Corpus based materials for teaching critical voice

Helping readers towards a preferred interpretation of the information

(*Hyland & Tse 2005: 157*)

Abstract

Novice, NNS, academic **writers** struggle between being too strident and being invisible.

As **readers**, they struggle to hear the writer's voice in academic text.

We can address these problems by raising awareness of key language and its role in reader-writer interaction.

Outline

Some aspects of critical voice in the literature

A pedagogical analysis of critical voice in academic texts, showing expert and novice writer examples

Developing critical voice with EAP students: approaches and corpus materials

Some aspects of critical voice

evaluation   *de Chazal (2008), Hyland &Tse (2005), Bloch (2003)*

stance   *Biber et al. (1999: 965-986), Hyland (2005)*

hedging   *Crompton (1997), Lewin (2005)*

qualification and certainty   *Hyland & Milton (1997)*

metadiscourse   *Hyland & Tse (2004)*

persuasion   *Hyland & Tse (2007:247)*

A simple example of critical voice

A. International students account for <u>almost</u> a third of university fee income in the UK.

B. International students account for <u>under</u> a third of university fee income in the UK.

Analysis of critical voice

1. **Stating and relating information**

2. **Taking a commitment (truth value) stance in relation to information**
    a) endorsement / more rarely, disagreement
    b) distancing
    c) hedging

3. **Taking an evaluative (persuasive) stance in relation to information**
    a) evaluative attribution
    b) use of emphasisers (*see Glendinning & Holstrom 2004: 108*)
    c) choice of marked lexis

Stating and relating information

- Making an unattributed statement (orally or in writing) is a commitment to the statement

- Relating one piece of information to another is a commitment to the relationship

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Commitment stance   a) endorsement

From the above figures **it is clear that** reducing energy consumption in buildings ... HWUSE

… **as** Painter says (2001), the tenor dimension is extremely difficult for students to 'navigate'. BAWE

From my point of view, it's clear that many factors contribute to happiness.

As we know, the forests are being reduced.

Indisputably, the population of Shanghai is increasing.

Commitment stance   b) distancing

This attitude may contribute to the **widely held** tolerance of the industry's high accident rate. HWUSE

The problems of global warming and climate change are **widely acknowledged** to be a product of man's profligate use of fossil fuels. HWUSE

Some people say …

Also, <u>we</u> have been experimenting with the quantum theory to control our physical world.

Commitment stance   c) hedging

Ideas which **appear** exciting and original **may** be impractical. HWUSE

Almost all of the empirical evidence, however, **suggests that** increases in fuel tax result in only a small decrease in fuel use, **at least in the short term**. HWUSE

Hence gathering information about the pollution produced <u>might be important</u> for each company to abandon polluting environment.

Material wealth <u>could</u> not make people happy.

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Evaluative stance   a) evaluative attribution

The trait theories **failed to take account of** the situation in
which leadership was required …HWUSE

This approach was **taken up** in Computer Vision by Marr [19]
and **elaborated** …He also **explained** the link between the
quantitative and qualitative descriptions …
(Griffin & Lillholm 2006)

Taylor <u>mentioned</u> that if a company advanced through
scientific ways the methods could be transferred to
other companies.

Evaluative stance   b) choice of marked lexis

Ecosystems may **suffer** from a lack of **complexity** ... HWUSE

… some of which [theories] lend new **insight**, but some have fallen into **disrepute**. HWUSE

Compared with regular mobile networks, ad hoc networks have many <u>features</u>.

The quantum theory could be a better choice because of its numerous <u>vivid</u> experiments.

Evaluative stance   c) emphasisers

Less than 40% **fully** addressed training and skills requirements, **less than** 25% properly integrated business and technology objectives and **only** 10-20% met **all** their success criteria.   HWUSE

… for the mankind and not for a few of us.

Considerably, we find that scientific colloquia are given globally <u>almost</u> in English.

However, to date, the definition and the literature on Conservation Plans <u>seems very little; small in numbers.</u>

Helping to develop critical voice

1. Genre awareness

Give the students a purpose and audience as part of any writing task (*Alexander et al. 2008: 191*)

Discuss 'high school essay' with students and avoid the genre

2. Noticing commitment stance and evaluative stance in authentic texts.

This is especially useful if students bring them from their own subjects. Concordancing also raises awareness.

Helping to develop critical voice

3. Scaffolded exercises

e.g. gap emphasisers or marked lexis in authentic examples
(*see handout, also Benson et al. 2007*)

4. Writing feedback

Show the class examples in their own texts of successful and unsuccessful expression of critical voice.

Explore with individual writers what they were attempting to say, i.e. voice. (*Alexander et al. 2008: 212, 295; Hyland & Tse. 2005: 138*)

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