critical Period Notion. The student appears to have chosen to respond with an Exposition text, i.e., to bring together evidence so as to present an argument in support of the proposition that there is a "Critical Period" for first-language learning. The following extract comprises the first paragraph (full text in Appendix A)'.

Fluent speakers of their native language are usually exposed to language from birth and develop the skills need and understanding during the 'critical period'. [*acknowledge*: the terminology of some unidentified external source, not the propositions/views/observations etc of any external source] It is widely noted [*endorse*] ability to speak and understand when being spoken to is something that is not taught to a child, rather something that we innately acquire. The 'critical period' [*acknowledge*] for a child to successfully construct a lexicon and grammar is from birth until puberty and is biological, "Any language learning after the age of puberty will be

slower and less successful”¹. [*acknowledge*] In the rare cases that children have been found that have not been exposed to any language until after the onset of puberty they have been able to acquire vocabulary but suffer in grammar. Also, looking to bilingual speakers and second language acquisition are we able to gain an understanding of the importance of the ‘critical period’.

That said, there is a degree of contention expressed in P4, regarding the precise details of the Critical Period. As this is an isolated instance, it is not sufficient to justify describing the text as a Discussion, in which more than one position on an issue is explicitly tendered and scaffolded around competing positions. It does, however, suggest perhaps that the student was somehow responsive to the ambiguity of the question.

e.g. Though the consensus on the number of stages of language development varies amongst the experts in the field [*acknowledge*] it is widely agreed [*acknowledge*], “all children, no matter how rapid or how pedestrian their rate of acquisition, proceed systematically through the same learning stages for any particular linguistic structure³. [*acknowledge*] (STA:P4)

The manner in which this was done is worth examining. The alternative position is stated, using a general unspecified source, but the definitive position is supported with a citation. This appears to show some manipulation of the use of sources in the text to advance a particular argument. Firstly there is an instance of Acknowledgement, by which the proposition (that “all children...proceed systematically through the same learning stages”) is associated with some unspecified grouping – those who “agree”. But then additionally, and crucially, there is the Attitudinal consequence of “widely agreed”. By the use of this descriptor, the reader is invited to see the proposition as highly credible. That is to say, the manner of the Acknowledgement acts to invoke a positive attitude towards the quoted proposition (i.e. that it is true or reliable). So, in such cases, analysis needs to include consideration both of what is going on in terms of Engagement (i.e. dialogic positioning), and in terms of attitudinal positioning. Acknowledgement, combined with the invoking of a positive Appreciation, present the writer as strongly supporting the proposition and positioning the reader to accept the proposition.

The writer tends to treat the established knowledge as unproblematic, using a majority of monoglossic formulations in the text, with a very large majority of propositions barely or categorically asserted. Where material from outside sources is introduced, this is, typically

Acknowledged, but it is still noteworthy that there was at least one instance of Endorsement, for example, “the results of his survey found three different groups of second language learners” (STA:P3), and that the Acknowledgement is infrequent – only six instances for the whole text, for example in P1 above.

With regard to the distribution of the few heteroglossic formulations, it could be said that the student moved from dialogically expansive formulations in the introduction and main body of the essay up to paragraph 4, which included Arguments 1 and 2:

e.g. From the knowledge of the brain and how it functions it has been surmised [*acknowledge*] (STA:P2)

to dialogically contractive formulations which were introduced from Paragraph 5, Argument 3, where the student writer presents another position but only to discount it and in doing so shores up her/his own position:

e.g. It could be argued [*entertain*] that this is because the learner has already learnt one set of lexicon and grammar, but in the case of bilinguals that are exposed to two different language from birth, the ‘separate systems hypothesis’ demonstrates [*endorse*] that they are able to form two separate lexicon and grammar.(STA:P5)

Although the conclusion contained some heteroglossic formulations, they were contractive, rather than expansive,

e.g. It is more than evident [*pronounce*] that there is a specific time frame (STA:P7)

and alternative points of view were effectively excluded by means of the extensive use of monoglossic assertions:

e.g. First language acquisition unlike other functions of the brain is something that cannot be taught.(STA:P7)

It seems relevant to note, for the purposes of comparison, that a third of Student A’s heteroglossic formulations included Entertain and Pronounce formulations, although they were not part of the three formulations under analysis. This was particularly salient in the concluding stage of the essay, when the writer started to fend off possible dialogical alternatives through the repeated use of Pronounce when presenting key propositions.

e.g. Yet, it is clear [*pronounce*] that second language learners generally are never as fluent as [sic] in their second language as they are their native tongue, the fact of the matter is [*pronounce*] the brain is not functioning in the same way after puberty to allow the same degree of [sic] acquisition. (STA:P7)

Student A uses what has been termed, for this study, ‘Mixed’ formulations in which a sentence begins with the student’s own words and ends with a quotation from a cited source. This will be expanded upon later when I discuss the difficulties in categorising some of the formulations in the texts.

The student uses unidentified, generalised sources without verbal communicative processes, for example, ‘it has been surmised’ (STA:P2). These are characterised as “unidentified” and “generalised” because there is no named source associated with the attributed material. Thus in the above example, the impersonal structure with “it” has been used”.

Student B/Text B

Although in the second question, the task directive is to *discuss*, the student could be described as having responded with an Exposition, following the staging *Thesis^Argument(s)*. On the other hand, the student does not clearly present the initial proposition as contentious, i.e., as something the reader has to be convinced of, so perhaps it could be better described as an Explanation.

Of all the world’s population, each individual person knows at least one of approximately 6,912 living languages¹ [*acknowledge*]. The process by which a person acquires their first language intrigues linguists [*entertain*] as to whether it is the same process by which second, and subsequent, languages are acquired. Linguistic knowledge is innate; in a similar way that a person acquires their language, it must therefore be possible for anybody to acquire a second. However, there are critical differences in between acquiring first and second languages. A learner’s first language plays an integral role in their acquisition of a second. Before further discussion, it is necessary to distinguish between language acquisition and language learning. Language acquisition is defined as “the gradual development of ability in a language by using it naturally in communicative situations with others who know the language.” (Yule, 2006:163). [*acknowledge*] In contrast, language learning is “a more conscious process of accumulating knowledge of the features of a language, for example vocabulary and grammar.” (Yule, 2006:163)². [*acknowledge*] (STB:P1).

This is consistent with the tension noted earlier within the task question, where the question invites discussion, after a statement which contains the assumption that there is a causal relationship between L1 and L2 acquisition.

Consistent with this response, Student B uses a highly structured, formulaic argumentation, allocating a new paragraph to each argument, beginning with an expert definition followed by evidence.

In the majority, Student B uses monoglossic formulations throughout the text,

e.g. Noam Chomsky's innateness hypothesis is a useful tool in studying in the influence that a learner's first language has on their acquisition of a second language.(STB:P2)

e.g. The less closely the learner's first and second languages are related, the stronger the negative crosslinguistic interference of the first language.
. (STB:P6)

with some dialogically expansive rather than contractive formulations, notably Acknowledgement, shown in the following example, which is used in all paragraphs except the conclusion. She does not use general unspecified attribution (as discussed above), and sources are cited and identified in the body of the text or in footnotes, but with a preference for intext citation.

e.g. Charles Curran (1976) suggests [*acknowledge*] that 'language learning success is a function of the degree of commitment of the individual to the task' (McDonough, 2002: 94).[*acknowledge*] (STA:P8)

With regard to the distribution of heteroglossic formulations, the student uses primarily dialogically contractive formulations when discussing arguments 2 and 3. The Conclusion is entirely monoglossic, using Monoglossic assertion formulations. This has the effect of reinforcing the student's position on the topic and blocking other interpretations or arguments.

e.g. The acquisition of a second language, it has been noted, **is** strongly influenced by the learner's first language. The less arbitrarily related the first language **is** to the second, the greater the role the first language plays in terms of ease of acquisition. (STB:P10)

Student B creates a seamless connection between her comments and those of the source, using numerous Mixed formulations:

e.g. Metalinguistic awareness is a person's conscious awareness that "the rules of that language (grammatical, phonological, pragmatic, and so on) are an arbitrary linguistic code independent of meaning"⁴. [*acknowledge?*]
(STB:P3)

While the source is acknowledged, this invites a possible interpretation of Endorse, which is discussed below.

Discussion

The data analysis raised a number of salient points with regard to the task descriptions and the students' responses.

The students' responses showed a strong correlation between the perceived task directives and the generic structure. For example, in Q7, the directive is to discuss, which could invite a Discussion, but the student has chosen an Explanation, which would imply that they did not perceive the proposition as contentious, but where there was some tension, such as in Q2 where the first part of the question is a monoglossic assertion, followed by 'critically discuss', there was some attempt at argumentation, in acknowledging other opinions or substantiating certain assertions that the student was making.

With regard to the Appraisal analysis, certain formulations emerged which were either difficult to classify or were marked in other ways. One such formulation was, what I have termed, 'Mixed' formulations, where the student begins a sentence in a monoglossic manner, with a monoglossic assertion, and then moves to a heteroglossic formulation, with a citation within that sentence. As the source is acknowledged through a footnote, this could be considered as Acknowledgement. On the other hand, the citation is unqualified by a reporting verb, and its integration into the student's own argument invites a possible interpretation of Endorse.

e.g. The 'critical period' for a child to successfully construct a lexicon and grammar is from birth until puberty and is biological, "Any language learning after the age of puberty will be slower and less successful"¹ (STA:P1)

e.g. Language acquisition is defined as "the gradual development of ability in a language by using it naturally in communicative situations with others who know the language." (Yule, 2006:163).(STB:P1)

Another marked feature is that both students' writing contains a formulation in which a theory is a source, used with a reporting verb. They are not strictly nominalisations (as defined in Martin & White, 2005:111), and thus, difficult to categorise. In this study, they

have been called Theoretical sources, and they are referenced in three forms, shown in bold in the examples below. The first is directly, with a reference to a key text, as a footnote or in parentheses in the text.

e.g. his [John H. Schumann's] **acculturalisation hypothesis...stated** that...(McDonough, 2002:95).(STB:P9)

The second is to include the name of the theorist.

e.g. **Chomsky's** innateness hypothesis (STB:P2)

The third is through the use of a recognised nomenclature.

e.g. **The 'fundamental difference hypothesis' which says** that second language acquisition is a completely different process to the first supports the 'critical period notion', as it becomes clear that the biggest difference is the time in life when the learner attempts to acquire the language. (STA: P5)

e.g. **This [Fundamental Difference Hypothesis] argued** that it is impossible to explain acquiring a second language in terms of acquiring a first language. (STB:P4).

One explanation for this could be that these theories have become "concept symbols" (Small, 1978) or part of the phenomenon that Garfield (1977, 1978) describes as "obliteration by incorporation", that is, they form part of the "canon" of the discipline, and their naming is a sufficient citation or reference. A more prosaic explanation could be that given the limited extent of the students' knowledge of the discipline, they do not perceive any incongruity with the concept of attributing agency to a theory or an idea.

A marked feature of Student A's writing was the use of unidentified, generalised sources, a sub-type of Acknowledgement, such as "it is widely noted" (STA:P1) and "it has been surmised" (STA:P2). These have the effect of presenting the proposition as uncontentious, or less contentious, while giving credibility to the proposition as "common knowledge", and therefore not worthy of referencing.

The students' texts are essentially a series of monoglossic assertions, treating propositions as established knowledge, uncontentious, and/or unproblematic, interspersed with occasional heteroglossic formulations. Student A's text is more sophisticated dialogically than Students B's, as Student A uses a wider variety of heteroglossic formulations, but dialogism is minimal. Both students' assignments move from the inclusion of some heteroglossic formulations in the argumentation part of the texts, to a monoglossic conclusion.

Conclusion

This presentation is a snapshot of a dialogic analysis of undergraduate Linguistics student writing, and forms part of a larger doctoral study. It demonstrates the complexity of the task/response binome, and students' sensitivity to the tensions which can be inherent in certain task descriptions. It also gives insights into the manner in which students respond to the perceived communicative purpose of the task, the types of formulations they choose, and the difficulty in categorising some of these formulations under the existing Engagement framework. Further analysis of the entire corpus of student work in the larger study would suggest that perhaps some categories, such as Acknowledge may require sub-categories or a cline of formulations to accommodate and differentiate these new or idiosyncratic formulations.

It is too early in the broader research project to propose specific ways in which the results of the study may be applicable to extending students' understanding and mastery of the dialogic aspects of disciplinary discourse, and pedagogical solutions for educators, but, to return to Bazerman:

“One purpose in developing accounts of disciplinary work is to provide guidance for neophytes and their mentors by giving them tools to characterize their experience, to make visible their situation and resources, and to frame choices for action”. Bazerman (1997:301).

References :

- Angelil-Carter, S. (2000) *Stolen words? Plagiarism in writing*. Harlow: Longman.
- Askehave, I, & Swales, J. M. (2001) Genre Identification and Communicative Purpose: A problem and a Possible Solution, *Applied Linguistics*, 22 (2): 195-212.
- Baker, D. R. (1990) Citation analysis: A methodological review, *Social Work Research and Abstracts*, 26(3): 3-11.
- Bazerman, C. (1997). Discursively Structured Activities. *Mind, Culture & Activity* 4(4): 296-308.
- Bhatia, V. K. (2002) Applied Genre Analysis: A Multi-Perspective Model, *Ibérica* (1139-7241), 4: 3-19.
- Carlson, J. (2006) An Examination of Undergraduate Student Citation Behaviour, *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 32(1): 14-22.
- Clarke, M. E. and C. Oppenheim (2006) Citation behaviour of information science students II: Postgraduate Students, *Education for Information*, 24: 1-30.
- Cronin, B. (1981) The need for a theory of citing, *Journal of Documentation*, 37 (1), 16-24.
- Garfield, E. (1977-78) Introducing citation classics: The human side of scientific reports, *Essays of an Information Scientist* 3:1-2.
- Halliday, M. A. K. & Hasan, R. *Language, Context and Text*. (Republished by Oxford University Press 1989.) Geelong, Vic.: Deakin University Press.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Hasan, R. (1985) The structure of a text. In M.A.K. Halliday and R. Hasan. *Language, Context and Text*. (Republished by Oxford University Press 1989.) Geelong, Vic.: Deakin University Press. 52-69.
- Hendricks, M. and L. Quinn (2000) Teaching Referencing as an Introduction to Epistemological Empowerment, *Teaching in Higher Education*, 5(4): 447-457.
- Hyland, K. (2000) *Disciplinary Discourses*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Hyland, K. (2002) Genre: Language, Context , and Literacy, *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 22: 113-135.
- Magrill, R. M. & St. Clair, G. (1990) Undergraduate term paper citation patterns by disciplines and level of course, *Collection Management*, 12 (3/4): 25-56.
- Martin, J. R. (1992) *English Text: System and structure*. Amsterdam: Benjamin
- 2009 ASFLA Conference: Practising Theory: Expanding Understandings of Language, Literature and Literacy

Martin J. & White, P.P.R. (2005) *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Martin J. R. & Rose, D. (2008) *Genre Relations: Mapping Culture*. London, Equinox.

Moravcsik, M. J. & Murugesan, P. (1975) Some results on the function and quality of citations, *Social Studies of Science*, 5: 86-92.

Petric, B. (2007). Rhetorical functions of citations in high- and low-rated master's theses, *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 6: 238-253.

Small, H. G. (1978) Cited documents as concept symbols, *Social Studies of Science*, 8:327-40.

Swales, J. M. (1990). *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Swales, J. M. & Feak, C.B., (1994) *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Thompson, G. and Ye, Y. (1991) Evaluation of the reporting verbs used in academic papers, *Applied Linguistics* 12: 365-82.

White, H. (2004) Citation Analysis and Discourse Analysis Revisited, *Applied Linguistics* 21(1): 89-116.

APPENDIX A
STUDENT A/TEXT A

TASK: Foundations of Linguistics 2008 Essay: *What is the 'critical period' for the acquisition of language? Critically discuss evidence assembled in support of the 'critical period' notion.*

Key: Bolding by researcher; Engagement categories in italics

PARA	TEXT	STAGE DESCRIPTION
1	<p>Fluent speakers of their native language are usually exposed to language from birth and develop the skills need and understanding during the 'critical period'. [<i>acknowledge</i> the terminology of some unidentified external source. , not the propositions/views/observations etc of any external source] It is widely noted [<i>endorse</i>] ability to speak and understand when being spoken to is something that is not taught to a child, rather something that we innately acquire. The 'critical period' [<i>acknowledge</i>] for a child to successfully construct a lexicon and grammar is from birth until puberty and is biological, "Any language learning after the age of puberty will be slower and less successful".¹ [<i>acknowledge</i>] In the rare cases that children have been found that have not been exposed to any language until after the onset of puberty they have been able to acquire vocabulary but suffer in grammar. Also, looking to bilingual speakers and second language acquisition are we able to gain an understanding of the importance of the 'critical period'.</p>	<p>Introduction Thesis Definition of terms</p> <p>3 x <i>acknowledge</i> 1 x <i>endorse</i></p>
2	<p>Specific cases of the acquisition of first language after the 'critical period' cannot but serve as resounding evidence in favour of the idea Examples of deaf children born to families who were ill adapt to teaching them sign language or accommodating to their disability, prove that when a child is not properly exposed to a language during the 'critical period' it is detrimental to their ability to successfully gain understanding of the lexicon and grammar. The 'critical period' in effect is imperative because it is in direct correlation with the development of the brain, and brain lateralisation which is essential to the understanding of language. From the knowledge of the brain and how it functions it has been surmised [<i>acknowledge</i>] that there are two individual cerebral hemisphere and they are lateral. This means that specific functions occur on either side of the brain. In the case of language it is normally an attribute for the left side of the brain but in cases of deaf children being exposed after the 'critical period' their language functioning was found to be in their right side. Though they were</p>	<p>Argument 1 Problems of learning after CP.</p> <p>Argument 2 Neurolinguistic evidence</p> <p>1 x <i>acknowledge</i></p>

¹ Snow C., E & Hoefnagel-Höhle., M 'The Critical Period for Language Acquisition: Evidence from Second Language Learning', *Child Development*, (Dec., 1978), Vol. 49, No. 4, p.1116.

	able learn vocabulary they were unable to grasp a full understanding of grammar.							
3	<p>Underlining the ‘critical period’ notion is, though it may slightly vary, during birth to puberty there are obvious stages of language development which occur at particular ages. These stages coupled with the link between brain development and the ‘critical period’ demonstrate that this is time is important for the acquisition of language, as this is the only period of life where the brain is functioning in such a way. By the age of three eighty percent of synaptic connections are made and in terms of language acquisition children of the age before five already have a great understanding of the grammar of language. The brain is twice as active in the first ten years of life as that of adulthood and after puberty growth of the brain declines and ‘pruning’ begins. Looking at the synaptic activity of a brain at birth, at six years and fourteen years old the most activity occurs during six years (figure one).</p> <p><i>Figure One</i>²</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: left;"><i>Brain at birth</i></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><i>At six years</i></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><i>At</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: left;"><i>fourteen years</i></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<i>Brain at birth</i>	<i>At six years</i>	<i>At</i>	<i>fourteen years</i>			Extrapolation of Argument 2 with further examples
<i>Brain at birth</i>	<i>At six years</i>	<i>At</i>						
<i>fourteen years</i>								
4	<p>Though the consensus on the number of stages of language development varies amongst the experts in the field [acknowledge] it is widely agreed [acknowledge], “all children, no matter how rapid or how pedestrian their rate of acquisition, proceed systematically through the same learning stages for any particular linguistic structure.”³ [acknowledge] These learning stages are inexplicitly linked with the stages of brain development pre-puberty and in second language acquisition it becomes clear how post puberty is not as prosperous and fruitful in the learning of language.</p>	<p>Extrapolation of Argument 2 with further examples</p> <p>3 x <i>acknowledge</i></p>						
5	<p>Observing second language acquisition after puberty highlights how the ‘critical period’ determines fluency and competence. <i>It could be argued</i> [entertain] that this is because the learner has already learnt one set of lexicon and grammar, but in the case of bilinguals that are exposed to two different language from birth, the ‘separate systems hypothesis’ demonstrates [endorse] that they are able to form two separate lexicon and grammar. Learners of a second language later in life generally are unable reach a native fluency and acquire the language in a different way. The ‘fundamental difference hypothesis’ which says [acknowledge] that second language acquisition is a completely different process to the first supports the ‘critical period notion’, as it becomes clear that the biggest difference is the time in life when the learner attempts to acquire the language. Even the opposing idea, [acknowledge] that second language acquisition</p>	<p>Argument 3 L2 acquisition and Fundamental Difference Hypothesis</p>						

²Brain development’ <<http://www.michigan.gov/>> (2008), sited 20th May.

³ Scovel T., *Psycholinguistics* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p 23.

APPENDIX B
STUDENT B/TEXT B

TASK: Foundations of Linguistics 2008 Essay: *What role does a learner’s first language play in their acquisition of a second language? Discuss*

Key: Bolding by researcher; Engagement categories in italics

PARA	TEXT	STAGE DESCRIPTION
1	<p>Of all the world’s population, each individual person knows at least one of approximately 6,912 living languages⁵<i>[acknowledge]</i> The process by which a person acquires their first language intrigues linguists <i>[entertain]</i> as to whether it is the same process by which second, and subsequent, languages are acquired. Linguistic knowledge is innate; in a similar way that a person acquires their language, it must therefore be possible for anybody to acquire a second. However, there are critical differences in between acquiring first and second languages. A learner’s first language plays an integral role in their acquisition of a second. Before further discussion, it is necessary to distinguish between language acquisition and language learning. Language acquisition is defined as “the gradual development of ability in a language by using it naturally in communicative situations with others who know the language.” (Yule, 2006:163). ⁶<i>[acknowledge]</i> In contrast, language learning is “a more conscious process of accumulating knowledge of the features of a language, for example vocabulary and grammar.” (Yule, 2006:163). ⁷<i>[acknowledge]</i>.</p>	<p>Introduction Thesis Defining terms</p> <p><i>3x acknowledge</i> 1 x <i>entertain</i></p>
2	<p>Noam Chomsky’s innateness hypothesis is a useful tool in studying in the influence that a learner’s first language has on their acquisition of a second language. Chomsky’s innateness hypothesis states <i>[acknowledge]</i> that humans are born with an innate knowledge about universal principles of language such as ‘structure dependency... and the general rules of sentence formation’. (Fromkin et. al, 2005: 310) <i>[acknowledge]</i>. This innate knowledge is known as Universal Grammar. Universal Grammar is a set of design principles to which all natural human</p>	<p>Argument 1 Innate hypothesis</p>

⁵ <http://www.ethnologue.com>

⁶ <http://www.ethnologue.com>

⁷ <http://www.ethnologue.com>

	on their acquisition of a second language, is their transfer of grammatical rules from their first to their second language. This is defined as crosslinguistic interference. Crosslinguistic interference occurs when ‘sounds, expressions, or linguistic structures from a first language are used when performing in a second language.’ (Yule, 2006: 167). [<i>acknowledge</i>] If the grammatical rules of the first and second language are not closely related, for example, between Japanese and English, a negative transfer of grammatical rules occurs.	Cross-linguistic interference 1 x [<i>acknowledge</i>]
6	The less closely the learner’s first and second languages are related, the stronger the negative crosslinguistic interference of the first language. This is especially true for the second language’s phonology, when the first languages’ phonemes, phonological rules or syllable structures manifest themselves in the second language in a foreign accent. For example, native Japanese speakers learning English may perform a negative crosslinguistic transfer when they incorrectly pronounce the English phoneme [l] as [r], because the difference between [l] and [r] is ‘not phonemic in Japanese’. (Fromkin et. al, 2005: 340).[<i>acknowledge</i>]	Extrapolation of Argument 4 with further examples 1 x <i>acknowledge</i>
7	On a brief note, the relative closeness of the morphology between the first and second languages also aids in the acquisition of a second language. Languages that are closely morphologically related share many morphemes that are also semantically related. Choosing to acquire a second language closely related to the first, the learner can draw upon their knowledge about their first language to aid in answering their semantic and inflectional questions about their second language.	Extrapolation of Argument 4 with further examples
8	The characteristics of the individual learner play a role in the acquisition of a second language. Cognition or aptitude for language learning could encourage people to start learning, or to persevere when the task proves difficult. Charles Curran (1976) suggests [<i>acknowledge</i>] that ‘language learning success is a function of the degree of commitment of the individual to the task’ (McDonough, 2002: 94). [<i>acknowledge</i>] Success in the early stages of second language acquisition is more likely when the second language is less arbitrarily related to the first, as the learner can draw upon their knowledge of their first language, and perform positive crosslinguistic transfers. Subsequently, self esteem increases and the learner is more confident and motivated to continue their learning process.	Argument 5 Individual Cognition/Aptitude 2 x <i>acknowledge</i>
9	Pertinent to a lesser degree than aptitude, an individual’s cultural background may [<i>entertain</i>] predetermine success in second language acquisition. In 1978, John H. Schumann wrote his acculturation hypothesis, which stated [<i>acknowledge</i>] that ‘the facilitation and inhibiting influence of cultural group attitudes (of which individuals may be hardly aware) add up to good or bad language learning situations.’ (McDonough, 2002: 95). In today’s world, globalisation is playing an ever	Argument 6 Cultural background

	<p>increasing role in necessitating people to learn a second language. There are many countries and states which have two, or more, official languages, such as Canada, where in some states the official languages are English and French.</p> <p>Furthermore, an increasing number of people are migrating to different countries, where their native language is scarcely spoken. In order to assimilate themselves, these people may need to learn a second language. The cultural group attitudes as hypothesised by Schumann [<i>distance</i>], in the learner's new environment, if encouraging and accepting are more likely to result in a 'good language learning situation.' (McDonough, 2002: 95). [<i>acknowledge</i>]</p>	<p>2 x <i>acknowledge</i> 1 x <i>distance</i> 1 x <i>entertain</i></p>
10	<p>The acquisition of a second language, it has been noted, is strongly influenced by the learner's first language. The less arbitrarily related the first language is to the second, the greater the role the first language plays in terms of ease of acquisition. Morphology, phonology, and semantics are the three main linguistic units playing an integral role in the transfer of grammatical rules from the first language to the second language, as second language learners draw upon these in their efforts to perform their second language. In today's world, it is increasingly important to learn a second language, and the theories and hypotheses discussed in this essay promote a greater understanding of how a person begins the process of acquiring a second language.</p>	<p>Conclusion Reiteration of thesis</p>
	Total 27	<p>19 x <i>acknowledge</i> 3 x <i>distance</i> ? 2 x <i>endorse</i> 3 x <i>entertain</i></p>